

# MY CAREER GOES GLOBAL



[ 1965 ]

**N**EW YORK IS MY BASE NOW. After my stint as Stage Manager for the Fall 1965 Canadian Opera Season, I declined the opportunity to tour again with Canadian Opera.



GORDON HILKER,  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, MONTREAL  
EXPO 67 WORLD FESTIVAL  
[PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN]  
CIRCA 1967

I was missing my Yale friends. It's been a busy winter, just back from Washington, DC working as a design assistant on a Menotti Opera and President Johnson's Inaugural Gala. The phone has just rung. Gordon Hilker is on the line. He left the Vancouver International Festival a year ago moving to Montreal, Quebec, to spearhead the programming of a World Festival with the 1967 World Exposition. Ann, can you arrange to come to Montreal for an interview? I have a position that I think is right for you with the 1967 World Exposition. We will present a cultural

festival, a World Festival. Your employment would begin in September. Sitting in Gordon's Expo 67 office was quite a shift from backstage at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre in Vancouver. It's on the 25th floor of a sprawling office building, Place Ville Marie. Brand new and many-storied – yes forty-six stories – steel-framed office building, mostly glass-covered, designed, by I.M. Pei and others. I am wondering, do I want to work in a business tower? I don't know.

Gordon is ebullient as he outlines details about the Exposition Expo 67 is a Category 1 Exposition.

Is this impressive?

Yes, and here's why.

In Paris, the Bureau of International Expositions assesses applications and makes awards to a country/city. What distinguishes Category 1 from the other World Expositions is the fact that each country participating will be responsible for the design of their own pavilion. Most are choosing architects in their country to represent them. The site will have a unique look. We expect sixty nations to sign up. Come, let me show you.

We move to the large picture window and focus our attention forward to the St. Lawrence River.

See those masses of dirt mounded in the river?

Yes.

Two islands are being created upon which most of the pavilions will be built.

Gordon, this has to be ready in three years!

Yes, wait until you meet Colonel Churchill. He's an incredible engineer who had a major role in World War II. Now, he is translating his war skills into this peaceful project by overseeing construction. Believe me, with him at the helm, we will open on time.

It's hard to believe looking from here.

Come, I want you to meet two of my colleagues.

As we walk to John Pratt's office, Gordon explains

John has been both a politician and a performer.

I discover he is a tall, handsome gentleman with a very open face.

Now he is the Director of Entertainment and very gracious to me. I understand you are good at organizing. We need that here. I hope you give serious consideration to joining us. Gordon and I move down the hall to Gilles Lefebvre's office. Gilles founded the highly successful Jeunesses Musicales in Quebec. I discover he's a quiet, sensitive man with a twinkle in his eye. He and Gordon are evolving the World Festival programming. There will be several divisions within the World Festival: Theatre Presentations, Amphitheatre, La Ronde, an amusement park and Special Manifestations, including national days. Just outside the Expo site, the Corporation is building a 26,000 seat amphitheatre for spectacles and a two-thousand-seat theatre, Expo Theatre, for popular attractions, musicals, variety shows and drama. On La Ronde, the amusement park, a night club called The Garden of Stars will be built, programmed and operated by the Theatre Division.

I sit quietly and listen. Gordon is very excited as he continues Broadway musicals and popular entertainment from other countries will be featured at Expo Theatre. Place Des Arts, in downtown Montreal, will be the center for other cultural presentations. Only one facility exists, Salle Wilfrid Pelletier, an attractive theatre used primarily for opera and symphony. Two other theatres will shortly begin construction: the Maisonneuve, seating thirteen hundred and Port-Royal seating eight hundred. Again, all three of these theatres will be overseen by the Theatre Division.

The World Festival programming will include opera, theatre, symphony, dance and popular entertainment. We are just beginning negotiations with the Bolshoi Opera, La Scala, Vienna State Opera, Hamburg State Opera, The Royal Opera from Sweden and The English Opera Group. Gordon, this is amazing. What about the Metropolitan Opera?

At the moment, they are not interested in talking. Their attention is focused on opening their new Opera House at Lincoln Center.

We will not give up, however.

Gilles jumps in and says

We are also talking with the major symphony orchestras and chamber music groups, as well as approaching a diverse selection of theatre companies including the National Theatre of Great Britain whose Artistic Director is Sir Laurence Olivier and the Kabuki from Japan. Let's go for lunch and talk about what you might do with us. A thought goes through my mind. If they book nothing else, I will sign up for the opportunity to work with the opera companies. That sounds like pure heaven.

By the end of the day I am offered and accept the position of Head of Production, Theatre Presentations Division. I will be responsible for overseeing the smooth operation of the production aspects of each attraction being hosted by this Division. I begin in six months, after two gigs I have contracts for: Vancouver Summer Festival and the Fall Season at Canadian Opera.

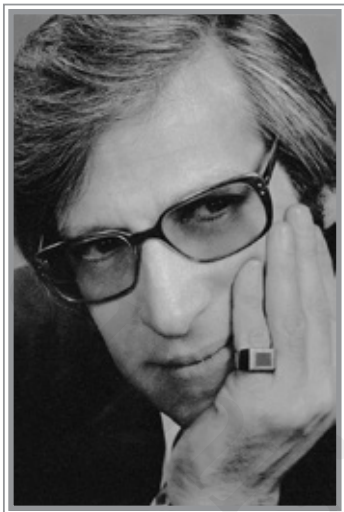
Wow, I am only twenty-eight years old. What an opportunity!



## MONTREAL

It's a time of transition, moving from Production Stage Manager to a production management position, living in a bilingual city (Montreal), working in a corporate office rather than a theatre. People are impressed when I say I work in Place Ville Marie. I am not so sure. I am not used to being jostled about by others dashing for elevators. Everyone runs, and no one talks. Where's the stage doorman with his warm greeting? I am assigned a desk in a cubicle with a wall that doesn't even come to eye level. That's weird.

Gordon has engaged David Haber as Producer of the Theatre Division of the World Festival. A Canadian, who grew up in Quebec City, he must be a decade older than me and is my boss. For the last ten years, New York was his home, working as an artist's agent and touring manager for William Morris Agency. We have similar beginnings in the theatre:



DAVID HABER

[PHOTO BY EDITH VON DU LONG,  
COURTESY OF DIDIER PIOT MD,  
LIFETIME PARTNER FOR 42 YEARS]

apprenticeships and then stage management. David's bubbling, creative spirit and wonderful sense of humor are a delight to be around. He wears colorful ties, not the norm in a corporate environment.



My adjustment to Montreal and a corporate environment is made easier by the arrival of Canadian Opera colleagues, Irving Gutman and Wally Russell. Irving is directing *Carmen*, being produced by the Montreal Symphony. Zubin Mehta is conducting. Irving and Wally are sitting at the lighting desk in the middle of the Salle Wilfrid Pelletier

auditorium as Wally is setting cues.

Hi, gentleman. You don't know how glad I am to see you.

Being a fly on the wall gives me an opportunity to experience Salle Wilfrid Pelletier's strengths and shortcomings. During Expo, the visiting opera and ballet companies and symphony orchestras will perform here. Wally took me backstage to meet some of the stagehands.

You will be working with Heinz Roessler, he's head electrician and very talented. Also, Marcel Desrochers is here tonight.

He's the business agent for IATSE.

Great, I would love to meet them. We are going to need many stagehands in '67.

As with the O'Keefe Center, Salle Wilfrid Pelletier has side levers on the edges of the orchestra pit for lighting instruments. Tonight, Irving and I are watching *Carmen* from this secret spot. A childhood friend of Irving's,

Terry McEwen, has joined us. He has a round face  
and a bit of a round body to go with his face.

While Irving is schmoozing with the artists at intermission,  
Terry and I stay put. I discover he's quite the raconteur.

Irving and I were pals growing up in Montreal. We loved opera  
and were glued to the radio, listening to the Metropolitan Opera.

Where do you live now?

In New York, producing classical recordings for London Records.

I hope you will join us after the performance for dinner.



My dear friend Sherry decided that Montreal seemed a good place  
to move. We are settling in and have found our first piece of furniture,  
a sofa from a used-furniture store. Don't worry, it's in good shape. We are  
having it recovered by students at an upholstery school. Our living room  
is empty again. However, it's not empty for long. John Skelton, who works  
for the Autostade has volunteered to build bookshelves in the living  
room. Lumber has arrived. While he toils, we cook good meals and  
offer plenty of wine.



My comfortability  
with the corporate  
world has improved.  
Two women on the  
World Festival staff  
have taken me  
under their wing.  
Jennifer McQueen,  
a tall, soft-spoken lady  
with a beautiful lilting  
voice, does special projects  
for us, lots of research. While not of the theatre, but with an arts  
background, she is a perfect complement to the rest of us noisy types.



SHERRY GRAUER, ANN FARRIS, [SHERRY'S PAINTING  
ON THE WALL] MONTREAL, 1967



She makes sure we see projects from many different points of view. And she's a woman of the world in a way I am not. She breathes before she acts. I watch her and learn. Eventually she will be producing the House Programs for two hundred productions being presented in our five theatres. That's a daunting task.

And then, there's Yvonne Goudreau; she's Gordon Hilker's assistant. Trained as an opera singer, she realized her voice wasn't going to give her the kind of career she desired, so she moved into arts administration. Yvonne is very practical and gutsy. In fact, she's taking on the management responsibility of the Artist's Hotel or, in French, *Hôtel des Artistes*. Part of our deal with visiting attractions is providing housing for all of the visiting artists when they are in Montreal for our six-month World Festival. The Expo Corporation has leased two-fifteen story apartment buildings adjacent to one another, not far from Place Des Arts. Yvonne is a tough cookie, she can handle it. Just try and pull something on her. It won't work!

By the way, I am discovering that the two languages, French and English, really do go, rather must go, side by side in Quebec.



David's and my first task is identifying a technical director for the Theatre Division. I am preparing the first draft of the job description. It covers technical theatre skills and experience in touring. And the person must be unflappable, as well as have a sense of humor.

David, what else shall we include?

The ability to work with architects and theatre consultants? Remember, we are building two theatres and Place Des Arts is building another two. And, so it went. Gordon has signed off, giving us a surprising piece of information.

You need approval from the Expo hiring office.

Why? They don't know anything about the theatre.

Not only does the Corporation have a format into which your job

description must fit, there are specific corporate requirements to be included. Oh!

Approval of this job description is a major corporate learning experience. Many of the Expo staff have army backgrounds. Few of them attend performances. I am discovering three skills are necessary to be successful in obtaining what we want: listening, teaching and cajoling. And I am learning corporate language while adjusting mine to fit into their system.

Today they gave me a surprising piece of information. Each potential candidate must pass a security clearance. That's a stipulation I will not quibble with. They are also helpful. We will advertise the position. Give me the locations and addresses and we will announce your opening.



ANDIS CELMS  
NATIONAL ARTS CENTER THEATRE  
MAGAZINE—OCTOBER 1980

We have found an ideal technical director, Andis Celms. An intense, quiet and serious man in his late twenties, his references are glowing from professionals we trust. His technical theatre experience, while not long in time, has been intense. He seems undaunted with the size of the project, asking pertinent questions.



Gordon, his lovely wife Betty, a former chanteuse, and their daughter, live down the hill from me in a coach house tucked in behind the Museum of Fine Arts. The first floor was a stable, where five or six horses might have been housed. Now it's renovated into a charming wood-paneled room



and has become Gordon's study.

After dinner, several nights a week I amble down Mountain Street and check in. Gordon tests his ideas on Betty and me. She is very perceptive, funny and knows the theatrical business well.

We are becoming good friends.

The Autostade is Gordon's idea. Its name comes from the sponsors – the auto industry. Gordon's hatching a variety of spectacles including a Canadian Armed Forces Military Tattoo. Gordon loves sharing his ideas and I love learning from him.

Major Ian S. Fraser from the Black Watch (HRH) of Canada is evolving a show to describe, in pageant form, the development of the Armed Forces in Canada. We will need to accommodate seventeen hundred men and women backstage.

I can just hear the effect of the massed bands. How exciting!

Oh, I forgot to mention. There will be over eleven hundred animals.

What else is up your sleeve?

Leon Leonidoff, the producer at Radio-City Music Hall, will put together a variety show, probably highlighting Maurice Chevalier. There will be three identical and simultaneous variety shows on three different stages.

The renowned French film director Christian Jaque is producing *La Grande Parade de La Gendarmerie Française*, a French approach to horse spectacles. Their show will describe four hundred and thirty years of Gendarmerie pageantry, from Francis I of France (16th Century) to the present time. One hundred and thirty horses are being shipped to Montreal not to mention seven hundred and fifty-four men along with costumes and props.

Wow, I thought we in the Theatre Division had challenges.

These are humungous!

I sense that the stadium shows are capturing Gordon's heart. Yes, he is enjoying traveling in Europe booking the opera companies, symphony

orchestras and theatre companies, but the Autostad is his passion.

It is where his creativity flows.

Our nighttime talks are not only revelatory but are giving me a chance to digest the breadth of our project. They are special evenings.



David and I are continuing to develop a working relationship with other corporate divisions, particularly finance, construction and uniforms.

The uniform specialist, out of Army retirement to help out, has just called me for a meeting

We need to start thinking about the uniforms for Expo Theatre and the Garden of Stars.

But the theatres aren't even built yet. We have not thought about this component.

Never mind. Let's do some research.

Ploughing through several three-inch-thick picture books of uniforms, brown for the army, blue for the navy and lighter blue for the air force, I play around with ideas.

We can adapt these designs to fit your needs. How many stripes do you want the ushers to have on their jackets?

And so it went. It's fun. When he calls, I am delighted.

The finance department is another matter. They are very nervous about us and have prepared a complicated system for requesting funds.

David, let's take them out for lunch and describe what happens with a touring show.

They seem delighted to join us and are willing to listen as we describe

At the last moment a show will require something as small as a different-sized platform unit or as large as a paint job on a backdrop. Emergencies happen. We are responsible for these costs once the show is in Montreal.

We need to be able to accommodate, to move quickly, especially when payment is required for a service at completion of the service.

There is no question they liked the lunch. And we learned their intricate

and sometimes arcane bureaucratic processes generated from Army rules and regulations. I am not sure, however, that we got very far convincing them to adapt their rules to our operational needs. What they don't seem to want to understand is that we do stay within budget.



Our sofa has arrived and looks just great. Sherry spied a brass bed under a snow bank outside an antique shop this morning. Knowing this has been my heart's desire, she called Ann, it has a decorative bed head and footer. The downside is that it is tarnished, dark, dark black! I jumped into a taxi whose driver drove through a light snow storm to the antique store. The shop owner assured me that with a couple tins of Brasso and a little elbow grease the bed will shine up. I bought it, became friends with Brasso and the final result looks gorgeous. Mum helped out and sent me an embroidered bedspread in pinks and beige that my great grandmother made seventy years ago. My bedroom is taking shape.



Until Andis arrives, I am pinch-hitting as our technical consultant on the design team for the three theatres Expo is constructing. Thank heavens, Hank Hawthorne involved me in his theatre design project at Yale. Some of the lingo is familiar. I feel comfortable being a collaborator. This morning the Golden Garter Saloon architect asked How high must the stage be so can-can girls dancing behind the bar will be seen? I have no idea but will do the research.

Back at Place Ville Marie I approach John Skelton and Jennifer McQueen Are you free this evening to go bar hopping? After explaining my reason, they signed on. With measuring stick and tape measure we duck into small tiny bars featuring entertainment.

Some are well-maintained, others sleazy.

A glass of wine ameliorates the condition as we contemplate the height.

Is this stage too high?

Yes, the dancer's legs are out of proportion.

Let's try another bar.

We leave half-filled glasses of wine.

Down the street we go.

Nope, this won't do, their legs are being hidden by the bartender at the bar.

We continue to St. Catherine's Street and move to ginger ale.

Jennifer and John begin a hilarious story

We are developing our budget for yet another show at the Autostade, *The World Horse Spectacular*, a display of man and his horse at work and play through the centuries. One of the components is the RCMP Musical Ride. A major budget item is manure.

Why will manure cost the Corporation money? You don't have to generate it!

True but we need a place to store it and then get rid of it. That costs.

Hmmmm

John continues

Our first task was to discover the amount of manure these horses generate each day. It meant a trip to Cincinnati to observe the RCMP Musical Ride to get the details.

Jennifer is now laughing so hard

Yes, it was a stinky job, but we have the details. That's not all. We have discovered that Slack's Mushroom Company outside of Montreal wants the manure. In fact, they will remove the manure daily and are going to pay the Expo Corporation for it. Now, isn't that an excellent example of cost recovery!

John adds

We are using this income fact with the Expo budget office.

They think we never consider the income side.

Oh, I know what you mean. The corporation staff certainly does have a jaundiced view of us theatrical types.

It's the wee hours of the morning and time to call it a night. Jennifer's

relieved or at least her knees are. She's been crouching down below the stage calling out the measurements to John as tired old broads on stage take off their clothes for the front row of sad old men in raincoats.

Thanks for your help.

Wouldn't have missed this for anything!



Andis has arrived and bought my idea of developing a technical and production questionnaire to send to the production and technical staffs of our visiting attractions. We need to have a consistent form for the information we receive. And for those companies sending advance teams, we will be more prepared for our discussions.

This questionnaire grew like Topsy. It started by asking for the number of people and their skills in production and technical areas. We moved into technical details, number of stage drops, platforms, special lighting needs. Are you bringing an orchestra, If yes, how many musicians?

What are the number of crates of scenery and costumes? We need to know for storage requirements offsite and, and, and, and

One day at Salle Wilfrid Pelletier to determine the equipment available, we unearth a rule from a casual comment made by a stagehand

Be sure to tell them about the strict fire code stipulations. Here's why.

Years ago there was a devastating fire in a theatre in Montreal. The fire codes were rewritten. Now each theatrical production that comes to town is checked to ensure they comply.

How do they check?

A fire marshal comes during setup and strikes a match one inch from several items, including drops. If the item becomes singed the show is closed.

Needless to say, we have highlighted this information in a special box in our questionnaire.

The news is out about our developing questionnaire. Other departments want inclusion. Mary Joliffe, a rather frantic public relations lady with a biting sense of humor, plunks herself down and gives us the press

information she wants. Yvonne Goudreau has prepared a very concise accommodation segment. Gordon and David have ideas.

Yea! Our masterpiece is finished and has gone for translation into French.

Andis, I think we should congratulate ourselves. This was an intense project with a time line. We made it without a major battle.

Ann, we are very different. Perhaps that's why it went so well.

Andis is quiet, I am noisy. We are both methodical. We argued about details and became passionate about our points of view until we worked it through.



January 1966. Gordon has decided the Autostade will open with a circus. Circus promoters are inundating our office. They are a different sort from theatre and opera folk – more casual. Stu McLellan, the latest one to arrive, asked me today

Do you want to go to the circus tonight? My circus is performing.

I would love to.

Bring a friend.

Sherry and I are off to the Arena. We left in the oven, at 200 degrees, chicken wings. Tomorrow night we host the World Festival staff.

Our fingers are crossed that all will be okay.

Stu has ringside seats and is providing a running monologue

Watch those acrobats. The trick is risky.

It's the one where acrobats are forty feet up, doing summersaults in the air. They need to grab the flying bar to return to home base up on a side platform at the exact moment it comes racing towards them.

Whew, they did it.

Time passed so quickly.

Thanks Stu, it's been a fascinating and a learning experience.

Want to go backstage?

Sure.

There's the usual hustle and bustle of shutting down for the night.

Henry, the clown, comes up. He was that silly one with the floppy shoes and big black tears drawn on his face. Now he's in street clothes. We can see his dark, dancing and laughing eyes. He's charming. Stu asks

Would you like to come with us to the South Shore, across the St. Lawrence River, to a night club? A new batch of show girls have come from England. I am checking to see if they are a fit for Las Vegas. Of course, we want to go.

Out the stage door of the Coliseum, into the biting, cold Montreal January night, we climbed into Henry's car, a 1966 Cadillac, pink inside and out. It's a hoot. Around the entire interior perimeter above the windows are installed one-inch pink upholstery tassles, the type you find on curtains in an elegant Victorian home. As he starts driving it feels like the entire interior is jumping, the tassles are jiggling so much. Stu and Henry seem oblivious. We are in the back seat, hardly able to contain our laughter.

Of course, we have ringside seats. The show is professional and entertaining. The girls can really dance, those long legs go way above their shoulders! Stu and Henry went off to talk with the dancers. They have just returned, sporting serious looks on their faces. As they sit down Stu says Don't question what I say, just do what I say. We focus on him.

When we get up, follow me right out of the nightclub. You are not to look to the left or the right. When you get out the front door, run as fast as you can to Henry's car.

To the girls he says

There are jobs in Vegas. I will be back tomorrow.

As we exit, I can't resist shifting my eyes to the left and right. What is here that we are not to see? Just a mass of hushed men – no women. How odd! Gosh it's tricky to run on ice. I am going as fast as I can but that's not very fast. Whew, I made it. Sherry's right behind me and closes the back door

of the car. Henry speeds away. When we all have caught our breath,  
Stu turns around

I apologize. If I had realized what was happening this evening,  
I would not have brought you.

What's happening?

The Montreal Mafia is meeting. Normally, I wouldn't be too concerned.  
However, last week the circus crowd was in Chicago. The Montreal Mafia  
boss was amongst us with his lady. That lady and I took a shine to one  
another and she left him. He's furious. Henry and I feared for both  
you and Sherry if he realized you were with me.

Now that's an adventure!

It's 4 a.m. The wafting odor of chicken wings is strong as we walk  
in the door. Yes, they are a little charred.

Let's serve them anyhow. The story is just too good.



Jennifer is getting us organized, commenting

As we are living in French Canada, how about learning French? I have  
found a French teacher who will meet with us three days a week at 7 a.m.

Want to go?

Great idea.

Winters in Montreal are bitter cold. I have talked a friend, Katherine  
Johnston, into joining us. Together we trudge down Mountain Street  
at 6:45 a.m. This is not my idea of heaven, but I am doing it!

Everyone is making headway, except me. My head can't compute  
what is there to get. My tongue can't spit out the words, I don't get it.  
It's very frustrating.

Jennifer, after Expo, I am going to Paris. I will get this language  
come hell or high water!!!

And, I have made another decision, which didn't last long. I began to  
wonder if my inability to learn a language is a psychological matter,  
like the eye doctor suggested about my eyes. You know it is frustrating  
to have such a great job and be faced with these irksome issues. I found  
a psychiatrist at McGill University to see what I could learn. He, too,



was dressed in brown and required that I lie on a couch. He sat behind me, never looked at me. It was all too, bizarre. I only went once.



We're a year away from opening day. Now, an influx of advance opera teams are arriving to review details. First up is Hamburg State Opera. Rolf Liebermann, a much-respected opera administrator and composer, is the Intendent. We are learning that Intendent is the European phrase for a General Manager or General Director of an opera company. Mr. Lieberman's programming for our World Festival veers towards the contemporary: Hindemith's *Mathis the Painter*, Berg's *Lulu*, Janáček's, *Jenufa*. Yes, he has also made a nod to one of Germany's first romantic operas from the early 19th Century, Weber's *Der Freischütz*.  
I don't know any of this repertoire. Great!

Andis and I are enchanted with the Hamburg technical team, setting the cooperative tone for us. Hans Stahn, their technical director, is a stocky man with a deep voice, large hands and a big laugh. His English is quite good. Every detail we could possibly need is outlined in our completed questionnaire. He didn't bat an eyelash with the fire prevention restrictions. An older man nearing the end of his theatrical career, he has a charming persuasive way of taking on the role of a teacher, helping us streamline our planning and implementation processes.

I love your questionnaire. It gave me the confidence we would meet professionals in Montreal. If it's all right with you, we will use the questionnaire for our own purposes.

I do have some concerns. How are you going to integrate the foreign stage crews with the Montreal crew?

And so it went.

At dinner last evening Hans led a discussion we hadn't expected. It is just twenty-two years since the end of World War II. The atrocities of my country are very much alive in memory. What impact do you think this war will have on visiting German attractions?

Andis and I are taken aback. Andis experienced the war, first hand, as

a child before leaving Latvia so he knew of what Hans spoke. I had not.

Having spent so much time with Gordon in these last few months

I used one of his phrases

You know, Gordon Hilker feels that global projects like Expo 67 will allow a peaceful way for peoples of many nations to learn about each other.

I have a sense that the positive will be highlighted here.

I am beginning to understand that the World Festival and Expo 67 are such an opportunity not only to learn more about different cultures and their needs, but also give us an opportunity for more global tolerance.

Our meetings with Hans and his team have highlighted the need for a bank of interpreters throughout the six months. At the moment, the Expo Protocol Office is providing us with that service.

During the World Festival we will need our own stable of interpreters.

I am researching and developing a request for proposals.



MONTREAL, EXPO 67, ANN FARRIS, EXPO SITE UNDER CONSTRUCTION—1967

Meantime, I have found a tiny theatrical dictionary at The Drama Book Shop in New York. We are using it as the basis to develop a much more detailed version.



Vienna State Opera's advance team is here: Hans Felkel, their technical director is an intense man, tall and dark-haired. Georg Fritsch, administrative director, gives the impression of being less stressed, though I am not sure he is. Both men have a few years on us, but not more than ten. As expected, they are really organized. We are going over the technical plans of their repertoire, Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier*, Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*, Strauss' *Elektra* and Berg's *Wozzeck*.

Part of their apprehensions stem from the size of the orchestra pit at Salle Wilfrid Pelletier.

Maestro Karl Boehm, yes, the legendary Maestro, will not agree to come until he knows the pit is large enough for the Strauss' *Elektra*.

We are ready for this comment.

Yes, we know, the pit as presently configured cannot handle the Strauss *Elektra* musician requirement. However, there is good news. Place Des Arts will close down this summer to enlarge the pit.

It will be able to handle eighty-five musicians.

They still are not happy

We know Maestro Boehm. He will insist he be offered the opportunity to come to Montreal and test the pit before he will sign on.

I will discuss your request with David and Gordon. We will have an answer before you leave.



A contingent from the Bolshoi has arrived. Our contact is Ararat Charuhghianc, the technical director. Andis and I adore him. He's a tiny man who gives the impression that he has weathered many wars – not gun wars – internal Bolshoi battles. Nothing seems to faze him. He speaks not a word of English, so our interpreter is working hard,

not only translating but learning the theatrical lingo. This group also includes Mr. Rynier, who is the Bolshoi Chief of Staff.

The Bolshoi leadership is adventurous. They are bringing some of the biggest works in their repertoire, Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, Tchaikovsky's *Queen of Spades*, Prokofiev's *War and Peace*, Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh*, Borodin's *Prince Igor*.

A staggering undertaking!!! And like the Vienna State Opera and Hamburg State Opera, it's their first visit to North America.

Ararat has just informed us

I will bring a hundred stagehands making the total complement five hundred from the Bolshoi.

Keeping a calm demeanor but gulping inside, knowing this number is well over our budget, we explain

We are providing stagehands in Montreal. They are well-trained and known for their professional skills. You can rest assured your needs will be met. We suggest you bring supervisors and a few others.

We meet a quiet resistance. Ararat is firm

No, I will bring these one hundred stagehands. They will be needed.

It's clear he is not going to compromise.

Gordon, Gilles and David have a similar reaction when we report this staggering stagehand stipulation. But they do not want anything to disrupt the potential of the Bolshoi coming to Montreal.

We will talk with corporate finance and get back to you in a day.

Their decision is positive

Accept the one hundred stagehands.

Ararat is looking very relieved. It's clear we made the right decision as far as he is concerned.

Oh my God! The Artists' Hotel is going to be filled to the brim!

The three of us with our interpreter load into an Expo car and drive to one of the Canadian Armed Forces armories.

Ararat, this armory is where the Bolshoi scenery will be unpacked and prepared for load-in at the theatre.

Will it handle your shows and equipment?

It's plenty large enough, thank you.

We need your scenery and costumes to arrive in late June, a month before load-in. And we need, in advance, a detailed list of the contents with the value. Expo 67 contractually is responsible for the insurance coverage of your goods while you are here.

When the interpreter translates this comment, Ararat gives us a blank look. He has no idea what we are talking about.

We explain...

He counters

We don't have anything like that. In our country we have a system which provides financial protection should something unforeseen happen. If something is lost or destroyed, the State replaces it.

Okay, we will make a guesstimate of value prior to arrival and correct the estimate later.

Our final caution is the fire prevention requirement.

Here are the stipulations.

No problem. I understand.

Ararat and others are gone, back to Moscow.

Gordon and David, the Bolshoi is huge. We have to have plenty of lead time for setup. Please don't book any attraction in the Salle Wilfrid Pelletier during the week prior to their opening.

Ann, we can't have a dark week in the middle of August.

We plead and don't win. At least Gordon came into my office to tell me.

Ann, I have booked Harry Belafonte, the "King of Calypso," into the theatre the week before the Bolshoi. It has a very small set. You can have the stage from midnight to 4 p.m. each day.

Gordon, that makes me really nervous. Okay, if you are going to do that please put a clause into the Belafonte contract which clearly stipulates that the Bolshoi setup will be going on around his show. No surprises, please! Yes, I will.

I have just received a copy of the signed Belafonte contract. Yes, Gordon put the clause in the contract. However, Belafonte has crossed it out.

I am fuming.

David and Gordon are meeting in Gordon's office. Pat, Gordon's secretary, tells me I am not to disturb them.

Oh, yes, I will.

Look, what is this?

They are prepared for me.

Ann, it's not a problem, don't worry.

How can you say that? It's a major problem. I am going to mark my calendar to check with you each month. You'd better solve it.



Andis and I are meeting with Marcel Desrochers, head of the IATSE (stagehands) union on a regular basis. We like him a great deal. With five theatres, a stadium and other locations on the Expo site all requiring seasoned stagehands, the number was staggering. In Salle Wilfred Pelletier, the visiting opera companies alone would use every professional stagehand in Montreal. Marcel is a far-thinking gentleman. He's as excited about the upcoming challenge of the World Festival as we are.

It will provide so much work for so many stagehands. He tells us I have put out a call to the IATSE locals throughout North America asking stagehands to come for the six-month period. We are going to need a stagehand workforce of six hundred.



Representatives from The Royal Swedish Opera are here.

What a contrast from our meetings with the Russians. Everything is organized and clear. My youth hosteling in Europe six years ago is helpful as we begin our discussions.

I have been in your theatre, when I was a student traveling in Europe.

It's such a beautiful intimate auditorium.

Yes, and we are concerned. We hope this intimacy will not work against us for Salle Wilfrid Pelletier seats nearly three thousand.

We fear our productions will look small on your much larger stage.

And, they bring out their technical drawings for Verdi's *A Masked Ball*

(set in Sweden), Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, and Karl Birger-Blomdahl's *Aniara* (a sci-fi space opera).

A great deal of time is spent on how we can help them adapt to our large space.



Now it's La Scala. Gordon and Gilles have put the pressure on Andis and me. The La Scala management has not yet come to agreement with us. They don't have their repertoire sorted out. All we know is they have a new Franco Zeffirelli production of *La Bohème* to be conducted by Herbert Von Karajan. Do what you can to be very encouraging. The Italian advance team is of a certain age, very properly dressed in black suits and ties. It's clear they are not sure about Andis and me, youngsters in our late twenties. I feel as if I am hearing their feelings louder than their words and those feelings don't feel respectful.

I sense them asking themselves

How can these youngsters have the production and technical responsibility for us in Montreal?

Andis and I are taking an assertive tact. Our interpreter is going a mile a minute as we barrel through, asking the questions and learning their needs. As the repertoire is not set, they have few answers to give.

They've gone now. We sent them off with a ton of information and a request that they have our questionnaire completed as soon as possible. They are the only advance team, so far, who wasn't prepared for our discussions. Not their fault. Their administration hasn't settled on the repertoire yet.

Andis and I report to Gordon and David

La Scala is an unknown quantity. If they come, it's a good thing they are in late September. By then we will be seasoned. It sure is hard to plan for them without any details. And we don't think they liked us very much.

The La Scala advance team taught me something. If another doesn't respect me, I can freeze. Not when I am with them, but later.

How do I know it? By writing letters! I am the written connection with the production and technical staff of the attractions we are presenting. Most of the time, I have no problem. It's easy to write these letters. With La Scala it isn't. This first draft of my first La Scala letter is stilted and uncommunicative. I can't send this. In fact, I don't want to communicate with them.

What can I do? I'll put the letter in my left-hand bottom drawer of my desk and wait. I need to let off steam, hot steam!

An advance team from Australia has just arrived. They are an ebullient bunch. One of their shows, *Pop Goes Australia*, a variety show, is being tailored for Expo Theatre. I must say it's a hoot watching these very responsible-type bureaucrats who wear stripped ties and stripped shirts with black suits, tell us

There will be a special show stopper – boomerangs which will be tossed out over the heads of the audience.

You never know what someone will come up with. Our job is to make it happen, safely.

There is more to the artistic palette from Australia. They are also sending the Melbourne Symphony and the Australian Ballet.

I opened my bottom drawer this morning. You know what? The La Scala draft isn't as bad as I thought. It just needs some smoothing, soothing out. I feel ready to handle this now.



The Expo Protocol Office has just left my office informing me of the pending arrival of the advance team from the Kabuki Theatre in Japan and the details arranged

We have set up five days of meetings for you and have booked a meeting room at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel.

I look at them as though they are nuts

There is no way Andis and I can give five days to a theatre company when there is only one set going on the stage. There is just one unique feature: the construction and installation of the Hanamichi, which is a platform



unit at stage height that extends into the audience adjacent to the right-side wall of the auditorium. (Recently, Rae Ackerman shared that it also has a small building at the end of the ramp which acts as an exit, a destination and is actually a place to rest, change costume and makeup, have a cup of tea, etc.)

I also commented to the protocol office staff

The Bolshoi advance team was here for four days and their needs are huge compared to Kabuki.

The protocol staff smiled, reaffirming

It will take five days.

I just shook my head.

The Kabuki advance team is here. Our interpreter is busy. The visitors don't speak English and, of course, we don't have any Japanese. Andis and I are very thorough doing our dog and pony show, going over the plans, both of the theatre (under construction) as well as their technical and production requirements. They keep saying yes, yes. I guess our planning is working for them. We even discussed how the Hanamichi would be built and installed.

It's five o'clock, they have left. We are back at Place Ville Marie in Gordon's office reporting

It seems they have agreed to what we proposed.

Day Two: Whoops, not so. Today they want to go through the same material again. Our interpreter explains

Their nods of what we took to be a yes or okay were simply an indication that they understood what we had said. Now they desired more interaction.

It took us the five days to come to final agreement. We are getting a quick lesson on the customs of many different cultures.

David has taken us for a drink. We exclaim

We would never be ready for opening night if this style of lengthy negotiation was typical of all the attractions!



David is booking most of the popular attractions for Expo Theatre, Diana Ross and the Supremes, Simon and Garfunkel, The Turtles and on and on.

These touring shows are grateful for our questionnaire.  
David, have either you or Gordon heard from Belafonte's agent?  
Where's the approval for the Bolshoi to work the midnight hours?  
We are asking. No response yet. Don't worry. We will get it.  
Hmmmmmmmmm!



My focus is theatre production personnel who will staff backstage at the four theatres and the night club. We need three for each theatre. A production coordinator capable of wearing many hats, stage manager, sometimes our point person on deck, the stage, to make sure all is moving forward as planned, supervising IATSE stagehand crew calls, or handling technical problems with Andis or coordinating with my office on the schedule for trucking or interpreters, or liaising with the Artist's Hotel and, and... Each will have a production associate and an apprentice. In Salle Wilfrid Pelletier, there will be three apprentices. The corporation has signed off on our job descriptions. Now, it's my turn to find these people hidden in some theatre across Canada.

Michael Tabbitt is our overwhelming choice for Salle Wilfrid Pelletier. He has the stage management and production skills along with an amazingly gregarious personality. Everything he does comes with perfected results. Gordon, Gilles and David have booked seven opera companies, twelve major symphony orchestras, eight ballet companies, along with Harry Belafonte (growl, growl) and other special one-night events for this theatre. Michael will have his hands full. He has the talents to handle this. Yes, I forgot to mention, we also need house management staff, handling the dignitaries coming to the theatre, amongst other duties. David found Gerald Holmes in London. He was house manager at the English National Theatre working for Sir Lawrence Olivier. Now, he's sharing my office preparing for his House Manager responsibilities at Salle Wilfrid Pelletier. Gerald's a meticulous man, a solid background in the theatre and speaks French with great ease.

I am enjoying selling our production jobs to prospective staff. How can I not be? In the Maisonneuve Theatre we have thirteen theatre companies (from England, France, Greece, Japan, Canada, USA, Italy and more) along with music, chamber opera and ballet. There is so much to experience from these attractions. Two production theatre specialists, Stewart Paul and Raymond Choquette, will take on the task.

The Port-Royal needs a different breed of coordinator. The emphasis is primarily music. Gordon and Gilles have booked sixteen chamber orchestras, eleven dance companies, twenty-four recitals, two music theatre companies, and yes, also seven theatre companies plus a few galas. Our coordinators need to be comfortable with solo artists. Larry Hertzog and Gilbert MacDonald will fill that bill.

One thing I am learning: Expect the unexpected with staff that is hired. Gordon has just informed David and me I am stealing Gerald Holmes from you. He will become my Executive Assistant. David and I just laugh. Okay, we will go back to the drawing boards.

Here's an interesting fact: Only one person out of the fifty we expressed interest in hiring does not meet the security requirements. No, we weren't told why.



A theatrical entrepreneur, many years my senior and responsible for booking some of the European attractions to the World Festival, has arrived. He is in my office, sitting across from me. There is such an ease between us. No, that's not quite right – it's like we have known each other forever. We understand each other, plain and simple, that's it. I wonder why? May I invite you to dinner this evening? Yes, that would be lovely.

I have no other choice. I have to know more about him.  
Guess that feeling is mutual.

At dinner we talk theatrical talk. He comes up to my apartment for a glass of wine. We are making polite chat about nothing much. My heart is pounding some. Perhaps it's his energy, it's a sensual energy. His dark brown eyes penetrate. They grab me. He's making a move, a move that's making me very happy. We are off, off, off. A strange and beautiful intimacy is beginning. More than that, it has begun. He's gone now. He'll be back.



Gordon, David, Gilles, Andis and I are in Gordon's office. There has been the strangest announcement in the morning paper, *The Montreal Gazette*. It's June 1966, a little less than a year before Expo 67 opens. We are informed that La Scala is coming to Montreal to perform in six weeks. What's up? Each of us takes on the responsibility to sniff and regroup at the end of the day. We know there is something fishy.

Gordon has discovered

A Montreal businessman is giving La Scala as an anniversary present to his wife, Well, not really La Scala. He has engaged a promoter who is providing *Stars from La Scala*: Renata Tebaldi. Mario del Monaco, etc. The opera chorus is coming from Parma.

Andis and I report our conversation with Marcel Desrochers

There will be three productions, three performances each, scheduled for Salle Wilfrid Pelletier.

Gilles comes in with a frown,

I am concerned about the possible repercussions to the World Festival if this endeavor fails.

We agreed to keep on top of this. Gordon tells me  
Ann, find a way to attend rehearsals.

David Peacock, a much-respected stage manager and a professor at the National Theatre School in Montreal, has been engaged by the “La Scala” promoter to oversee the production, technical and stage management aspects of this anniversary present. Fortunately, I know him.

We met backstage during the Montreal Symphony’s opera productions when he was their stage manager.

David, may I be around during setups and rehearsals?

Absolutely.

On my first visit, it’s dinner time, the first day this endeavor is in the theatre.

David greets me at the pass door to backstage and in his very proper English accent pronounces

This engagement is “instant” opera at its cliché best. To start, the technical plans are incomplete. There is no technical director. The scenery is composed of stock scenic drops and stock platform units that fold. The stage crew and I are doing our best to figure out what goes with what.

Feel free to wander about.

It’s in the huge basement under the stage that I gasp. There are stacks of folded platform units. Some of the frames are open without tops. The stagehands have no choice but to try one after the other. Nothing is labeled. I wonder if this is how the *La Bohème* from La Scala is going to appear.

Murray Laufer, the set designer of *Aida* and *Turandot* at the Canadian Opera, has just arrived in Montreal.

Murray, do you want to come with me to a full staged rehearsal of the “La Scala?”

And I tell him the story.

Yes, this could be amusing.

We conceal ourselves in the top balcony and watch. It is so sad.

A young assistant stage director, Franco, keeps screaming at everyone.

Murray points out

Look, Tebaldi is upset.

The next thing we know, she storms off stage.

Del Monaco asks for the understudy. Tebaldi returns quickly.

And so it went.

I report my findings to Gordon, Gilles, David and Andis. Gordon comments The handwriting is on the wall. The financial cost must be exorbitant.

This is going to end in disaster.

Right, they are working from 8 a.m. to midnight. The crews are in several hours of double time.

Okay, Gilles and I are going to warn the upper Expo echelon they might have to get into this.

A few days later, after the opening of the second production, we read in the morning paper,

The remaining performances of the *Stars of La Scala* have been cancelled. There is no funding to return the chorus to Italy.

Gordon and Gilles are on it. They and others have the Quebec Government covering the cost of returning these artists to Italy.

I wonder what will happen with the scenery and costumes?

We never found out.

Even though there is a lot of negative publicity, it doesn't seem to affect the World Festival. Thank goodness.



My “lover plus” is back. I say plus because this relationship is more than a sexual delight. We have a common business. He has much more experience than I, being twenty years my senior. It's fun to mine his ideas, exploring them with him... That's a real “plus” even though he has some old-fashioned theatrical beliefs

I prefer scenery that is beautifully painted. I don't like these modern productions, modular ones. They're cold.

Well, I like both. I like variety.

His sense of humor and mine seem to match. You know, I can annoy him quite easily and then he starts to smile, an adorable, mischievous smile. There's no choice. We end up in each other's arms. He's an amazing lover, my teacher, bringing me alive. He's quite selfless, patient, letting me experience the pleasure he offers. His mouth on mine begins it all. His hands move to my breasts and tease, then all over my body, arousing me.

What a sensation!

It's divine to feel more competent as a lover.



It's vacation time, and I am in Vancouver for a week. The Vancouver Festival is in full swing, offering me a great opportunity to search out production staff for Montreal. Three successes. Al Wallis is coming to be my assistant. We work so well together, I am thrilled.

Crossing the QE stage, John Ellis calls from the light board cubby hole in the front of the auditorium.

Ann, we are coming to Expo. The IATSE bulletin has us intrigued. Who? Tell me more.

Several of us, me, Barney, Fred, Maurice, Terry and probably others. We have been in touch with Marcel Desrocher and it's arranged. That's fantastic. It's going to be amazing. You will be busy!

Sitting in the bar at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre a thin, lanky young man sits down beside me.

Hi. I'm Rae Ackerman. I am a theatre technician, just graduated from the University of British Columbia.

My mind goes click, click. Andis is looking for an assistant. I sense he is next to me.

Ann, meet Jessica Peters. She wants to come to Expo. We have an apprentice position. Would that interest you? Yes.

It's neat there will be a good number of westerners joining us.



Sherry is moving to her own apartment. She's planning to stay in Montreal after Expo and wants to get settled.

Gordon has just come into my office.

Ann, Dave Dauphinee is looking for someone to coordinate the costumes for the six spectaculars. Talk with him.

Gordon, do you remember Maureen Heneghan? She was Harry Horner's costume assistant for *Flute* at the Festival? What about her?

I remember her well. She is the no-nonsense British lady?

Yes.

See if you can find her.

I have unearthed Maureen, teaching Costume at Boston University.

She's curious about this challenge

Maureen, if you take the position, you can share my apartment.

Sherry is moving at the end of the month.

Maureen's here. We are both so busy, we are like ships in the night, passing long enough to be sure each other is healthy and okay.

There are few dinner parties now!



Change is afoot. Not only have the autumn leaves arrived, but also there is organizational change at the top. The World Festival has been placed under the joint authority of Gordon as Artistic Director and Jean Cote as Administrative Director. And, it's moving day from Place Ville Marie, the tall office building in downtown Montreal, to a sprawling Administration Building just outside the Expo gates. I am glad to be gone from Place Ville Marie and its isolation from the world I know. No, we haven't moved to a theatre; we're in an administration building, but it's smaller, more human. My office is closer to the ground and has a large window. The St. Lawrence River is within a short walking distance.

It's September, eight months until Expo 67 opens. Trucks, cranes, lumber, steel and men in hard hats are everywhere. Already I can see the distinctive shapes of the different pavilions. I can hardly wait to get inside the American Pavilion. It's designed by Buckminster Fuller. He has created a huge ball, called a geodesic dome, constructed out of a steel frame and glass.



I guess it's a glass covering. You can see right through the building. When the Exposition opens, one of the Monorail trains depositing visitors at different locations on the site will travel through the center of the Dome. Visitors, including me, are going to be fascinated.



I am hitching a ride to work with Gordon each morning. It's a great way to bring him up to date with my concerns and to learn the latest.

Gordon, any word from Belafonte's agent?

Not yet.

Are you not concerned?

No, it will work out.

Hmmmmmmmm.



My "lover plus" is back. It's as though we have not been apart. In a way, we take each other for granted in the best sense. We want to be together, to share, to explore, to know more about what is important to each of us. It's easy to share. We just do. And his life experience brings new vistas to me. I am baffled that it could be so easy. One day, I explore  
Don't you sense there is something beneath the surface that we are not getting? How come we know each other so well and yet we have spent so little time together?

I don't know. I agree. It's a mystery for us to discover.

I was surprised. I felt sure he would have an answer.

He's older, lived more.

He's gone again. It doesn't worry me. He'll be back, and we'll continue where we left off. This intimacy doesn't feel like make-believe, yet it doesn't have a sense of permanency.

I am growing. Wonder where to.



The orchestra pit renovation at Salle Wilfrid Pelletier is finished and D-Day is here. Today Maestro Boehm decides whether or not the Vienna State Opera's participation will become a reality. The Maestro is regarded as the outstanding Richard Strauss conductor. He's a favorite at the Metropolitan Opera, as well as in Europe. It would be a great thrill to have him in Montreal.

There's a crowd of us – Gordon, Gilles, David, Andis at the back of the auditorium – sitting separately, trying to be inconspicuous. Apprehension is in the air. This test is not only about whether we can get enough musicians (eighty-five) into the pit to meet the needs of the Richard Strauss score for *Elektra*; it's also about whether the acoustics are acceptable, no not just acceptable, excellent. Oh, look, the Place Des Arts officials have just arrived. I'll bet they are nervous.

I know Herr Fritsch is nervous, nervous. He's pacing between the rows. They are wide you know, continental seating. There is no central aisle. The width makes it easier for the audience to get to their seats.

The Montreal Symphony musicians are tuning. Oh, here's the hush. The musicians must have been given the high sign, our famous maestro is about to enter the pit. He's on the podium, I can see the top of his head. There goes the down beat. To my ear the sound seems integrated. I am going to go to the balcony. Gilles, what do you think? He's climbing up also but says nothing.

An hour later and the Maestro gives approval. Gilles is taking him to lunch.



This morning, driving to work,  
Gordon tells me  
We are sending out the brochure

announcing the sale of tickets for the World Festival.

How can you, Gordon? La Scala hasn't set its repertoire yet. And you haven't settled all the popular attractions.

Yes, that's a problem, but we can't wait. We have so many tickets to sell, we need to go public now. There will be a follow-up brochure.

Did you know that for your attractions in the Theatre Division we have nearly 2.1 million tickets to sell?

No, I can't imagine what that will be like.

How many tickets are there to sell for the Autostade?

Nearly three million.

Yipes!



SEE APPENDIX I FOR THE WORLD FESTIVAL  
PROGRAM DETAILS



It's March 1967; our theatre Production Coordinators and staff are here. (*See Appendix II for the list of staff.*) They are a great bunch, have healthy energy and are adding much theatrical flavor to a corporate environment. For a month, we have crammed them into a tiny space just down the hall from my office. Then, they will move to the rehearsal hall at Expo Theatre until they go to their assigned theatres.

Welcome to you all. We are so glad you are here and can take some of the organization responsibilities off our shoulders. Your first step is to copy the pertinent information in both Andis' and my files for each of your attractions. And I have good news. Gone is the Gestetner machine and the red gunk. The Corporation has Xerox machines that make fast copies. Lise and Anna, my two trusty secretaries, from now on will copy new information we receive, and it will be forwarded to you. Meantime, you have to do the background search in my files. One file at a time please!



RAE ACKERMAN  
NATIONAL ART CENTER THEATRE MAGAZINE  
OCTOBER 1980

By the way, out of necessity, Rae Ackerman has figured out how to fix a Xerox machine when it breaks down. On weekends, repairmen don't work. Rae is your contact.

You have no idea how wonderful it is to have this capable crew here. They are catching details we missed, setting in place additional systems and asking pertinent questions.

We need to provide some musicians for this attraction. What's the process? Check the contract. Is it

our responsibility? If yes, here's the contact info.

What about interpreters?

Berlitz is engaged to provide interpreters. Get in touch and outline the needs as you see them now. They need advance warning.

What's the dress code?

Casual during the day, dress up at night for performances. Black tie is not necessary but look and feel good. We want to make a professional impression.



Grandpoo Farris just called

Ann, the Senate is not sitting tomorrow. I am coming from Ottawa to Montreal to see Expo. Please arrange a tour.

My grandfather has been a senator since I was born in 1937.

I remember well the many Sunday afternoons in his library listening to him describe to my father and mother a bill before the House. I learned a lot just hanging around those conversations about Canadian politics.

My grandfather loves Canada.  
Grandpoo, wonderful. Where shall I pick you up?  
Queen Elizabeth Hotel at 1 p.m.

The protocol office is being very helpful and loaned me a car,  
hard hats and given me access to the site.  
Maureen, will you come with me? You have toured the site, I haven't.  
And I think you will enjoy my grandfather. Yes, he's in his late eighties  
but he's very with it and lots of fun.

I would love to.  
It's a grey day. We put him in the front passenger seat and Maureen  
is leaning over with the map. She's good with those kinds of details.  
My grandfather is more focused on looking out the window.  
Ann, there is so much construction still going on.

How can you be opening in a month?  
Yes, we know. But everyone tells us they will be ready.  
I take him first to the American Pavilion. The Monorail is up  
and functioning.

Look, Grandpoo. See that train, it is going to go through  
the American Pavilion.

Hurumph.  
That's a typical comment when he's taking in something new, like when  
I gave him a lesson in contemporary art ten years ago. Maureen suggests  
Let's cross over to the French Pavilion.

I am skirting a group of workers securing a bench, a modern shaped  
bench with low lights attached. Grandpoo comments  
Those look comfortable.

You know what they are called?

No.  
Site furniture. They are designed by Norman Hay. He's had the huge task  
of designing the lighting, street furniture and signage for the site.  
Hurumph!

I want to see the Canadian Pavilion.  
Okay.

We've spent a good hour stomping around "Canada." Its extensive open areas and wood structure are very handsome. Granpoo has been silent much of the time. And at one point a tear dropped from his eye.

Driving back to the hotel, he turns chatty

Ann, this is an amazing undertaking! I am proud of you and your colleagues. And I am proud that this is happening in Canada.

He meant it.

You know, I think my grandfather was so impressed during his visit to the Expo 67 site, in part, because his grandfather, John Farris, was a Liberal Party member of the House of Commons in the Canadian Parliament in 1867.

That was the year when the British Parliament established British North

America and the Dominion of Canada was officially born on July 1, 1867. Now, one hundred years later, Canada and Expo 67 are celebrating this hundredth birthday. With my grandfather's visit to the Expo 67 site, probably he had memories born from the stories he had been told when a youngster and young man about the significance of the 1867 decision.



1967 MONTREAL, QUEBEC, EXPO 67 SITE  
ANN FARRIS, SENATOR J. W. DE BEQUE FARRIS  
[PHOTO BY MAUREEN HENEGHAN]

The ice on the St. Lawrence River is thawing. In fact, snow has disappeared from the streets. Jennifer just came rushing into my office, worried There's an ice jam between the two new islands. It's locked between the American Pavilion, that beautiful geodesic dome, on one island, Ile Ste. Hélène and the massive Russian Pavilion on the other island, Il Notre Dame.

The pressure of the ice could undermine the stability of the buildings if the jam jolts the islands. You know, these man-made islands are still settling. What can be done?

They are going to dynamite the ice blockage tomorrow.

It's a tension-filled morning.

And success, the solution worked. The dynamite broke the blockage.

The St. Lawrence River is flowing between the two islands. I feel sure that's a positive metaphor for the next six months.



"Lover plus" is back for a week. When he's gone, I feel safe in a way I haven't felt before. Now that he's back our reconnection is sheer happiness.

What are we reconnecting to? Why is it so easy with him?

At times he acts like a father, warning me about something, something in the theatrical business I need to know to be successful.

And, we love to laugh. He loves my silly sense of humor

You know, we are destined, for some reason, and yet we aren't. It's all odd.

Am I happy? I guess so. I certainly feel looked after when he's here.

I told Jennifer about this relationship.

Ann, be careful you don't get hurt.

I don't see why I will. There's more to all of this, somehow.



An Expo security officer has just come into my office saying  
Ann, you will be on a pager all summer.

I am given a little black machine, the size of a glasses case.

You, David and Andis are Theatre Division's emergency contacts.

*You must have this with you at all times and turned on.*

My goodness, he is a serious type.

And, here is the number you call when the beeper goes off.



We are now two weeks away from April 28th and Opening Day.  
Al, what's all the clatter and commotion going on outside our window?  
Al at his desk with his back to the window suddenly notices  
Ann, it's worth getting up and looking.  
A bulldozer is flattening mounds of dirt that have been covered  
with snow all winter.  
Look at that huge truck. What's rolled up on it?  
It's grass!  
In front of our eyes they roll out grass, roll after roll, onto the flattened  
dirt, as casual as if they are rolling out a tablecloth. Now, the convoys of  
trucks are gone. We have a finished lawn in three hours. That's a first for  
me!!! Dotted around this green tablecloth are cherry trees, and truckloads  
of flowers have just arrived. We are civilized. It's like this everywhere.  
Magically, the site is almost ready to open. It's more theatrical than  
theatre has ever been.



Gordon, what's up with Belafonte's approval for the Bolshoi to work  
the midnight hours?  
Ann, we are working on it.  
HMMMMMMMMMMMMM! I am not so sure.



The four theatres in construction are nearing completion. They will be  
ready. I was in the Port-Royal yesterday and the seats were being installed.  
That's progress.

Today an Expo protocol officer came into my office with a new requirement  
for the opening attraction in the Port-Royal Theatre: *Dancers from Ethiopia*.  
They informed me  
Haile Selassie II, the Emperor, will be attending the gala opening.  
You must create space for a throne. It's to be placed on a platform covered  
with an elaborate arrangement of cushions. There must be a special place  
for two wives and two cheetahs and others involved with the Royal Court.



I look at him in wonder, even though I know he is serious. Laughing, I say I want you to know that we have just been successful in making sure there are seats in that theatre. Now, you are telling me they have to come out? Yes.

Okay, it will be done! It will mean taking out two rows.

We both knew that this was just the beginning of many odd requests throughout the summer.

The installers must think we are crazy but...



It's opening day, April 29th, 1967. The ceremonies took place at Place des Nations on the site. Now, the diplomats, dressed in black tie and elegant evening gowns from the sixty-one nations are seated in Salle Wilfrid Pelletier for the Opening Gala.

I am standing backstage listening to Sir Laurence Olivier and Jean-Louis Barrault beautifully narrating the poem *Terre Des Hommes*, written by our Commissioner General Pierre Dupuy.

We've made it! We are up and running! It's hard to believe!

Michael Tabbitt has me smiling. He is making a fashion statement, dressed in black tie and a dress shirt fronted with frills. His staff are also dressed in black tie. Good for them. They are honoring our visiting artists.

Tonight is our second night of the World Festival. All theatres are supposed to be up and running. Not at the Maisonneuve. There's a technical snafu. One of the lighting boards blew a transistor. I hope it wasn't a George Izenour board. While the problem is not ours (it's the management at Place Des Arts), theatrically the problem is very much ours. Jean-Louis Barrault and Madeline Renaud's Théâtre de France were supposed to be presenting a *Homage to Saint-Exupéry* in collaboration with the Le Théâtre du Nouveau Monde from Canada. Rae and Andis are up to their elbows working on the problem. Not a good beginning. It's a half hour before curtain at the Port-Royal Theatre. I will sit a moment in the House Manager's office.

Good, he has some milk. I am sure he won't mind if I help myself.

I haven't had dinner.

Madam, please put that milk down.

It's the RCMP officer dressed in his khaki and red sitting in the room who's speaking.

I look at him quizzically.

That milk is for Haile Selassie's dog, who is accompanying him to the performance in the theatre.

I giggle to myself. And so it goes. Now, I am checking Expo Theatre.

This theatre is ready to open. We have *Hello, Dolly* with Carol Channing and a sold-out house. Mark Furness, our capable production coordinator, reports

So far, the theatre seems to be breaking in smoothly.

No problems here.

On to the Garden of Stars which requires I take the monorail train around the site to La Ronde, the amusement park. This is fun.

I love journeying inside the American Pavilion on a train.

Quite magical!

Raymond Menard, our seasoned theatrical manager at Garden of Stars, has had his plate full with this opening day. The schedule is heavy, a daytime family show, *The*

*Magic Box*, a show for teenagers at 5 p.m. and a popular review in the evening. How has today gone?

Fine. We need publicity on our teenagers' show. Not many showed up. But Muriel Millard has a good house tonight for her show, *Vive La Canadienne*.

Something tells me to go back to Place Des Arts and the Port-Royal Theatre. As I arrive the audience is still filing out.

Haile Selassie and his royal party, including the dog, are nowhere in sight.

JARDIN DES ÉTOILES — GARDEN OF STARS			
<p><b>DU 1<sup>ER</sup> MAI — 24 JUIN</b></p> <p><b>MURIEL MILLARD</b> dans sa nouvelle revue musicale <b>"VIVE LA CANADIENNE"</b> Chorégraphie: George Fench</p> <p><b>"LES GIRLS DE VÉNUS"</b> Tous les soirs à 20h et 22h30</p>			<p><b>MAY 1 — JUNE 24</b></p> <p><b>MURIEL MILLARD</b> in her new musical revue <b>"VIVE LA CANADIENNE"</b> Chorégraphie: George Fench</p> <p><b>LES GIRLS DE VÉNUS</b> Every night at 8 &amp; 10:30</p>
<p><b>25 JUIN — 14 SEPTEMBRE</b></p> <p><b>"HELLZAPOPPIN' '67"</b> Musical par ALEXANDER M. COHEN Écrit et adapté par Goodwin Rice Musique et lyrics par Marvin Hamlisch et Raymond Knoff</p> <p><b>ÉQUIPE DE 50 PERSONNES — COMPRENANT PLUSIEURS "GIRLS"</b> Tous les soirs à 20h et 22h30</p>	<p><b>25 JUIN — 14 SEPTEMBRE</b></p> <p><b>"HELLZAPOPPIN' '67"</b> Musical par ALEXANDER M. COHEN Écrit et adapté par Goodwin Rice Musique et lyrics par Marvin Hamlisch et Raymond Knoff</p> <p><b>ÉQUIPE DE 50 PERSONNES — COMPRENANT PLUSIEURS "GIRLS"</b> Tous les soirs à 20h et 22h30</p>		<p><b>JUNE 25 — SEPTEMBER 14</b></p> <p><b>ALEXANDER M. COHEN'S</b> production of <b>"HELLZAPOPPIN' '67"</b> Written and Edited by Goodwin Rice Music and Lyrics by Marvin Hamlisch and Raymond Knoff</p> <p><b>CAST OF 50 MOSTLY GIRLS!</b> Every Night at 8 &amp; 10:30</p>
<p><b>15 MAI — 17 SEPTEMBRE</b></p> <p><b>"LA CROIX AUX MERVEILLES"</b> Musical par RAYMOND MENARD Écrit et adapté par RAYMOND MENARD Musique et lyrics par RAYMOND MENARD</p>	<p><b>15 MAI — 17 SEPTEMBRE</b></p> <p><b>"LE TEMPS QUI BOUGE"</b> Musical par RAYMOND MENARD Écrit et adapté par RAYMOND MENARD Musique et lyrics par RAYMOND MENARD</p>	<p><b>15 MAI — 17 SEPTEMBRE</b></p> <p><b>"ACTION TIME"</b> Musical par RAYMOND MENARD Écrit et adapté par RAYMOND MENARD Musique et lyrics par RAYMOND MENARD</p>	<p><b>MAY 15 — SEPTEMBER 17</b></p> <p><b>"THE MAGIC BOX"</b> Musical par RAYMOND MENARD Écrit et adapté par RAYMOND MENARD Musique et lyrics par RAYMOND MENARD</p>
<p><b>ÉGLISE ST-JACQUES</b> 400 rue Saint-Jacques et rue des Arts pour les spectacles par The English Opera Group Plateau: 20.30, 22.30, 23.30, 23.30 Basse: 20.30, 22.30, 23.30</p>	<p><b>LA POUDRIÈRE</b> 400 rue Saint-Jacques et rue des Arts pour les spectacles par The English Opera Group Plateau: 20.30, 22.30, 23.30, 23.30 Basse: 20.30, 22.30, 23.30</p>		
<p><b>ST. JAMES CHURCH</b> 400 St. Catherine Street East pour les spectacles par The English Opera Group Plateau: 20.30, 22.30, 23.30, 23.30 Basse: 20.30, 22.30, 23.30</p>			

PROGRAMMING FOR GARDEN OF STARS

I'm watching at the back of the auditorium as the stagehands close down for the night.  
Why is the wardrobe mistress looking frantically around?  
Seeing me, she shouts  
Help, help, the dancers are leaving!  
I call out? What's the problem? She gives me the answer shouting even louder  
The Company is leaving with their costumes!  
Time to investigate. We have two more sold-out houses.  
The two of us descend to the dressing rooms to find our interpreter.  
Please ask why they are leaving with their costumes.  
When Haile Selassie came backstage to congratulate the artists, he invited them to return to Ethiopia on his private plane.  
It leaves tomorrow morning.

They are gone. We are refunding tickets. Only one of many unexpected experiences as we begin our six-month run!



I have had to make a change in my work schedule. Now, I am coming to work at 6 a.m. My job is to keep ahead of the attractions moving in, so the theatre staff has the information they need. It's the only way I can get quiet time before the craziness of the day's needs take over. My days are really long now.

Maurice Béjart's *Ballet of the Twentieth Century* from Brussels arrives tomorrow. A call just came in from Brussels  
Our singer for the Stravinsky piece has become ill. Please find a replacement.  
Hmmm. How do I do this? The piece is seldom performed. Something is nagging at me. Then I remember: I can call the Stravinskys. At the Vancouver Festival a couple of years ago, Igor Stravinsky was featured. It was a special few days.  
Hugh Pickett was my boss that summer and included me in the social aspects of the Stravinsky visit – lunches and dinners at Trader Vic's on

the waterfront in the Bayshore Hotel. This was Madame Stravinsky's moment to take stage, claiming the large wicker winged chair in the corner facing us and the entire restaurant. At the end of our last dinner, Madame Stravinsky said

Ann, this is our phone number in Los Angeles. Promise to call if you come. Oh, Mrs. Stravinsky, thank you. I certainly will.

I still have the telephone number. I knew it would come in handy someday.

Oh, goodness, you won't believe what I just did. I forgot about the time change and called them at 6 a.m. Los Angeles time. A croaky voice answered. I knew it was Mrs. Stravinsky and realized my error. Thinking it better to say nothing, I hung up.

It's three hours later and once again I am on the phone to her Mrs. Stravinsky, it's Ann Farris. I met you and the Maestro in Vancouver. Yes, dear. How lovely to hear from you! Are you in Los Angeles? No, I am at Expo 67 in Montreal. The *Ballet du XXe Siècle*... She didn't even stop to think before she gave me the name of the artist. He lives in New Jersey. In fact, I think we have his telephone number. Oh, Mrs. Stravinsky, thank so much. And by the way, it was me who called you so early this morning. I am so sorry. That's all right. I did wonder who it was.

My destination is Salle Wilfrid Pelletier and the *Ballet of the Twentieth Century* dress rehearsal. All is going well; the replacement made it in the nick of time. The wonderful variety of contemporary music and choreography has me dazzled. The dancers are very acrobatic as they embrace romance. Good thing my "lover plus" isn't here this week, he would complain about the look on the stage – too minimal.



The Royal Opera from Sweden is loading in now. So far, our planning process seems to be supporting each company's needs. These opening weeks are about checking, checking, checking. It's really fun. I am watching

the number of stagehands and trucks we are employing. We want to stay in budget. The Swedish Royal Opera is using three 45-foot trucks, twenty-four, 40-foot trucks, eight, 20-foot trucks and six forklifts to shuttle their shows from the dock to the warehouse to the theatre and back.

Peter Goslett, who is responsible for handling all of our transportation of goods, is doing a great job. I can hear him from my office as he orders this and that, changing this and that. Nothing phases him.

I can't resist teasing

Wait till the Bolshoi arrives. I'll bet you will become sleep-deprived.

The Swedes' productions are intimate in size because their theatre in Stockholm is small. We knew that up front. It doesn't seem to matter that their scenery doesn't fill the stage. *A Masked Ball* is enjoying a good response. *Aniara* has been difficult to sell. It's a contemporary opera. Not much is known about it. I have just arrived in time to see the second act. A space ship has left earth, been thrown off course and... The story predicts the end of Planet Earth. Kind of draconian. Very different. I like the music, it's different, jazzy with electronic sounds; that's new.



Hamburg State Opera is here now. Teatro Stabile di Genova is in the Maisonneuve. It's their North American debut. And Marlene Dietrich is at the Expo Theatre, which means Hugh Pickett. He's acting as her manager these days. Yesterday he asked for a typewriter. I had one and dropped it off at the Ritz Hotel this morning. He's again calling Ann, thanks for the typewriter. Marlene is making good use of it.

Come over to the Expo Theatre and meet her now.

I look at the clock. It's three p.m.

Hugh, how come she's at the theatre? The curtain is at 8 p.m.

She takes hours with her makeup!

Expo Theatre is walking distance from my office.

As I wander in, Burt Bacharach, conductor of this engagement,

is sitting with Marlene. He's wearing white sneakers.  
You don't see that around here often.  
Marlene's low voice invites me  
Come sit by me. Hugh has told me all about you.  
Her dressing table is covered with a linen towel. Carefully placed are several  
eye shadows, liners, pencils, powder and, and... She is just beginning to  
add her eyeliner. I watch and listen. This woman is a perfectionist.  
I just had a very special experience with an amazing artist.

Hugh's on the line again  
Come to the Ritz Hotel tomorrow at 12:30 p.m. Marlene and I  
want to take you to lunch.  
I would love to.  
It's an hour of stories. And then she says to me  
Let's go for a drive.  
Hugh has a Rolls Royce limousine and driver awaiting, the kind where  
you climb up and sit high above  
the ground, like Queen Elizabeth  
does. What a hoot! Hugh and  
Marlene look at me and say  
You guide us.  
I suggest we go to Old Montreal.  
It bespeaks the early days with  
a unique concentration of  
seventeenth, eighteenth, and  
nineteenth-century buildings.  
By the way, we are passing  
McGill University.  
And, promise me when you  
are in Montreal, that you try  
sugar pie. It's divine.  
Made of maple sugar!  
Ann, I work to keep my body trim,  
I may forgo that suggestion.



MARLENE DIETRICH, EXPO 67 WORLD FESTIVAL  
MONTREAL [PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN]

It's 3 p.m. and time for her makeup.  
Driver, please take us to Expo Theatre.  
What a great lady!

I just caught Hans Stahn on the run after the opening of *Lulu*.  
Hey, Hans, I saw the last Act. I hope you are pleased with  
the audience's reaction last night?  
Yes, he smiles his wide grin.  
His concern about the Company being received without rancor  
is not a topic. It doesn't need to be.  
Daytime stagehand crews for Hamburg have increased to fifty-nine  
and night crews to forty with three interpreters working each shift.  
We are still in budget.



The Bristol Old Vic Company from Great Britain has also just opened  
at the Port-Royal. Tonight, they're performing *Hamlet*. I am going.  
I have been feeling sad, missing the opportunity of attending at least  
one act of our visiting theatre companies. Already, Théâtre de France  
has come and gone, an opportunity missed!

Well, I have learned. It is just too much effort to spend an evening with  
the spoken word. I am spacing out, much like I used to do when going to  
the theatre with Lee and Mary in New York. Maybe it's because I am tired,  
but I don't think that's the complete reason. There's a mystery here.  
And, as I have a choice, I think I am better served to use my free time  
at an opera, the symphony or a musical. My body feels so much better.  
I don't have to struggle to enjoy myself.  
I know I will miss some amazing theatrical performances: the Kabuki,  
National Theatre of Great Britain, The National Theatre of Greece and  
the Stratford Festival. But my body needs to be richly nourished.  
Music does that!



David and Gordon called Andis and me into Gordon's office this morning. You both are ordered to take a week off.

What?

You are tired. Correct?

Yes, but...

You need every bit of energy for August, September and October.

At the beginning of July, the schedule lets up. Leave Montreal. Rest.

I went to Vancouver and slept the entire week. My parents couldn't believe it. While there, I discovered one piece of horrific news. I have put on fifteen pounds! Am on a regime now!



Coming back to Montreal, I have renewed energy and am quickly back into my 6 a.m. to midnight routine.

What is that strange noise? I am sound asleep, and I am hearing beep, beep, beep. Oh, it's my beeper! Yes, it goes all the time, but never when I am sound asleep. It must be serious. I squint from the light I just turned on. Where is that darn connection number? Got it.

Hello.

It's Ann Farris. You beeped me. What can I do for you? I notice it is 3 a.m.

There is a problem. The New York City Ballet trucks are at the Canadian border. They do not have the proper papers to get through Customs.

Yes, this is a problem. We have an 8 a.m. load-in at Salle Wilfrid Pelletier!

Thanks.

I will call the Expo Control Central which operates twenty-four hours a day. Those guys are neat. They love to solve problems.

And that is exactly what happened. I briefly explained

I need to find a way to get the New York City Ballet trucks through Customs.

God knows why their papers aren't complete, but they are not.

Go back to sleep. We will solve it.

Just remember, the trucks need to be at the stage door of



Salle Wilfrid Pelletier by 8 a.m.  
They will.



Andis and I are concerned. The Bolshoi scenery hasn't arrived yet.  
We are very nervous. Each day Andis comes into my office, asking  
Where is the Bolshoi scenery?

I wish I knew.

Two Canadian Customs officials, assigned to Expo and working out of  
the Administration Building, dropped by my office asking  
What date will the Bolshoi scenery arrive? I just shook my head saying  
That's anyone's guess.

We can hardly wait. The Russians are legendary. They create the most  
incredible ways to hide contraband.

Hey, gentlemen, you be good to them, they are our guests.

Laughing, they leave.

My office has an eastern exposure. Summers in Montreal are mostly sunny.  
I love to feel the radiant sunlight streaming in to greet me. It makes me  
happy to settle down at my desk. All is quiet, only Andis is here, down the  
hall. This morning my silence is broken with an unexpected ring. Hmmmm.  
Hello.

Miss Farris?

Yes,

I have the Bolkoi. I don't understand him; his accent is so thick  
and unintelligible.

Could you repeat that?

I have the Bolkoi.

Yipes, yea, it's the Bolshoi. It has arrived with fifteen days to spare.

Please, where? What dock?

He doesn't want to hear my question: "Off dock today, off dock, today."

You bet your bottom dollar, we will get it off the dock today!

Tell me where are you located?

Andis is out the door.

I wait for his call. I need to know if he and Rae found the ship.  
Andis, what? Say that again  
The scenery, costumes etc., five hundred tons of it are loose in the hold  
of a rusty old freighter.  
Andis goes strangely silent. I think he might even be crying,  
We are both silent. Then I hear him say  
Ann, they didn't pack any of the scenery. None of it! It is all broken.  
I can't believe it. The *War and Peace* chandeliers are suspended inside  
birdlike cages and totally visible to the naked eye. They are the  
only thing that has made it intact.  
Andis' voice is quietly desperate. He never gets demonstrative.  
He gets quiet  
There is double the amount of scenery than what we are expecting.  
Tell Gordon and David we need another armory.

Within twenty-four hours, another huge armory in Montreal is cleared  
out for us so we can load in the Bolshoi. It took a staggering number of  
one hundred four 40-foot trucks, fifteen 20-foot trucks and six forklifts  
to handle the movement of scenery, costumes etc.  
Peter's organizational skills are being tested. He is also moving in  
the Paris Opera Ballet and a big extravaganza from Cuba.

Andis and Rae are just back from the airport to meet the Aeroflot plane  
with Ararat Charuhghianc, their technical director and the crew of one  
hundred. Andis reported Ararat took one look at our strained faces  
and said (through interpreter) How bad is it?  
Awful! Why didn't you pack anything?  
We don't have the lumber. If I had asked for the lumber, it would have  
probably cancelled the opportunity of coming to Montreal. This is why  
I have brought so many stagehands. We will rebuild everything now.

Oh my God, what a two-week period we are going through.  
Two armories, two construction crews going twenty-four hours a day.  
Finally, we have the costume trunks unpacked.

Maureen, my roommate, handling the costumes for the Autostade spectacles, is estimating the value of the costumes for insurance. She calls me breathless and Maureen is never phased by anything Ann, you won't believe it but the costumes for *Prince Igor* are personal clothing probably used by the aristocracy before the revolution. They are encrusted with authentic jewels. You need a jeweler to appraise.

David and Gordon, we move Bolshoi in next week! Have you received written approval from the Belafonte group to use Salle Wilfrid Pelletier in the off hours?

No, we haven't, we are working on it!

That's what you have said for a year now. I think we have a problem.

I must say these two guys do look glum.

The Customs officers are back. They have smiles on their faces, relishing their story as they answer my question

What happened?

When we asked them to unroll the one hundred drops...

I think that's what you call them.

You mean the canvas with different scenes painting on them rolled on a wooden pole?

Yes.

What happened?

Out rolled bottles of vodka, caviar, face powder, sausages and on and on and on.

I could only smile. Those Russians are truly unpredictable, or maybe a better way to put it, they are predictable. Whatever, we love them.

It's the 27th of July, four days away from when we need the midnight hours to hang the Bolshoi scenery and still no approval from Belafonte.

We are loading them into the basement of Salle Wilfrid Pelletier, taking care to schedule around the Paris Opera Ballet warm-up sessions on stage.

Pat, Gordon's secretary, just asked for my presence in Gordon's office.

He and David are chatting when I enter. Gordon hands me an envelope, I open it. It's a plane ticket.

What am I to do with this?

It's your ticket to Toronto where Belafonte is performing. You are going to convince him to release the theatre so the Bolshoi setup can continue. Come on, what kind of nonsense is this?

Look Ann, Belafonte's agent and others have tried to move Belafonte on this. None have been successful. We don't know why he is being so rigid. You are really good at getting people to listen to both sides. You can do it. Oh my God!

My heart is in my stomach.

I am on a 9 a.m. plane, an hour's flight to Toronto. I will go directly to the O'Keefe Centre to see who's there. That's where Belafonte is performing. As I walked onto the stage, the Toronto stagehands look at me in surprise. What on earth are you doing here? You should be in Montreal.

I need to talk to Mr. Belafonte.

That's his manager over there.

They take me over and introduce me, saying

Meet Ann Farris. She's with Expo. Be nice to her.

While their last comment is rather foreboding, I am glad for it.

I would like to meet with Mr. Belafonte.

The manager is looking at me square on. It's clear he knows why I am here.

Come back half hour before curtain tonight. I will be sure you meet with Mr. Belafonte. You will not be successful.

A friend was kind enough to spend the afternoon with me. Now I am walking back into the O'Keefe Center stage door.

The company manager is very dour and seems to resent having to take me to Mr. Belafonte's dressing room. As we walk in, I am stopped short.

There are so many beautiful women in colorful skintight costumes draped against the walls and lounging in the few chairs.

How will I ever get his attention?

I have it. I haven't said a word. Mr. Belafonte, the very handsome Mr. Belafonte, has the floor, saying  
You have wasted your time coming. I will not give permission for the Bolshoi to set up around my show.  
(Okay, here I go. My song and dance have been well-rehearsed. I have used it for the last two years. I believe it. Yes, I do!)

Mr. Belafonte, the World Festival is celebrating not only the artistry of many nations but is also providing a unique opportunity for a coming together on neutral territory for different points of view. Your hesitancy is the first time at the World Festival we have not had cooperation.

Mr. Belafonte stops me with great force.

I have been working in Africa to help. The Soviets are undermining my work. I see no reason to give an inch to the Bolshoi at the World Festival at Expo 67.

The two of us are off and running. The beautiful ladies fade into the background. Now, I know what is the problem!

I keep on my theme of cooperation.

Perhaps the Soviets will recognize your cooperation.

At least you can use it as a ploy.

Belafonte glowered at me.

But, if you don't cooperate, they might even dig their heels in deeper.

Gosh, I can't believe I said that. I continue, he continues. Then, suddenly  
Okay, you can have those hours.

Thank you, Mr. Belafonte.

As I head for the stage door, I hear the stage manager call  
Mr. Belafonte to the stage.

I am numb in the taxi to the airport.

I wander to my flight and pass a pay phone.

Gordon, Mr. Belafonte has given us permission for the Bolshoi work.

Good for you. See you in the morning.

Gordon is a man of few words and in this instance, so am I.

This Belafonte exchange is giving me a deeper understanding of why the kind of effort that one puts into an event like an Exposition is so important. Linkages can be made.

I am at Belafonte's opening tonight. I haven't been to a complete performance of an attraction yet. This one I am. As he begins singing the "Banana Boat Song" with the famous lyric "Day-O" I just melt. Oh, Mr. Belafonte, you are wonderful and thank you, thank for your cooperation. I am going to the opening night party. I want him to know I am grateful.

Oh my God, Andis is in my office with an awful story.

Ann, last night at three a.m., there was an accident at the Salle Wilfrid Pelletier. Some of Belafonte's scenery was smashed.

Andis, you have got to be kidding!

I wish I were. To accommodate the Bolshoi setup, each night the crew has been moving the Belafonte platform units and lattice work, which is his background, onto the orchestra pit, raised to stage level. One of the Bolshoi drops, a long one, eighty-five feet long, was being tied onto a pipe and went out of control landing in the Belafonte scenery.

I have no words. I just stare as Andis continues

The crew is almost finished rebuilding it. We will be ready by 4 p.m. when we give the stage back to Belafonte.

Andis, it's 3:30 p.m. Are you sure?

Yes. I decided no one was to tell you. You've been through enough with this attraction.

I am angry they didn't tell me; no, I am grateful. At least I didn't have that worry during the day.

The scenery is rebuilt. The show is running now.



Belafonte has gone. We are into a twenty-four-hour blitz.

My phone is ringing.

It's Michael Tabbitt.

Ann, there is the most awful smell in the theatre. We can't figure out what it is.

Are you sure it isn't Russian cigarettes? Their odor is pretty pungent.

No, it isn't. We need help.

Okay.

I head to the Yellow Pages looking for smell specialists. I'll try this company.

Good morning, I am with the World Festival at Expo 67 and we have an odor issue...

Well, one thing you must not do, is put another smell (perfume or whatever) on top of this smell. Where is this happening?

Salle Wilfrid Pelletier. Is it possible to meet you at the stage door in half an hour?

Yes.

He's a tall man who seems to know his stuff. It's rather amusing, watching him walk, sniffing like a dog, trained to find drugs, covering every nook and cranny at stage level and the basement. He's not very encouraging, but he is honest.

I don't have any idea what it is. The only solution is to open every door, front and back of the theatre and keep the air conditioning on.

It's August, hot and sticky, the stage crew aren't very happy the outdoors is indoors but...

This evening I am back in my office working on La Scala preparations.

My phone rings. It's Michael.

The mystery is solved. The smell is caused by rotten eggs.

What do you mean?

One of our stagehands discovered the smell is coming from the drops and came to me. I took Ararat to the drop, questioning why this could be.

The interpreter was really amused with Ararat's answer

Oh, we used rotten eggs and sour milk to flameproof the drops.

It's a clear substance, doesn't affect the paint job. In Moscow, we don't have fireproofing retardant chemicals, so we created our own.

Rotten eggs and sour milk!

I am giggling hard tonight. Walking across the stage, a Bolshoi stagehand offers me a bottle of vodka. And so it goes, sometimes vodka, or face powder, or a sausage. Those customs officials didn't find it all... We are stashing the vodka in a file drawer in Michael's production office for later use – a celebration party.

So it goes night after night. Six interpreters are wandering around doing their best to get the appropriate information across. Many close but brief friendships in the shape of nods and handshakes are forming between Russian and Canadian stagehands.

I have arrived in time for a *Prince Igor* dress rehearsal. Sitting next to me at the back of the auditorium is a tall, large-framed Russian. I am sure he's tall because he's much higher than me as he sits. We smile at each other. That's our communication.

I remember some Russians speak French. I wonder if my poor French could open an opportunity to communicate.

Voila, it's working.

He's J. Toumanov, stage director for *The City of Kitesh*, due to open in a few days.

We are deep into a bumpy conversation. He is telling me I studied with Constantin Stanislavski.

My halting French is able to get across that I studied Stanislavski at Yale. Dr. Nagler, in our history classes, vividly described the impact of Stanislavski and the Moscow Art Theatre. He developed a new approach to acting. Correct?

Yes.

I hear it is called "The Method" in North America. Stanislavsky died at the beginning of World War II.

My mind is racing. Toumanov must be in his late forties if he studied with him.

In my halting French I continue

Tell me what it was like to study with him.

We are also using lots of gesticulations and laughter.



Whenever I am up at Salle Wilfrid Pelletier, I search him out and we chat during intermissions. Nearly always, Vadim Rydin is also with Toumanov, but always silent. I discovered he is a stage designer for the Bolshoi Opera.



*Left to right: INTERPRETER, ANN FARRIS, I.M.TOUMANOV, VADIM RYDIN  
1967 MONTREAL, EXPO 67 WORLD FESTIVAL, BOLSHOI OPERA*

I sent a fruit basket this morning to the Artists' Hotel for Toumanov. Last night I learned he is ill. And he's not back tonight. A Russian interpreter had a message for me.

Mr. Toumanov is very grateful for the fruit. I want to tell you that you are not doing him a favor by sending gifts. The KGB are watching everything, and gifts create suspicions.

Mr. Toumanov and I spoke after that, but not nearly with the enthusiasm and fun we had during the first two weeks.

On closing night of the Bolshoi, I was surprised. Vadim Rydin handed me a large envelope. In it was a drawing of an angel. The interpreter told me Rydin wanted me to know he thinks of me as an angel. Oh, I was quite taken aback and deeply touched.



DRAWING OF ANGEL, GIFT TO ANN FARRIS  
FROM VADIM RYDIN—1967, MONTREAL,  
EXPO 67 WORLD FESTIVAL, BOLSHOI OPERA

A film festival is just beginning  
a three-week run at Expo Theatre.  
Mark Furness, our Production  
Coordinator, is on the line  
Ann, we have a problem.  
The auditorium is filled with bats.  
It happened just now,  
during our opening performance  
of the film festival.  
It's cancelled, right?  
Yes, can you get a bat specialist now!  
We have another show scheduled  
in two hours.

I found one. He's with us and sharing  
Bats nest when the roof goes  
onto a building.

That was almost ten months ago. How come we didn't  
experience them before?

They only make their presence known when it's dark. During a film festival,  
there are no stage lights, so the bats come out to play.

We can't fumigate, we have audiences. What do we do?

When it's dark open all exterior doors. Be sure all the lights are out.

We had to cancel another showing. And the problem is solved.



I am called to the pass door between front of house and backstage  
during a Bolshoi performance. It's Terry McEwen. He's here all the time,  
schmoozing with the artists. Many of them are recording with London  
Records. Tonight, he has two people in tow who are unfamiliar.

Ann, I would like you to meet Kurt Herbert Adler and his wife Nancy.

He's General Director of the San Francisco Opera.

How do you do? Are you enjoying the Bolshoi?

Yes, we are very much.

And, then the bell signaling the end of the intermission chimes.  
Lovely to meet you.  
They are gone.  
Next morning, I am sitting in my office.  
Hello,  
Zis is Kurt Herbert Adler.  
Good morning, Mr. Adler. What can I do for you?  
I vant you to vork for me.  
When?  
As soon as Expo is finished.  
Sorry, but I am going to Paris.  
You would turn down the San Francisco Opera for Paris?  
Yes. Thank you for the invitation.



The Bolshoi engagement is over. In this past month we opened five operas, presented fourteen performances, several symphony and folk concerts. The company has made a major impact. The distinctive, round, full and dramatic Russian operatic music and the sound of the Russian operatic voices had us on the edge of our seats. When the bells in Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* began to chime, chills went through my body. While, the immense physical aspects of their productions are very traditional in look, they seem to suit. Yes, the Bolshoi is truly grand opera. I love it. Now they are gone. We are feeling the vacuum, but just for a brief moment.



No rest for the weary! It's the day after the Bolshoi moved out. The Vienna State Opera is moving into Salle Wilfrid Pelletier. Their carefully-crated scenery and costumes have arrived in good shape and our estimates for their needs are meeting our expectations. Gone is the *sturm und drang*. As sad as we are to see the Bolshoi go, we are grateful, ever so grateful, for the calm, the quiet, the organization of the Vienna State Opera.

I bought a ticket a year ago to two attractions. One is the Vienna State Opera's performance of Mozart's *Coronation Mass* at the Notre Dame Cathedral. I knew there would be no sneaking into this early September Sunday morning performance.

Jennifer just told me

This is not just a performance. It will accompany a Mass co-celebrated by Cardinal Koenig of Vienna and Cardinal Léger of Montreal.

My seat is halfway back, the late summer sun is filtering through the stained-glass windows, awaiting the gorgeous music to drop over me. There are many priests in white robes and clerical hats about. The chorus and musicians have taken their place. Maestro Krips, the conductor and soloists are entering. There's the downbeat. This is my first opportunity to hear this Mozart Mass. There are an amazing number of quartets. Mozart's music seems refined in comparison to the full even wonderfully bombastic sounds of the Russian composers. Other memories flood in, listening to Leonard Bernstein conduct the Vienna Philharmonic in a beautiful cathedral in the late spring of 1960 when I was youth hosteling through Europe. No, that was not a Mass, it was in the evening concert but... I had to run up sixty stairs in a tower adjacent to the cathedral where a monk was selling cheap seats.

How fortunate I am to have such a rich life.

This celebration, this time to be with myself and the music has left me with a signal. In two months, the World Festival will come to an end. Gosh.



Each afternoon, I meet a lovely woman responsible for the Vienna State Opera's stage and room rehearsal schedules. She's always ready for me.

Miss Farris

(I am always Miss Farris to her.)

This is the schedule for tomorrow.

I review it. Seldom do we have any issue to discuss.

They are thorough and know what they are expecting us to provide.

The details just fall into place.

The Vienna State Opera productions are beautiful and perfect. Strauss' *Elektra* with Birgit Nilsson singing the demanding principal role is my favorite. Her sound is full, rich and her portrayal terrifying.

She has extraordinary stamina, giving her performances power beyond human imagination.

*Der Rosenkavalier* is beginning to feel like an old friend. I also saw it in Vienna seven years ago when I was youth hosteling. Now I am seeing the same production with a different cast. And we performed it at the Canadian Opera in 1963. It makes me happy to discover that an opera is becoming an old friend, so comfortable to be around.

Of course, Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Don Giovanni* are enjoying sold out houses. I can only glimpse from the wings.

We have our second Berg opera this Festival, *Wozzeck*. I am missing it. Benjamin Britten is calling.



Benjamin Britten's English Opera Group. *Beggar's Opera*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Acis and Galatea* and *The Bear* are being rehearsed in the Maisonneuve and we are setting up in Saint Jacques Church for two other operas, *Curlew River* and *The Burning Fiery Furnace*. Colin Graham, the stage director who has directed all of the operas, has a busy schedule. Each opera seems to have a distinct flavor. That's talent.

Jennifer is waxing philosophical this morning

I saw *Curlew River* last night and am fascinated with the connection between the *Sumidagawa* production from the Kabuki Theater of Japan and *Curlew River*. They both tell the same tragic story of a woman searching for her lost child.

Yes, it is amazing how different cultures have the same themes to express. But what is striking me is the different musical styles. The Bolshoi with Mussorgsky, Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev and their full penetrating sound. Vienna with Mozart's majesty and the modern works, sprinkled through all our visiting opera companies with Berg or Britten, or Birger-Blomdahl and Hindemith, new sounds, sometimes jarring and yet intriguing.

So much to learn!

Perhaps, even more eye-awakening is my growing awareness of how we in Canada are just a part of a complex world. I had not thought about this before. People are the same; ideas, ideology are not. I want to get my French so I can communicate with others more easily.



There's a changeover of shows at the Garden of Stars. Over the summer we have offered five different evening shows. The turnaround from one to the next needs to be completed in less than twenty-four hours. We are moving in *Prestige de Paris*, a variety show with artists from Casino de Paris, Lido de Paris, Moulin Rouge, L'Opéra de Paris, and the Comédie-Française. Gordon, David and I are awaiting the first dress rehearsal. It's noon.

Gordon, who are those two men dressed in white suits looking like ice cream sellers who have just come in?

He whispers

The censors.

This is the first time I have seen them at a dress rehearsal. Our other nightclub shows weren't provocative. This one has been so advertised. Hmmmm. Good, the rehearsal is beginning.

On stage with great panache and confidence come bare-breasted dancers from the Lido de Paris, strutting their stuff.

Oh, look at this!

The men in white suits are on their feet loudly exclaiming No, the show cannot open with bare-breasted performers.

Gordon whispers

Ann, find sheer cover-ups.

I laugh and exit. Then I remember, it's Sunday in Montreal.

This is a Catholic city; every store is closed. Maureen, she'll have an idea. She's in final dress rehearsals for her last show at the Autostade.

Maureen, here's the situation...

Go home to our apartment, get our nylon nightgowns and glass curtains (sheer curtains), hanging in our bedrooms and take this booty to the

wardrobe mistress at the Garden of Stars. She will know how to concoct a peek-a-boo cover up.

The Garden of Stars is a good long walk to the exit of La Ronde.

I am in a sweat from the hot September sun. A quick monorail ride and I jump into a taxi and head home.

Please wait for me, driver. I will be returning to the La Ronde.

We are in the final dress rehearsal. Here come the girls.

No interruption, the solution worked. The girls are suitably attired, I guess.



La Scala is next. We caught our breath with Vienna. We're ready for these Italians.

In fact, can you believe it? The La Scala technical and production leadership seem to be relaxed and in fact, cooperative with us. They are still wearing their black suits!

Our biggest production challenge is Puccini's *La Bohème*. Isn't that surprising? Well, there's good reason. This is a new production by Franco Zeffirelli, the Italian whiz-kid opera director/designer. His second act, the street scene, has two streets: one upper and one on stage level. It's huge, fills the width and more of the stage. The upper street has to be populated with people. We are providing one hundred and ninety-two Montreal actors and opera fanatics as supernumeraries to wander those streets. The pay is minimal. They don't care. They know it's a privilege to perform with La Scala under the baton of Maestro Herbert Von Karajan. Of course, all performances are sold out. I view from the wings, standing backstage by Von Karajan's assistant, Peter, near a monitor that's focused on Von Karajan. Peter just whispered in my ear

Ann, the air conditioning has to be turned down.

Michael Tabbitt in his elegant black tie and frilly shirt is near-by.

I deliver the message.

It's intermission now.

Peter, how did you know the air conditioning had to be turned down?

The maestro has several signals he can send me as he is conducting. That's why I am glued to the monitor.

By the way, Terry McEwen told me to watch for a sensational young tenor, Luciano Pavarotti, singing Tebaldo in the La Scala production of Bellini's, *I Capuleti e I Montecchi*. I did. It's a beautiful voice.

Mum and Cheechee McCormick, my godfather's wife, are here this week. I have tickets for the three of us for the La Scala Verdi *Requiem*.

Von Karajan is conducting with Leontyne Price, Carlo Bergonzi, Fiorenza Cossotto and Nikolai Ghiaurov as soloists. Isn't that a line up? It's been an extraordinary evening of music-making. Me, I am lost in the gorgeous sounds.

As the thunderous applause brings me back to today, I find myself saying I forgive you, you La Scala technical staff, for your distrust of Andis and me. How can I not? The musical experience transcends that annoyance. There goes my beeper. What can be the problem now? Back to reality.



We are into the final World Festival weeks now. The National Theatre of Great Britain with Sir Lawrence Oliver at the helm is in residence for a couple of weeks at the Maisonneuve. The Roland Petit Ballet is at the Port-Royal and The Stratford Festival is at Expo Theatre.

The Canadian Opera has just arrived. We are loading in their new production, *Louis Riel* and Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffman*. Mr. Torel commissioned a Canadian, Harry Summers, to compose *Louis Riel* as part of the celebration of Canada's hundredth birthday. The opera depicts a Canadian hero, a man in the late 19th century, who was a politician, a revolutionary and leader of the *Métis* (a person of mixed Indian and Euro-Canadian ancestry) from the Canadian Prairies. I hear that Bernard Turgeon singing the title role is both dramatically and vocally very powerful in this production.

So many old friends are here: Mr. Torel, Wally Russell, Jimmie and Connie Craig. And of course, Murray and Marie Laufer: they've designed



the scenery and costumes for *Riel*. Elisa Ronstadt is stage managing. They are making Canada proud as they offer their repertoire.



Something's up at the Garden of Stars that needs attention. I am on the monorail, wandering through the Exposition site to La Ronde to help out. Wow, this is a huge crowd exiting the train into La Ronde. It's going to take some effort to maneuver through this. I guess the can-can girls in the Golden Garter Saloon are a big draw. By the way, I did check to see how I liked the height of the stage. It's about two inches too high for my taste. Oh, well!

This is an unruly crowd. Who shoved me?

It's a man. He did it purposefully. I don't like his look. It's very sinister.

I am hearing feelings louder than words with this crowd around me.

Something's wrong here.

I am being shoved again, on my other arm.

I get it. Two men are focused on hitting me. They are downright abusive.

Thank God I have my clipboard.

I flail it at one of them and take off pushing my way through the crowds.

Whew, I can run now. Don't like this much, I can hear their footsteps behind me. I have another city block, past the lake to go.

My inner voice is pushing me. Ann, run faster. I am, I am.

The stage door is in view.

I'm in.

Please call Raymond, (our manager) quickly.

*Poupée de Paris* is in the middle of its first show of the evening.

I know he has to be around.

Raymond, the worst thing just happened and...

Come with me, Ann. I am calling the RCMP.

We are in Raymond's office. The RCMP are forthright with some facts.

There have been problems on the site, particularly at La Ronde, with harassment of attractive women. From now on, when you come to La Ronde you must come with another, and let security know you are coming.

There will be a small electric cart to take you from the train to the theatre.

We are near the end of the Exposition. I can handle this arrangement. I feel sorry for other young women being so afflicted. That was no fun!



One of the dancers with the Roland Petit Ballet from France had an accident and is not allowed to dance for the rest of engagement. The doctor asked  
We need to find a quiet place for her to stay.  
She can stay with me. My roommate has returned to Boston and I have a spare bedroom.

The dancer has been staying for five days. We have been talking about my upcoming trip to Paris to learn French.  
Ann, I will be going on tour in January. Would you like to rent my apartment? It's near the Palais Garnier, the opera house. I would love to, thanks so much.  
My next steps are falling into place.



My "lover plus" is back again, for the last time in Montreal. He has been in and out all summer. What fun we have had. We will meet in Paris. Not only am I going to master French, I will have fun.



Expo 67 is closing today. It's a grey afternoon, matching our mood. All of us, sixty-three plus Theatre Division staff are in the rehearsal room at the Expo Theatre with its large picture windows overlooking the site, a good location to watch the final fireworks show. A party is in full swing. It's a different kind of party, a farewell. We are quite subdued. This is the last time we will all be together. In two days, the production staff will be gone. No, we aren't going through extensive goodbyes. Somehow, they aren't necessary. Just a hug and see you, somewhere, somehow. It's been quite a summer and now it's over.



Some of us are contractually required to stay six weeks after closing to help close down. We did that in a week. Now we are bored. Lionel Chetwynd, who spent his Expo gig coordinating the broadcast rights for the World Festival, has an idea

Let's use our lunch hours to take a speed-reading course.

As reading is not my favorite thing, I sign up with great interest.

Maybe this will change my ability to read.

The teacher is telling us

Read down the page, rather than across.

Oh my God, there is no way I can do this. This makes reading even more confusing. I can't comprehend the content at all.

Damn. It's so frustrating not to be able to comprehend, let alone enjoy reading.

I quit.



The final sales figures for the Theatre Division are in.

We sold over one hundred and seventy-five thousand opera tickets, 87% of capacity. Almost one hundred thousand ballet tickets were sold, 75% of capacity. Close to one hundred and five thousand tickets were sold for symphony, chamber music and other musical events, 72% of capacity.

Theatre productions sold two hundred and ninety thousand seats, 78% capacity and folklore sold fifty-four thousand seats, 92% of capacity.

Good news. The total expense figure for all the entertainment including the Theatre Division, Autostade, Special Manifestations Onsite, Public Relations and Programmes was \$16,422,324, 8% below the approved budget of \$17,859,729. The Theatre Division's total expenses were \$7,044,770. Our expense budget was \$7,035,971. We are nine thousand dollars over budget. Not bad given the surprises we encountered with the Bolshoi. Gordon and David's instinct and the senior management buying into this gamble on the Bolshoi didn't impact negatively on the total entertainment costs.

*(See Appendix I: Listing of Programming; See Appendix II: Staff listing)*

David, Andis, Susan, Gerald, Rae, Jennifer and I are now celebrating. We are hosting dinners for each other. Andis and David are moving to Ottawa to work for the National Arts Centre, which is under construction and due to open in a year. Andis has bought most of my goods and chattels, except my brass bed. I can't bear to part with that. It's being shipped to Vancouver. Susan is going to Minneapolis to apprentice as a seamstress in the costume shop at the Guthrie Theater. Jennifer is going to Ottawa. She's joining the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. Gordon will move back to Vancouver and do projects around North America.

It's my last day. A man from the publicity department just came into my office asking

We have several complete packets of all the posters used over the last few years for Expo. Do you want a set?

Yes, I would, thanks.

A huge roll, six feet long and eighteen inches in diameter has just been plunked on my desk. Poor Mum, more storage. Oh well!

# DARK AND LIGHT ABOUND- SAN FRANCISCO OPERA



[ 1968 ]

**P**ARIS WAS A DISASTER! “Lover plus” chose not to see me. That’s what he did, he abandoned me. Initially, I was devastated, I couldn’t believe it. Then, anger set in. To make matters worse, after three months of French immersion at the Sorbonne, my professor and his colleagues were mystified. I was making little or no progress. A Canadian linguist on staff took me to coffee. Ann, no one works harder at learning French than you. We have seen others with the same dilemma. It’s caused, we think, by some aberration in the brain. What do you suggest? Let it go. You have given it all you can.

At first, I was so relieved, grateful someone else saw my pain. Then, confusion set in and I searched for comfort. It came in strange ways. I began attending Musique Concrete concerts, embracing a new approach to creating music employing primarily computer sounds. The result seemed so distant it fitted my state of mind. Evenings with

this newness gave me relief. Don't ask me why. During the day, I sat in cafes on the Left Bank drinking in the chaos, dissonance and weirdness of the 1968 springtime student revolution. As their anger deepened, so did mine. They took to the streets, I joined them until... When I was subjected to tear gas in the Paris Metro and found myself gasping for breath as I exited up the flight of stairs at the L'Odeon stop, I came to my senses.

I need to get out of here!

Three days later I was back in Vancouver in my bed looking out at the Coast Range mountains. The very next morning the *Vancouver Province* newspaper front page headline read "Paris Airports Closed."

The students are being brought under control!

I sat in wonderment! All I knew is that I am neutered.

Over the summer my self-esteem began to re-appear. And I began to see that there's something amiss with my decision-making processes in my relationships to men. Gestalt Therapy helped me work through some of this. Confronting and releasing anger began to make me feel better.

And with that came my desire to start working again. I attend a dress rehearsal of *Faust* being produced by the Vancouver Opera.

Robert Darling is the designer and Lotfi Mansouri, the stage director.

After the rehearsal, Robert asked

Why did you turn down Mr. Adler and the San Francisco Opera?

I was going to Paris.

Well, the position has never been filled. Call Mr. Adler.



[ MAY 1969 ]

It's nearly a year since I left Paris. Each day now begins with a San Francisco tradition: a cable car ride down the steep California Street hill. The fog makes the ride chilly as I sit on the wooden seats these foggy May mornings, but you know what? It's fun. The cable car grip man not only wakes us up with the bumpy starting and stopping from the manipulation of the brake

release, but he also offers beautiful ringing bell tones that he creates while driving. I am enjoying this transporting mode to work at the San Francisco Opera. I have accepted Kurt Herbert Adler's invitation to be his Administrative Assistant.

Mr. Adler and I interviewed in Los Angeles during the Company's spring tour. Two hours flew by as we talked about his needs and how I might fit them. I felt very comfortable during the interview.

Good morning. I am here to see Mr. Adler.

The stage door of the War Memorial Opera House is at the back of a courtyard. This imposing French Renaissance structure is embraced across the courtyard with a matching edifice, the Veterans Building. The complex feels solid and strong. I think I will be happy here.

Good morning. I'm Danny.

He's the stage-door man.

You take the elevator to the fourth floor and turn left and then right.

Thank you.

I must say I feel privileged beginning my work in a major opera house.



I have a month with Gary Fifield, whom I am replacing before he takes off to a garret to become a playwright. My office is just down the hallway from Mr. Adler's and has a large window looking out onto the manicured courtyard. It gives a feeling of indoor/outdoor space.

First up is making the rounds.

Richard Rodzinski, Mr. Adler's Artistic Assistant, has the office next to mine. His windows are small slits. Richard is younger than me, mid-twenties, very handsome with dark curly hair and a cigarette nearby. Being the son of the conductor Artur Rodzinski, he has an extraordinary knowledge of classical music and opera and speaks many languages. Most important though is his love to laugh, a hearty throaty laugh. It's infectious.

I sense we will be a good team together.

You can't imagine how surprised I was to see John Priest. He has joined the Company as Production Director, overseeing all matters technical. In 1964, I worked for John as a design assistant in Washington DC. And there's Matt Farruggio, an elegant man with a crazy, crowded no-windowed office. It's jammed with production books, musical scores and three stage managers besides himself. Matt began with the Company years ago as a stage manager. Now, he is Production Coordinator and a stage director.

Upstairs to the 5th floor we went. There are no windows on the fifth floor. A couple of years ago, two floors of offices were squished into one large space that was formerly the scenery construction shop. The publicity office is buried here. Herbert Scholder and Margaret Norton hold down that fort. Up a few stairs beyond them is a tiny space: the chorus library with chorister Colin Harvey keeping guard.

Gosh, Gary, how many people are on staff?

Ten staff are housed backstage and six, Accounting and Box Office are at the front of the Opera House above the elegant entrance.

That's more than we had in Toronto!

Gary is a perfectionist. He's been with the Opera for seven years and knows what is expected. It seems Mr. Adler is a task master.

Well, so was Mr. Trel. That's okay.

Today's lesson is artists' contracts.

Singers and dancers are represented by the American Guild of Musical Artists, AGMA.

Oh, that's interesting. In Canada, Actor's Equity has that responsibility. AGMA has a standard contract form into which we outline the details of each engagement. You will find that the Boss...

You mean Mr. Adler?

Yes, Paul Hager, a German stage director resident for several months each year, gave him that name. It stuck.

The Boss is very finicky about the wording on contracts. You can expect much discussion and many drafts. Come, I will show you a couple.



By the way, Nancy Adler, Mr. Adler's wife, oversees the invitations and hosts the guests before a performance to Mr. Adler's Box – Box A. The lawyers or business agents of all unions are always invited.



Rehearsals for Spring Opera are underway. Gary explained that this adjunct company began in 1961 to feature young artists and unusual repertoire. Ticket prices are less expensive than Fall Opera with the hope of encouraging a younger audience. And do note that Spring Opera has a separate Board of Directors.

Luckily, I have arrived when this season's preparation is beginning. There are piano run-throughs in the evening. The chorus is only available in the evenings and on weekends. Technical work is done on the War Memorial Opera House stage during the day.

Gary, I must say it does make a difference for an opera company to have its own theatre. Having the administrative offices as part of the theatre makes the flow of work so much easier.



Ann, I have a ritual which I hope you will continue. I wander the backstage areas during the hour before a rehearsal or performance checking in with every department. You hear about complaints before they become an issue, or you can sense something is not okay and probe. Let's start on stage. We enter the cavernous stage across from the male star dressing room where Joe Harris, the dresser, stands guard. Our first stop is the prop shop tucked away off-stage, left of the proscenium arch. Ivan Van Perre, a tall friendly man, welcomes me. Mike Kane, the Head Stage Carpenter wanders in. He's robust and gives the impression that he's the boss – a friendly one. Ann, come meet George Pantages, head electrician. When we get across the stage, I am aghast. The opera house has the old-fashioned piano boards that stand vertical against the downstage wall. It takes several electricians to man them. Gosh.

Hi George, you and your crew are kept busy!

Downstairs we go to the cavernous dungeon-like basement. The halls are painted institutional beige and the floor is cement. There are no windows here. Our first stop is the Wig and Makeup room. A tiny narrow space, not far from the entrance to the orchestra pit, it has three walls lined with shelves filled with wooden heads adorned with odd-shaped hair pieces perched amusingly on them. The center of the room has a large high table and stools. Miscellaneous hair pieces, tools, combs, lie strewn across this flat surface. Richard Stead, the Wig and Makeup Master, and his staff are rushing in and out, taking wigs to the dressing rooms. They are a friendly bunch.

Next stop is Craig Hampton, head of Men's Wardrobe. He oversees a large room containing several sewing machines, racks of costumes and shelves of boxes. Talk about ebullience; Craig is a master. He enjoys sharing how his room works, explaining

All of the costumes are assembled at Goldstein's Costume House.

You will meet Rose Goldstein and her associate Walter Mahoney upstairs tonight at the piano dress rehearsal.

Let me show you to the women's chorus dressing rooms.

We cross back under the stage to the other side of the building and the women's dressing room. Pat, a tall graceful woman who carries herself like a dancer, explains

For tonight's rehearsal of *Romeo and Juliet* we have just finished pressing these long velvet dresses in shades of blues, greens and dark purple velvet, typical of the Renaissance period. Now, they are hung on racks in the center of the dressing room awaiting the choristers.

Gary moves me along back under the stage once again to the Orchestra Manager's office. Passing lockers for the musicians we end up in a tiny room, about the size of the jelly room in my parent's basement.

A round-faced man, Gerry Cornouyer, is poring over the schedule as he talks on the phone. No musicians tonight, this is a piano dress.

We wait. The phone is back in its cradle.

Gary, two musicians are leaving at the end of this season. We need to set auditions for their replacements. And when is Mr. Adler going to decide

on the new concertmaster?

Gary makes a note to get these topics on Mr. Adler's agenda.

Over the loudspeaker we hear

Places, please for Act 1.

See you later Gerry. Gary, you are right, there's a separate life going on in the basement. Thanks for the tip.

We cross under the stage again, up the stairs to stage level and on through a pass door to the front of house and the auditorium.

En route, Gary introduces me to Walter Beverly. He controls access to and from backstage during dress rehearsals and performances.

Walter, Ann is taking over my position.

Welcome Ann.

And he hands me a candy wrapped in a paper.

Thank you.

Gary laughs

Candy and Mr. Beverly are a tradition.

We have a few moments before the rehearsal begins. Come, let me walk you around the main floor foyer.

It's so elegant. Gary, the lobby has the feel of a European opera house.

Its sensually soft marble floors and wide staircases make me want to don a hoop-skirted ball gown and waltz to Johann Strauss.

Look at that gold coffered ceiling. This is beautiful.

I thought you would be impressed.

Into the main floor of the auditorium we go. Mr. Adler and one of his secretaries are sitting just in front of the overhang of the Boxes on the main aisle. John Priest and George Pantages are sitting close by at the temporary table setup over the seats. George is talking on a head set to the electricians backstage who are setting light cues.

Gary, I am surprised that the San Francisco Opera is not up to date with the new technology, an Izenour light board. And how come the Opera doesn't have a lighting designer?

Budget and need. I think Mr. Adler is coming around to agreeing there is a need for the latter.

The rest of us are now scattered behind this group. Robert Darling is amongst those eyeing the stage. He is designing a new production for Spring Opera, Gian Carlo Menotti's *The Consul*. And Mr. Menotti is the stage director currently sitting with his assistant close to the orchestra pit.

Our challenge is watching both the staging and the stage to see what is working or not. Mr. Adler has a keen eye. He is very forthcoming with dissatisfaction, grumbling, shouting and needling as he pounds down the aisle towards the orchestra pit. Gary has two comments

Ann, I have come to realize that sometimes he is just grumbling with himself about his decisions. With Spring Opera there is limited funding, which means that the production side only has one new production.

The other three productions are assembled out of scenic elements from the warehouse where they have been stored for decades. They just look old and tired; the Boss knows that and is impatient because of lack of funding.

Rose Goldstein and her associate, Walter Mahoney, are huddled with Robert at the back of the house searching the stage looking for costumes that don't look complete. Rose is a diminutive woman with sparkling eyes, colorful clothing and sharp assessments. Walter's a quiet man with a subtle sense of humor. If this trio hears Mr. Adler bellow Where are the white gloves?

They know this is a symbol that there's problem with a costume on stage. It's never about the gloves.



We have just finished a Sunday final dress rehearsal of *The Marriage of Figaro*. As I come out of the elevator on the fourth floor and peek into Riki's office, I catch him looking out of the thin slit of the window behind his chair. His large desk is stacked with scores and papers.

We have started calling Richard "Riki" after we heard Gian Carlo Menotti using this nickname.

Riki turns. His eyes are cocker spaniel-like, sorrowful.

I don't think I can stay here!

This comment demands that I sit.

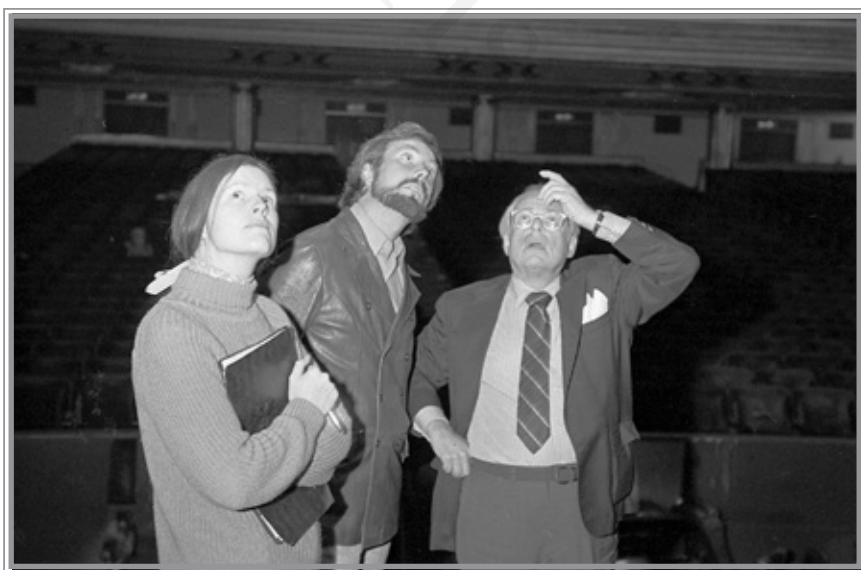
Why?

The artistic standard. *The Marriage of Figaro* is terrible.

You're correct. However, there are rumblings afoot to make major changes with Spring Opera. Here's what Robert told me. A year or so earlier, Mr. Adler asked him to prepare a designer's concept of what the Fillmore Auditorium, the space used by rock shows, might look like if it were designed to handle opera productions. When Robert's design sketch met with Mr. Adler's approval, he invited the Board of Spring Opera to the Fillmore. Robert knew the concept had failed when one of the board members asked

Where is the location of my box?

Now, however, Robert senses there will be a change for the Spring Opera programming. It is in the offing, he feels.



ANN FARRIS, ROBERT DARLING, KURT HERBERT ADLER  
[PHOTOGRAPH BY MARGARET NORTON]



I am discovering that my heart is beginning to sing with a romantic tinge again. This time Robert and I seem to be enjoying each other's company. He's more attentive than he was at Yale, even though he lives in New York. At the moment he has reason to be in San Francisco for Mr. Adler is employing him. However, I am being very careful after my misjudgment about "lover plus." Being dumped is no fun.



Spring Opera is over, and we are looking to the future of the program. Mr. Adler has engaged Robert as Artistic Advisor for Spring Opera. Many a July evening Mr. Adler has Robert, Riki and me in his office to rethink Spring. Gathering around his large desk, looking out into the foggy sky as it moves towards darkness, ideas are bouncing about. Great fun and stimulating! Mr. Adler's experience and musical knowledge determine whether or not our collective ideas could work. He isn't arguing with us. Rather, he's pushing us for more. As we moved into early August, Mr. Adler comments It seems clear that Spring needs to move out of the Opera House. To take that step we need more time, which means postponing the Spring Season a year. I will suggest this to Bill Godward. Bill's President of the Spring Opera Board. He's a lawyer, a wonderful man, quiet, unassuming and takes his task very seriously. We love him. For some reason, Mr. Adler always seems to give him a rough time. Bill is unfazed.

God bless Bill. He loves the idea of a new concept. Mr. Adler and he have sold postponing the season to the Spring Opera Board. Now we have the spring of 1970 to plan and we will reopen in 1971.



Robert surprised me today. We are going on a Sunday picnic to walk in the redwood trees nestled in Muir Woods. He has rented a Maverick and has a basket full of delicacies. Our perambulation through the redwood grove is quite magical. I am fascinated to learn when Robert shared These tall, majestic trees grow in a circle, sometimes the circle seems clearly delineated, sometimes the trees come out of one century-old tree which always seem to have a dark brown gnarled base. Redwoods take to the temperate, foggy environment of the San Francisco Bay Area. Now I see. There is good reason for fog. Oh boy, did we goof. Driving home up the windy, narrow two-lane road we ran out of gas. Can you believe that? It was late afternoon and a stream of cars were not only behind us but also coming down this treacherous hill. A savior, a man, emerged out of nowhere holding a gallon can of gas.

Robert has returned to New York. Our relationship seems to be blossoming. I miss him very much. I have learned my lesson with “*Lover Plus*.” No longer am I willing to be silent about my sentiments. Robert, I am feeling very lonely without you. I really miss you. I miss you, also. I will be back in the fall for *L’Elisir* technical rehearsals. That’s a month away. Seems very long. My loneliness is offset with my new challenge of diving into the opera business from a management point of view. Periodically a bouquet of fresh flowers, imaginatively arranged, arrives. Robert’s generosity makes me very happy.



Mr. Adler has three secretaries. Betty Krouse, a tall, thin woman who has worked in European opera houses. She focuses on contracts and keeping the files in order. That’s a huge task. Then there’s Marilyn Mercur. Her desk is against the wall, behind which is Riki’s office. She’s a natural with musical matters as she began her professional life as a singer. And then, there is the third secretary, Mr. Adler’s personal secretary. There is no one

in this position at the moment. They come and go, sometimes as quickly as a month. Either Mr. Adler is dissatisfied, or the secretary is.

It's my job to find the replacement. Any candidate who responds to my advertisement has to have some interest in opera. That requirement is clearly stated in the ad. I always explore why they want the job. Sometimes it circles around the mystique of the business, or their knowledge and wanting to learn more, or a desire to find a career in opera. Whatever the reason, they usually are keen for the job.

I make it very clear to each new candidate

You must have excellent skills with dictation. He may give you several letters at once, and there is no way you can remember the contents.

And he is very particular about how letters look, as well as their accuracy.

He also changes his mind frequently on the content. And he can, at times, be very gruff. It takes great patience to work for him.

Do you think you can handle this?

Yes, I do.

When I sense there is a chance, Mr. Adler will accept a particular candidate,

I move to the next step, dictating a letter with lots of opera terminology.

I allow one error. If that test is passed, I set a time for the interview.

Hey, Riki! I think I have found a perfect secretary. He has been a court reporter and takes dictation on a machine.

Does he know anything about opera?

A little.

Riki smiles

What can you lose? Try it.

Mr. Adler bought this solution...for a while.

I have come to accept that this position will be a revolving door.



The Merola Opera Program, the entry level training program for young opera artists, is in full swing. The voices of these young artists soar up to the fourth floor from the dressing rooms below. They double as coaching rooms. Named for San Francisco Opera's first general director Gaetano Merola, the Merola Opera Program began during the 1954-55 season



and established its full training program in 1957. It's a favorite project of Mr. Adler. He gives much attention to the staffing and programming. Today he is giving a master class. Mr. Adler was chorus master of the opera for many years. He knows the voice, what it can and can't do. James Schwabacher, an accomplished tenor and a member of an old San Francisco family, is the President of the Merola Opera Board. He's in and out of our offices and is becoming a friend. At the end of the summer, the Merola Artists perform at Stern Grove. The opera has a table and we picnic. In the morning during the rehearsal it's cold and foggy. If we are lucky the sun comes out for the performance. While I don't have specific responsibilities with this Program, I am often called on to give a hand with tricky admin issues.

Western Opera Theater is another adjunct company in the San Francisco Opera family. WOT, as it is more often called, was created by Mr. Adler four years ago and has some of the same mandates as the Canadian Opera Touring Company. The difference is the focus of the artists. The COC presents already-established Canadian opera artists; WOT, on the other hand, is composed of young emerging professionals. It also embraces a unique feature, a continued training program.

My Canadian Opera tour experience serves me well. Edward Corn, WOT's manager, and I spend many an hour discussing the challenges of touring. He is a very intense man with ideas that gush out like the Trevi Fountain in Rome.

Ann, we are organizing a two-week tour to Alaska. Robert's designing. Where will the scenery be built?

In Alaska.

Ed, do they have any idea how to build scenery?

They say they do. I guess we'll learn.



Today, Mr. Adler had a visit from Glynn Ross, General Director of the Seattle Opera. Some of my colleagues expressed surprise that Glynn is here.

Why?

Glynn used to live in San Francisco. In the late fifties he was exploring how he might start an opera company here. Mr. Adler did not think much of this and was clear he did not approve.

Well, Glynn now has a very successful opera company in Seattle.

This will be interesting!

Immediately following their meeting, Riki and I are called to Mr. Adler's office. By the way, I haven't told you how we are summoned. He has a buzzer on the right side of his desk by his telephone. One buzz means a secretary is being called, two buzzes means Riki and three buzzes means I am summoned. Today both Riki and I meet going down the hall.

Obviously, the meeting with Mr. Ross went well. Mr. Adler is quite excited, sharing the reason for Glynn's visit

Glynn is promoting the formation of an organization of professional opera companies, both established and emerging, throughout Canada and the United States. He is modeling this undertaking after the American Symphony Orchestra League. He feels opera managers could benefit from the opportunity of sharing artistic and management issues with one another. And he feels that professional opera needs a unified voice in Washington DC to speak on behalf of the National Endowment for the Arts which was created a few years ago. Glynn wants to be sure that funding for opera at the Federal level continues to build. He wants me to convince Rudolf Bing at the Metropolitan Opera, Julius Rudel at the New York City Opera and Carol Fox at the Chicago Lyric Opera to become involved.

We ask

Will you take the lead?

Yes

Will that be difficult?

Mr. Adler is shrugging his shoulders.

We'll see.



Riki and I are becoming accustomed to Mr. Adler's work habits. He's a perfectionist, tries to micro-manage every detail of the Company and its affiliates. His process with the telex tells all. This mechanical typewriter communicates typed messages through the telephone. It's a godsend for it's the only quick and financially efficient way of connecting with Europe. The machine sits near Marilyn's desk. Preparation of a telex is time-consuming and generally involves all of us. Riki's and my ability to hone in on the issue and express it concisely and accurately have matured greatly.

Mr. Gorlinsky in London, a major European artist's agent, is often the target for a telex.

Mr. Adler begins the process, dictating the first draft. It comes next to Riki, then to me. We ask ourselves

Is it clear we are only exploring, not confirming, whether a Gorlinsky artist is available to perform during our 1972 season? Now, how can we cut down the number of words to save costs and keep the intent? We know Mr. Adler will probably wait another day before sending it. He is known for his calculated procrastination. And so it goes, each day.

But micro-managing has its downside!

Joe Allen, the Manager of the War Memorial complex, who oversees the operation of the two buildings, the Opera House and the Veterans Building, just called

Ann, a new phone system in the Opera House will be installed shortly. Please call a meeting of the staff. I will have a telephone representative attend to describe the intricacies of this new system.

Certainly. I will send out a memo with the date and time.

Herbert Scholder, a long-time employee at the Opera, who knows the most amazing details about operas and singers, just dropped by my office. He is a man of few words

You are brave!!

I looked at him quizzically

Why?

As far as I know Mr. Adler is the only one who sends out memos to the staff.

Hmm, I thought, and let it go.

We met this afternoon in the conference room, twelve of us from backstage and front of house. The specialist from the telephone company had many details to share. Afterwards I went into Mr. Adler's office to report on the meeting. Opening his door, I could hear his feelings loud and clear.

He is not happy. In fact, he has his growl ready.

What's the matter, Mr. Adler?

You called a meeting without my permission. I call meetings.

Mr. Adler, this meeting was about the new telephone system.

I couldn't imagine that you would want to waste your time with those details. I have come to report what I think will be useful to you.

Meetings do not happen without me.

Mr. Adler, if Gordon Hilker, the Artistic Director and Producer of the World Festival at Expo had required that we invite him to every meeting, the Festival would never have been booked, let alone produced.

I don't understand why you are so focused on...

And so it went for a good half-hour.

Mr. Adler has agreed I can call and run meetings.

I have agreed to let him know when I will be doing it.



The production focus for Fall Season is full steam ahead with technical setups and chorus rehearsals. In the summer, each of the eleven operas is assembled on stage and rehearsed technically with lighting cues set. In the evening, the stage director – now it's Paul Hager – stages the chorus into the scenery. Mr. Adler attends most of these rehearsals. He doesn't mince words if the progress is not to his liking. The chorus master, who is standing in for the conductor, receives most of the complaints.

Before Gary left, he gave me a history lesson

Paul and Ghita Hager have been an important part of transforming the

Fall Season from instant opera status with little or no rehearsal to more thoughtful productions including new scenic approaches. Since 1954, now fifteen years ago, the Hagers have directed nearly fifty operas. In the last half of the 1950s, Adler brought in stage designers who gave a contemporary look to stage design. Pierre Cayard, a skilled carpenter from France who became a stagehand when he moved to Montreal, was hired to run the Scenic Shop, responsible for executing these designs. The visual look of productions began improving at a faster pace. Mr. Adler is aware of how important good craftsmanship is, knowing it offers the opportunity for a much better result.

Ghita Hager is now based in San Francisco, working both for Fall Season and Western Opera Theater, as she and Paul have gone their separate ways. However, during the season she is Paul's assistant. Paul, like Mr. Adler, is very autocratic.

My brother Haig is in San Francisco. I have put him into the back of the auditorium for this evening's rehearsal and have just come to join him. Whispering, he says  
Ann, the man with the microphone sitting in the auditorium blasts everyone on stage. He's not very pleasant  
His name is Paul Hager, and that's his way of getting what he wants.



I walked into Mr. Adler's office today and announced  
I think I am going to resign!  
He looked at me astonished  
Why?

Everything around here is grey or white. When I get up in the morning, I take the cable car through the grey fog to the War Memorial Opera House which is white. I look out my window or your window at the white Veterans' Building or the white City Hall, and when I leave the Opera House late in the evening, the fog is white mist blowing crazily in the dark blue sky. It is driving me nuts.

Where are you living?

Russian Hill.

You have to move to the Mission District. Most mornings you will wake up in sun. That will break the monotony for you.

Margaret Norton, on the publicity staff, and I are becoming friends. She is driving me about to find a new area in which to live. We are navigating up a hill above Dolores Park, the sunny section of San Francisco, not too far from the Opera House. I ask

Margaret, what happens when it snows in the winter? I can't imagine what it must be like, these hills are so steep!

She's in gales of laughter.

Ann, it doesn't snow in San Francisco.

Oh, I am glad to hear that. I can see myself and cars skidding everywhere.

We find an apartment close by. My brass bed and a few other personal belongings have arrived from Vancouver. Most mornings the sun is shining. What a difference it's making in my life! I don't feel depressed by the fog. San Francisco is beginning to feel like home.



We are two weeks away from the beginning of orchestra rehearsals for Fall Season. Mr. Adler has chosen our concertmaster, Stuart Canin. Both parties seemed happy with this decision. I have learned that Mr. Adler takes his time with important decisions. It can be frustrating to others but...

Gerry Cournoyer has just come into my office

Ann, I have decided to resign as orchestra manager.

That's a big surprise. He is very competent, and Mr. Adler seems to like working with him.

Why, Gerry?

I want more time to play music.

We have little time now to find Gerry's replacement. I wonder if Mr. Adler will move quickly with this decision. Thank heavens, Gerry's resignation happened after the concertmaster decision.

This search process is giving me a collaborative way to begin working with Gerry Spain, the Musician's Union negotiator. By reputation, there is a love/hate relationship between Mr. Adler and Gerry.

The hate side is not apparent at the moment. He asks

Please mention Tom Heimberg to the Boss as a candidate for orchestra manager. He's a violist. Mr. Adler will know him. He plays with both the Opera and the Symphony and has an interest in the position.

Mr. Adler has just spent at least two hours with Tom. Riki and I have learned that when meetings extend long past the time they are scheduled, it means we have hit pay dirt.

Yes, that's true. Tom is aboard as orchestra manager.

With eleven operas this fall, the orchestra schedule is grueling.

All their rehearsals are in the orchestra pit as the scenery is moved in, set up, technically massaged and prepared for rehearsals or performances on the stage. And the musicians work most evenings, except Sunday. We have a matinee on Sunday. Monday is our only dark day, no performance.

Tom's in my office. I love working with him. He looks at the musicians from many points of view. Of course, their skill with their chosen musical instrument is the most important ingredient. But there is also the musician as a person. Tom loves to delve into what is making the musician tick and if there is a challenge, why that might be happening.

We talk for many hours about this musician or that one

Ann, we need to discuss the horn player. He's got several complaints

I know Mr. Adler likes this man's artistry.

Tom and I put our heads together. We want solutions for Mr. Adler to consider.

And then there is the constant complaint of space in the orchestra pit.

It is just too small for the Strauss and Wagner operas. Mr. Adler and the conductors want to engage the full complement of musicians called for by the composer's score to achieve the desired artistic goals. Sometimes, that means cramming musicians into tiny spaces, like sardines. No, they don't have oil flowing over them. They have steam, heat, and sweat undulating

around and on them. They are *hot*.

Tom is the musician's barometer in the basement, in and around the pit.

I am Tom's Adler barometer on the fourth floor.

Ann, I have a long list of musical issues to clear with Mr. Adler.

Can you float a couple with him before I sit down with him?

Mr. Adler can be reactive and abrupt, especially with musical matters.

It's easier for Tom to get answers if the gate has been oiled.

Okay, Tom, all is quiet on the western front, Mr. Adler is ready to see you.



Orchestra rehearsals have begun. What a pleasure it is to hear these glorious sounds through the loudspeakers as I plough through the paperwork on my desk. Robert is back from New York for *L'Elisir d'Amore* technical rehearsals, which means Lotfi Mansouri is also in the house.

Robert's and my relationship is continuing to grow. He is much quieter than boisterous me but seems to be happy spending time with me.

Opening Night is very splendid. The lobbies are festive with beautifully dressed ladies in the latest evening gowns from New York, London, Paris and Milan. Robert Watt Miller, Chairman of the Opera Board and a much-respected man in business, is a favorite with the stage crew.

On opening night Mr. Miller has a ritual. Dressed in white tie, tails, cape and top hat he crosses the stage to stage right saying

Good evening, gentlemen.

Good evening, Mr. Miller.

As he reaches the stage manager's desk an electrician, Jack Philpott, is waiting for him. He takes Mr. Miller's cape and top hat and carefully places them on a stool between the stage manager's desk and the light board and says Good evening, Mr. Miller.

Good evening, Jack.

Mr. Miller continues his saunter, passing by the female star dressing room to the pass door between backstage and front of house.

Mr. Beverly, our friendly guard, dressed in black tie, greets him

Good evening, Mr. Miller.

Mr. Beverly gives Mr. Miller a tiny candy wrapped in cellophane



as he opens the door to the front of house. Mr. Miller exits, turns left and walks up the wide soft grey marble stairs to his Box.

*La Traviata* is the perfect opening night opera. Sung beautifully in Toni Businger's sumptuous settings, in collaboration with the much-respected theatre director from Munich, August Everding, the evening is a big success. Everyone's artistic and celebratory tastes are satisfied tonight. Mr. Miller has just returned for his cape and top hat. He will be back next Tuesday night. All opera openings occur on Patron Night: Tuesdays.



Strauss' *Ariadne Auf Naxos* has opened and has good houses. We are in final preparation for *La Bohème* and our soprano is ill. Dorothy Kirsten, who has sung many seasons with this Company, has arrived to take over. I called Hugh Pickett in Vancouver. I know he and Dorothy are good friends for he presented her several times in Vancouver when she was on the recital circuit.

Hugh, Dorothy Kirsten is singing Mimi, filling in at the last moment.

Ann, get me seats for the first two performances near the orchestra pit.

I will be there.

I know why he wants to be close to the stage.

He will throw bouquets of flowers to her.

He is such a romantic and a showman.

Rodolfo is the new exciting tenor, Luciano Pavarotti.

I met Hugh at the stage door with the flowers. He gave me one bunch for delivery to Dorothy's dressing room. The rest are with him.

I watched from the back of the house at curtain-call time.

Dorothy was pelted with flowers.



I have just been through my first San Francisco earthquake. Most evenings I work in my office during the performances doing paperwork. Tonight, it's another *La Bohème*. I was preparing some statistics for Mr. Adler's much-respected artistic adviser, Otto Guth, when my desk started to shake.

Ann, get in the door jam.

It's John Priest. He was working in his office around the corner from mine. What's going on?

It's an earthquake.

John, the orchestra is continuing, I can hear Pavarotti singing over the loudspeaker.

We peek out of my door jam. Otto and Mr. Adler are in Mr. Adler's door jam. Their big bellies are hitting each other. It's really funny. Well, actually it isn't because this is serious, but it's funny about two tummies hitting.

John, I wonder if Betty is okay.

She's the secretary on duty tonight and was sitting at her desk when I passed by the bullpen a few minutes ago.

The opera house has stopped shaking. Betty is under her desk. She's fine. The orchestra is continuing, we can hear Pavarotti singing.

I don't know who suggested it but

Let's look on stage from the catwalk door.

The door to this narrow bridge is just outside Matt Farruggio's office a few steps away. In opening the door, we can look over the railing and see the stage from sixty feet above. We are at the level of the steel pipes holding the hanging scenery.

We made a big mistake with this action. The steep pipes are clashing against one another from the momentum of the earthquake. It's an awful noise and could be quite dangerous if one of those pipes swung our way. Closing the door quickly, can you believe what we did next? We headed for the elevator. Not one of us had a second thought. We are very silent, though.

On stage level we discover the orchestra is still playing and we are nearing the end of the Act.

The curtain has just come down, end of Act 1.

Luciano comes storming off, garbling in Italian.

Mr. Adler is taking him to his dressing room.

The Italian prompter has jumped out of his box at the front of the stage and is talking with great excitement to Riki – all in Italian. I am waiting for a translation. Riki reports

While the building was shaking, Luciano continued singing, edging down-stage towards me. When he had a moment, he asked in a stage whisper What in the (bleep) is going on?

Cauzzi, the usually somewhat excitable prompter, calmly replied It's an earthquake, shut up and sing!

And sing Pavarotti did.

Our conductor, Anton Coppola, was very wise. He didn't panic.

He sensed it was important to continue so no one would panic.

Nobody did, at least that's what we thought.

I was at a party last night after the opera and the host came up to me Ann, if you promise not to tell anybody I have something you might want to hear.

Okay, I promise.

Come.

We went to his study and he put on his tape recorder.

That's *Bohème*. You are naughty. It's against the rules of the Company to tape a performance.

Wait.

All of a sudden, I hear a roar covering the sound of the music.

It got stronger and stronger like many lions sounding off.

The next thing I hear is a male voice exclaiming

My God it's an earthquake.

Click, the tape recorder turned off.

My host told me that most people in the balcony evacuated.

And most returned after intermission!



Riki's and my schedule during Fall Season, September to early December, is grueling. We work seven days a week from 10 a.m. and seldom leave before 11 p.m. Sundays, we have a bit of a respite, arriving an hour before the matinee curtain at 1:30 p.m. We rotate the responsibility of receiving the 10 a.m. call from the rehearsal department on Sunday, advising us that all the singers scheduled for the matinee are up, healthy, ready to sing that afternoon. Today I am responsible. We have a matinee of *La Bohème*. Susannah Susman from the rehearsal department is on the line.

Ann, all of the singers except Luciano are up and ready to sing.

What's with Luciano?

He says he doesn't feel very well.

Please give me the telephone number of his hotel. I will call to check.

Good morning, Luciano. I understand you are not feeling well. How can I be helpful?

Oh, Ann, I don't feel well. I just don't feel well.

Would you like Dr. Gropper to visit?

Oh, Ann, I don't feel well. I just don't feel well.

I sense the best is to suggest

Luciano, why don't you tuck yourself in bed and rest some. I will be back to you.

Mr. Adler. I have just talked with Luciano. He doesn't feel well and doesn't seem to feel he wants Dr. Gropper.

Ann, meet me at the Opera House in half an hour. Get Richard and Otto and ask them to come also.

We don't have an understudy for Pavarotti. If Pavarotti is really cancelling, Mr. Adler will have to ask one of the tenors in one of the many other operas in rehearsal or already performing with us to stand in for him.

We have a sold-out house! There is much at stake.

Ann, tell me exactly what Luciano said. The four of us are now huddled around Mr. Adler's big desk.

Suzanna called and advised me he wasn't feeling well. I called his hotel and...

I don't think I have mentioned this fact. Most of Mr. Adler's telephone calls are conducted over a speaker phone. Whoever is in the room takes notes recording the proceedings and the information is filed in the individual's file. Riki is poised with paper and pen.

Good morning Luciano.

Oh, Mr. Adler, I don't feel well.

Do you have a sore throat?

No.

Did you eat something yesterday that is making you feel unwell?

No.

Did you not sleep well last night?

Oh, Mr. Adler, I don't feel well.

There is a pause and then Mr. Adler continues

Have you heard from your family in Italy?

Luciano has young children and a wife, about whom he talks a great deal.

Oh Mr. Adler, I am missing my daughter's first birthday party today.

I am so sad.

Now, we know what the problem is.

Mr. Adler is fast to respond

It is too bad you are not coming to the Opera House today.

I have a surprise for you.

Silence, a long silence, a very long silence

What is the surprise?

If I told you, it wouldn't be a surprise.

They are bantering back and forth.

Luciano is agreeing to come to the Opera House. He wants his surprise.

Mr. Adler, what's the surprise?

I will go on stage in Act Two, as the waiter bringing the bottle of champagne. Get me a costume.

What a hoot!

We have to let Joe Harris, Luciano's dresser, in on the secret.

Joe, we know he will ask for Mr. Adler as soon as he arrives. Stall Luciano, saying Mr. Adler will be down shortly.

Luciano went onstage for the first Act. But now, in the first intermission, he is plainly not happy. Mr. Adler has told him he has to wait for his surprise.

Act Two is just beginning. Riki and I are standing at the back of the auditorium with all the standees. It's a short act. Here comes Mr. Adler, entering from stage right. He seems quite assured with the tray and champagne.

Oh my God, Luciano, Dorothy and the others are gulping with mirth as they sing. It's a wonderful moment and a lesson for all of us.

Going with your intuition can really save the day.

The rest of the *La Bohème* performances are going as expected.

Placido Domingo will replace Luciano later in the Season when we bring the production back.



Next up is Beethoven's *Fidelio*. The Welsh soprano Gwyneth Jones, a tour de force on the operatic stage, and James King, who made his San Francisco debut with Spring Opera in 1961 and is now a tenor much in demand worldwide, are being staged by Paul Hager into a mysterious Wolfram Skalicki production. Dark is suitable as most of the opera takes place in a prison. The music is glorious.

Robert and Lotfi are bringing light back into the Opera House. *L'Elisir D'Amore* is a silly love story. Robert has designed the most adorable cart for the traveling salesman, Dulcamara. It has a horse sitting on a movable platform, a huge puppet horse with eyelashes that bat. And yes, those eyelashes can be seen from the back of the auditorium. Luciano Pavarotti is the star. The audiences lap it up.



Robert's gone, back to New York. We are becoming quite attached. I am glad when he's here. I hate to say it, but I have become quite needy when he's gone. That's placing a stress on our long-distance relationship. I don't know how to move out of this behavior.



Mr. Adler doesn't always reach out for the superstars to achieve his casting goals. He has a nose for emerging talent, respecting what they can handle without harming their voices. He's also wonderful at evolving a balanced cast, where no one voice is too strong or weak in comparison to others.

*The Magic Flute* is up next, and its large cast is a great example.

Stuart Burrows, Christina Deutekom, Geraint Evans, Margaret Price, Ragnar Ulfung and more under the baton of English conductor Charles Mackerras are charming our audience in a new production directed by Paul Hager and designed by Toni Businger.

*The Magic Flute* will tour to the outdoor arena at the University of California in Berkeley. No, most of the scenery is staying at the opera house. The artists don't need it. Their brilliance as an ensemble will wow.



Riki's mother and my sister Katherine are here for a week. My parents have given her the go-ahead to miss a week of first-year classes at University. (They are much less rigid with their discipline than they were with Haig and me.) Riki's mother reminds me of Bizzy. She's rich in passion and in her interest of others. She's rich in how she expresses herself, she's rich and exotic in how she dresses. She's rich in how she speaks English with a Polish accent. She's rich in her stories about her life and her great love, Artur Rodzinski. Katherine calls her Mama Rodzinski or Mama R. In fact, Katherine and Mama R are poring over Mama R's manuscript about her life with her fascinating husband. Maestro Rodzinski has been gone more than fifteen years.

English is Mama's second language. Katherine excels at English grammar. Each afternoon they meet in Riki's apartment overlooking beautiful San Francisco Bay to Angel Island. Not much time is given to the view for they are delving into Mama's life with the Maestro, page by page.

An amazing friendship is developing between those two.

Evenings these new friends join us at a rehearsal or a performance.

Katherine makes friends very easily. She and Mr. Adler have hit it off. He invites her to sit in meetings with us in the morning.



A scheduling issue is affecting IATSE. Eddie Powell, the IATSE business agent, is asking for concessions. The stagehands are working eighteen hours a day and Mr. Adler is holding firm to what he feels he needs. At the moment the discussions are by phone, speakerphone. I am taking notes.

Today their exchange moved to a new level, frustration and angry words. Those two really do go at it. Not many notes to take.

I just finished my customary walk-through in the basement, the hour before curtain. All is quiet on that front. I am standing now off stage left talking with Ivan, our head prop man. Eddie Powell has just come by. He's not here often in the evenings, but he's here tonight. I guess, Eddie's hoping the issue will get resolved. Hmmmm. Well, he and Mr. Adler are bound to meet. Mr. Adler has to cross the stage to say good evening to our glamorous star just before ° the performance. I will keep an eye on this.

Standoff. They are circling each other, like cats. Tonight is not the face-off. And there never was one. All is sweet roses once again. How that happened, I don't know.



The energy in the opera house is heavy, not because there is any particular problem, but rather it's the art we are rehearsing, Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*. Mr. Adler is planning a complete Ring Cycle three years from now. Each year we are introducing one of the famous quartet. This is my first experience with *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. *Götterdämmerung* is an opera about power, having it and not having it. It's about love, yearning for it and losing it. It's about death and resurrection. *Götterdämmerung* is sold out, four performances. Jess Thomas, whom I first heard when I was a standee in 1960 at the Vienna State Opera during my



youth hosteling days in Europe, is one of our stars. I am a standee again, this time behind the three lines of standees in the War Memorial Opera House. This sensual experience is too wonderful to miss. My evening catchup work is on hold.



We have just finished a run of *Aida* performances. Jon Vickers gloriously singing Radames. Backstage walls are not so glorious; they are a mess. The Makeup Department used Dallas dirt to cover the singers and extras playing Ethiopians. Our Ethiopians looked legit, but the walls and floors, even the elevators backstage, have become mottled brown. Dirt is everywhere! Can you believe we are just about to tour *Aida* to Sacramento?

Meantime, Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, who has produced stage designs for the company since 1958, is taking on an additional role. He will both design and direct *La Cenerentola* with Teresa Berganza as Cinderella. They have a three-week rehearsal period before moving on stage. That's long for opera, but more and more we are seeing stage directors requesting more time to rehearse their casts.

Jean-Pierre is an intense, quiet man with a mop of curly hair. He and I have become good friends for quite an unusual reason. During the technical period last summer, he came into my office Ann, would you do me a favor? I am very lonely for my wife. The only time I can reach her in Europe is eleven in the morning San Francisco time. Would you let me use your office? Of course, Jean-Pierre. I've no problem with that. I know this feeling.

The audience has gone wild for *La Cenerentola*. It is delicate, amusing, heart-rending and divinely sung. A very special evening in the theatre.



Max Azinoff, our Controller, Evelyn Crockett, Executive Assistant in the financial office, and I are beginning preparations for the negotiations next

year with the IATSE stagehands and the Musicians Union.

Evelyn is a long-term employee, about as long as Mr. Adler – over twenty years. She's a quiet, lovely lady and very good at recordkeeping. Can you believe she has participated in every union negotiation since she joined the Company? Not only we, but also the unions, rely on her history of facts, including an outline of how the financial numbers have changed over these many years. This historical information gives us a basis to start developing our initial proposals.

Max is a character. Even though he has no interest in opera as an art form, he commands respect. He came to the Opera in 1963, almost as a lark. He had been chief accountant for a large hardware company, Fuller Brush, which was bought out by a conglomerate.

Its headquarters moved elsewhere. Max retired.

He's a member of the venerable Bohemian Club, a prestigious men's club in San Francisco. Over lunch Mr. Miller, our chairman, asked Max if he would consider the Controller position at the Opera.

Max looked at me with an impish smile as he was describing this story. Ann, I thought that idea was the most ridiculous idea I had ever heard. I decided the suggestion was so outrageous I called Mr. Adler and set an appointment. Little did I know what I was getting into!

Now, you need to know that Max is a rough-cut diamond.

He calls a spade a spade. His story continued

I come from an industry that knows nothing about the opera or music business. On the day of my meeting with Mr. Adler, I arrived a few minutes early. An hour later I am still sitting there. An hour later, then another hour later, I am still sitting there. As the third hour was coming to a close, I said to hell with it and left.

Yes, Mr. Adler is notorious for keeping people waiting.

He pulled it on Max.

Mr. Adler called me a day later and apologized. He talked me into coming back in for our meeting. We met promptly. And I am still here.

I like the man.

Mr. Adler listens to Max. Max knows how to get a message across in very difficult circumstances and he does it often with a great sense of humor. It is clear both Max and Mr. Adler have respect for each other. Max also helps Mr. Adler out with the Board. Mr. Adler is the instigator of projects that need funding. We have no one on staff fundraising other than the delightful Peggy Dunlap, who oversees the donor income.



Today our rough-cut diamond with a heart of gold is sitting in my office, waiting.

No, he's not waiting for me. He meets non-American artists at my office and whisks them off for a lunch engagement. Max is a messenger, but his is a message artists aren't really anxious to hear. It's about how much of their fee will be withdrawn from their final check, for tax reasons. Max sweetens the blow by hosting them at lunch.

Max, who is it today?

Luciano Pavarotti.

That will be fun.

No, not because he isn't good company. He is. But he eats two entrées and two desserts. I feel I need to do the same.

Oh, come on Max, can't you just watch the encore?

Max is solid but not heavy. I find it amusing that his tough veneer can be crushed by food. We are laughing over this one.



Fall Season is nearly over. Two productions to go, both being directed by Paul Hager. I have to admire this man's stamina.

Debussy's *Pelleas et Melisande*, is up next. I have just had an *ah-ha!*

Mr. Adler, for the most part, hires conductors from the country where the opera originated. German operas have German conductors, Italian operas have Italian conductors and French operas have French conductors. Jean Perrison, the French conductor, is in the pit and we are in a piano dress rehearsal.

Mr. Adler is amusing us, though he's not amused. Perrison's conducting

style is a fluid one. Debussy's *Pelleas et Melisande* is fluid, dream-like. The two fit perfectly together to my ear. I guess Mr. Adler agrees or Perrison wouldn't be on the podium year after year, but Adler is frustrated. He's out of his seat, leaving his secretary and the light desk with George, Paul, JP and others, to pace the central aisle. Ach! He's stirring soup. Ach! I watch. Mr. Adler is right. The conducting style is much like stirring soup, the arms go around and around. It's hard to know what is a downbeat and what isn't. Maybe there really isn't one! Flow is the name of the game.



Home stretch, our last opera, the Czech composer, Janáček's, *Jenůfa*. It's a new production. The noted European, Leni Bauer-Ecsy, has designed a long rectangular house that seems to go up to the back stage wall, it is so long. Quite desolate! Our conductor, Bohumil Gregor, is a fiery one. His temperament matches the music, bordering on violent. We have an amazing cast: Irene Dallis, Ragnar Ulfung and Felicia Weathers.



John Priest and the stage crew are making sure we celebrate our accomplishments this fall by hosting a crab feast at lunchtime on stage. Crab season has just opened in San Francisco. The Props Department is setting up tables, mostly platform unit tops plunked down on saw horses and then covered with newspaper. Now, there are mounds of crab everywhere; you have never seen so many crabs. Wine bottles and plastic cups are readied. Mr. Adler and Nancy have joined us. So, has Eddie Powell. The toasts are underway. And the stories go on. Remember the rehearsal when... Mr. Adler loves this event. He loves his extended family. He's not given to speech-making much, he's more of a one liner, but today he's digging in and giving us a chuckle.

The crab feast is a wonderful end to an amazingly complex and successful fall season.



1970 is here and so are the meetings to redefine Spring Opera, which means Robert is here. Many a late afternoon and on into the early evening in Mr. Adler's office, we are hammering out details. In fact, last night all of us were at the Adler's home on Buena Vista hill. It's very windy up there, one almost gets blown over walking from the car to house. Inside our energy is hot with creativity as Nancy takes a large pizza out of the oven for us to munch on.

Well, we've made it. Spring Opera has a new name: Spring Opera Theater. The dates of the Season are advanced to late March/April of 1971, a year hence. All performances will be in English and take place at the Curran Theatre, a Broadway-style theatre. The focus is opera as music theatre. Robert as Artistic Advisor has suggested that the orchestra be placed at the back of the stage. The lights for orchestra would be masked by a product called Hexel, which has cells of honeycomb design allowing the sound through. The singers will follow the conductor via closed circuit television sets that will be hung from the balconies and placed in the wings, backstage. The stage will be extended over the orchestra pit to bring the performers in closer connection with the audience. This will give stage directors and designers new challenges for presentation of opera.

The repertoire for the first season is set: Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito*, Verdi's *Rigoletto*, Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* and a contemporary opera, yet to be determined. William Francisco has been engaged as stage director for *La Clemenza di Tito* and Richard Pearlman for *Don Pasquale*.

Robert is hired to design the new stage look and will design all three operas. We are embarking on a whole new adventure. Bill Godward and his fellow board members, Otto Meyer, Jimmie Schwabacher, Peter Cahill, Mrs. Ferguson, William Kent, Peter Zuber and more are off raising the funding to make it happen. They, too, are energized.

This reinvention of Spring Opera Theater (SPOT) has been invigorating. Mr. Adler seems comfortable with new ideas until he isn't, and then he shuts the door on further discussion until...

His young staff – most of us are in our late twenties/early thirties – are energetic, talented and opinionated, not at all afraid of speaking our minds. And yes, we get it when we need to stop pushing. It's all a fascinating game.



Mr. Adler and Nancy have gone to Europe for a month to uncover artists and new directing and design talents for Fall Opera. The San Francisco Symphony has taken over the War Memorial Opera House stage.

Most of our musicians are members of the Symphony. I am very happy with classical music wafting through the speakers into our offices. Max, Evelyn and I have started the union negotiations with representatives of both the stagehands and the Musician's Union. Gerry Spain, negotiator for the musicians, and I are becoming good colleagues.

Today we are waiting for others to arrive  
Ann, I am taking a law degree at Hastings.

Are you planning to become a lawyer?

Good heavens, no.

You should. You think like a lawyer. You are very methodical, clear and not afraid of a battle. Come, join me. I take the classes in the evenings.

Thanks, but no.

I didn't say this to him, but there's no way I could become a lawyer if I wanted to. Reading is not my bag. I know how much reading my father, grandfather and now brother have to do to be successful.

I'll stick with opera, thanks.



Several of our staff are studying German with Nora Norden, the singers' German coach. Maybe I would have more luck learning German.

Maybe it is only French that my head can't compute.

I went to three classes and that was it.

The grammar, oh my God, the grammar.

Nora told us tonight that the verb goes at the end of the sentence.

That's the most ridiculous thing I have ever heard. My head can't make that kind of switch. It just won't.

Ms. Norden, I am sorry, but I know German is not for me.



My personal life is changing. Robert has asked me to marry him. I had no idea he was thinking about that. I just kept wondering when I might see him next. He comes and goes, comes and goes. On his last visit he took me to a popular German restaurant nestled on the side of Telegraph Hill. At one point, Robert left the table. The wildest thing happened.

I felt my grandfather Farris, the Senator, come to me, saying  
Hello, Ann.

He all but gave me a hug but couldn't because he wasn't there really, yet he was. And then he floated away.

Robert returned, and his first words were

Would you like to marry me?

I was astounded.

Yes, I said and told him of Grandpoo's strange visit to me.

It was like Grandpoo knew this invitation was coming and supporting it.

I am very happy. I love being with Robert. My heart feels open and fulfilled when he is in my space. I think he cares for me. He is quiet in temperament, a complement to me. A very well-read man, one who bubbles with ideas and we both are passionate about opera. He's a thoughtful man and ambitious. I am happy we will be creating a life together.

Another weird thing happened that evening.

The next morning my father called, sharing

Ann, Dad died last evening.

Oh, good heavens. When?

Around 8:30 p.m. or so.

I didn't tell my father, but he died just around the time he visited me in the restaurant.

Robert is working on a new production of *Madama Butterfly* for the Vancouver Opera. Irving Gutman is directing. They are in the discussion period and Robert and I are in Vancouver. Also on his agenda is asking my father for my hand in marriage. He's really nervous. Mum and I are in her bathroom applying makeup when we hear him talking to Daddy as they walk up the stairs. Strange place for the question! Mum excitedly comments Ann, I think I just heard Robert talk marriage with your father? Is that true? Yes. Oh, I am so happy for you. He's a lovely man.

Yes, my parents are delighted for us and bought into our idea of the wedding taking place in my family's beautiful garden. Well, it's actually



MUM'S GARDEN



Mum along with Pat, our gardener who comes on Sundays, who make it beautiful. We are keeping our fingers crossed that it doesn't rain during the third week of August. It's Vancouver, you know.

At the airport, Robert drew a sketch of my wedding dress while we waited for his New York flight. It has an under-dress in a soft, soft peach and an over-apron of white lace.

Robert, it's beautiful, I love it.

He's gone now, back to New York, preparing the final touches on *Anna Bolena* for Santa Fe.



Mr. Adler is back from the Merola auditions and complaining about how poorly dressed the auditionees were

I want someone on the Merola staff this summer who will help young artists with stage deportment and dressing.

Mr. Adler, I have a suggestion: Maureen Heneghan.

Mr. Adler has her on the speakerphone. He likes what he hears.

It's her very proper English accent that's impressive.

Maureen is here for the summer and staying with me.

Nice to have company with Robert away for two months.



## [ SUMMER 1970 ]

After several reminder calls from Glynn Ross, Mr. Adler is setting a meeting with the big three: Carol Fox, Julius Rudel and Mr. Bing. It will take place in neutral territory, the New York Philharmonic Board Room.

Now, Mr. A (Robert came up with this name; none of the new staff like the name Boss) is making the calls. First to Mr. Bing.

Riki and I are poised with pen and paper in hand.

Rudy, Kurt Adler.

I am coming to New York and would like you to join me, Julius Rudel and Carol Fox at a meeting at the New York Philharmonic to talk

about developing a national organization to serve opera managers' collective issues.

Why is that necessary?

With the creation of the National Endowment for the Arts, funding for opera is now becoming possible. Opera needs an organization whose managers come from across the nation and can speak to their Congressional representatives about the importance of the arts and opera and encourage funding...

They had quite a conversation. Mr. Bing is hesitant but says he will come.

Mr. Adler just returned from a week in New York. Carol Fox and Julius Rudel showed. Mr. Bing sent Robert Herman, his Assistant Manager. Mr. Adler asked Glynn Ross to be present. He brought Robert Collinge, Manager of the Baltimore Opera.

Mr. Adler reported

Bob Herman says the Met has a concern. They feel this new organization will be in competition to Central Opera Service, a program of the Metropolitan Opera Guild staffed by Maria Rich.

I have met Maria. Her husband is a Metropolitan Opera conductor.

He was in Vancouver for the Vancouver International Festival conducting the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, which Mr. Torel directed. Maria came for the performance week. She is much respected for the archival information she keeps on opera activity throughout North America, and to a lesser extent, Europe.

Mr. Adler assured Bob that this new organization would provide different services, one focused on professional opera managers' issues, both artistic and administrative.

Mr. Adler reports

There is an agreement to support the concept. OPERA America is to become a reality.



I've been in Vancouver for the weekend making wedding arrangements with my parents. Top on our list is a minister to officiate. My first choice,

Tommy Anthony, is not available. We invite Reverend Larmouth to tea on Sunday. It's a lovely day and we are sitting on the upper patio overlooking Mum's late spring garden. The flowers for the summer have been planted and are beginning to show their color. Tea has just been served.

Daddy opens our discussion

Reverend Larmouth, this August, Ann is going to be married and we would like you to officiate. The wedding will be in our garden.

The Reverend just stopped Daddy

That is not possible. Ann cannot be married anywhere but in a church, otherwise she and her husband to be will not be married.

All three of us sat up as my father explored a little more.

It's clear the Reverend will not budge.

I can't believe it, but my father just ushered Dr. Larmouth out the front door. He hadn't even taken a sip of tea!

Thank you, Dr. Larmouth, for coming.

Next day at lunch my father presented this dilemma to his buddies at the Vancouver Club. One of them, Larry Dampier, suggested looking for a minister who will marry divorced individuals. My parents pursued and reported to me in San Francisco

Ann, we have met a minister who officiates at the church where we were married. He has no problem with a wedding in a garden.

I just learned that Mum is delivering all our wedding invitations by hand.

The Canadian Postal Workers are on strike. She had to drive to Blaine, Washington to mail the American invitations. Oh goodness!

Another fortuitous event has happened. Robert has just called Ann, I have been offered a year of teaching at Stanford. The costume professor, a friend from Yale, is going on sabbatical.

Oh, Robert. That's perfect. You will be here during the preparatory months for our new Spring Opera Theater and we will have eight months of living together.

You know, while Robert was away, I met a psychiatrist at an opera event. I liked him and made an appointment. I wanted to talk about my loneliness issue.

Ann, you need to decide if you can handle the lifestyle that Robert is offering you. From what you describe, he will be away a good portion of the year. Are you willing to accept this?

I love Robert. I will just have to try.

I just received a wonderful book from Robert. It's a book he drew along with pictures of Kauai, the island we have chosen for our honeymoon. My loneliness has gone.

I just reported to Robert: I have found a perfect place for us to live.

It's the lower flat of a 1910 two-story home on 21st Street, the sunny section of San Francisco. There's lots of space.

What about studio space?

Yes, there's a large room for your studio.

Here's what I think you will like the best. It has an undeveloped garden with a view that looks over San Francisco and to the East Bay Hills.

Robert has given his approval. I have signed on the dotted line.

Robert and I are married. The week before was one of celebration and preparation. My parents had a lovely cocktail party for us in their garden, so their friends had an opportunity to meet Robert. And one day they hired a large yacht, the *Kitten F*. We cruised with friends by Gambier Island, swimming off log booms.

There was one moment of anxiousness. Not for Robert or me, but Mum. Katherine arrived home from Europe two days before the wedding. She had just completed her responsibilities as a tour leader, her summer job during University.

I picked her up at the airport. It's clear she is claiming her independence and has adopted a hippie dress mode: long curly hair and a tie-dyed long dress in mauves and peach. And she's stumbling along on crutches. She had fallen and hurt her foot.

Mum was appalled when we walked in the door.



ROBERT AND ANN; ROBERT AND ANN WITH NANCY AND KH ADLER  
JOHN CONKLIN, KATHERINE FARRIS AT WEDDING REHEARSAL

Of course, it all worked out.

It was a beautiful wedding, the weather cooperated, and Mum's garden never looked more beautiful. A bank of blue, purple and pink hydrangeas backing the lower patio was our background for the service. Robert and John Conklin, Robert's best man, delineated a sacred space, an altar made from white ribbons on stakes in front of that mass of gentle color.

Two musicians, guitar and flute, played throughout the service.

Robert's parents and his sister Dorothy, Riki, Mr. Adler and Nancy, Maureen, Ghita Hager and others came from California to join my Vancouver friends and family. Yes, my cousin's children came in their pretty party outfits. I loved the energy they brought with them. They reminded me of Thursdays at Nana's when we were their age. And a half-hour before the wedding, Nursie Leith arrived to wish me well.

I had no idea she was still alive. All dressed up with her signature, lots of rouge on her checks. We had a precious moment. I loved her so much growing up. It was a treat to be with her on this special day.

Robert surprised me with our wedding rings. They were made by a goldsmith in Santa Fe and contained both a smooth part and a rough part, alternating around the ring. Quite beautiful.

Uncle John, my godfather, came from New York. He read the telegrams after my father delivered a beautiful speech to the bride, me.

When Robert and I returned to San Francisco after our honeymoon in Hawaii, my parents and I were chatting on the phone. Daddy told me that Mr. Adler came up to him after his speech and said  
If I ever should marry again, I will ask you to give the toast to the bride.



Now, we are back, and Fall Season is two weeks away from opening.

Max, Evelyn and I spent most of the summer negotiating with the Musicians Union and IATSE. Mr. Adler is now involved.

There are a few issues where he is holding firm

I cannot agree to the musicians leaving the orchestra pit at the end of the opera before the conductor takes his curtain bow. It is not only

a discourtesy to the performers, conductor and audience but also, I want the musicians to be present to receive their accolades as the conductor receives his. I am paying for the time they are in the pit, performing or not. This issue seems to be a sticking issue, or perhaps Gerry's ploy to get the Opera to agree to their money package. We'll see.

Bill Diedrich from Pillsbury, Madison and Sutro, a prestigious law firm, has joined us. A complex man with a huge heart and an ability to storm a meeting like I have never seen, has taken over the negotiations. Gerry Spain is loving it. Only problem is we are against a deadline. It's now two days before opening night. The contract expires today.

It never rains but it pours. Regine Crespin, our opening night Tosca, is ill. Dorothy Kirsten to the rescue! Lotfi has spent five hours today getting her into the staging. He just came into my office

Ann, Dorothy is such a pro. She has it down pat. You watch tonight. It will all happen as intended.

Yea, we are opening. The musicians settled and we are producing eleven operas in three months. The music is divine. The schedule, as always, is crazy.

And I feel safe. Not just in my work, for I always seem to feel safe there. But personally. I am married to a kind man whose interests are mine. I don't have to worry about dating. That is behind me.

Mr. Adler's uncanny ability to unearth and engage talent before they are singing in other major opera houses continues. Yes, we also are having our challenges. Jon Vickers was scheduled to sing his first Tristan with Birgitte Nilsson as Isolde. Well, he's just cancelled, a week before opening, stating he doesn't feel ready to sing the role.

Wolfgang Windgassen, a much-respected Wagnerian artist, has just flown in from Germany.

That drama has gone, now it's about artistry. Miss Nilsson and Mr. Windgassen have sung these roles together many times. You can't believe how beautiful each performance is. Our sold-out audience is glued to their seats, enraptured. Standing room is four rows deep.

Riki and I backup those standees. We, too, are taken in with the beauty of this experience.

*Salome* is in rehearsal. There is much excitement and sadness around this production, even though this version premiered here two years ago. It was created for Anja Silja by Wieland Wagner who died unexpectedly before it could be realized in San Francisco. Robert had spent a summer at Beyreuth several years ago, in the master class program overseen by Friedelinde Wagner, his sister. With this experience Mr. Adler asked Robert to supervise the design elements of the *Salome* production in San Francisco. Everything is being done to make it easy for Anja. Well, not everything, and I am the bearer of the news that annoys her Anja, the City Manager who oversees the Opera House does not allow any parking in the Courtyard by the stage door. I fear if you leave your rental car there, it will be towed. Anja paid no attention to my warning. And guess what, the gods were with us. It wasn't towed.

Anja's *Salome* performance matched all that we had heard and read about. The critic Harold Rosenthal says it best: "Her voice is not beautiful by any stretch of the imagination, but it is clearly projected, and every phrase carries its overtones—psychological not musical—which suggest the child-like degenerate, over-sexed princess in all too clear a manner. Her nervous, almost thin body is never still; she rolls on her stomach and on her back; she crawls, she slithers, she leaps, she kneels. There is no denying that this is one of the great performances of our time."

We are in November and a second set of dress rehearsals for *Tosca*. James Levine is conducting, Placido Domingo singing. Mr. Adler just announced to us sitting around the light table in the dark auditorium These are two talents!





With the season done, Mr. Adler and Nancy are in Palm Springs for a week of rest. I am taking a day off playing homemaker, painting our living room soft peach. It's exciting to be creating a home. Next purchase will be a sofa bed. Katherine is coming for two weeks at Christmas. We are thrilled. Robert's garden is beginning to bloom. The temperate climate makes it possible to grow flowers year-round. The dirt is now a lawn and we have fresh lettuce. He even has planted artichokes. Fuchsias adorn the side of the house. Each bobbly flower in different colors of mauve, purple, pink, peach and white seem to have a different story to tell. Robert, I am going to create a story using the fuchsias as my characters. Will you illustrate?

Sure.

I wonder if we will ever have any time to make this happen.

Our Christmas tree with its white lights and many-colored baubles sits in the corner by the floor-to-ceiling window looking out on Robert's garden. I am making chestnut stuffing for our turkey. My fingers are getting bloodied. The brittle skins are so hard to remove! Next time,

I won't be so authentic!

Ann, it's time to go to Grace Cathedral for Christmas Eve service.

Wait, I need to put Band-Aids on!

It's a foggy night, very mysterious, as we walk up the steady grade of stairs leading to the large imposing east doors of Grace Cathedral. They are replicas of the famed Doors of Paradise from the Baptistery in front of the Duomo in Florence.

Robert, Katherine, look. There's a live nativity scene. Look at their beautiful costumes for Joseph, Mary, the Wise Men.

They even have a real baby, baby Jesus.

Ann, we need to go. The service is just beginning.

Okay, okay.

As we enter the large Gothic cathedral, it's jammed. We squeeze into three seats in the last row.

The nativity scene has moved in. They are sitting down on the floor of the wide central aisle near us.

Katherine is giggling

Look, the ushers in their black suits are trying to get them to move. There are two shows going on, one at the altar and the other at the back of church. It's quite beautiful, in fact!



1971 has arrived. All our organizational efforts are focused on Spring Opera Theater. Rehearsals begin in the middle of February with openings in mid-March. Bill Godward and the SPOT board have done a great job raising the funds necessary to make this all happen. Mr. Adler decided to invite Center Opera, a new opera company based at Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, to present a collage piece as our contemporary opera in SPOT: *Faust Counter Faust* by John Gessner and Wesley Balk. John Ludwig is the company's manager. John and Wesley were both at Yale at the same time as Robert and me.



Today is a sad one for San Francisco Opera. Robert Watt Miller, Chairman of the San Francisco Opera, passed away last night. Mr. Adler is deeply affected by his death. Mr. Miller admired Mr. Adler and knew how to handle him. They had great respect for one another over these last twenty-five years.

Mr. Adler is assembling a memorial service and has invited Leontyne Price to sing. That's an honor she is happy to fulfill. Mr. Adler and the San Francisco Opera with Robert Watt Miller, President, were the first to present her in an opera house in the United States. In 1957, a black artist was not a common occurrence on the opera stage. A few weeks later that season, Ms. Price sang her first Aida, stepping in for an ailing Italian artist. Life in the Opera House is very somber these days.



Mr. Adler has just come in from lunch. Both Riki and I have been summoned by our buzzers. Mr. Adler is exercised. David Gockley is in town. He did not call to advise me he was coming.

Riki and I look at Mr. Adler in amazement. Neither Richard nor I have met David Gockley but know that he is a young adventurous opera producer who has recently taken over as Manager of the Houston Grand Opera in Texas.

Mr. Adler, how do you know he's here?

I saw him on Van Ness and McAllister as I was driving back from lunch. It is very rude of him not to be in touch.

Riki and I have learned that when Mr. Adler becomes growly, it can be that his supremacy is being challenged. This is the current situation.

Best to divert!

Mr. Adler, I have had a call from Harry Polland and it needs your attention.

Riki and I sit down to begin working with him.

The secretary is calling through on the speakerphone

Mr. Adler, David Gockley is on the line.

Drama over.



Robert is doing some supernumerary research for Richard Perlman, director of *Don Pasquale* in SPOT. He needs supers who aren't afraid of acting. They will make an entrance through a trunk placed over a trap in the stage floor during the overture.

Ann, do you remember the nativity group at the Cathedral?

They call themselves the Cockettes, a hippie group of gays and others who love to explore the extreme in costume. They will be our supers.

The Curran Theatre has a very different look. The stage is extended out over the orchestra pit, the closed-circuit TV monitors are installed all over the theatre, both backstage and front of house. Dennis Russell Davies, one of our conductors, is testing out how he is going to communicate with the artists now that the musicians are placed behind a scrim upstage. There is much tension, for this setup is presenting a new performance discipline for the artists and crew. We have many rehearsals scheduled on the stage to ensure everyone gets comfortable in this new environment. Elisa Ronstadt, my former Yale roommate, is stage managing *Rigoletto*.

Ann, you missed a good moment today. The stress hit the stagehands. They got into a water fight, taking the fire hoses off the backstage wall. You know, I didn't even try to stop it. It broke the tension.

It's Sunday and I am just returning to the Curran from shopping down the street. For some reason, the front door of the theatre is open. Better see what is up. What's that smell? I know, marijuana.

Robert, there's a heavy smell of marijuana.

Are the Cockettes in the theatre?

Yes.

Can you please check?

I closed the front door of the Curran Theatre as he disappeared backstage and into the basement where the Cockettes are awaiting their opportunity to enter as Brunnhilde or Dr. Faust, etc. through the trap door and trunk. Our dress rehearsal of *Don Pasquale* begins in a half hour.

He's back.

Yes, they were. It's handled.

Thank heavens! Mr. Adler is due to arrive shortly.

Isn't it interesting that no one in the theatre smelled it? Or maybe they did and thought it amusing. I have opened all the front doors!

Robert and Bill Francisco have had a wonderful time developing the *La Clemenza di Tito* production. Frederica Von Stade, the beautiful, lithe artist with a gentle soaring voice, is our star. She's a great hit. The new staging approach is working for the performers, audience and the critics. Spring Opera Theater is on its way. It is very gratifying to have been a part of making this happen.



During this very busy time, Mr. Adler's birthday came. Margaret and Peter Botto, our Box Office Manager, had decided to give him a piglet, Persephone. The reason Riki recently (2018) shared: It seems that Mr. Adler, in discussions with Riki and others – not me – would talk to a mythical pig named Persephone when an answer to a question couldn't



KURT HERBERT ADLER AND PERSEPHONE [PHOTO BY MARGARET NORTON]

be reached. Mr. Adler, turning to his left, would say to the open space, Persephone, what do you think about this...? And then their conversation would continue.

Obviously, both Margaret and Peter had been in a meeting with Mr. Adler when he used Persephone as a way to illuminate some dilemma. They thought it was very amusing and decided to celebrate it. They went to a pig farm and purchase a piglet. When we all gathered in the conference room adjacent to Mr. Adler's office for his birthday celebration, hidden under a cloth was a cage with a piglet. Well, you can imagine the hilarity in the room when the gift was given. The Adlers loved it.

That night we had a performance at the Curran and, of course, we all were there. When Robert and I got home around midnight, the phone was ringing. It was Mr. Adler  
Where is Persephone?

What do you mean?

Persephone is not in the conference room.

I don't know but I will try to find out.

I knew the name of the bar that Peter might have gone to and called.

Sure enough, he was there.

I asked

Do you have any idea where Persephone might be?

Yes, I took him back to the farm. I didn't think it was a good idea to let him be in the conference room all night.

Oh, thanks.

I called the Adlers back and reported.

The next afternoon, they headed for a visit to the farm.



Next up is *Rigoletto*. I am sitting at the back of the auditorium not far from Rose Goldstein as the dress rehearsal begins.

The orchestra is in full blasting form; so is Mr. Adler. He is very agitated.

He's pacing the aisles. Nope, he's heading for me. He's yelling

Who told me to hire these artists?

Stunned by this question, I had to raise my voice for my response to be heard over the orchestra

No one, Mr. Adler, you made that decision!

He has a look of fury.

No one speaks to me like that.

I don't even think twice but blurt out

Oh, yes, they do, I do.

There he goes, storming down the aisle.

A colleague across the aisle asks

Want to go for a drink?

Yup.

We are driving home and I need to share a painful decision

Robert, let me tell you what happened during the dress rehearsal...

That's intense.

The time has come for me to resign from the Opera. As much as

I love the work, I don't love the Adler behavior. Even though I know

he is yelling at himself, this is unacceptable. He isn't going to change.

It's his nature.

Do what you have to do, I have two more shows to get open.

I need to keep focused.

I will tell him in the morning.

Mr. Adler, I have made a decision.

And what may that be?

I am leaving the Opera.

You can't do that, you are the only one around here who will yell at me.

That is exactly why I am leaving.



Ruth Felt, who has been on staff at the UCLA Center for the Performing Arts for several years, is now engaged to take my position. I have spent the last month training her. She will do a wonderful job. She has a quiet personality, and is very smart. I think she will be a good collaborator with Mr. Adler.

I feel relief and regret. I love working at the opera, I love the work I was engaged to perform, I love being around music, I love the friends I have made. I love learning and collaborating with Mr. Adler. He has been an important teacher, offering me the opportunity to grow, including how to stand up to him. Now, it's time for me to be away from the tension that he naturally creates. I hear his feelings before his words. The combination of the two has become tiring on a day-to-day basis. Strange though, I sense Mr. Adler, Nancy and I will remain good friends.



KATHERINE FARRIS, ROBERT DARLING, ANN FARRIS DARLING  
EACH ONE WEARING A SCARF REPRESENTING ONE OF THE WARDS IN SIENA

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# ON THE ROAD



[ CHICAGO 1972 ]

**R**OBERT AND I ARE JOURNEYING TOGETHER. He's busy designing and installing the scenery for productions in different parts of the country. Chicago is our first stop where he and stage director Lotfi Mansouri are re-mounting Verdi's *Don Carlos*, a production that opened in Santa Fe last summer.

Initially, I thought it would be fun to delve into a project "on the road." The one I chose, expanding the existing international dictionary of theatrical terms, became too overwhelming. A portable typewriter doesn't cut it with the logistical complications. There is much too much information. This project needs an office or home with proper technical support.

So, I am a tourist in Chicago. Michigan Avenue, this broad "Magnificent Mile," a more elegant version of New York's Madison Avenue, is window-shopping heaven. A tiny linen store filled with Italian hand-stitched white embroidered towels, packaged sheets, puffy comforters, dainty pillow

slips is my favorite. And museums! Oh, my goodness! This city has spectacular museums. I find myself being drawn back day after day to the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist exhibits at the Art Institute of Chicago. They have their own hall, which is dimly lit except for the art. I can't help wallowing in the vivid colors of these paintings. In Van Gogh's *The Bedroom*, I am in that room; I can feel myself wandering, well maybe not wandering, it's too tiny, but living in that sparsely furnished colorful room.

We are living in an apartment hotel just off Michigan Avenue, close to downtown which includes an amazing grocery store. Each day I drop by to pick fresh fish or meat or vegetables to cook for dinner that night. It is fun just being a wife.

I am not divorced from opera. Robert's rehearsals keep me filled with the glorious voices of Fiorenza Cossotto, the Italian mezzo who is currently storming the operatic world with her powerful voice, not to mention Pilar Lorengar, the Spanish soprano whose broad range of voice has no restrictions, and yes, the amazing Bulgarian bass Nicolai Ghiaurov. However, the first challenge is getting into the opera house stage door. It's so windy on North Wacker Drive that pulling the door requires the strength of a sports competitor. When I achieve that goal, I am literally blown in. Quite an experience!

Lyric Opera of Chicago has a powerhouse of a General Director, Carol Fox. The primary flavor of her opera season is Italian. Maestro Bruno Bartoletti, a quiet, intense man with a very friendly smile, is both her chief artistic advisor and conductor. Pino Donati, an elegant tall Italian, provides business advice. The musical coaches and prompters also hail from Italy as does, most often, the scenery and costumes. You don't hear a great deal of English backstage. Even the daily rehearsal schedule is published in Italian. And, yes, the very nature of Italians means there's lots of audible drama about.

Carol's assistant, Ardis Kranik, a physically round, full-voiced wonderful lady with a great sense of humor, keeps the operation moving. She and I were in frequent telephone contact during my San Francisco Opera days, chatting about union or contract issues.

There is a characteristic difference between San Francisco Opera and Lyric. Lyric is very formal. San Francisco and Toronto are more family-like, more intimate despite the Germanic disciplined leadership. Perhaps the formality in Chicago is dictated by the architecture of the Civic Opera Auditorium. It's cavernous, stretching forever back on the main floor.

Carol is pleased with Robert's work and has invited him to design a new production of Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera*, which will open a year hence. Tito Gobbi, the famous and much respected Italian baritone, will direct. Robert is thrilled. Tito is also in Chicago, performing Baron Scarpia in *Tosca*. They have begun their conceptual discussions.

## NEW YORK

Robert has a tiny apartment in Greenwich Village, in a coach house behind Tharon Musser, the lighting designer's home, on Cornelia Street. Every inch of this space is accounted for. While Robert meets with Bill Francisco, the stage director of *Mahagonny* for Spring Opera next March. I am visiting with friends and hanging out in art galleries. When he's not working, we explore New York together. He has different favorite haunts (mostly downtown NYC) than I. It's fun discovering them.

## DENVER

Christmas in Denver. The Denver Lyric Opera scheduled the opening of the world premiere of Dominick Argent's Colonel *Jonathan the Saint* on New Year's Eve! This production never had a chance. Robert's scenery was not built in time, the rehearsals were chaotic, and almost no one showed up on New Year's Eve for the opening. Moral of the story for

a General Director of an opera company: Don't take on what you aren't ready to handle and don't schedule a world premiere on New Year's Eve!

### SAN FRANCISCO

Back in San Francisco for winter and early spring. Robert is up to his ears designing several new productions. He is even taking Italian lessons. We will be in Italy in late spring when he selects the costumes for *Un Ballo in Maschera* in Florence.

I am learning more about myself. If I am very busy, either working or being with friends, or visiting art galleries or sewing or cooking – life goes very well for me. However, sometimes I am very uncomfortable living with myself when I am by myself. I feel overwhelmed by a dark sensation. I know this feeling well. It started when I was a child. And it really shows up when I decide to read. I can't keep on the written page. I go up and out there, above my head – away from words. This makes me very sad. And, the behavior can be interruptive to the flow of my marriage. I am not good company when this feeling takes over. Perhaps what that eye doctor told me ten years ago is true when he commented It could be you have an emotional issue to address. Well, now I am in his camp. Yes, I do believe there are emotional issues blocking a free flow to my life. I am trying another psychiatrist who wears brown suits. Not attractive, especially when you have to look at them for an hour.

Darn, his process doesn't seem to be much help. All I do is talk and that doesn't make me feel better. His philosophy is You will discover what is going on.

Well, I am not buying that anymore. My old pattern of escaping, spacing out, going away, going up and out there seems more effective. To be honest, I know it isn't the solution, but it gives more relief than just talking to someone with no progress.

I got a lead today, from a lady I met in a bookstore. She asked  
Have you read any of Jane Robert's *Seth* books?  
No, why are you so interested in them?  
They describe human life in different realities.  
I am not sure what you mean. Is this an example?  
And I explained my going out and up there. Is that another reality?  
Could be! I suggest you read *The Nature of Personal Reality*  
and see what you think.

This book has my attention, many new concepts to consider, including  
how the content of this book came to be written. The author, Jane Roberts,  
is a channel for information coming from another source. I know this  
seems weird, but it's true. She accesses this source after going into a  
meditative state. This blank state, space, allows universal knowledge  
that lies beyond consciousness to flow into her mind. Mrs. Robert  
speaks this information and her husband records it.  
How fascinating!

There's a rather sobering comment in the book  
One can change one's experience by altering beliefs about yourself  
and your physical existence.  
Well, I don't know how to accomplish that. I wish I knew where  
that woman I met in the bookstore lived. I sure would like to talk  
with her about all this.  
I did find it interesting to observe that reading this book was not  
as difficult as others seem to be. Hmm, I wonder why?

Robert and Bill Francisco Spring Opera Theater's production of Bertold  
Brecht's *Mahagonny* has just opened. Now, I know a wife may not have a  
clear perspective, but I think Robert's work on this production was the  
best he has done to date. He has found a new style, simple, clear,  
and supportive to the work. It was great to see that the critics agreed.  
Guess what? I worked briefly for Mr. Adler during the Spring Opera  
Theater season as publicity director while he was interviewing for someone

to fill the position. It was fun. I summoned up all that I learned from Hugh Pickett in Vancouver all those years ago. Get the story out! I got the sports page involved. We had a singer, Gwendolyn Jones, who works out with weights! *The Chronicle* newspaper sports editor was intrigued. The item hit a different market. Who knows if it sold tickets? These three weeks were a good stint for me. I discovered I don't miss the day-to-day at the Opera. Adler has engaged Robert to work with Francis Ford Coppola on an American premiere of an opera based on *The Visit of the Old Lady*. It's scheduled in the Fall Season. And, Robert has another world premiere in San Diego in the late fall, Alva Henderson's *Medea* with Irene Dallis. Ghita Hager is directing. He's busy at his drafting board preparing designs. Operatic music fills our flat. I love that.

#### FLORENCE

Robert and I are in Florence, he to select costumes from a rental house for *Un Ballo in Maschera*. That changed quickly. Carol Fox called the day Robert and I arrived in Florence, very excited. She had just come from lunch in Chicago where she had found a donor who committed the funds for new costumes for *Un Ballo in Maschera*. Instead of being in Florence to rent the costumes, Robert will spend the next two and a half weeks designing them. They will be built in Rome.

Katherine, my wonderful sister, who has spent the year in Paris, has joined us. The three of us have set down temporary roots in a small 14th-century Renaissance-style palace, Monna Lisa Pensione, not far from the Duomo. Robert has placed his drawing and painting tools on a table under a tree in their charming garden and is lost in his creative space designing costumes.

Katherine, who has been studying at the Sorbonne, and I are rediscovering Florence. It's fifteen years since I visited when youth hostelting through Europe just before Yale. Katherine is much more informed about Florence. For the last several years, she has been shepherding high school

students from Canada as they tour Europe. She knows the details. We are having a great time standing before an artifact while she shares her knowledge. I love that Katherine and I are so bonded with one another. During her first eight years of her life we established a friendship, a closeness, a love for one another that continues to blossom each time we see one another. I value it deeply.

Lunchtime we check in with Robert at the Pensione. The chef makes each meal an event, introducing a different kind of pasta. Today is Capelli d'Angelo, angel hair pasta, with a very light sauce and a delicious green salad to accompany it. Yesterday it was Conchiglie, sea-shaped pasta colored green from spinach. The day before it was Farfalle, bow tie pasta. And, of course, they all have different sauces. I suppose if we had pasta three hundred and fifty-five days of the year, we might tire of it. Not now.

Dominick Argento and his lovely wife are in residence in Florence for six months. He's composing his next opera. At night they are introducing us to restaurants where Italians eat! Yes, you can imagine, it's gourmet delight. Last night they gave us a sightseeing tip:

Go to the Forte di Belvedere on the other side of the Arno River.

There is a beautiful Henry Moore sculpture exhibit.

Late in the afternoon Robert put away his art supplies and sketches.

The three of us walked the bridge across the Arno River, a bare trickle this time of year. Hiking up a hill topped with massive walls that have been opened to create entrances, we discover the top is a plateau.

Strategically placed about this protected space are twenty or more powerful Henry Moore sculptures, large soft stone grey/black/blue shapes silhouetted against the warm pinks, oranges and off-whites of Florence's historic buildings bathed in the setting sun. Oh, we are in aesthetic heaven!

Tito Gobbi is in residence this week in a villa outside of Florence teaching a master class for young opera baritones in the beginning stages of their careers. The ballroom is the classroom: a long rectangular elegant room filled with a gaggle of heavy Italian antique carved furniture.

One wall is lined with tall windowed doors opening to a patio and a stunning view of the hills around Florence. The sun is still high; the varying greens of nature are vibrant.

Tito is re-enacting his *Rigoletto*, a court jester, a role he has sung with great success in every major opera house. This opera requires a powerful voice and detailed acting skills, both of which Tito more than excels at. The four apprentice baritones have taken over, acting/singing the scene. One of them is very comfortable with Tito's approach. The others are not. I have a sense they may not have enough experience yet to know how to build their character, or they might have imagined a different approach to the character and do not feel comfortable exploring his point of view. Whatever, it's been an interesting late afternoon.

Robert took a Sunday off and the three of us took the train to Siena for the Palio. Dating back centuries, it's one of Siena's most important traditions. Ten horses and riders, bareback and dressed in the historic costumes, represent ten of the seventeen city wards. We had been warned. Get there early.

We did and sat on the ground just inside the temporary fence within Siena's city square. Around us were Italians who shared with us that just before the race, the fence would be rushed with young athletic sorts trying to frighten us away from the fence so they could take our place. We and our Italian friends were going to have none of that. Following their instructions, we ducked when the jumping bodies came at us and hung on to the fence for dear life. We survived, and the race was priceless. The costumes, the horses, the colorful banners depicting each ward went around and around us. I felt very sorry for the horses; their riders pushed them and some jammed into walls. Thousands were screaming. It was extraordinary.

Robert is getting to the home stretch. The designs are taking shape. Amelia, Oscar, Renato, Ricardo, Ulrica, Tom and Sam are now clothed. He's working on the chorus costumes. I think he is enjoying himself, even though there is a lot of stress to do so much work in a short time.



My darkness has reappeared. Last night I had a dream. Nothing seemed to be going right. My confusion, a frustrating gnawing internal turmoil has taken over. It means I have been difficult to be with today. There seems to be nothing I can do about it. I don't know how to live with myself. Now it reminds me of when I was doing poorly in school at age twelve. Everything seemed to be in confusion. Now, I feel like a victim. What is going on?

Robert, I feel better tonight. It is really annoying to have all this inner turmoil when on the outside my life is full of so much that is wonderful.

## ROME

Two weeks have gone by very quickly, and we are in Rome. It's a whirlwind. Tirelli Costume House is building the costumes for *Un Ballo in Maschera*. Housed in a gorgeous white Italian villa with a wide, winding staircase leading from an expansive entrance hallway, we are now sitting in an elegant high-ceilinged room upstairs. The activity is what I expected – frantic. Assistants are running in and out with trays of espresso and samples of fabrics. Pino Donati, Carol Fox's right hand in Italy, is with us watching.

Our next stop is a fabric warehouse with long cavernous aisles of shelves reaching twenty feet up with ladders running alongside. As Robert spies a fabric, an assistant is up the ladder to retrieve the bolt of fabric. Wouldn't you know that Robert just spied a dark blue wool, and of course it is on the top shelf? Long tables are now filled with Robert's selections. He is combing through one after another with his designs nearby. I do admire his ability to know what texture and color will work.

Next stop, the cobbler. We are darting through the dark narrow Roman streets in Pino's car and soon stop on a dime outside a tiny building. Inside, there is an atelier with leather in all colors, soft and beautiful, everywhere. I can see it's hard to organize leather. It doesn't do that. Clearly, it's much happier hanging rather scraggly about. *Un Ballo in*

*Maschera* is a somber show. The palette of leather is somber. Too bad, I would love a pair of period red leather shoes to wear.

Our time in Rome, for the moment, is complete. We will return when the fabric swatches have been attached to the drawings. Robert needs to give final approval.

#### PIRMASENS, GERMANY

Robert has extended family here. And this small German town is an ideal location to purchase costumes for *The Visit of the Old Lady*. The opera is set in the fictional Central-European town of Gullen, sometime in the first part of the 20th Century. The Old Lady grew up in this small town and left in disgrace. She comes back a wealthy woman to take revenge on her former lover. It's the chorus, the townsfolk and other male characters: the mayor, the police chief, the minister, and the trainmen for whom we are shopping.

Today we found a shop, much like Woolworth's. Our goal is *hausfrau*



TRAIN JACKETS FOR *THE VISIT OF THE OLD LADY*

dressess. Robert wants varying patterns and colors to make an interesting palette on stage. The style doesn't much matter, the look he wants is ample in size, hanging down, quite long with little shape. We have bought two outfits in varying sizes for thirty-five women choristers including *hausfrau* hats, some cloche-like, some with a little brim and on and on. Oh, and we are also buying patterned shirts. Yes, and pants for men.

Robert, I think the shop sellers are a bit surprised that I am not trying any of these dresses on. Let's explain.

Robert speaks some German. His listeners are fascinated and have given him a suggestion where he might find authentic trainmen's clothing.

Success. A retired trainman is willing to sell his uniforms. I think the fact that they would be a part of the costumes in an opera in San Francisco piqued his interest.

I had an attack of my dark feelings this morning. I just feel down and unhappy. There doesn't seem to be any reason. What can bring this on so suddenly? I know not. I feel so badly to be in such a gloomy mood! One might say all this is happening because I am not busy, working. That is not the case. I am happy not working. This emotional up and down status is a continual paradox.

We bought four large cheap suitcases in Pirmasens. Three of them we jammed full of the men's clothing and shipped to San Francisco by air cargo. The other suitcase is coming with me. It's crammed with the *hausfrau* dresses. I am carrying the hats, jammed one into another. Quite a sight!

## RETURNING TO SAN FRANCISCO

A day in Rome for Robert to finalize the fabrics at Tirelli's. I shopped for a round of fresh Parmesan cheese, Riki's request to us just before we left San Francisco.

Deplaning at Kennedy Airport in New York I asked

Robert, how are we going to take these hats through customs?  
You are the crazy hat lady.  
He just plunked ten on my head, some straw, some fabric,  
some dark, some light.

The customs officials didn't seem concerned at all with my unusual look.  
We whisked through. Robert is going on to Santa Fe to report to  
Carol Fox. She summers there. I am continuing on to San Francisco.

Mr. Adler, I am back.  
I am lying on my bed. My feet swollen from the long trip are elevated  
on a pillow because they are still puffy.  
We have shopped most of *The Visit of the Old Lady* chorus costumes.  
The women's clothing came as my luggage and there's no duty.  
The rest we shipped and will be here shortly. The Opera will,  
in all likelihood, be charged duty as they are not personal luggage.  
In typical Adler fashion, he said  
Ann, find a way to avoid that charge.

I just had two calls. United Airlines informed me that the shipment of  
suitcases has arrived. And moments later one of Mr. Adler's secretaries called  
We have just received in the morning mail an announcement from  
OPERA America. They have concluded an arrangement with US Customs.  
Any costumes coming into the country either as a purchase or a rental  
come duty free!

## MONTREAL

My father is completing his tenure as President of the Canadian Bar.  
We are here to celebrate with him and to listen to his speech on  
the final night. He is a respected orator.

Last night I was chatting, in French, with the President of the French Bar.  
Can you believe it? I was conversing passably in French.



DOROTHY FARRIS, JOHN FARRIS,  
Background: HAIG FARRIS, KATHERINE FARRIS

This morning my father asked  
Did you have a conversation  
in French with the French  
Bar President?

Yes.

He said that you speak  
French beautifully!

Now, what was that all about?  
Why did my brain work okay?  
Yes, I had a glass of wine but...?

## CHICAGO

Opening night of *Un Ballo in Maschera*. All went well until the middle of the second act. During the scene change, a piece of scenery was turned backwards when the curtain went up. Carol Fox was furious – so was Robert.

## VANCOUVER

My father has just been appointed Chief Justice of the Appeal Court in British Columbia. We are in Vancouver for the swearing-in ceremony. I can't understand why my father is taking this step. He loves an argument, presenting cases in court. Now that part of him will be buried. And, he won't be able to socialize with so many of his friends who are lawyers. Conflict of interest, you know.  
This seems an odd step to me. Well, I hope he's happy.

## SAN FRANCISCO

*The Visit of the Old Lady*, the opera, was not a critical success. However, both Francis and Robert received good notices.

## SAN DIEGO

It's December and the scenery for Alva Henderson's *Medea*, a world premiere is loading in. The General Director and Conductor, Walter Herbert, just asked Ann, would you like to attend the first orchestra reading of *Medea*? I would love to, Maestro, thank you.

We, Alva and I, and all the musicians, seventy plus are jammed into a rehearsal hall. Maestro Herbert has announced We will play the piece through, stopping only for an intermission. I want Alva to hear his piece as a whole. The music is unfolding. Its dramatic roll befits the drama of Medea's life. I am drawn right into it. It keeps building. It's downright powerful. Not only am I affected, so are the musicians. They just gave him a rousing round of applause.

The opera is sold out. Irene Dallis is a frighteningly effective Medea. Robert's work is excellent. *The Los Angeles Times* critic, Martin Bernheimer wrote Henderson is, clearly, an extraordinary talent, a strategist who can cope with sprawling forms, a musician with an obvious flair for the theatrical.

## KANSAS CITY [ JANUARY 1973 ]

We have landed in a city where the corn grows as high as an elephant's eye. The open spaces, green fields, the Nelson Art Gallery and the Country Club Plaza are some of its selling features. We are working for the Kansas City Lyric Opera. Russell Patterson, General Director and Conductor is an enthusiast. He and his board have achieved great respect for their opera season. Robert has been offered the opportunity to direct and design Richard Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman*. I am overseeing production and assist in marketing. We've decided that we will make Kansas City our base for nine months. Our San Francisco apartment is sublet again.



SCENE SHOP AT AIRPORT  
ROBERT DARLING, LEE, RICK AND MADELINE BENOIT

We have an adorable little house on Janssen Place in an old section of Kansas City. On one side we overlook a rolling hill of green, green grass dotted with deciduous trees. On the other side is a beautiful boulevard and lovely large homes built at the beginning of the 20th Century.

Two couples, Madeline and Hector and Lee and Rick, have taken us under their wings. The husbands are

both doctors. And a Yale crony, Jim Gohl, is nearby teaching stage design. Together we are exploring Missouri and Kansas.

I am enjoying my work. The production part comes easily; the marketing is a challenge, a good one. Robert is here most of the time. He's deep into planning *The Flying Dutchman*, along with other design work for other companies. The Lyric has rented a warehouse at the airport for the construction of the scenery. Robert spends many hours there and comes home very happy. We are also enjoying more new friends who are subscribers to the Lyric and befriended us.

On Good Friday we observed that the hill adjacent to where we were living was a mass of dandelions. Robert said Great, we are going to make dandelion wine.

Off he went to purchase the makings required, and all day Saturday we picked dandelions. They were put into a vat and left to ferment. The physical result was we had yellow hands. It was fun and several months later we enjoyed dandelion wine with dinner.



ROBERT DARLING AND DANDELIONS

Just when the path is smooth,  
there's a jolt.

This time it's Robert.

Ann, I just had an argument  
with the President of the Board  
of an opera company.

What happened?

I offended him. The result is I  
am not allowed to participate in  
the setup in the theatre of my new  
show for him next November.

Wow, Robert.

Then I remembered Robert  
had shared, a year earlier,

a similar circumstance with another colleague, this time a stage director.

Robert is a soft-spoken man. It's hard to believe he has harsh words.

I know he can push too hard and/or too long for what he wants.

I didn't know that he could go beyond what is reasonable and offend.

I am in Mum mode

Robert, what is done, is done.

It's clear to me now that both of us have inner behaviors needing help.

Robert's willing to go with me to a psychiatrist.

The process is the same. We talk and talk and...

Nothing internally seems to get resolved. I guess we don't know how  
to use the help we have found. Whatever; we have given it up.

*The Flying Dutchman* was well-received. Robert loved both the design  
and directing work. We decided, however, to move back to  
our apartment in San Francisco.

## EDMONTON/ LONDON

Can you believe in late October there's snow in Edmonton? It's true.

Robert's show has opened. It went well and we're off to London. This is





THE SET OF *THE FLYING DUTCHMAN* DESIGNED BY ROBERT DARLING  
KANSAS CITY LYRIC THEATER

the time he was supposed to be opening another show, only he wasn't allowed to show up. The stage director will have to cope with the scenery.

### SAN FRANCISCO

I am back in San Francisco. Robert is off doing a show. I just had a phone call from John Ludwig, now General Manager of Wolf Trap. Ann, would you be interested in being Production Director at Wolf Trap this coming summer?

John, to be honest, I don't know much about Wolf Trap.

It's in Virginia, just across the Potomac River from Washington DC and a project of Catherine Shouse, a woman with amazing vision, political connections and the financial capability to realize her dreams. Several years ago, when the Dulles Airport access road was being built, a segment of her property was appropriated for the construction. Mrs. Shouse donated the segment annexed from her property to the US Park Service. She also paid for the construction of a handsome,

impressive large outdoor theatre, the Filene Center, with the understanding that the National Park Service would manage the facility. The Wolf Trap Foundation, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Shouse, provides not only the programming for the three-month summer season but also there is a summer training program for emerging operatic artists much like those in Santa Fe, Central City, and, of course, the Merola Opera Program in San Francisco.

John, I am coming East to meet Robert in Michigan. I'll stop by en route.

I accepted Wolf Trap this summer. It looks like fun. And I created a *faux pas*. I didn't discuss this decision with Robert before accepting. He is angry. He's right. Most of his work is on the west coast this year. We will be back in separation mode.

#### WOLF TRAP [ JANUARY, 1974 ]

I am working with former colleagues. Gerald Holmes, an Expo crony, is on staff. Wesley Balk, from my Yale days, is teaching and directing the training program of young opera artists. We are presenting a broad spectrum of entertainment this summer: a week with the Metropolitan Opera, Martha Graham Dance Company, many performances of the National Symphony Orchestra, Virgil Fox, the famous "theatrical" organist, Preservation Hall Jazz, The National Theatre of Great Britain, and on and on.

We also are producing Prokofiev's opera *War and Peace* with Sarah Caldwell conducting and directing. John hired Robert to do the costumes. Ralph Hoffman, the Filene Center theatre production manager, and I collaborate well. Our big challenge is Sarah Caldwell, known for her brilliance and her reputation of never staying within budget. As the latter is my responsibility, that's a concern. Ralph had a great idea. Let's go to Boston and watch the final dress rehearsal of *War and Peace*. Her opera company is producing this production first. Right on.

Sarah's dress rehearsal started at 7 p.m. It's now 2:30 a.m., and there's no indication that it will end soon. Midnight hours are double-time dollars for the musicians and stagehands. Ralph just leaned over whispering I know what we are going to do. We will treat her as a presence. I got it immediately. Sarah needs to know that she, her ideas, her intellect, her commitment, her brilliance, her humor, her doggedness, her outrageousness are respected. Our first step is to get her comfortable with us. Then, we have a chance of keeping the production under control. The challenge was substantial for we moved this production from her small Boston theatre with a proscenium arch opening of a little more than thirty feet into the massive Filene Center Stage, a sixty-foot opening. Everything exploded in size and we had to find a way to make it work. Almost daily Sarah has called with a request. Yes, some of them reasonable, and some of them beyond what we can handle. I have evolved a standard answer Sarah, that's a great idea, let me see what I can do. I always return to her. And either I agree that we can realize her idea, or I have an alternative. I never say that awful, frightening word, "no." I seem to be gaining her confidence.

Do you have a moment?

It's Sarah. She has come to my office for a chat.

Ann, I have been invited by Gloria Steinem to conduct the New York Philharmonic in a benefit concert supporting the advocacy of women's rights. I don't know whether to accept it. I never have had a problem being a woman and achieving my goals. Have you?

No, with the exception, perhaps, with the technical staff from La Scala. I do admire Ms. Steinem but I am ambivalent about being attached to the new feminist movement.

Is it because they seem strident?

Yes. I just don't know what to do.

Sarah has gone off to rehearsal, pondering.

Tonight, is the final dress rehearsal of *War and Peace*. It's going well. It's now two minutes to midnight, the scheduled end of the rehearsal. Sarah has put down her baton and bellowed my name  
As I walk down through the auditorium to the orchestra pit,  
I see her determined face and am greeted with  
I want two hours overtime.  
This time I have a different answer  
Sorry, Sarah, no.  
Looking at the orchestra personnel manager, I say  
Midnight, we finish.  
Sarah's furious and has stomped out of the orchestra pit.

It's coming on 3 a.m. I am in search of Robert. It's taken us and the large production staff two and-a-half-hours to handle the notes and prepare for corrections to be made tomorrow.  
Are you nearly done?  
Yes, why?  
Sarah is still in her dressing room. It seems she doesn't want to drive herself home.  
Meet you in ten minutes at her dressing room door.

Hi Sarah. Time to go home.  
She's comfortable, ensconced in a large arm chair, smiling.  
Sure.  
We know we have to get her up. Robert puts an arm under one,  
I followed with the other arm. She's up.  
Our drive home is silent. All of us are tired.

*War and Peace* opened tonight. A huge success. Sarah is amazing.

### LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

Robert's been in Louisville for the last couple of weeks, reproducing *The Flying Dutchman*. I'm here for final rehearsals and the opening.

Robert Driver, Assistant Manager of the Kentucky Opera, and I had tea this afternoon. He's a charming man, with a soft southern accent, who just asked me the strangest question

Why did you turn down the OPERA America job?

What are you talking about? I didn't know the job was open. Tell me what you know.

David Baber, the first Executive Director, has left to become Manager of the Washington National Opera working with George London, the General Director. A search is on for a replacement.

Bob Collinge, General Director of the Baltimore Opera and President of OPERA America reported at the recent Board Meeting that you were not interested in the position.

Robert, I know Bob Collinge. He visited Mr. Adler several times while I was on staff in San Francisco. It didn't seem to me that he was a person to make up this story. Something is strange here, very mystifying indeed!

At dinner I tell Robert this story adding I could be interested in the OPERA America position. It would mean moving to Washington DC. What do you think?

Well, we have been thinking about buying a house. Maybe this is the time. We would be based in one place for a period of time. I enjoyed the little bit we saw of Washington this summer.

So did I! Okay with you if I call Bob Collinge to find out what is up?

Bob took my call immediately.

I understand I have turned down the opportunity of being considered as Executive Director of OPERA America.

There's a dead silence.

Mr. Adler has said that you cannot have the job

Do you know why?

No.

Is it okay with you if I call him?

Yes.

Mr. Adler took my call immediately.

I understand you have said I cannot have the OPERA America job.

Is that true?

Yes.

Why?

Because you belong here at the San Francisco Opera. This opera company is your home.

Mr. Adler, you know I am not coming back.

He's resolved, in Adler fashion, that I will return.

You must come back. This is where you belong.

This conversation is going nowhere.

Look, Mr. Adler, if you give your approval to my accepting the OPERA America job, you and I will have lots of opportunity to work together.

You are on the Board of Directors. We will be able to continue sharing ideas and have a good time. If you say no, I will probably end up at another opera company and the likelihood of much interchange will not be great.

There's silence, a long silence.

Okay, you can have the OPERA America job.

Will you call Bob Collinge to tell him you have changed your mind?

Yes.

I have accepted the position. I am very excited about this next professional step. What I will do with my inner turmoil, I know not. I guess it is just best to keep busy.

# OPERA AMERICA A CREATIVE ADVENTURE



[ 1974 ]

WASHINGTON DC WILL BE OUR BASE NOW. We came directly from Louisville. A rented, furnished apartment, a half-hour commute to the OPERA America office on Vermont Avenue downtown, is our temporary home. The commute is useful. Just like Paris, the street organization is complicated. Many traffic circles with spokes running off them send me in the wrong direction. I have also learned the house we buy needs to be close to downtown where the OPERA America office is located. I don't like commuting.



The OPERA America staff is me and a secretary who seems very competent. In three weeks the four-day Annual Meeting is in San Francisco. Bob Collinge and I are often on the phone, orienting me and working out the agenda for the meeting. Two days for business meetings and two for auditions. Each opera company recommends one or two singers. There are lots of logistics to get in hand.

At the moment, eighteen opera companies make up the membership of OPERA America. There are strict membership guidelines: An opera company must perform at least two operas a year with a minimum of two performances, as well as paying the American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA) minimum – in other words, professional fees. Membership growth is obviously high on my priority. We need programs and services to entice others to join.



Liaising with government agencies is a new experience. Top on my list is the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Their offices are in a sprawling office building offering a spacious view of the Kennedy Center, the long rectangular theatre complex designed by Edward Durrell Stone. It opened three years ago and borders on the Potomac River. Walter Anderson is Director of the Music Program at NEA. He's a tall, handsome man, kind of willowy in physique and very welcoming. Ann, come meet Ralph Rizzolo, Associate Program Director. We will be in San Francisco to attend the open sessions of OPERA America. It is important for us to listen to the discussions to comprehend the major issues facing the opera field. And we have Music Program information to share. Can you arrange to add us to your agenda? And we need a meeting room for our individual discussions with opera managers. Yes, to all.



Three weeks have flown by. I am back in San Francisco staying in our apartment on 21st Street. I haven't seen it for nine months. It feels like an eternity. Now, I am saying goodbye to our first home. It's time. I don't feel like I belong here anymore. Isn't that strange? I loved our home so much.

The OPERA America meeting is going very well. Bob Collinge and I are a team. Perhaps it's more accurate to say he's my mentor and I am absorbing everything I can from him and the discussions around me. Running four-day



meetings is much like putting together a show. This time everyone is sitting down. I am certainly grateful for my varied professional Canadian theatrical experiences, my time with the San Francisco Opera and my two years of wandering with Robert. I do have a broad view of opera in North America and Europe. Some of the Canadian opera companies are members. Mr. Torel and the Canadian Opera joined when OPERA America was founded. Not long after, Irving Gutman brought the Vancouver Opera and the Edmonton Opera into the fold. He's artistic director of both companies.

Tonight Jimmie Schwabacher is hosting a party for the Board of OPERA America at his lovely home in Pacific Heights. Mr. Torel and I began chatting on a comfortable sofa near a gently burning fire.

With the signature cigar in his mouth he confided

Ann, I am retiring.

What? I can't believe it. I thought you would be at the helm of COC for a very long time.

No, that is not the way it is to be. There is a search committee which has a list of potential candidates as my replacement.

Goodness, this is all happening so quickly.

Yes, and I think Lotfi Mansouri would be a good choice for this position.

He would bring a breadth of experience from both Europe and North America.

Does it concern you that he hasn't had a General Director position?

No, he is very smart and will learn quickly. I sense he could bring a new energy and effective leadership. In fact, I have given the Search Committee my suggestion. Now, I want your assistance.

How can I be helpful?

I feel sure members of the Search Committee will visit you in Washington.

You have a history with our Company and I think they would like to have your suggestions.

If they come, yes, I will suggest Lotfi's name.

And do suggest others, too.

I will, Mr. Torel.

This conversation is giving me a hint on the complexity of my role at OPERA America. I can see that many different points of view will be coming my way. I need to take my experience in the business and mesh it with my ability to stand back and look at what is going on before offering a point of view.



Washington DC, winter, snow and ice. It's been five years since I have experienced real winter. I like it.

And I am very busy. I have a long list of projects to initiate that were generated from the Annual Meeting: a handbook listing member companies' scenery, props and costumes for rental; an annual summary of income and expenses of member opera companies based on their audit, organizing the information according to budget size, below \$500,000, between \$500,000 to \$1 million, and over \$1 million.

And yes, they want a list of operas translated into English. Many smaller opera companies are following the lead of Kansas City and producing opera in English. It is clear that audiences appreciate the opportunity to understand the plot. And sales seem to increase.

And the list continues: a membership directory with contact names not only of top management but also staff, a monthly newsletter containing information on NEA and other government agencies' activities and services affecting nonprofits, along with a summary of activity of other similar service organizations.

I have my work cut out for me.



Robert is back in Washington for Christmas. We are continuing our search for a house and have just ruled out the Capitol Hill district, right behind the imposing Capitol building. The houses seem too jammed together. Last night we had dinner with Jane and Tucker Battle, friends from Vancouver. They have been resident in Washington DC for several years. Tucker has a job with the US government, a highly secretive job. He asked

Have you looked at Logan Circle? It's very elegant, although in a run-down section of Washington, located six blocks from the White House.

The homes were built in the 1800s and are Victorian in style. Nine years ago, Logan Circle was the nexus of the riots following the assassination of Martin Luther King. Many of the homes were damaged and are now abandoned. But urban renewal is beginning. The prices of the homes will be within your financial reach.

We are onto this lead and have found Barbara Rothenberg, the primary real estate agent for Logan Circle. A tiny lady with bright red hair and a passion not only for real estate but also for the restoration of this historic area, she owns one of the beautiful homes on Logan Circle. Step by step she is renovating, bringing it back to its former glory. You should see the detailed carved wooden paneling throughout the main floor. It's beautiful. We spent Sunday afternoon in her living room, a spacious room with fourteen-foot ceilings and tall windows with a commanding view of the Circle. On her coffee table is a handsome book about the history and architecture of Logan Circle. She points out the houses that are on the market, all the while elaborating on the Circle's history.

In the 1860s, Logan Circle was one of the most desirable residential neighborhoods and fashionable addresses in the City. By the turn of the century, the Circle had become the social, intellectual and artistic center of Black Washington. During the 1950s, the neighborhood went into decline. Many of the homes became boarding and rooming houses as well as "tourist" homes. The latter is a euphemism for houses of ill-repute. Let's go walk around the area.

We are intrigued. This challenge seems up our alley. The distinct Victorian architecture draws it all together. Robert and Barbara will explore options in the coming week.

Explore he has, in and out of thirty-five homes in three days, all at different levels of disrepair. He reports excitedly I have found one. It's on "O" Street, between 12th and 13th street,

only four blocks and one Circle, (Thomas Circle), from your office.  
I think you will love it. And no commuting will be necessary.  
I am intrigued by the idea already!

Robert's choice is a charming four-story brick 1865 Victorian house, forty-feet deep and twenty-five feet wide. On one side there is a vacant lot and on the other a matching Victorian house. The exteriors of both homes seem in fairly good shape. There's a lane off the vacant lot giving the feeling that the property is even bigger.

Ann, there is great potential for a garden. It is anchored with a beautiful tree which needs help. Currently, this sixty-foot long spread of what could be a back garden is enmeshed by concrete, part of which is a parking lot. Of course, the garden potential intrigues Robert.

When we walk in the front door to view the house, Barbara shares it has been divided into five apartments. There is only one family living in the building now, on the main floor. The seller has another apartment where this family can move. You would not be displacing them. That's good. I don't feel comfortable with that idea.

Upstairs we go. Two one-room apartments on each floor, about twenty-by-twenty feet.

Little remains of the original interior architectural moldings, but the ceilings are ten feet high. Robert and I are tall, we like space, we like the potential of this space.

I feel at home in this space.

Barbara, what is the cost?

Thirty-five thousand dollars.

Robert, what do you think?

We are driving back to our Connecticut Avenue apartment chewing on what we saw.

I love the house.

So do I!

We are neither naïve nor undaunted about the fact that there is so much

work to be done. We sense we could handle a mortgage if we had a decent down payment. A thought just came to me and I am making a call Pie and Mum, Robert and I have seen a house, it's a fixer upper that we would like to buy. Would you lend us \$10,000?

It was amazing. It was as if they were jumping for joy.  
Yes, we would love to do that.

I think they thought we were intending to spend the rest of our lives being itinerant wanderers. The thought of roots and their participation in making that happen gave them a great deal of satisfaction. My mother's father, Grandpa Colledge, had helped them when they bought their first house, and now they are moving into that role.

So, the contract is signed for 1211 O Street, NW. I love that it is four blocks, and one Circle, Thomas Circle, from my office. Divine!

Robert has departed for the West Coast and his work.

We are waiting for the escrow period to complete.



A postal bill is moving through Congress that will affect non-profit organizations. I am learning the process of legislation from my predecessor, David Baber. Today, I spent several hours on Capitol Hill obtaining a copy of the bill as written to date and finding the names of the congressional committees involved. Tomorrow I am writing the opera managers whose Districts match members of the committee making decisions on this postal bill. We need their cooperation. We need them to talk to their Congressman and Senator and outline the issues affecting non-profit groups and more particularly opera. This is a new step for opera managers.

You know I am grateful for my background, spending time with my grandfather as he made decisions for his work in the Canadian Senate. He was very methodical with lots of intellect and passion thrown in. My parents participated in his process, being a sounding board as he considered each issue. Haig and I were bystanders, learning a lot. Both of us treasured our times in Grampoo's library, listening to those

discussions. Now, I am seeing the political business from a different point of view.



I have another mentor, Livingston Biddle. He's Congressional Liaison for NEA on Capitol Hill. Livy, he's called, is a gentleman, urbane and passionate about his work

Ann, it will help if you know the history of the founding of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Senator Claiborne Pell and Congressman John Brademas were the primary sponsors behind its creation. I was working for Senator Pell and the job of drafting the initial legislation creating NEA fell to me.

It took several years before the bill was approved in 1965 by Congress.

Livy, I am going to drop by often to learn more from you.

That would give me great pleasure.

And let me ask you about the current postal bill. These are the steps I have taken. What do you think I might do next?

Become familiar with the work of the Senate and House committees.

Go to their meetings and listen. It will give you an idea of what you will need to prepare when the Senate and House Appropriations Committee meet to discuss the funding for NEA. I took Livy up on this suggestion and learned so much – not only the topics but also the individuals and their politics.



I have also discovered that each discipline program (Dance, Theatre, Music, Architecture, Folk Arts, etc.) at NEA have open panel meetings to discuss the issues of their field. It's a great way to learn more about non-profit arts. I am a regular at these sessions, no matter what discipline.

There are many ideas to garner that we in opera are not focusing on.

The National Council on the Arts, the governing body of NEA also has open meetings. Its membership is appointed by the President and composed of nationally-known artists, donors and others. The Chairman of the Council, a political appointment, is Nancy Hanks. She is also

the Chairman of the NEA. There is a grace about her. She has an extraordinary ability to bring disparate points of view to resolution. These open sessions are gold. I am watching trends develop, writing notes about what I hear as fast as I can.



The escrow period on 1211 O Street is complete. Robert is on the West Coast, so the final step is up to me. It's February in Washington and cold. Gerald, my friend from Expo 67 who owns a home in Washington and has been through this experience, accompanied me to O Street to check that the house is still in the same condition as the time when we viewed it before making the purchasing agreement.

Well, it isn't. The heating system has stopped working.

Barbara, I just stopped by O Street and the heating system is not functioning.

I will get on it right away.

Gerald, I know this is a harbinger.

And still I am excited.

Robert, I am back from the escrow office. It's official. We are the proud owners of 1211 O Street, NW.

Ann, I am finishing up here, will pack our belongings and ship them from San Francisco and we will move in.

Barbara Rothenberg just called.

Ann, you have been assigned to picketing duty this evening.

Picketing duty?

Yes, the Logan Circle Community Association is collaborating with the DC police to clean up the drugs and prostitution in the Logan Circle area.



1211 O STREET, NW, WASHINGTON DC

One important step is proving that “tourist” homes, a euphemism for houses of prostitution and drugs, are a drawback to a healthy neighborhood.

So, what’s with picketing?

Two of these “tourist” homes are coming up for re-registration with the DC government. Our job is to draw attention to them, proving they are a nuisance in this residential area. We do that by picketing Wednesday through Saturday in front of the houses as the visitors, men, go in and out. Come tonight to my house around 8 p.m. You will meet members of the Association and other neighbors.

Okay.

Bundle up with warm clothes. Be sure you have boots. It’s cold out there.

This is quite an adventure. We are marching up and down in 32-degree cold winter weather. My sign says

Prostitution is a business; put it in the business district.

My picketing partner is Lewis. He and his wife, Carolyn, own the large white house on Logan Circle adjoining Vermont Avenue. I thought our house needed help. Wow, they are taking on the renovation of a mansion.

Lewis’ sign says

Does your wife know where you are tonight?

There are five groups of us walking up and down in front of two large mansions on the opposite side of the Circle from Lewis’ house as Vermont Avenue continues up the hill and out of Washington.

There seems to be one taxi after another dropping off men – “johns” as they are called. And yes, they have to go through our signs to get to the front stairs. It is quite amusing. Some look at our signs and then duck into the house. Others pretend we don’t exist.

Robert and I have only owned our house for fifteen hours and I have no regret. There is a wonderful camaraderie. And each person seems to have a job connected to the government. Why am I surprised?

I don’t know. But I am.





I have been meeting my counterparts. Ralph Black is the Executive Director of the American Symphony Orchestra League. The ASOL office is at Wolf Trap, courtesy of Mrs. Shouse. I often wondered last summer what went on in that house up on the hill.

Ralph's a go-getter, a salesman.

And then there is Peter Zeisler. He's top dog of Theater Communications Group. Their office is in New York. While he's a quiet man, he can have a strident point of view.



I am making my weekly rounds at NEA. Often I don't have an appointment, I just wander. It's interesting what I discover.

Hey, aren't you the opera lady?

There's a gruff voice calling out from a corner office. He must have an important job.

I guess I am. I am the new Executive Director of OPERA America. There sits before me, peering over his large desk, is an open-faced large framed man

Get in here and sit down.

My, he's impertinent. And it doesn't stop

There is war.

War?

Yes, between the opera companies and the state arts agencies.

Tell me more.

I don't let on that I don't have any idea of the existence of state arts agencies. He seems pleased to have me as his captive audience, to teach and complain.

After the formation of the NEA in 1965, each state began to take the initiative to create an agency to handle arts funding at the state level. So, how does opera fit into this scenario?

The states feel the opera companies are too aggressive in their actions to obtain state funds. These efforts have a negative effect on other arts organizations and artists.

There is war now, opera companies versus state arts agencies.

Well, I can understand why they are aggressive. The art form is expensive. They have to pay singers, orchestra, dancers, chorus, designers along with the costs of scenery, costumes, lighting and on and on. The art form needs funding. But tell me what they are doing.

Some of them are lobbying their state legislators to create line items for the funding of opera outside the state arts agency purview.

Can you explain a line item?

It means they get a legislator to put a special line in the budget for funding opera. You know the members of the boards of directors of opera companies are powerful people from the business sector. They carry weight with legislators. But a line item can put the new and fragile state arts agency movement into potential chaos. Some legislators feel that the line for opera completes their responsibility of funding the arts in their state.

Now, you and I know there's more to the arts community than opera.

That's why there is war.

I interject

May I ask who you are?

I am Clark Mitzie, Director of the State Arts Agency Program at the NEA. I did not tell him that his concern had not surfaced at the OPERA America meeting in San Francisco a few months earlier.

His passion, his beliefs, are opening my door to understanding a little bit about the push/pull between the large arts institutions versus the individual artists and small arts groups and yes, also state arts agencies.

I have just come in from my Mitzie encounter to find a message to call John Crosby, Founder and General Director of the Santa Fe Opera.

He's a quiet, brilliant man not known for loud outbursts. I met him in Santa Fe, when I went for Robert's *Anna Bolena* opening.

Today I am seeing another side.

He is angry, quietly angry.

Ann, the New Mexico Arts Commission has just taken a decision which is contrary to what we had been told would happen. I have talked with some members of the Santa Fe Opera Board who were initiators in the creation of the Commission. They are also angry.

(Well, I guess Clark is right. There is a battle going on.)  
John, let me share what just happened. I had an encounter  
with Clark Mitzie and...

John listened quietly and then shared an idea  
Let's have an OPERA America meeting in Santa Fe this summer.  
Let's invite the State Arts Agency Executive Directors and their Chairman  
along with the General Directors of the OPERA America membership  
and their Board Chairpersons. I will host the meeting at the end of July  
in Santa Fe after all five operas have opened. We need to discuss funding  
of opera at the state level, collectively.  
John, that sounds like a great step. I will go and see Clark Mitzie along  
with Walter and Ralph in the Music Program and Livy. And I will send  
out a letter to the Board of OPERA America to see if we can get  
agreement to move ahead on the planning of this meeting.

Yes, from both sides. Yes, we need this meeting. Yes, put the  
details together.  
I sense we will get a good number of participants. The topic seems  
to be hot and so is the Santa Fe Opera. It is enjoying great critical acclaim.  
Opera professionals and aficionados flock to Santa Fe  
during the opera season.  
This is exciting. I have a first meeting to organize.



These three months have been quite a learning curve. It's exhilarating.  
I don't have many opinions yet. How can I? I don't know enough yet.  
Listening works for me. And I am writing down all that I hear. This locks  
the information into my brain. And now I have useful material to create  
a quarterly newsletter. I love going through my notes and synthesizing  
what I have learned. And I am getting good feedback on the newsletters.  
That's good. My instinct is working.



Robert is back for a few weeks. We are moving into our house today. Our belongings have arrived from San Francisco. Yet, a rather strange thing happened to me as I was walking on O Street towards the house. I said to myself I will not always live in this house. I wonder what that is all about. Well, I don't know. And I don't really care. It's just odd.

Robert and I are delighted. In only two weeks, three neighbors have moved into our little area. John Morris is next door, in the house that matches ours. And across the lane Jeff and Irene have taken up residence. She works for the CIA and Jeff for the Army. Their house fronts on 11th Street.

We are keeping the kitchen in the apartment on the second floor at the back of our house for our temporary kitchen. The rest of the house is being stripped of all the apartment remains and, in some cases, walls are being torn down, especially on the top floor.

Two university students looking for a place to stay agreed to barter rent for work. They don't mind living in a war zone. Their sleeping bags go on the floor after the mess is swept up.



ANN AND ROBERT [PHOTO, KATHERINE FARRIS]

In four days, the three of them have demolished four kitchens and most of the interior walls of the house.

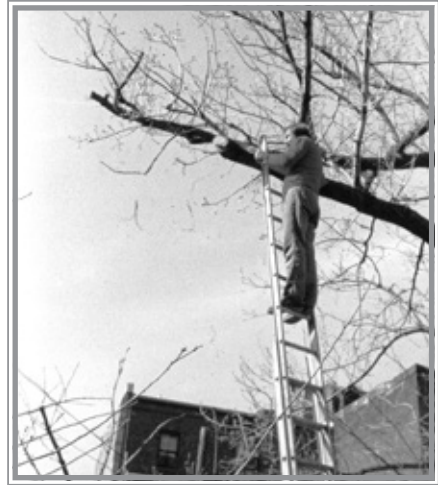
No, don't be horrified.

We are saving any of original moldings left.

When I came in after work today, they were very proud. Look at the quick way we are moving the plaster and stuff to the first floor. The fireplace chimney slots are our chute, down three floors.

What a mess!  
But the results are there.  
My job is cooking big dinners  
and cheering them on.

I must say it is nice to walk home.  
Ten minutes at most.  
Yea, no more commuting!  
The top floor will be Robert's  
studio and sitting room.  
With the interior walls  
and ceiling removed,  
the forty-foot open space  
is very enticing. The front room  
on the second floor is our bedroom.



ROBERT DARLING AND TREE

My Montreal brass bed looks very handsome in this space. Yes, the room is unpainted and has one temporary wall. However, the eastern exposure allows lovely warm sun through the tall, elegant windows each morning enticing us to get out of bed and greet the day.

The demolishing team of three made a decision at dinner last night. Tomorrow they are taking sledge hammers and pounding out the concrete in the "garden" behind the house. A tree specialist has arrived with a large narrow needle-like implement with a hose attached. It gets poked into the ground leaving the nutrients behind. This is our first major financial investment into the improvements to our property.

Robert and I visited the bank today to see if we could get a renovation loan. No, sorry we are not convinced that the Logan Circle area will turn around. There is a phrase for this. Banks have red-lined Logan Circle, meaning no funding.

Hmmm. Well, we will just have to do it, piece by piece.  
Robert has left for several weeks. I am on my own. I am glad  
of the distant company of our new neighbors.



Wandering through the NEA offices today, I came upon a young woman with long curly black hair and piercing black eyes sitting at a desk in a cubby hole. Paula Silver is her name. She explained

I have been hired by Nancy Hanks to work with other Federal agencies to upgrade their visual image.

Oh, Paula! Can OPERA America be considered a candidate for your expertise?

God bless Paula. She not only designed our stationery, she also designed the invitation for the Santa Fe meeting. As we chatted, I was amazed to learn that she apprenticed with Louise Nevelson, the famous sculptress.



Representatives of the Canadian Opera search committee, Rodney Anderson, an accountant and Margo Binder, a hard-working volunteer on the Board, were in Washington today. We had lunch. It was fun to reconnect with them. They feel like family. And I did as Mr. Torel asked: I had Lotfi Mansouri on my list of candidates.



I just met with Hugh Southern in New York. I know Hugh. He was our hero consultant at Expo 67, helping the box office staff develop a process to handle the hundreds of thousands of theatre tickets for the World Festival. Hugh is now Executive Director of Theater Development Fund, a non-profit arts organization which focuses on new solutions for financial, production and marketing issues in the non-profit arts world.

Hugh's credibility in New York is high. He conceived and manifested the TKTS booth, the discount ticket booth located in the middle of Times Square.

Hugh had two messages at lunch

Before you jump into developing a new program, whatever it might be, ask around. Has it been done before? If yes, where, and what are

the lessons to be learned. Don't reinvent the wheel.

He used that phrase several times. He feels there is a great deal of unnecessary reinvention happening. Hmmm.

And he offered the use of the TDF office as a base for me when I am working in New York. That's a rich gift. I need a place to gather my wits and make copies and, and, and...

Hugh, I am putting this meeting together in Santa Fe with the state arts agencies and Opera America. I need a moderator to handle this crowd. Got any ideas?

Yes, there is a very capable man, Bob Crawford, who lives in Minneapolis. He could handle this job. Ann, let me warn you, this is going to be a fiery event.

You know, I know that.



Its early spring and the OPERA America Board meeting is taking place in the Board Room of the Metropolitan Opera. Of course, I need to give a report. It's written. Counting on my memory for specifics is not something that always happens.

The Board meeting went well, and I am clearing up.

Ann, what are you doing next?

It's Glynn Ross asking. Remember, he's General Manager of the Seattle Opera, the one who instigated the idea of OPERA America, the one who convinced Mr. Adler of the viability of this organization. I am taking the train back to Washington.

Good, I will go with you. I want to talk to you.

I don't know if you have ever spent time with Glynn Ross. He is a fast talker, like stream of consciousness filled with one idea after another. For three hours, he has not stopped talking. I am madly writing notes. They mostly have to do with working the Hill and the state arts agencies. And he wants me to find a way to help opera companies promote themselves better. He is a follower of Danny Newman, the wiz publicist from Lyric Opera of Chicago, who has a formula for building subscription series.

We have just arrived in Washington. My head is spinning. Good bye, Glynn, thank you for this unique opportunity to have your thoughts.

I can't believe it, he just went up to the ticket wicket and purchased a ticket back to New York tonight. He is not only creative, knowledgeable but also hard-working; he never lets up.



My life is taking on a new shape. I am extremely happy in my work. I am challenged, I have the freedom to be creative, I am learning, I am meeting and working with smart people who are as passionate about what they are doing as I am about mine. Our evolving home is only a ten-minute walking commute from work.

And our abode has some improvements to it: a new roof and air conditioning. The latter was installed just before the heat and humidity of the summer descends. With few walls in our house these days, installation of the ducts was easy.

We have decided to leave the beautiful wooden beams on the ceiling of the top floor, Robert's studio, exposed. He's built a brick frame around the fireplace. The bricks came from houses demolished across the street. This space is unique and handsome.



4TH FLOOR CHAOS—ROBERT AND ANN [PHOTOS BY KATHERINE FARRIS]



Our homesteader neighbors are great supports. They are as energetic and resolved as we are to see this neighborhood become a lively and safe place to live. Robert's travel has not diminished. So far, our separateness does not weigh heavily on me, as long as he finds a way to come back within a month.

We are thrilled with the results of our picketing. A renewal license for one of the "tourist" homes came up at City Hall. It was denied. CBS covered our story and to my amazement, eight of us carrying our signs were featured on the Six O'Clock National News with Walter Cronkite. Needless to say, I did not call my parents to watch. I am sure they would have worried.



Robert's back and thrilled. One of the DC parks is offering leaf and grass clippings free for the taking.

Ann, I am going to build a mound of them in the backyard.

What do you mean by mound?

Oh, perhaps ten feet square and four feet high. I will cover them with plastic and let them compost for a year. We will have fabulous soil next year for our garden.

He wasn't kidding. It looks like Planet Mars out there. Desolate, except for the shiny plastic.

By the way, the prostitution business has moved to the business district, about three blocks south to Thomas Circle. While not a big change in location it's an important step towards Logan Circle gentrification.

The girls and I are becoming acquaintances. I see them as I walk to and from the office. When I am wearing my colorful patchwork long skirt, I can count on one of them asking

Can I buy your skirt? I think it would help my business.

We both laugh.

No, sorry, I love wearing it.

I wonder what effect it has on those I work with.



The appropriations process that marches through Congress and approves funding levels for each agency every year is in process. Nancy Hanks has engaged Anne Murphy as an associate to Livingston Biddle in the Congressional Liaison office to handle the details for NEA. This physically small, madly Irish lady with an outspoken tongue has no fear in giving me guidance. We are becoming good colleagues.



ANNE MURPHY

Ann, is OPERA America planning to bring a panel of opera personalities, both artists and managers, to testify on behalf of NEA? Yes, and we have our time slot before Congressman Sydney Yates' Appropriations Committee. I have also sent a letter to the OPERA America membership to both meet and write their Representative or Senator in support of NEA.

Yesterday, I listened to Nancy Hanks presenting the NEA

budget before Congressman Yate's committee. She is a good speaker. The room was jammed, in fact standing room only. Nancy and the Congressman seem to respect one another. Congressman Yates, with a swipe of white hair and a wry smile, asks probing questions and does make amusing comments. He seems to have the respect of his colleagues, be they Democrat or Republican. Norm Dicks from Washington State is well prepared. I wonder if Glynn Ross sat down and talked with him. John Murtha from Pennsylvania is quiet. I'm not sure where he stands. It's fascinating watching each man's questioning technique. No, there aren't any women on this Committee.

I keep my pen busy on my page recording the proceedings for my newsletter. The NEA budget grew from sixty-four million to eighty million dollars this year. I think we have been a tiny part of making this happen.



My attention is now on the upcoming OPERA America/ State Arts Agency two-day meeting in Santa Fe. We have had a positive response from both the opera and the state arts communities. Even Carol Fox, the indomitable leader of the Lyric Opera of Chicago, is participating. She warned me

Ann, I hate these kinds of meetings. Nothing ever seems to get done. But I will be in Santa Fe, so yes, I will come. I can't promise to stay the two days. The much-respected facilitator, Bob Crawford from Minneapolis, has just cancelled. He's on his way into surgery for a back operation. And we are three weeks away. Gosh, as "war" is anticipated by the states' representatives, we need someone impartial who can handle these clashing temperaments. Hmm.

I called Peter Zeisler at Theater Communications Group. He seems to have nerves of steel. After much persuasion, thank heavens, he accepted.

Seventy of us are assembled in a meeting room at the Hilton Hotel in downtown Santa Fe. There's a cross-section of personalities, successful business and government leaders who are on boards of the opera companies or state arts agencies and, of course, opera managers and directors of state arts agencies.

Peter seems ready. This afternoon is the getting to know you – both participants and issues. As each participant is introducing him or herself, it is becoming clear there are two points of view. Those who are glad for the opportunity to meet and explore ways to cooperate and work out the issues, and those that are here to grouse. One of the latter is a state arts agency board member. He is furious and lets us know emphatically I very much resent the effort in our state of our two opera companies bypassing our state arts agency and working directly with the legislators

to achieve a line item in the state budget for opera. As a result, the agency's funding has been diluted. We have even been told by one legislator that the line item for opera completes the state's responsibility for the arts. That's outrageous.

Another state arts agency director just added

We need the opera companies with their board clout to help us.

We need to build a collective effort to assure ongoing funding for all arts disciplines in our state.

An opera board member from a southern state is also very clear

I have tried to gain support of our arts agency. They tell me we are a large institution, we can look after ourselves. The role of the agency, they say, is to look after the smaller arts organizations.

Yes, different points of view abound. The energy in the room is very heavy.

Carol Fox, dressed in her characteristic black dress with long sleeves adorned by an elegant turquoise necklace cascading down the front of her dress, is rising to speak. It's clear she has reached her limit

of patience. Frustration is oozing out of her every pore as she begins

This meeting is a total waste. No one is listening to each other.

All you do is gripe. No wonder opera wants to go on its own and...

Carol just finished and has left the room. There is dead silence.

John Crosby just whispered to me

Don't worry. They are coming to the opera tonight. At the party afterwards, I have good libations. The ice will begin to break.

Carol is not here today. Her gift was her outburst. Her frustration said it for most in the room. Now this disparate group feels more relaxed. At John's party, discussions began. Solutions to some of the issues are evolving.

The first steps toward collaboration have been taken, not only at the state level but also from the federal perspective. Even Clark Mitzie agreed there was progress!



Robert and I are on a two-week vacation. It's August and hot in Washington, but it's a golden time for us. We have assigned a week to work on the house. I am painting our bedroom, even though one wall is partially missing. The color is soft yellow. It will enhance the sun in the early morning. Robert is building shelves on a twelve-foot wall between his study and studio. He needs to have a place to unpack his research stuff, which is now stacked in boxes. We are enjoying this quiet time together.

Lake George in upper New York State is the location of our second week of vacation. Robert is doing visual and historic research to supplement the dramatic concept he and Alva Henderson are evolving for Alva's next opera, *The Last of the Mohicans*. It premieres next year in Wilmington, Delaware. The designs need to be in the shop this fall.

Our days are wandering up river and down dale. Robert is sketching and taking photos. I luxuriate in the sun.

It's been a busy six months at OPERA America. We did manage to assemble two booklets: one listing English translations of operas and the other a list of scenery and costumes available for rental from member opera companies. At the meeting in Santa Fe, I was given the go-ahead on the format we have evolved for our financial summary of the member companies. I am also pleased that our membership is growing. Yes, my secretary and I have accomplished quite a lot.

The activity I enjoy most is preparing the newsletter from the many notes I record each day. It's exhilarating getting them all together with a particular point of view. The information becomes more real to me and it seems helpful to the membership. That's satisfying.



The American Symphony League has hired Gretchen Ralph as Congressional Liaison for Orchestras on Capitol Hill. Gretchen's from Syracuse. She was President of the Syracuse Symphony Board and very

successful at lobbying the New York State Legislature in support of the New York State Arts Council.

She and I are developing a working relationship. I sense she feels her experience outshines mine. Yes, that's true but not intimidating. So far, I feel I am doing a credible job.



The re-authorization for the National Endowment for the Arts is up next. Gaining approval is essential if the agency is to continue receiving Federal funds each year. I have a new set of congressional leaders to approach. Representatives John Brademas (D) representing Indiana, along with Congressman Albert Quie (R), from Minnesota are responsible for guiding these deliberations in the House of Representatives. These two very articulate men have good control of their committee as does Senator Claiborne Pell (D) and Senator Jacob Javits (R), who head up the Senate Re-Authorization Committee. At first the staffs of these committees were quite standoffish. Our relationship is changing. Like me, they are passionate about their work.

I have a lineup of opera heavies, chosen not only for their position but also for their location in the country, to testify. Our speakers – Anthony Bliss, General Manager of the Metropolitan Opera. Robert Herman from Greater Miami Opera, Charles (Chuck) Fullmer, Manager of the Minnesota Opera, Glynn Ross from Seattle Opera and beloved Sarah Caldwell from the Opera Company of Boston – are representing our point of view with cogent content.

I am sitting next to Sarah who has seemingly fallen asleep.

I am not concerned.

What a giggle. John Brademas just looked at me from his pulpit, winking and asking

Mrs. Darling, would you please wake Miss Caldwell? It is time for her to testify. Sarah heard him, of course. She's opened her eyes and is meandering her large bulk to the testifying table.

Sarah speaks from her heart, not from notes. I had given her the points we wanted covered. She's doing it with precision and meaning, lacing them with her personal experiences gaining attention of all. Yes, Sarah is a presence!

By the way, the National Endowment for the Arts was re-authorized.



Sometimes Robert and I have to learn the hard way. We thought we had made a good financial decision. Wrong. As homesteaders we had to make our house impervious to a break-in. People on drugs need money and sometimes they get it by selling goods, goods they steal. After one break-in, we installed iron gates on the tall, twelve-foot windows at the back of the house on the first floor. And we put iron bars on all the basement windows, except one which we boarded up with plywood. We are going to make a door there as access to the back garden from the yet to be built laundry room. Why spend money on bars? I'll tell you why.

Last night I was sound asleep only to be awakened by a loud crash.

I jumped up, grabbed the phone and dove into Robert's clothes closet, dialing 911.

Please come to 1211 O Street, NW. Our house is being broken into.

Next, I called John, our neighbor. A sleepy voice answered "Hello"

John, I am being broken into. Can you come and let the police in?

I have called them.

On my way.

The police were there as John opened his door. They went to my basement and caught the burglar. John and I have boarded the window up again.

I guess we'll have to install bars.

I think we deserve this brandy we are gulping down.



The Annual Meeting is in Miami this year, in mid-December. Bob Herman, General Director of the Miami Opera is our gracious host, arranging for our stay at the Key Biscayne Hotel. I can't believe it is only a year since



ROBERT HERMAN, ANN DARLING—MIAMI 1975 [PHOTO BY PHIL BRODATZ]

I started with OPERA America.

Bob Collinge is retiring as President, a position he has held for five years, since OPERA America's founding days. To my great delight, John Crosby has agreed to take on the responsibility of President. We collaborated well during the State Arts Agency drama. I know he has a somewhat aloof personality. It doesn't seem to hinder our relationship. I know I can work well with him. And conveniently, John is resident in New York during the winter. His town house serves both as an office and his home.

Bob, do you think the Board would consider increasing the OPERA America staff by one? With all of the projects we are undertaking, another hand would make it a great deal easier.

Develop a budget for the coming year and include this as an item. We will discuss it in Miami.

Our hotel is on a tiny island, Key Biscayne, adjacent to Miami. The feel is tropical surrounded by broad-leaved plants and shrubs.



Warm sun and gentle breezes waft through the hotel. Our rooms are in small houses that open into gracious gardens or the sandy beach. A lovely quiet place to be. It seems we are the only guests.

Just as we are beginning our meetings, I ran into Bill Fisher, a successful business man from Marshalltown, Iowa, with a passion for opera. He is not only a member of the Metropolitan Opera Board of Directors but also the creator of the Gramma Fisher Foundation. Bill has come to sell his concept of shared new productions that he will fund. Sharing doesn't come easy for some General Directors. They all want to make their own artistic statement. But they also need financial backing. This week will be interesting.

I am discovering Bill is a straight-forward guy, says what's on his mind. Ann, I hear OPERA America has financial troubles.

What? This was news to me.

He continued on his way.

Hmmm, there must be something behind this that comes from truth.

I am sure we have not overspent the budget, so what was up?

Hey, Ed

Ed Corn, he's now Manager for Mr. Adler at the San Francisco Opera.

I know Mr. Adler would have told him about this financial situation if it is true.

Ed, is something afoot with OPERA America's finances?

Yes. The Board is beginning to realize we are not capitalized sufficiently to accomplish our projects in the long term.

Gosh, Ed. I feel badly that I didn't see this. I know how to build a budget and live within it. Long-term year projections and global financial looks are not yet part of my strengths.

Ann, this is not your problem. It's for the Board to address.

My lack does not seem to worry the OA Board. They were just sorry

I heard it from another source. Michael Bronson, Technical Director at the Metropolitan Opera and representing the Met at OPERA America and on our Board will collaborate with me on long-term financial matters.

I am pleased with this setup. I like Michael a great deal. He's quiet, skilled,

financially conservative. We seem to work well together. He and John Crosby will be my advisers. I like this a lot.



ANN FARRIS, BOBBE PILK

The Board wants me to assemble more workshops. The meeting with the State Arts Agencies had a positive effect.

This time put your focus on self-help: Financial Management, Marketing, Development. This makes sense. The management of opera companies, with the exception of a few, is young: in their thirties and early forties. Many of them were artists, performers, stage directors and

designers. They are thirsty to learn the current trends in the management side of the business. By the way, Lotfi Mansouri did succeed Mr. Torel at the Canadian Opera. He now represents Canada on our Board and is an enthusiastic supporter of workshops.

And the Board did approve the staff position I requested. After quite a search, Roberta Pilk is now my project assistant. A smart, funny, go-getter urchin, Bobbe has been on staff at Arts Development Services out of Minneapolis working for Brad Morrison. They are consultants helping floundering arts organizations get back on track and be successful. Her energy and talents are a welcomed asset in our tiny office.



Jeff, our neighbor, is on the phone. He and Irene keep an eye on our house when Robert and I are away.

Ann, when you were in New York, late one afternoon I looked out of our kitchen window to see a gold Cadillac backed into your garden next to Robert's huge mound of mulch that is cooking under the plastic. Two people emerged out of the car with shovels and garbage bags

which they filled and started stuffing into their trunk.  
Oh my God, Jeff, what happened?  
I went around the lane and asked them  
Do the Darlings know that you are helping yourself to their mulch?  
There was no response. I said  
I suggest you dump that mulch back where it belongs.  
And I left, memorizing their license plate number.  
When I got back into the kitchen, I called 911 and told the operator  
I have a mulch thief to report.  
What? What is that?  
I briefly explained, giving them the license plate number.  
A police car was dispatched.  
While I was on the phone, I watched the gold Cadillac drive away.  
Perhaps it was my army uniform that intimidated them.  
And there still was a hole where they had removed the mulch.  
When the police arrived and saw the results, they checked with the police  
station and were given the address attached to the license plate number.  
They asked  
Will you accompany us?  
Yes,  
To our great surprise, we went to the Gold Coast, you know that  
high-end black neighborhood up 16th street, knocked on the door  
and the two culprits answered. My first comment was  
If you had only returned the mulch, this would not have happened.  
They claimed they had no idea what I was talking about. The police asked  
to see the garden. Sure enough, mulch was spread all over.  
They were cited.  
What a story.  
I was howling with laughter.  
Thanks, Jeff. I guess Robert will decide the mulch  
is cooked enough now for our use.  
Logan Circle and its continuing stories!



My focus right now is money: funds to present a Financial Management Seminar for the Opera America membership in Santa Fe this summer. Yesterday I met with Philip Jessup, a staff member of the Donner Foundation in New York. He's a quiet, thoughtful man, young, my age, mid-thirties. He's encouraged me to make a proposal.

Marsha Thompson, the much-respected official at the Ford Foundation, suggested Len Vignola as our financial consultant for this seminar in Santa Fe. I met him today and sense he would do a good job for us. He's very organized and passionate about financial management. Thank goodness he has a sense of humor. My impartial advisors, Hugh Southern and his associate Vincent Marron, concur. My proposal to the Donner Foundation is going in tomorrow.



Robert has a good friend, Frank Oz. As kids in Oakland, they were involved in a puppet troupe. Frank's now a part of the Muppets and created the character of Miss Piggy. He is saving OPERA America a bundle. Although he lives in New York, he is seldom there. Generously, he offered us the use of his apartment. I will let Jimmie, the doorman, know that you have a key. That's such a boon. Hotels in New York are sky high in cost. And it's fun to stay in his apartment. It's whimsical. I love it. The kitchen is alive with plants that hang from the ceiling. Some of the greenery hits the top of my head as I wander through the space. To keep them healthy they are lit by special lights – day and night. His bedroom has a beautiful wooden canopy bed with white curtains surrounding it. Quite magical. I feel certain when I climb into bed that I am going to be transported to Oz.



Just heard from Phillip Jessup that our seminar is funded. And more good news, the Donner Foundation will fund a seminar for marketing and fundraising in the two coming summers. This is very exciting. I mentioned the Donner Foundation funding during my regular Sunday

evening chat with my parents. My father surprised me when he said When I was President of the Canadian Bar Association, I submitted a request to the Donner Foundation in Canada for a grant to look at the effects of the emerging computer industry and how it is going to transform the process of law. They funded this request. What a coincidence!



This year is 1976, two hundred years since the forming of the United States creating its independence from Britain. Many celebrations are underway, including the premier of *The Last of the Mohicans*. The renovation of the historic theatre – the Grand Opera House in Wilmington, Delaware – is almost complete. It's been a huge project, a labor of love for Wilmington, but they are pulling it off.

The opera went well. Robert Jacobson wrote in Opera News: "Henderson obviously has an exultant talent for opera. His instincts come right from the heart in creating arias, duets, and ensembles with a pulsing sense of melody and stirring emotional commitment. Cora's dramatic farewell forms the basis of a richly layered, thrilling outburst with principals and chorus." After so many years of work by Alva, Robert and Wilmington, this was a great accomplishment.



I am back in Santa Fe. Little did I know fifteen years ago, when my friend Barbie and I were driving across the vast United States on Route 66 and first visited and fell in love with Santa Fe, that I would return so often. This time I have booked a dormitory and large meeting rooms at St. John's College for five days to accommodate the sessions and living space for our financial seminar. It's a beautiful campus in the hills above Santa Fe with spectacular views. Many of the opera managers and staff members are taking advantage of the inexpensive housing. It's a smart move, not only from a financial point of view. There are many late-night conversations going on. We need that. We need to be working closely

together as we grow. And we are growing. The membership in OPERA America has doubled. We are now thirty and more coming. This financial management class is filled. Forty people. Len has a way of grabbing our attention. He makes financial issues seem simple – kind of. And of course, we are going to the opera, remembering to bring our warm coats. The Santa Fe Opera's performing facility is outdoors. Yes, the stage has a roof and so does a tiny bit of the auditorium, but the winds can blow through. We don't mind, we are dressed appropriately. We are just happy watching the high quality of opera that John Crosby produces. And he is our gracious host, opening up his ranch for a party after a performance. We will be back for two more summers, thanks to the Donner Foundation.



Two wonderful surprises. Our friend Gary Fifield has accepted the position of Manager at the Washington National Opera. While Robert and I have made many friends in Washington, it will be great to have an opera colleague who's a good friend nearby. We have started a tradition: Sunday night dinners, whether Robert is in town or not.

And John Ludwig has moved to Washington, DC. He's become Executive Director of the National Opera Institute (NOI), an organization created in 1969 by Roger Stevens, a successful real estate mogul, first director of the Arts Endowment and now Chairman of the Kennedy Center. He has a passion for opera. George London, the famous baritone, was its first director. When Roger created the National Opera Institute, he assembled a board of individuals with capabilities to either raise the funds for the organization's projects or provide professional guidance to the organization. Mr. Adler was one of the first NOI Board members. John Ludwig is a good appointment. He has experience with large and small opera companies and with traditional and experimental opera. He tells me

Ann, I want to redesign the internship program for emerging administrators, technical staff and stage directors. At the moment,

these interns are most often treated as staff and there is little coaching or training other than on-the-job training.

Great. I would love to help out on this.

And I am going to assemble workshops to discuss the future of opera to determine what the opera field envisions.

Great.

I know John and I will have fun collaborating. We have known each other for fifteen years, starting at Yale. We know how to work together.



Robert's and my relationship is changing. I am back being alone a great deal, living the life of a single woman. This pain of loneliness is no longer new to me. And I have accepted there is nothing to be done. I can't spend my life traveling around the country with him. What concerns me most is that our relationship isn't maturing. I find I need a period of adjustment when Robert comes back: time to move from my single woman mode to being married. Isn't that strange? Robert seems impatient with that. He kind of resents my independence. Eventually we work through our period of re-adjustment.



A delightful solution to being alone every night has shifted.

It just happened during our OPERA America Annual Meeting this year in San Diego. Christopher Hunt, the new Executive Director of Wolf Trap was complaining

Ann, I can't talk Paula Silver into joining my staff as marketing director. Paula is now in New York marketing movies.

The salary I can offer her won't give her the flexibility of having an apartment in Washington and New York. She wants to be in New York on weekends.

Christopher, I have an idea. Paula could stay with us. I know Robert likes Paula and he knows I don't like being alone so much. I am sure it could work out. You talk that idea over with Paula and I will with Robert.

The Annual Meeting is going well. We are raising the dues. I have such admiration for John Crosby and Michael Bronson. They have labored hard over how best to introduce this need. Those efforts have paid off. Their proposal had little controversy. Our membership is growing. Soon we will be forty companies. John Crosby said to me the other day Thank goodness for the Metropolitan Opera and the Saturday broadcasts sponsored by Texaco. Without this exposure, opera would not have had such a jump start. We just have to find ways to keep opera available.

In San Diego I had two missteps. The San Diego Opera planned a jaunt to Tijuana for an evening on the town. I reminded everyone to remember their identification. Guess who forgot? Christopher Hunt and me. And that was serious. Both of us are in the US on green cards, those invaluable identifications that make us legal here. When our bus was returning from Tijuana, I realized my error. John Crosby and I were sitting together. Whispering, I said John, I forgot my green card. He said nothing. He leaned across the aisle and whispered to Michael. Then he whispered to me Stand between Michael and me when the officer comes. We will try to hide you. (Rather amusing for I am taller than both of them.) Poor Christopher. They have taken him off. As the officers dealing with him were pre-occupied, they didn't do a thorough check of the rest of us. We waited, and Christopher is now sitting at the front of the bus. How stupid of me to have forgotten. Oh, well.

The other goof is more serious. This was a personal misstep. I felt my heart beating strongly around the presence of a man attending this large meeting. I even created a silent name for him: Mr. Wonderful. My feelings became overwhelming. I had to tell him. Yea, I know that is strange, but it's the truth. I asked Would you have time for tea? Yes, of course.



He was most accommodating. I am sure he thought it was about business.  
We met in the hotel restaurant. After some pleasantries I said  
I am finding myself very attracted to you.  
He got it immediately.  
Has this happened to you since you were married?  
No.  
Well, I can assure you that nothing is going to happen now.  
He was very pleasant but firm.  
And we soon parted.

This morning I woke up with a new awareness. I am married.  
There is an issue of integrity here. His clear stance has helped me see the  
inappropriateness of my actions. I am very grateful and embarrassed.



Paula is in residence. She has the tiny guest room on the top floor,  
just off Robert's studio where each morning she can feast her eyes on  
our beautiful tree that we salvaged from the cement. It's fun having her  
as a roommate. She abounds with a new idea a day  
Ann, let's start an early morning exercise routine. How about running  
around Logan Circle?

I pulled a muscle on our first morning. The doctor asked  
Did you warm up before running?  
No  
We are warming up and running again.  
Yes, 1211 O Street is filled with wonderful, outrageous and bubbling energy.  
I am glad when she returns from her New York weekends.



Richard Balthazar, another "urban pioneer" neighbor approached me  
asking to be our secretary.  
This was a surprise given his background.  
He's a former professor of Russian and last year was stage interpreter

with the Bolshoi Opera for their runs  
at the Metropolitan Opera and Kennedy Center.  
However, a career in the arts administration is his goal.  
He happily agrees to learn shorthand to take minutes of meetings.  
We are very fortunate.  
He and Bobbe are jewels



The open sessions of the various panel meetings at the NEA are still an important new idea resource. At the moment, the Music Program Policy Panel is meeting. This program covers symphony, chamber music, jazz, composers and opera.  
We have two stellar representatives on this panel, John Crosby and David Gockley. By the way, John has added another leadership position to his daily work. He's Director of the Manhattan School of Music in New York overseeing the many aspects of training opera and classical music artists. So, he brings not only professional focus to the panel meetings but also the academic. And David is the entrepreneur. Yes, he works in the non-profit arena transforming the Houston Grand Opera into a national opera company, but he knows how to leverage their work into the commercial sector. He also has a passion for American musical theatre. The academic types balk at opera and musical theatre being connected. John and David clearly see the connection.

I am waiting for the two of them in the Watergate Hotel dining room. When they are in town, we have dinner so I can bring them up to date with OPERA America business. The location is convenient, two blocks from the Endowment offices.

Good evening, gentlemen.

They are all churned up and hardly notice me as they banter between them. It's clear something happened today that has upset them. Remember, John Crosby and David Gockley are quiet people. They don't rant and rave. They are intense but quiet.

Ann, it is clear the membership of this panel is primarily administrators

and composers working in classical music. They don't comprehend the issues of producing opera. They think opera is only about musicians, composers. They have no idea of the complexity of our art form. And they don't seem to care. Let's order dinner and we will tell you what happened.

It's been an intense evening. John has just made a recommendation David, we have to have a separate program at NEA for opera.

David nods

I agree, and we need to include musical theatre.

All is quiet right now. I think they are amazed at the conclusion they have come to.

The quiet is transforming into controlled excitement.

Yes, let's go for it. Let's make this recommendation tomorrow.

John has my pad of paper. He's jotting down notes. I ask

Who's going to propose this idea tomorrow morning at the Policy Panel meeting?

Neither man is speaking. It's a long silence. John has just said David, you will do it.

David has countered

No, you will do it.

This is fun. I wonder where we are going to end up. I know neither man enjoys public speaking.

Okay, I will do it.

That's David speaking.

See you in the morning, gentlemen. I can be there, it's an open session.

New policy ideas come up in the open session.

I just left a message for Bobbe and Richard

Thought you might like to come to the Music Program Policy Panel meeting tomorrow morning. I know it's a Saturday, but something exciting might happen that will affect us.



We are all gathered.

Ann, I am sick.

That's David speaking. It just before 8 a.m.

What do you need?

Orange juice!

Bobbi is out the door to the Safeway across the street.

The New Business agenda discussion has just begun. We have had to sit quite a while as classical music issues were discussed. David is now speaking Ladies and gentlemen, John and I are asking that opera be given a separate program at the National Endowment for the Arts.

And we want musical theatre included in this program. The opera field...

You could have heard a pin drop in the room.

Now David is finished and there is a barrage

NO, NO, NO. Opera must stay within the Music Program.

Everyone in this room is in agreement except the two opera renegades

The discussion is charged. David is in top form, making the case as he gulps down orange juice. John is in there, reading off his list from last night. David has asked

We request this idea be forwarded to Nancy Hanks,  
Chairperson of the Agency.

Nancy does not support this request. Her reason: If opera and musical theatre have a separate program, other music genres, jazz, etc. will ask for a separate program.

Her decision does not daunt us. We are continuing to plant the seeds.

Within the opera community, there does not seem to be any resistance.

David has energized the musical theatre world. Hal Prince, the renowned Broadway producer and stage director is on the National Council of the Arts, the governing body of NEA. He is beginning to promote the idea with his colleagues on the Council. Stuart Ostrow is following suit with his colleagues in the musical theatre field in New York.

We may have to wait a while, but we are preparing.



I have been invited to become a member of the Federal-State Partnership Program panel at the NEA. Clark Mitze is now in California, director of that state's arts agency. The new director, Hank Putsch made the invitation. We want a representative of the professional arts disciplines who can bring a different and useful point of view to the table.

I know several of the panelists as they were at the Santa Fe meeting. And Anthony Turney is on the panel. I don't think I mentioned him before. He's Director of the Southern Arts Federation, an organization involving the states from the south. He can be quite audacious. Not long ago he came, unannounced, to my office saying You and I are going to figure out how to tour opera in the south. I must say we have enjoyed collaborating on ideas. Now we meet in Washington at panel meetings.



I just received a call from Marty Lavor, staff member in the office of Congressman Albert Quie from Minnesota, inviting me to an early morning meeting. His office oversees the re-authorization of the NEA. I wonder what is on his agenda.

Ann, Congressman Quie and Brademas and others on the Hill have been carrying the brunt of moving the re-authorization of the NEA through Committee and Floor votes. We need more support from the arts constituency. You and Gretchen Ralph do not speak for the entire professional arts field. We need you to get a collective voice together with one point of view. We need statistics from the professional arts field that confirm the need of NEA funding and the effect this funding gives. A bigger case has to be made for the NEA. Two lone persons, you and Gretchen Ralph, cannot provide what is required. Back to the drawing boards once again. My first call is John Crosby. I have just met with Marty Lavor and... John concurs.

Yes, this is urgent. I had a call from Peter Zeisler at TCG yesterday. He is saying the same thing. Seems to me we need a meeting of the five professional arts disciplines: opera, symphony, museums, dance and theatre. I am willing to host a meeting in Santa Fe. Send a memo to the OPERA America Board of Directors to let them know what you learned and my suggestion.

The Board has concurred. A memo is now going to the membership to inform them of what is afoot. The meeting is scheduled in four months in Santa Fe, after our Development Seminar week at St. John's College.

I just spent a morning with Anne Murphy. She's taken over as Congressional Liaison at NEA. Livy has gone back to the Hill as director of the Senate Subcommittee on Education, Arts and Humanities.

Anne, here's what is afoot...

She agrees, this could very helpful to the Arts Endowment.

It's an appropriate step. Have John Crosby write Nancy Hanks to inform her and invite her as a guest at your deliberations.

That letter has gone out.

I have started talking with each arts discipline. The symphony world – Gretchen Ralph, Ralph Black, Atwill Gilman from Denver on the ASOL Board and others – do not want to collaborate. They don't see the need. They feel it will dilute their power on the Hill. At least they are honest. The art museum leadership does not see why they would collaborate with performing arts. I am challenged to find leaders of dance/ballet organizations who have the time or interest in what we are proposing. The dance world is not at all organized as a national group working on common issues. It's only regional theatres through TCG who are on this bandwagon.

I just spent a morning with McNeil (Mac) Lowry at the Ford Foundation in New York. He developed the arts and humanities program at the Foundation in 1957, overseeing the distribution of over \$320 million to performing arts organizations, artistic institutions, and individual artists

during these last twenty years. He's known as the daddy of the dance world. And for good reason! He developed a ground-breaking program at the Foundation to encourage and fund the regional development of professional dance.

Mac, here's what we are up to... Can you help me identify who I need to talk with in the dance world?

First off, you need to know that most dance companies are led by former dancers. All their effort is channeled to choreographing and building their company. They have not yet been exposed to the need for their participation on the national level. I agree that the idea of professional arts organizations working together on the national level is essential. I will inform the dance world why it is important they are represented at this meeting.

You know, Mac reminds me of Thornton Wilder, who I had the great privilege of working with at Williamstown Summer Theater. They both are enthusiasts. They even look alike with round faces, and round, no, not fat, just round bodies and not very tall. And they are wonderful to be with: so open, so friendly, so successful. Mac gave me names to contact. I just called Barbara Weisberger, founder of the Pennsylvania Ballet. Ann, I had a call from Mac telling me I had to meet with you. I am very busy putting together a new ballet. Can we meet at the end of the day? Yes, by all means. I will go to Philadelphia next week to explain the details.

The symphony world is keeping to its separatist point of view and we are six weeks away from our meeting date. I just had an idea. Carol Fox in Chicago can help me. Carol, I would like a meeting with you. I have an issue that I think you can help us on. I will arrange my schedule to fit yours. The sooner, the better. Ann, I would be happy to meet.

You know I am glad I had the opportunity of spending so much time in Chicago with Robert. Carol and I got to know one another, and ever since that connection has paid off. It's nice and very useful to have her respect.

Carol has invited Ardis to join our discussion. They are dressed in their uniform, black dresses with long sleeves and beautiful jewelry. Carol, here's the situation. As you know OPERA America is hosting, thanks to John Crosby, a meeting of the representatives of the arts institutions later this summer in Santa Fe. The symphony world is balking at participating. I sense if we could get John Edwards, Manager of the Chicago Symphony, supporting the idea there would be a turnaround in their attitude. He seems to be the titular head of the symphony world. The Symphony managers seem to take their cue from him. Would you be willing to talk to John and let him know what is happening in Santa Fe and take it from there? I have brought lots of backup information for you. Ann, as John Crosby supports this step, yes. I will be glad to approach John Edwards. I will set up a lunch.

God bless Carol!!!! She may not be one to participate in groups, but when the chips are down and there is a chance to make a difference, she's right in there. She convinced John Edwards of a collaborative approach amongst the professional arts institutions. The symphony world will be represented.

We are down to one month and art museums are still equivocating. I just had an off the wall idea. I am going to invite a science museum to the discussions.

They're thrilled to be included.

Peter Zeisler is horrified that I made this invitation. Well, art museums are not co-operating.

Santa Fe is its beautiful self. It's been a busy time. We've just completed the development seminar at St. John's. That's the last of three Donner Foundation funded self-help seminars. I wonder what will be next.



The meeting of the arts institutions' representatives is about to begin. All five disciplines are represented, each with two managers, an artist and a Board Member as well as the three service organizations representatives, Peter Zeisler, Ralph Black and me.

Nancy Hanks, Florence Lowe, her press officer, Anne Murphy have come from NEA. Marty Lavor and Greg Fuscso, he works in Senator Javits office, along with other staff members from the Hill are also joining us. And our mediator, Bob Crawford, is with us this time. His back is better. Thanks heavens!

We have taken over a rehearsal hall at the Santa Fe Opera. Its doors are open to a panoramic view of the rolling hills of the New Mexico terrain. It's great we have this outdoor space. The tension rolls out of it. This is more challenging than the state arts agencies and opera leaders' confrontation of a few years ago. There are more points of view and territorial imperatives.

John and I are sitting at the end of the long table, having fun writing notes to one another as the proceedings continue. We've done our job getting the meeting together. Tonight, everyone is going to the opera and John is hosting one of his fabulous parties. Tensions will continue to release. I muse, how can this diverse group disagree on the concept of coming to Capitol Hill with a collective view point? In fact, we are a small number of organizations. If we want impact, we need this collaboration.

I think opera managers have a greater understanding of what it takes to be collaborative. This art form combines all the arts disciplines. They are used to working with many points of view, coalescing ideas. Hmmm.

The American Arts Alliance is born! Everyone finally bought in.



Robert has just accepted the Artistic Director position with Central City Opera House Association. This much-respected summer opera season in Central City, Colorado takes place in a one-hundred-year-old opera house built by Welsh miners. The company has a long-established

apprentice program. Beverly Sills is a graduate.  
I sense Robert will do a very good job for them.  
It is also good for us. Yes, he will be away the same amount,  
but he will be using more parts of his talent. Robert does see the big  
picture. Not many do. Now, he has an opportunity to explore his ideas  
beyond design and directing. And it means he can participate in the  
OPERA America meetings, which means more time for us together.



We have a new President of the United States being installed, Jimmy Carter.  
I just received a call from Livingston Biddle asking me to lunch. Hmmm,  
wonder what this is about?

Ann, I am putting my name before the President's Search Committee  
identifying the new Chairman of the NEA and I want opera's support.  
I will be glad to take your request to the OPERA America Board.  
And by the way, the opera field is looking for a separate program  
for opera and musical theatre at the Endowment. You know opera  
is not a pure music form, it embraces all the arts. We need a program  
with panels who understand these many disciplines and their needs.  
No commitments were made today. However, we both are informed  
of some facts.



An early spring OPERA America Board Meeting has just concluded  
at the Metropolitan Opera Board room. During our discussion,  
the Board endorsed the nomination of Livingston Biddle.

Henry Holt, resident conductor of the Seattle Opera, came as Glynn's  
replacement to this meeting. As our meeting concluded, he asked  
Ann, where are you going now?

Uptown, why?

Can I share a taxi with you?

Sure. Henry and Glynn are made to work together. They complement  
as they support each other. Henry's passion is arts education, particularly  
the development of opera education in the schools. To achieve this goal,

he has become an effective arts education lobbyist at the Washington State Capital in Olympia.

I am laughing to myself: Like Glynn, he takes advantage of every moment. I wonder what's up today.

No sooner is the taxi door closed than Henry starts

Ann, OPERA America must have a program to develop more opera education programs throughout the school systems in the cities where opera companies exist. In Seattle, we work in collaboration with music teachers from Grades One to Six. Together we have developed an opera curriculum program. Now, we have several years of experience and it's a great success. I know there are a few other opera companies exploring this arena. I want OPERA America to convene a meeting of these opera education movers and shakers. We need to share ideas and our achievements. Would you put together a meeting?

Henry, it's a fabulous idea.

Glynn agrees and says the Seattle Opera would host. I know this is short notice, but do you think you could get a meeting together for late spring?

I will send a note to the OPERA Board for approval. If yes,  
I will see if we can find a little money to make it happen.

This fifteen-minute taxi ride was packed full.

I do find it a wonderful challenge to be in on the ground floor of an organization. There is nothing to change because little exists. We just have to create it. It's fun.

The Board concurred. I found some money and thirteen opera companies signed up.

This meeting has a new twist for me. The agenda is not my responsibility. Henry and his able assistant, Joanne Menashe, are on top of that.

I am an observer. Can't be a participant, I have no experience in this field. Creativity is abounding.

Henry just told us they have learned by trial and error.

At first, we offered the product. There were few takers. Then, we developed a program to excite the teachers, getting them involved in developing

the product for the schools. It took a year. We didn't push. Word of mouth took over and others came knocking on our door. Teachers seem to appreciate our willingness to bring them in as partners. In our second year, collectively, we and the teachers developed opera programs for youngsters. We are now at the point where children are writing, composing and producing an opera. You will see an example this afternoon at a school.

If ever there was an example of what opera can do for the growth of a child, this is it.

The children told us with great pride how they developed the plot for their opera. It came from their history lesson about early settlers in the Seattle area.

And we asked our parents to help make the scenery and costumes. They did!

And yes, some children learned to play a musical instrument: the xylophone, the drums and the flute. Others sang the roles as they acted. It was thrilling.

Perhaps the best was watching the delight these children had in what they were accomplishing.

"A petition has been created."

We ask the Board of Directors of OPERA America to endorse an arts education program and to allow me to find the funding for a director in the Washington, DC office, along with funds for programs.

The Education Program is approved by the OPERA America board. We have raised the funds to make it happen and Bobbe Wedlan has joined us in Washington as our first Education Program Director, bringing her much welcomed experience from the Kansas City Lyric Opera.



The American Arts Alliance is up and running. A Board representing the five arts disciplines is in place and our executive director, Jim Backus,

hired. He has a state arts agency background and is known to be effective working with disparate groups of people. Well, he has a great opportunity to work his magic here.

And OPERA America is engaging a staff person to collaborate both with Jim Backus and his researcher Fraser Barron. We need to give more time than I have to work with the opera constituency in becoming more effective at lobbying, not only in Washington, but also at the local and state level. Theresa Burt, a member of Senator Ted Kennedy's staff, is filling this role. I did laugh. Before we settled on engaging her, she pulled her lobbying strings. One day my phone rang  
This is Ted Kennedy speaking.

Good afternoon. Lovely to hear from you.

I am calling to tell you how effective Teresa Burt is. One of her responsibilities involved organizing Indian tribes for legislation we were moving through. If she can organize this disparate group, I am sure she will work well with opera boards...

Teresa is hired. She's smart, gentle yet firm, a professional with an amazing sense of humor. Now she is busy rallying the opera troops across the country. How can they not march to her tune?



Over these last few years we have made some headway with our house. But it's been slow. The banks continue to redline Logan Circle. Our kitchen is still makeshift on the second floor. The sense of temporariness is beginning to wear on me. Perhaps this comes from a recent fact from Robert. He told that me he didn't love me when he married me. That has been quite unsettling. Perhaps it's because I don't feel satisfied with my relationship with Robert. Our relationship just doesn't mature. Is this what the rest of my life is going to be? I need advice and am going to give another psychiatrist a try.



Livingston Biddle has ascended to the Chairmanship of the NEA, engaging Mary Ann Tighe as Deputy Director of Programs, a new position at the Agency. At first, we were dismayed. She doesn't have an extensive arts background. However, now that we are coming to know her, it's clear she is a bright woman with enormous interest in the arts. And she has many political smarts. I have invited her to lunch. Mary Ann, the opera community wants a separate program at NEA. Being folded into the music program means the specific needs of opera are not being addressed. Opera is not a pure music form, like symphony, chamber music, jazz. Rather, it embraces many different arts disciplines. We need a program and advisory panels that work in the business. And we would like to include musical theatre.



It feels like this new program is gaining momentum within the Agency. How do I know? Yesterday I was walking through the NEA offices. I dropped by Jim Ireland's office. He's now the Assistant Director of the Music Program. Ann, I have an interest in becoming the first director of the Opera and Musical Theater Program. That sounds like progress to me!

Jim Ireland and I just spent an afternoon together. He has many positive characteristics: intelligent, hardworking, enthusiastic and funny. He can also be outspoken and hard to discuss an issue when convinced about his point of view. It was the latter that emerged this afternoon. Ann, if I should become Director of an Opera and Musical Theater Program, I will lobby to include music education. A warning flag went up inside me. Yes, I know that the opera community is working diligently with the education community, but they don't see funding for education coming through NEA. Jim, I have a concern. The opera community wants an opportunity for NEA to focus on the business of producing opera and musical theatre

along with the development of new works. Funding for arts education, as important as it is, would dilute this effort.

The two of us became quite polarized. I left the Agency all churned up. A walk seemed in order. A long walk, up New Hampshire Avenue, around Dupont Circle – it's a match to Logan Circle – across P Street to Logan Circle and home. That couple mile trek cooled me off.

Sensing it important that John know the gist of this conversation I called Ann, I agree with you. Let me take care of this.

Jim hasn't brought the topic up again.

Mary Ann and Livy called me in for a meeting today.

We are moving forward with the idea of creating an opera and musical theatre program. We want to be sure that this step is what both arts disciplines want. We have asked Jim Ireland to assemble a meeting with representation from the many different players in the opera and musical theatre community.

Thanks. This is great news.

I can't believe it's the fall of 1978. I have been with OPERA America for four years. The time has flown by. So much has happened.

Now we are assembled at the Board Room of the Metropolitan Opera to discuss the potential of opera and musical theatre working together.

This large square space colored in tans, browns and green today is configured into theatre-style arrangement. The room is jammed.

A sense of anticipation is in the air and yes, there are concerns being expressed I want assurance that opera will not be the dominant focus.

That musical theatre will have equal say.

I fear that all the funding will go to basic operating support.

I want to be sure that new works are given a major focus. And on...

The first day is over. Tomorrow we reconvene.

Robert Tobin, a board member of the Santa Fe Opera, hosted a dinner party this evening for the meeting's participants at his beautiful home on Park Avenue. I spent the evening chatting with many of the musical

theatre guests. They seem not only committed to the idea but also very excited about the potential of the cross fertilization of opera and musical theatre for future evolution of the art. The feeling is Let's get to it. We can do a lot together.

I have just come back to Frank Oz's apartment. The phone has just rung. It must be Robert. He went to a performance at the Brooklyn Academy this evening. No, it's not – it's Haig, my brother. There is one thing about Haig you can count on. Once he has a phone number, he never loses it. A year earlier he and I happened to be in New York at the same time. He came to Frank's for a drink one evening. Frank's phone number must be stored in his phone book. But why is Haig calling at this hour? It is nearly midnight.

Good, I found you. Your father wants to speak to you.

Immediately I said to myself

Good lord, I wonder what have I done?

A very serious tone of voice comes through the phone.

I want to read you a letter I have just sent to the Prime Minister of Canada.

Oh my God, it's his resignation as Chief Justice of the Appeals Court in British Columbia.

What is going on? What prompted this?

It seems my father had an inappropriate liaison with a woman of the night in Vancouver. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police discovered this.

It is always amazing to me how I react under stress. The first thing that came out of my mouth was

Well, I hope you had a good time.

And we both laughed.

Now we are sad and distant. There wasn't much to say except that

I am sorry for him and Mum.

I commented

I cannot come to Vancouver at this moment but will come as soon as I can.

I am sitting on Frank's bed, the wonderful canopied bed.

Frank's apartment to me is all about make-believe. This phone call



seems to fall into this category.

No, it's all real. Life does seem to be about building up and falling down.

Who will know more? My sister-in-law.

Mary, it's Ann. What's going on at 1403?

All I know, Ann, is that Haig came rushing in a few hours earlier to pick up something, saying

There is trouble afoot at 1403.

Perhaps Katherine knows more.

Katherine, what do you know about Daddy?

She's in tears.

Ann, Daddy was the top story on the Ten O'Clock CBC news an hour earlier...

I want to go to Vancouver. I don't have the airfare.

I will ask my travel agent first thing in the morning to prepay your ticket and book your travel.

Robert has just come in. We realize, no question, overnight my parent's lives have transformed. My father's continued midnight liaisons have finally caught him up short. Wow!

This morning, I am sitting in the corner at the back at the Opera and Musical Theater meeting at the Met. Although there is much going on around me, I am quiet, maybe more accurate to say I am numb.

I didn't get much sleep last night.

Yes, I called my travel agent, Katherine's ticket is arranged.

My mind keeps focusing on the paradox of life. Here at the Met we are building a new idea into life, and in my personal life, aspects of it are tumbling down.

Our meeting is over. Many recommendations have been made to Mary Ann Tighe. The most important one is agreement. The opera and musical theatre representatives do want to collaborate together at the NEA. It is an exciting moment. The next hurdle is approval by the National Council of the Arts.

That final moment is here. It's Sunday morning and the last session of the National Council meeting is an open session. Livingston Biddle and Mary Ann Tighe's recommendation of the evolution of an Opera and Musical Theater Program is being brought to the table for a vote. Our primary spokesperson Hal Prince has flown overnight on the Concorde, that fast-flying plane, to be here for the meeting. He is in final rehearsals for the premiere of *Sweeney Todd* in London. My staff and I are glued to our chairs. Robert is away doing a show. Gary Fildes is also in attendance. Billy Taylor, the famous jazz artist, is against the concept and threatens that if it is established, jazz will ask for its own program. Others are with him. I am sitting on my hands. Here's the vote.  
We made it by one.

Thank you, Hal, thank you for making that special effort to come to this meeting. Thank you, thank you and good luck with *Sweeney Todd*. Hal is off in a limousine to the airport and a Concorde trip back to London. We are ever so grateful to him. Without him this would not have been a reality!

Jim Ireland has become the Director, putting together the new program. He and Mary Ann Tighe have assembled a stellar panel, including Mr. Adler who was a vocal proponent for this program. The joining of opera and musical theatre takes him back to his early professional years in Europe and his work with Berthold Brecht and Kurt Weill. Musical theatre, be it *Three Penny Opera* or *Sweeney Todd*, is simply a more popular version of opera. We all are grappling with the same issues of producing music theatre.

Today in the open panel meeting the discussion focused on the title of the program

What if we call it the Music Theater Program?

What if it's named the Opera and Musical Theater Program?

What if we shorten it to Opera/Musical Theater Program?

Mr. Adler has just spoken

What if we call it the Opera-Musical Theater Program?

If we have a slash it can indicate confrontation, a dash means a harmonious interrelationship.

A typical comment from Adler. He sees the minutiae.

And so the program is named: Opera-Musical Theater Program.

Now the panelists are devoting their attention to developing guidelines.

What fascinates me is the cross-fertilization of ideas. Stuart Ostrow is an important heavy in these discussions. He is all about experimentation.

David Gockley is with him. They are suggesting there be funding for new music theatre approaches which are neither typical of opera or the traditional American musical theatre style.

It will lead to new energy in both art forms.

This is healthy and stunning to watch.



The banks are lifting their redlining of Logan Circle. Robert and I have found an architect who respects the Victorian nature of our house. He will prepare detailed renovation plans so we can apply for a loan. In the bottom level will be a small rental apartment.



I am beginning to feel tired. I have been in a five-year non-stop creative period. While I love my work, I am running out of energy and I am lonely. My work with the psychiatrist is pointing out the strain this is causing. Robert is spending at least five months of the year working on Central City Opera and then he has other engagements. We hardly see each other. I need space to sort this out. I will talk with John Crosby in Santa Fe this summer before the Board Meeting.



Hugh Southern gave me a tip the other day, recommending I enroll in the newly initiated four-month course at The Institute for Not-For-Profit

Management at Columbia University. He has just completed the course and felt he learned a great deal.

During these last five months I have been in New York every other Friday and some weekends, learning new management techniques, labor relations perspectives and long-range planning. This training has an additional gift. It has allowed me to leave OPERA America with a five-year organizational plan.



Our bank loan is confirmed. We can start renovation. Yea.

While I have loved working for OPERA America and am proud of what I accomplished it is time for a change. And for that to occur I need time for myself. My sessions with my psychiatrist, Dr. Messore, have opened my perspective on myself. I want more balance in my life. I know it will always be a “push/pull” situation with my marriage because of Robert’s career and mine – same business but so different. I am hoping that by spending time this summer resting, for I am very tired, overseeing the renovation and visiting Robert in Central City will begin to open doors for me and us. It’s difficult when the person I love is seldom around. It was difficult when I heard him say he didn’t love me when we got married. It’s difficult to know if more of a partnership is possible. Time will tell.

# NEW CHALLENGES



[ 1980 ]

**T**IME HAS JUST FLOWN BY. Our house is transformed, not finished, but we have a kitchen with new appliances, a luxurious bathroom on the second floor, walls are installed throughout the house and the interior is painted, by me, in Williamsburg colors: deep blue, soft grey, rich pink/cherry red. Each room is attractive and makes physical life ever so much more agreeable. And our one-bedroom apartment is complete and rented in the basement. For eight months I focused on this project, loving every moment. Our home is a delight to live in. This meant we were ready to host our families. At Christmas, my parents, Haig and Mary and their two early teenagers, Jason and Lara, along with Katherine join us. It was a joyous family ten days, saddened only by the illness that Mary's mother was experiencing in Vancouver. In the Spring, Robert's parents will come.





*Standing:* JOHN FARRIS—LEFT, ROBERT DARLING—RIGHT  
*Sitting:* DOROTHY FARRIS, HAIG FARRIS, MARY FARRIS, ANN FARRIS DARLING, KATHERINE FARRIS  
*Front Row:* JASON FARRIS, LARA FARRIS

With the arrival of 1980, Gordon Hilker enticed me back into the World's Fair business. He has been up to his ears, writing themes for three of them. New Orleans in 1982, Knoxville in 1984 and Vancouver in 1986.

Ann, I want you to apply for the position of Producer of Entertainment for the 1984 World's Exposition in Knoxville. I wasn't even tempted. Leaving our renovated home, moving to Knoxville, giving up my freedom to see something of Robert was not a path I wanted to go down. I did agree to collaborate with him and David Haber as a consultant, laying out an entertainment plan for Knoxville. We meet monthly in this southern town.

As we began to outline the program ideas, my role becomes developing the staff and production requirements, along with the World Festival

operating budgets. It is stimulating returning to the energy of a World Exposition; creativity abounds, not to mention the satisfaction of looking at the project from both a global and local perspective. In the evenings, Gordon often holds court. He's such a raconteur. Tonight, he was drawing comparisons of the three World Expositions in North America over the next six years. I am most worried about New Orleans. They began this project underfunded and I fear that will catch up with them. Vancouver is in good shape. They have funding (\$850 million) from the British Columbia provincial government and Knoxville will be able to pull it off; they have the corporate support they need.



Robert just called  
Ann, Peter Kellogg has resigned.  
He's been the manager at Central City for several years. That's unexpected.  
Robert, what do you think if I put my hat into the ring? Would you like to work with me?  
Yes, I would.  
Do you think the Central City Opera Board might have an interest?  
Hard to know.



[ JANUARY 1981 ]

I have been hired as Managing Director. I interviewed with two people, the Board Chairman, E. Atwill Gilman, whom I know. He was a very involved Board Member of the American Symphony Orchestra League when I was at OPERA America. The President, Marshall Friedman, is new to me. I like him, he's sharp and I am told successful in his business. I think we can develop a good working relationship.



You may wonder about Central City. It has a Wild West history. In the last half of the 19th Century, gold was found in the Rocky Mountains, not too far from Denver. The town of Central City was a hub and was soon flooded with a population of 10,000, mostly Welsh miners. They loved music and wanted an opera house. In 1878, a 550-seat opera house opened.

The balcony seats were constructed as benches, so the miners could pop in for a performance dressed in their work clothes. The entertainment fare was extensive: opera and vaudeville, including Buffalo Bill and the P.T. Barnum Circus.



CENTRAL CITY OPERA HOUSE

After the gold rush died, the City became a ghost town with just a few hardy souls remaining. In the early part of the 20th Century, some enterprising people from Denver created the Central City Opera House Association to produce a summer season of opera. Over the last fifty years or more they have acquired the opera house, two hotels – the Teller House and Chain of Mines – a stable and many of the Victorian homes built for miners in the surrounding hills.

The primary focus of the programming over the years has been opera, but they also continued offering a smattering of dance, theatre and jazz. Producing opera successfully in Central City hinges on two core programming elements: the engagement of young American opera artists ready to test their mettle with new repertoire and an apprentice program, which not only trains young singers in their *métier*, but also provides a chorus for the opera performances in the evenings. Beverly Sills was an apprentice at Central City Opera.



Tourists who love wandering up the street past the Teller House are drawn into the bar by the honky tonk piano music. They are always surprised to find that decades ago an artist painted on the floor his version of the poem, "Face on the Barroom Floor." A couple of years ago Robert commissioned Henry Mollicone to write a thirty-minute opera, *The Face on the Barroom Floor*, which the apprentices perform at 4 p.m. in the bar. It's been a great hit.

Robert invited John Moriarty to join him. John wears many hats: conductor, musical coach and Director of the Training Program. They collaborate very well together, spending several weeks in December and January going around the country auditioning for the twenty apprentices. Robert has also initiated a series, Composers at Central. Short new pieces are staged and performed in the stables with the audience sitting casually on bleachers. On Sundays, he has added a recital series which follows a brunch in the Victorian Salon of the Teller House. You can see the apprentices have many opportunities for performing. That's one reason they love coming to Central City.

And a jazz festival follows the opera season. Then a theatre company or dance company, like Bella Lewitzky's troupe, complete the summer offerings.



Robert and I have rented our house in Washington and are staying in a furnished apartment close to the office in downtown Denver. We much prefer spending time in Central City and its Wild West environment, so most weekends we are off, driving forty minutes into those beautiful Rocky Mountains. Slowly I am meeting some of the Central City residents. Pancho Gates, a Central City legend, is an artist who has been working for many years with the Company. He and his wife, Agnes, own one of those decorative Victorian homes. It's jammed with art and overlooks the canyon leading into Blackhawk, a tiny town a couple miles below Central City. Pancho's fondest memories of the Company come from the 1950s and '60s when Donald Oenslager, the New York stage designer, (and Robert's and my design professor at Yale), was working here. My focus is the budget. With the company carrying a deficit, my goal

is to keep the expenses contained. After running the numbers, Robert saw the handwriting on the wall. We have to reduce the number of productions for this coming summer. Today we presented our budget to the Executive Committee. They agree it's realistic. Robert and I have weathered our first challenge.



Life is about surprises and we just had one. A visit from Nat Merrill, a much-respected stage director working frequently at the Metropolitan Opera. The purpose of his visit was to announce I am starting a new opera company in Denver. This announcement took us back some, as did it our Board. I did some digging. My contact told me "New money" in Denver is behind Nat. They don't want to associate with "old money" who are the primary supporters of the Central City Opera House Association.



Despite this bump, I am enjoying my work and its challenges. My responsibilities extend beyond the theatrical and into historic properties. At the moment, I am focused on finding two staff members. We need a manager to oversee the historic properties for the summer. Ann, I am your man. That's Glen Dutcher talking. He's a tall, lanky individual with an easy-going nature. His references confirm You can count on him. He is strong on the practical side, can fix anything that goes wrong. And he gets along with everyone. Sounds like our man to me. Glen, you know opera personalities can be dramatic and these homes where they will be living are old. Can you handle the drama? I can. I sense Glen will make them comfortable.

I am very pleased with my restaurant manager choice. He has managed two restaurants in Denver and seems keen to take on the challenge of the Teller House restaurant and Face Bar. Not only willing, he is not daunted by the antiquated kitchen and its ancient equipment and he's come up with menus that are imaginative and sound delicious. So, we are set.

Marketing is my biggest learning curve. Yes, I took the classes I organized for OPERA America and at Columbia University, but now is the down and dirty. I have found a woman who has the experience we need. I think she is sometimes frustrated with my questions, though.



CENTRAL CITY, LARA FARRIS, ROBERT DARLING, ANN DARLING



Time has flown by. The season is up and running.  
We are selling well, staying within budget.  
I had an interesting reaction on opening night. One of the Board Members came up to me at the first intermission and said  
The show is absolutely wonderful, congratulations.  
I had a hard time with that comment. Not because I don't believe that the show isn't good, but because, you see, I have a superstition.  
Let's get to the final curtain before congratulations.  
Well, we got there, and all went well.



A strange thing did happen today. Marshall Friedman, our Board President, asked me to lunch. It wasn't his invitation that was strange, it was his message. Ann, I am resigning as president of Central City Opera. My business needs my full attention. Charlie Leisure has agreed to take on this responsibility.

There is something not kosher about all of this. I sense there must be more behind his decision. Is he displeased with my work and not willing to tell me? Hmmm. I am also concerned with his replacement. Charlie is an amiable individual, passionate about opera. He manages one of the large television stations in Denver. He is, like me, someone who makes things work. But I wonder if he has clout with the old Denver crowd? I know you would say, but At Gilman, your chairman, represents old Denver. Right. But At isn't a businessman. I think there is trouble here.



The historic properties are more fragile than I thought. They are deteriorating at an alarming rate, giving Glen many repair jobs. Something has to be done with them. Listen to this story. Robert and I were having dinner when the phone rang. It was our restaurant manager Ann, please come immediately. There's been an accident. Part of the ceiling of the Teller House dining room has fallen on the lap of a guest.

Living across the street from the hotel, I was there in a flash.  
The man, a doctor, told me he was okay. Just in shock.  
We were lucky. But luck might not be always with us. Something needs  
to be done if we are to keep the restaurant running in the summers.



The season was an artistic success. We filled houses and the ancillary  
program was strong. We met our budget projections. My experience  
of being a manager is positive.  
I love Central City, love working on the challenges it gives us. I am not  
so keen on Denver. The air quality is poor, very poor, as bad or worse  
than Los Angeles. I am a runner. It doesn't feel healthy to run here!  
And as to Robert and me, all in all, Robert and I have weathered  
the summer together quite well.  
There was one occasion when all was not wine and roses. It happened at  
dinner. Robert and I were just finishing when he became agitated saying  
Ann, you didn't get done...(the specifics I don't remember)  
You're right. I ran out of time.  
He continued, pushing, pushing. I saw, for the first time, an icy look,  
a feeling of hate emanating from him. It sent a chill through my body.  
There was no space for discussion. He was too angry.  
This is the first time I experienced, first hand, Robert's shortcoming,  
the one that has caused him grief in his career. He just doesn't get  
when it is no longer appropriate to push.



Robert and I just met with Charlie, telling him  
We think Central City Opera needs a long-range plan to outline  
a way to renovate the historic properties, retire the debt and layout  
an artistic growth plan.  
We are delighted with his response  
I agree. And my station will pay for the consultants to help us  
develop this plan.

Matt and Gail Taylor, future planning consultants, have been recommended to us. They offer a Design Shop, a two-day workshop in their Boulder workspace bringing together thirty people from different points of view within the Central City Opera family, along with others. The process will result in a twenty-year plan.



GAIL AND MATT TAYLOR AND ANN FARRIS

Robert, I think we just met two people who will have a major impact on our lives. I like how they are thinking. Charlie also liked the Taylors. The planning process is approved by the Executive Committee. The Design Shop is set for a Friday/Saturday in early December. We have board members, audience members, artists, a representative from the town of Central City, along with

Jim Ireland, who is now working at the Houston Grand Opera. We know Jim will bring a healthy perspective to our deliberations.



Robert and I are in San Francisco for a part of the OPERA America Annual Meeting. Our Design Shop happens this Friday and Saturday, so we need to return to Denver, missing the last two days of the conference. But we had to come. This is the last week of Mr. Adler's tenure as General Director of the San Francisco Opera. It's a momentous occasion.

It's hard for us.

Mr. Adler, we are so sorry to miss your final performance of Carmen.

He looked at us with fire in his eyes

You must be here.

Such a typical Adler comment.



The Design Shop is in full swing. What I am appreciating most is being pushed by the process to think beyond today and into the future. It is also giving me a sense of each person's level of commitment to the Central City Opera House Association. At the outset, the process gave focus on the negatives, allowing an opportunity for expressions of concern. I saw how frightened Marshall Friedman was about the company's viability and future. Hmmm. I'll bet that's why he abandoned ship in the middle of the year. And this process is giving me a perspective on how single-focused Robert is and how that focus undermines achieving what he wants. I am not absolved either. Gail Taylor pointed out one of my shortcomings. Ann, have you observed that you are an enabler, picking up the pieces from others? That behavior does not always serve. Sometimes it's important to let a person fall short so he or she can learn the lesson. The pain might be great enough to make them interested in changing. She's right.

I am glad this process allowed the negative to be expressed. It gave perspective to the remainder of the two-day workshop. The twenty-year plan is outlined. Many ideas, along with constructive negotiations, have resulted in an exciting blueprint. Even the naysayers joined in.



It's a new year and I am finalizing the budget for next year, beginning work on the exciting challenge of defining the long-range plan. Richard Balthazar has just arrived in Denver to work with us. Robert and John are conducting more apprentice auditions on the East Coast. Meanwhile, I am beginning the search for a more permanent residence in Denver.

A new Board member, whom I hardly know but who attended the planning meeting, called  
Are you free this afternoon?  
Yes, I am.

I would like to come over and talk with you.

By all means!

He came right to the point

I have been sent by the Executive Committee. We feel you are being too aggressive in organizing the implementation process of the long-range plan. We have decided to remove the responsibility of evolving the plan from you. It will be a board activity.

That was disturbing news. And as he was talking, I wondered why is he the messenger?

Isn't that the responsibility of At Gilman, the Chairman, or Charlie Leisure, the President?

I just expressed to this visitor

You know, I don't feel comfortable with this news. I need to think about it.

Is there room for any discussion?

No, this is our decision. Do you have anything more to say?

Not at the moment. I will get back to you.

How soon?

Within a day!

Here is my phone number.

He's gone and I am without feeling, too stunned. I guess this is how "old Denver" behaves. Dictums! You know, this situation has shades of the Vancouver International Festival, only this time I am the recipient. I need someone to talk to. Matt and Gail Taylor! A drive to Boulder and a chat with them will help me get my head around this.

I just walked into the Taylor office. Gail said

I passed you on the street. You didn't notice me. I saw how troubled you seemed. Is this why you are here?

Yes, here's what just happened... Obviously the Executive Committee doesn't have confidence in me. It's odd that neither At Gilman nor Charlie Leisure had the strength to tell me face to face. I know that Marshall



Friedman must have been a part of that decision. He hired me, he might have at least been the messenger.

You know, what hurts most? It's the lack of respect.

Well, the facts are now before me. And without their respect how can I continue? I would just become their lackey.

That's not my nature. It will only go from bad to worse.

It's clear they want to micro-manage. That doesn't interest me.

You know, I am really angry, mostly at their lack of respect, but also at my lack of recognizing their duplicity.

Thanks Gail and Matt for listening.

I just called Robert in New York.

Ann, please don't resign. It can be worked out.

I don't believe it can.

It's a rainy Saturday morning. I just called the board messenger and resigned.

Hugh Southern and Vincent Marron from Theater Development Fund are in town. They are helping a Denver group shape a service like the TKTS discount ticket booth in New York. The three of us are having dinner in Central City. I told them the situation. Hugh said You need to take care of yourself. You need to have this leaked to the press. Obviously, these people can't be trusted to make that announcement.

Hmm, who can I ask? Oh, I know. Ann McAdams.

She is a friend and works with the press.



Monday morning. This morning I had a call from Ana Steele at the National Endowment for the Arts

Ann, I have heard you have just resigned from Central City.

Would you be interested in interviewing as Director of the Opera-Musical Theater Program?

Heavens, Ana, is Ed Corn not in the position?  
He has just accepted a position with the Metropolitan Opera.  
Oh, well, yes, that could interest me very much.  
Could you come this week for an interview?  
I will talk with At Gilman and get back to you.  
Ana knows At. He's a good friend of Nancy Hanks.

I am in Washington and just had my interview. The new director of NEA is Frank Hodsoll, a Reagan political appointment. I am surprised. He has no background with the arts, his last position was Deputy US Special Representative for Non-Proliferation. Hmmmm.  
Frank, I could be very interested. As Ana probably told you, I was a part of the creation of the Opera-Musical Theater Program and do have a sense of the needs of this industry. However, I need time to think about it.  
Frank commented  
It might interest you to know that I am talking with Hugh Southern. He is considering the role of Deputy Director of Programs.



Both Robert and I are back in Denver. My responsibilities will be completed in a month.  
At Gilman just left after delivering some very black news  
Robert, we have decided to release you from your contract.  
John Moriarty will take over as Artistic Director. And Ann, we have decided that we will not engage a manager to replace you.

Robert and I are in another level of shock. The Board has made a one-hundred-eighty-degree switch from the collaborative plans built in the Design Shop. Well, that is their prerogative. I have a sense that this switch was led by Marshall Friedman. His unexpected departure as Board President in the middle of the season last summer, his reaction at the Design Shop, where he clearly stated he doubted Central City Opera had a future, all seem to add up to something rather disturbing. Did he really

not believe in the two of us? Was he too hesitant to come forth and share his concerns with us? I don't know but...

I feel very sad for Robert. He loved the work, and the audiences and critics seemed to agree that his work was good. To have it suddenly ripped from him is painful – painful for both of us. And yes, our relationship is strained. I know Robert is blaming me for this but can't express it.

I have gone into Mum mode. What is, is! We need to move on.



We are home, back in Washington. Hugh is on board as the Deputy Director of Programs at NEA. I have accepted the Director of the Opera-Musical Theater Program position.



CHAIRMAN OF NEA, FRANK HODSOLL, WITH HIS PROGRAM DIRECTORS AND LEADERSHIP STAFF.

*Front Row:* C. McMULLEN, A. DARLING, R. LEVINE, A. STEELE,

F. HODSOLL, H. SOUTHERN, R. BERENSON, B. ANDREWS, K. MOORE

*Back Row, third from left:* A. GNAM—WASHINGTON, DC 1982

[PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN]

# WRONG JOB FOR THE RIGHT REASON



[ 1982 ]

**T**HE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS (NEA) administrative offices have moved downtown in Washington to the Old Post Office Building on Pennsylvania Avenue. Ten years ago, this building was slated for demolition. Thanks to the initiative and lobbying of Nancy Hanks and Bill Lacy, then Program Director of the Architecture Program at the Arts Endowment and many others, this historic building is now the home of both the NEA and NEH (Humanities).

I love walking to work. This twenty-minute saunter both allows me to leave the heaviness of Robert's energy at home, and returning home gives me time to digest the workday and then let it go.

Program Directors at NEA are administrators, managing the development of the guidelines for funding, reviewing the applications, inviting leaders in their respective art disciplines to participate in recommending funding in response to the applications, and then handling the award process.

Program Directors are innovators as well, sensing trends and needs of the art forms, initiating program ideas as well as unearthing creative talent to serve on advisory panels. Four years ago, the originators of the Opera-Musical Theater Program (OMT) devised two categories for funding: Institutional Support and New American Works (NAW).

In a way, I feel like I have come home. The granting process is familiar and several of my colleagues are old timers with the Agency: Bess Lomax Hawes, Director of the Folk Arts Program and Brian O'Doherty, Director of the Media Program along with Ana Steele, Associate Deputy Chairman of Programs and John Clark who oversees all the details involving the National Council. My friend Anthony Turney, brought in by Livingston Biddle, has been elevated to Deputy Director of the State Arts Agency Program. There are many new faces, Nigel Redden, heading the Dance Program, Ed Martenson leading the Theater Program and Adrien Gnam, the Music Program. We are an energetic bunch.

And I have been blessed with a wonderful staff and interns.



ELSA JACOBSEN, AN INTERN, GERT AND IN THE BACKGROUND TWO OTHER STALWARTS



It isn't all roses. There are several Reagan political staff appointments, including a new Associate Deputy Chairman, Ruth Berenson. A graduate of Smith College with a doctorate in art history from Radcliffe, Ruth has been an art editor for the *National Review*, a right-wing magazine founded by William F. Buckley. She's very outspoken, not always pleasant to be around. It's not her politics, right-wing, that are bothersome; it's her habit of being judgmental about issues she knows nothing about. Ruth is gunning for the Opera-Musical Theater Program.

I took her to lunch yesterday to find out why.

When I posed my question, it was clear she was waiting for this question.

And she relished the opportunity to tell me

We are convinced that opera and musical theatre should not be joined together. Opera is high art; musical theatre is not.

Who is we?

My right-wing colleagues.

Ruth, I don't sense this is all that is bothering you.

You are right. We feel our points of view have not been taken into account during these last twenty years at NEA. NEA should be funding high art and high art only. I see it as my responsibility to ensure that our points of view are heard and incorporated.

Wow! Am I glad I took her for lunch. Knowledge in this instance does help. She isn't yelling at me so much, but I don't trust that.

I will keep an "eye out."



My attention is turned to thick black binders, three or more inches thick that are stacked high in my office and contain funding applications from opera and musical theatre non-profit organizations. They require a great deal of reading, a skill that is not my best. It takes a great deal of effort, which means I tire easily and can't keep focused. I have two tricks to help me out. From my high school days, I discovered getting up and moving

around helps. My new solution is ice cream! There is an ice cream parlor in the lower level of the Old Post Office Building. After eating my waffle cone stuffed with chocolate ripple, I feel better and I can read longer. Odd!



The Ford Foundation has invited Robert and Richard Rodzinski to undertake a study. Both of them are enjoying themselves. And Robert and I have found a new outlet to explore: the World Future Society. Their annual meeting here in Washington just completed. It was a relief to share time with explorers shaping a new future for the planet. A board member, Barbara Marx Hubbard, sponsors classes for novices in the “future” field here in Washington. Robert and I have signed up. We are being energized as we learn. Tonight: techniques on how to function in a conscious way. This translates to: You have to be aware that each decision you take has an impact not only on yourself but also on others.

Wow, have I learned that lesson in the last couple of years.



A couple of years ago, Mr. Adler was appointed to the National Council, the governing body of the National Endowment for the Arts.

We catch up each time he's here. Today he had extraordinary news

Nancy and I are having our second baby.

What? How exciting.



Robert has begun working with the Taylors who are moving their business from Boulder to the East Coast offering Design Shops to government agencies and international corporations. Robert's extraordinary intellect and ability to absorb anything he reads, along with his artistic talents, seems to blend well with their work. I am happy for him.

The core of our relationship remains rocky.





I am observing myself as I am reading the New American Works applications for the upcoming panel meeting. It's so weird. I can't stay focused without enormous pressure. I must have a psychological problem. Time to revisit Dr. Messore, the psychiatrist who helped me sort out stuff a few years ago.

We face each other in very comfortable leather chairs.

No desk and no brown suits!

Dr. Messore, I am stumbling with my reading. I can't keep my attention span on the content and my comprehension abilities are poor.

This puts me into confusion which leads me into an old behavior which I call it "going up and out there." In fact, I am out of my physical body.

There, I avoid the frustration, confusion and pain, but can't read. What makes me feel better is ice cream – sometimes four cones in a day.

Dr. Messore is sitting very quietly, we both are. I can see his mind churning.

Ann, could it be possible that you are dyslexic?

Why would you think that?

I have a child who has been expressing the same symptoms and we have discovered that he's dyslexic. If you are interested in being tested, here is the contact information.

It's a very rainy day, I am on Massachusetts Avenue, NW, approaching a large brick mansion, a Victorian structure, with a series of small turrets. The sign says it's a Center for Dyslexics. Oh, darn, the interior is very dreary: dark woods, chopped up spaces, really uncomfortable! Well, I am uncomfortable about a lot of things right now and this space is making it even worse. The tests are being administered by a woman who doesn't smile. To make matters even worse, she is dressed in dark brown.

I didn't do well on the tests, a myriad of them! Now, I have to wait in a dark hall with tiny, and I mean itsy bitsy, windows for the results.

All I can see is the pouring rain as I wait and wait and wait.

An hour has gone by, now another half hour. This is impossible!

The dreary woman has just asked me to return to her drearier space.  
Ann, you are dyslexic, heavily dyslexic.  
I take a breath.  
Fine, what can I do about it?  
Her answer is short and painful  
Nothing. Learn to live with your disability.  
I am furious and rising out of my chair, I glower back, spitting out  
Madam, that is not the way I live my life.  
I just stormed out of her office. It's pouring rain. I don't care. I am walking  
home. How can there be nothing I can do? There must be something.  
I am not going to live with this pain and confusion for the rest of my life!  
I am going to prove that woman wrong!

There is one good thing about this situation. At least now I have a name  
for what hinders my ability to read. But you know what? I am embarrassed.  
I have a disability, at least that's what she said. I can't tell anyone.  
Well, yes, I can tell Robert. He won't tell anyone but...

Dr. Messore gave me the name of a specialist helping dyslexic children  
learn to read. After three appointments she said  
You have taught yourself the skills we believe are necessary for dyslexics,  
you can sound out words, read words and have a good vocabulary.  
I can't help you. I am sorry.  
She was at least nice. And she gave me the name of a national dyslexic  
organization, the Lorton Society.  
Perhaps you might find more information from them.

I have just received a package of books from the Lorton Society.  
They are written in fine print, very off-putting. I know I won't read them.



The OMT New Works Panel Meeting has just concluded. Our twenty  
panelists: Composers, stage directors, patrons, managers of opera, musi-  
cal theatre and music theatre companies labored hard under the chairman-

ship of Carlisle Floyd, the celebrated American composer. They had done their homework and are recommending several new commissions in both opera and musical theatre. It is amazing to see how much has been accomplished since John Crosby and David Gockley made the decision to push for this program. New works are being commissioned but perhaps what is more exciting is watching the interchange amongst these creative talents on the panel as they begin to understand one another's point of view. Their discussions are animated and respectful, talking to one another on an equal basis.

Ruth Berenson is a fly on the wall during these meetings. I hope her perspective is expanding.



You know I think my dyslexia problem is my eyes. I just went to a bookstore and saw a notice on the bulletin board advertising classes on the Bates Method of Seeing and have signed up. The classes are easy. They focus on strengthening my eye muscles. I am having fun moving my eyes up and down, to the side and on the diagonal. They aren't far off the Donald Duck exercises I did as a kid. The Washington subway stops are a great place to practice. The decor on the walls is repetitive, a perfect target to move my eyes up and down and to the side. Are there results? Yes! My eyes are feeling less stressed. But my comprehension isn't improving. However, I don't seem to want ice cream as much. These exercises must be making some kind of difference.



It's National Council meeting time again. Frank Hodsoll is hosting a party at his home in Virginia and I am Mr. Adler's chauffeur. Driving along the tree-lined Potomac River in Virginia, I just about caused an accident when Mr. Adler said

Ann, Nancy and I are wondering if you would be interested in being a Godmother to Roman, our new baby.

Oh, my goodness, I would *love* to be a Godmother to Roman.

We are also asking Robert and Richard Rodzinski.  
Nancy and I want Roman to have godparents who knew me well.  
I looked at him and laughed  
Well, that's an understatement. I will certainly make sure  
that Roman has a sense of you.  
We both are smiling.



PRIEST, KURT HERBERT ADLER, RICHARD RODZINSKI,  
NANCY ADLER WITH ROMAN, ANN DARLING, ROBERT DARLING



Ronald Reagan has just appointed new members to the National Council of the Arts. One is Sam Lipman, a music critic as well as Editor of the *National Review*, working with William Buckley. Oh boy, here we go again.  
Hugh, I am concerned.  
Let me do some research.

Ann, I have discovered that Sam is a pianist and thirty years earlier he auditioned for Mr. Adler as a rehearsal pianist at the Opera in San Francisco.  
Thanks, I'll check this out.

I can hear Mr. Adler's mind ticking when I call him.  
Ann, I don't remember him. I have auditioned hundreds  
of rehearsal pianists in my life.  
Never mind. How about you and me taking Sam for dinner  
the night before his first National Council meeting?  
By all means! You make the invitation.

The dinner went very well. Sam was entertaining and complimentary  
to Mr. Adler. There was no discussion about the Opera-Musical  
Theater Program.



The National Council meeting is just about to start. The Opera-Musical  
Theater Program is the first on the agenda to make its report. I have invited  
two panel members to join me; Robert Herman, General Director  
of the Greater Miami Opera and Chairman of the Opera-Musical Theater  
Institutional Funding Panel, along with Stuart Ostrow, a Broadway  
producer and founder of Musical Theatre Lab, a nonprofit professional  
workshop for original musical theatre. He is on the OMT New Works  
Program Panel. All three of us will be making reports.  
Sam Lipman just took me aside and threw a spanner into the works  
when he said  
Ann, I want you to know that what is about to take place is not personal.  
And marched away. So, the battle is about to begin.

I just relayed that message to Bob and Stuart. They ask  
What does he mean?  
I have no idea.  
We don't have any time to strategize as Frank Hodsoll  
has called the meeting to order.

OMT Program is up first. My report seemed to go fine. Bob has completed  
his. All seems copacetic. Stuart had no sooner started to speak when Sam  
interrupted. This man is like the Vesuvius volcano. He is spilling, no,

pouring out his violent distaste for the program and, in particular, musical theatre. His attack is venomous.

Why isn't Frank Hodsoll in his role as Chairman jumping in here? Stuart is on his feet

Mr. Lipman, what you are saying shows your lack of knowledge of musical theatre.

Everything is quiet now.

Our presentation is over. Stuart just looked at me and said

Don't you ever invite me down here again! I have never been so disrespected.

He's right. It is one thing to disagree with a point of view, but it's another to be spoken to in such a mean-spirited manner.

If I thought Ruth Berenson was a challenge, this personality is lethal.



My work load is piling up.

Hugh, I need an Assistant Program Director. The work is multiplying.

Yes, you do. I will see what's possible.

I have chosen Janet Brenner. She began her career as an opera singer and switched to management. Her knowledge, breadth of experience and great passion for both opera and musical theatre makes her the perfect fit.



Frank Hodsoll and I have just completed my annual review.

Methodically, we discussed the many aspects of my position: leadership skills, the development of the guidelines, the recommendations of panel members, the panel assessment process of the incoming applications, special programs and much more. He had little to say that was critical.

At the conclusion, however, he dropped a bomb

Ann, at the end of next year I may ask you to leave.

I looked at him. Then, I knew. I didn't have to ask why.

He is being pressured by Sam Lipman to make a change.

I left his office saying to myself

If Sam is going to run me out of my job, so be it. Meantime, I am going to do what I feel is appropriate to keep the Opera-Musical Theater Program intact.



There is more negative energy these days. I wonder if Frank Hodssoll set this one up. A colleague came to me and said

It's rumored that the Theatre Program will absorb musical theatre.

Thanks for being the messenger.

You know, in my heart, I feel sure the Theater Program is not the best home for musical theatre. Theatre specialists look at musical theatrical from an intellectual point of view. Most of them don't have the natural link to music. It would be like putting opera back into the music program where all the focus is on music. Opera and musical theatre integrate all the art forms.

I have made a decision. I am going to let that piece of gossip remain just that, gossip.



The phone has just rung.

It's Christopher Wootten, Director of Entertainment for the 1986 World Exposition.

Ann, we want you to consider the position of Producer of the World Festival for Expo 86. You have extensive World Exposition experience, you are Canadian and from Vancouver. You are the perfect candidate. You know, I really don't have an interest. I am involved in a huge challenge at NEA and my responsibility lies here.

Ann, we know you are coming to Vancouver. Will you stop by and see us? Hmmm. He's done his homework. I wonder how he found out I am going to Alaska to meet with representatives of the Alaska Opera.

On my way back, I am stopping in Vancouver to visit with my parents.

His request kind of piques my interest

Yes, Christopher, I will.



I had several hours today with Christopher and Jeff McNair, Director of Operations. They are quiet and effective promoters. Here's what I learned. The Exposition theme is communication and transportation which also celebrates the hundred years ago connection of Eastern and Western Canada by railroad.

Patrick Reid is Commissioner General and expects close to forty countries to participate.

And Jimmie Pattison, a very successful self-made man, is Chairman of the Board.

I commented

I don't know Jimmie, but my father once told me that Jimmie Pattison is the smartest man I have ever met.

Can I see a list of the Board?

I am relieved to see there is one I know, Peter Brown – his family and mine grew up together. I know he cares about the arts!

The name World Festival at this World Exposition refers to the cultural program only. It is contained within the Entertainment Division, which also includes Folk Life, Street Entertainment, Popular Entertainment and Special Events. It's fascinating to see the explosion of the arts at this World Exposition.

Perhaps, most important, the financing for this undertaking is in place. The British Columbia government is backing it. And the budget for the World Festival is \$8.5 million.



I have come away intrigued but not convinced. Fortunately, I have time on my hands.

Jeff and Christopher cannot make an offer. Negotiations with the construction unions building the Site are not going well.



The Board of Directors has put a hold on all hiring.

Thank heavens.

It's funny. I have no qualms about whether I can do the job. What is holding me back is a sense of responsibility to OMT at the NEA as well as leaving Robert. It's a two and a half-year commitment. While Robert and I are used to long periods of being alone, this pushes the envelope.

Gordon Hilker took me to lunch at the Vancouver Hotel and we had a long conversation. The white tablecloth became whiter as we completed eating and our dishes are removed. Somehow this whiteness said the unknown. As we parted, Gordon commented

Ann, this position is perfect for you. You are ready. Take it!

Flying back to Washington DC, OMT is foremost in my thoughts.

We fought hard to create this Program. I don't want to see it crumble.

If, however, Frank Hodson is serious about releasing me, now four months away, maybe it's time to look after myself. Funnily enough,

I haven't thought about that issue since he told me. But now it is something to consider. Frank will replace me with someone Lipman wants, an opera intellectual, most likely. And I don't know what that person might do.

Fortunately, I have a knowledgeable assistant, Janet Brenner, who's persuasive in a very quiet way and knows a lot about both art forms.

I would bet money that she would get my replacement to listen and have him or her become a proponent for musical theatre. And if push comes to shove, no doubt David Gockley, Hal Prince, Mr. Adler and others will take up the gauntlet.

Robert, I have been offered the Producer position for the World Festival at Expo 86.

I was surprised. He was very excited for me.

Today, however, Robert is concerned

Ann, I sense our marriage will not survive if we are apart for two and a half years.

I don't have an answer for that.

Last night, I woke up, sat bolt upright in bed and said to myself  
If the position is offered, I will accept it.  
I told Robert at breakfast. He's upset but also can see my intent is clear.

Christopher called  
The Board has lifted the hiring freeze and I am extending you this offer.

Took some negotiating, for the financial offer is less than  
what I am making at NEA. They upped the ante. I am going.

I just shared my decision with Hugh Southern.  
Go, Ann, go. It's the right place for you.  
When I told Frank Hodsoll, I sensed he was relieved.  
When I shared my decision with my staff, I felt their genuine  
disappointment. They, like me, are worried about the survival of  
the Opera-Musical Theatre Program.

Last night Hugh Southern, Ana Steele and John Clark took  
Robert and me to dinner, a happy and sad occasion. Happy to celebrate  
my new challenge. Sad, because I am leaving these wonderful people,  
and because Robert is so sad. Life is so paradoxical;  
the light and the dark are in full bloom now.

