Dear Friends,

It is with great pleasure that we introduce you to our very first edition of our quarterly newsletter BIS. In music BIS is synonymous to encore.

In as much as we were looking for a short, catchy name for our journal, BIS became the logical selection with its signal letters representing our objective: "Better Informed Subscribers."

Future issues will be mailed quarterly to our season subscribers. If you are not as yet a subscriber, we would love to have your join us. Going to the opera, as many fans will tell you, is a wonderful evening of exciting entertainment.

Listed elsewhere in this edition, you will find the Operas, dates, and all the information to join the crowd. Who knows? After a well sung aria, you may even find yourself crying out in a loud voice: "BIS BIS BIS!!"

Arthur G. Cosenza
General Director

The New Orleans Opera Association is busily adding the final touches to its spectacular upcoming season. 1985 is sure to include special moments for the opera connoisseur as well as for the opera newcomer, starting with the elaborate production of Wagner’s LOHENGRIN, October 1, 3 and 5.

The season continues with Bizet’s rarely performed LES PECHERS DE PERLES October 22, 24 and 26, and the new production of LA BOHEME, a creation of resident scenic designer David Gano, on November 12, 14 and 16. The curtain closes with Donizetti’s melodic and tragic opera LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR, December 10, 12 and 14.

Diana Soviero, returns after last season’s Violetta in LA TRAVIATA, to sing Mimi in LA BOHEME. The stunning brunette has made Mimi one of the signature roles of her repertoire, including her recent European debut at the Zurich Opera.

Jerullalem, will sing Lohengrin, the swan knight of the Holy Grail. The German tenor has built an international reputation as a Wagnerian helden-tenor.

Lauren Bench, the fair maiden Elsa in LOHENGRIN, her fourth Wagnerian role here. The soprano was the first American to sing Inaide at the Bayreuth Wagner Festival in Germany.

Dano Antencio makes his local debut as the struggling writer Rodolfo in LA BOHEME. The young Italian tenor has sung the role to great acclaim at the Metropolitan, Montreal and Venice Operas.

Marlanna Christoph, is Lelia, the High Priestess in Bizet’s LE PECHERS DE PERLES (The Pearlfishers). The young singer, who is a leading soprano with the New York City Opera, has been compared, both physically and vocally, to Maria Callas.
OPERA QUIZ

1. What was the first opera house built in the U.S.?
2. Who is the swan in LOHENGRIN?
3. What does Mimi order at the Cafe' Momus?

Unused Tickets
If you are unable to attend a performance, please return your tickets to the Opera Office at 533 St. Charles, or call 529-2278. The night of the performance call the Theatre Box Office after 6:00 P.M. at 525-7615. If the tickets are resold, the proceeds will benefit the Opera and their value will be tax-deductible.

Welcome Aboard
During the recent annual New Orleans Opera Association Membership Meeting, June 26, five new Board members were elected:
Dr. Maria N. Hires, Ralph L. Kaskell, Jr., Dermot S. McCollin-chey, Ronald L. Naquin, Mrs. Cecilia B. Slatten.

BIS Newsletter
Publisher: New Orleans Opera Assoc.
Arthur G. Cosenza, Gen. Dir.

Editor: Esther Nelson-Rapp

Writers: Esther Nelson-Rapp, Tana Addo

Printer: Marathon Press

Please send any questions or suggestions to the Opera Office at 533 St. Charles, New Orleans, LA 70130.

Donation
The New Orleans Opera Association thanks AT&T Information Systems for its donation of $1,000. Garvis H. Stewart, AT&T Branch Manager presented the check to the New Orleans Opera in June. "AT&T is pleased to make this contribution to the New Orleans Opera. It is through such an investment in one of the best cultural attractions in New Orleans that we hope to set an example of corporate support for the arts in the community in which we serve," said Garvis H. Stewart, AT&T Branch Manager.

Answers at bottom of Page 4.

New Production
LA BOHEME will premiere an entirely new production, designed by resident designer David Gano, in the Opera's own Scenic Design Studio in Metairie.

Celebration for the Arts
September 14 was a special night: "Celebration for the Arts," a spectacular black-tie event totally underwritten by the developers of Canal Place, took place at the Canal Place Fashion Mall. Beneficiaries are the four major local arts organizations: The Opera Association, the Symphony, the Ballet and the Museum of Art.

Entertainment was provided by the world famous Le Clique. Opera singers, symphony musicians and ballet dancers also presented on-going performances. Guests enjoyed the extensive and elegant food presentation, provided by the Hotel Iberville, on all three levels of the Fashion Mall.

Quiz Answers
1. |湛江 | 2. | rgville | 3. | Mimi orders at the Cafe' Momus.
4. | The first opera house built in the U.S. was the Bowery Theatre, New York City.
5. | The swan in LOHENGRIN is a symbol of love and passion.
6. | Mimi orders a glass of absinthe at the Cafe' Momus.
7. | The last surviving member of the Ravenswood clan is Enrico in LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR.
8. | Rodolfo's surprise present for Mimi on Christmas Eve is a scarf.
9. | Georges Bizet is responsible for L'ARIA DI LAMMERMOOR.
10. | Bizet's opera LES PECHEURS DE PERLES takes place in ancient Ceylon. The island is now known as Sri Lanka.

BIS
The Newsletter of the NEW ORLEANS OPERA ASSOCIATION
333 St. Charles Avenue, Suite 907
New Orleans, LA 70130

Dr. Frederick J. Stilson
Dana Library - USJ
P. O. Box 40199
Lafayette, La. 70504

Arthur G. Cosenza, General Director
It was an evening of jasmine and marigolds. The International Ballroom of the Fairmont Hotel was transformed into the Pink Palace of Jaipur, India for the 1985 Opera Ball thanks to the wizardry of chairmen Diane Dupin and Judy Sullivan.

With the “Star of India” as its theme, the Opera Ball conjured up the exotic atmosphere of a Maharaja’s palace. Colorful strips of tenting draped from the ceiling and the Indian tablecloths and centerpieces added to the air of authenticity. A wall-sized mural of the famous Pink Palace of Jaipur with 14-foot high trees leading up to it provided a backdrop for the glamorous affair.

Honorary Chairmen of the evening were the Rajmata Gayatri Devi of Jaipur and Victor Baneejee, star of the movie, “Passage to India.” The Princess Yashodhara Raje Bhansali lent her expertise to the planning of the festivities.

The successful silent auction raised more than $34,000. The raffle for a trip to India brought in more than $13,000. The lucky winner of the trip sponsored by Air India, Delta Airlines and Parrish Travel Center was John Laboulisse. Revillon donated the elegant white fox fur won by Mrs. Harold Molaison. As usual, the Opera Ball was a night to remember!

The New Orleans Opera Association Introduces Its 1985-86 Season Poster. The water-color was designed by New Orleans artist Jeanne de la Houssaye. It illustrates the swan from Richard Wagner’s LOHENGRIN, an opera based on nordic mythology. The offset poster is available for $10 at the Opera Office.

Names of subscribers:
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 
9. 
10. 

The sunny Garden Room at Commander’s Palace Restaurant was the ideal setting for the Fund Drive CoOPERAtion ’85 Luncheon, an affair which mixed the serious business of fund-raising with the pleasure of delicious food and good conversation.

The luncheon, held April 22, 1985, is an annual event hosted by the Brennan family at their restaurant. Guests were served Commander’s Palace famous fare highlighted by crabmeat soup and strawberry dessert.

James A. Noe, Jr., former President of the Association, thanked everyone for their attendance on behalf of current President H. Lloyd Hawkins, Jr., who was out of the country.

Ralph L. Kaskell, Jr., this year’s Fund Drive Chairman, announced the Fund Drive Goal of $500,000, which will cover approximately 40 percent of this season’s expenses. The next largest source of revenue is from ticket sales which cover only about 32 percent of the Opera’s total operating expenses.

“Expenses have increased rapidly in the last decade,” noted Arthur G. Cosenza, General Director, who compared the $60,000 cost of the 1975 production of LOHENGRIN to the $270,000 budgeted cost for this season’s LOHENGRIN.

One significant source of the CoOPERAtion Fund Drive Income each year comes from the revenues raised at the tremendously successful Opera Ball. Joseph Young, Jr., a previous Fund Drive Chairman, spoke for last year’s chairman, Victor C. Legille, Jr., who was also out-of-town. He thanked the Ball chairmen, Mrs. Charles L. Dupin (Diane) and Mrs. Jerry W. Sullivan (Judy) for their hard work and outstanding results.

Present at the luncheon were next year’s Opera Ball Chairmen, Mrs. J.R. Barnes and Mrs. John W. Callender; also attending were Mrs. F. Floyd Monroe, Mrs. Arthur G. Cosenza, and Times-Picayune social columnist Neil Noian.

Help and Win With SUBSCRIPTIONS!

Help us find new subscribers and we’ll send you a recording of your choice or 2 tickets to the Opera Ball, the highpoint of the New Orleans social calendar.

The upcoming season is a showcase of carefully selected operas to suit all tastes! Internationally renowned singers, conductors, designers, and directors, combined with our own chorus, set designs and the New Orleans Symphony, are sure to provide many unforgettable memories.

Many a potential new subscriber just needs a little encouragement to try opera. If you are not a subscriber yet join us and tell your friends, family and co-workers about us. Every new subscriber counts. Have them contact Mrs. O’Brien, or Mrs. Panzea at the Opera Office. 529-2278. Be sure to note the name of every subscriber below (student subscriptions excluded), and send us the completed form, so you can receive one of your well-earned gifts. Your name will also be mentioned in the next BiS Issue.

My name:

My address:

Phone:

I would like a complete recording of:

☐ LOHENGRIN
☐ LES PECHERUS DE PERLES
☐ LA BOHEME
☐ LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

I’ll pick up ☐ Please mail

Please cut out and mail to:
NEW ORLEANS OPERA ASSOC.
333 St. Charles Ave., Suite 907
New Orleans, LA 70130

The upcoming season is a showcase of carefully selected operas to suit all tastes! Internationally renowned singers, conductors, designers, and directors, combined with our own chorus, set designs and the New Orleans Symphony, are sure to provide many unforgettable memories.

Help us find new subscribers and we’ll send you a recording of your choice or 2 tickets to the Opera Ball, the highpoint of the New Orleans social calendar.

The upcoming season is a showcase of carefully selected operas to suit all tastes! Internationally renowned singers, conductors, designers, and directors, combined with our own chorus, set designs and the New Orleans Symphony, are sure to provide many unforgettable memories.

My name:

My address:

Phone:

I would like a complete recording of:

☐ LOHENGRIN
☐ LES PECHERUS DE PERLES
☐ LA BOHEME
☐ LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

I’ll pick up ☐ Please mail

Please cut out and mail to:
NEW ORLEANS OPERA ASSOC.
333 St. Charles Ave., Suite 907
New Orleans, LA 70130
Siegfried Jerusalem is one of the leading Wagnerian tenors of today. His appearance as Lohengrin in October is his second role with the New Orleans Opera Association, following his local debut as Florestan in 1981. The young German singer's many performances as Lohengrin include his Canadian opera debut with Opera Canada two years ago, La Scala in Italy, Covent Garden in London and several Bayreuth Festivals in Germany. This interview is conducted by Esther Nelson-Rapp, Director of Public Relations with the Opera Association.

ENR: Mr. Jerusalem, would you call Lohengrin one of your favorite roles?
SJ: Yes, definitely, even though it is one of the more difficult roles. At least it is more difficult than Parsifal and Siegmund, the other Wagnerian tenor parts I sing frequently. I am only now starting to learn the Siegfried part in the Ring, which requires a very mature voice.

ENR: You are currently singing Siegmund and Parsifal at the Bayreuth Wagner Festival?
SJ: Yes, this was my third year as Siegmund, starting with the new production under Solti three years ago. I have, of course, performed many other roles there, such as Parsifal and Lohengrin in Das Rheingold.

ENR: Is it true that you began your music career as an orchestra musician?
SJ: I was a professional bassoonist for ten years. I enjoyed this year's opera special of Rossini's charming and happy operetta CINDERELLA. Every spring the New Orleans Opera Association, with the support of the City of New Orleans and Jefferson Parish, offers a free, usually shortened, youth-oriented performance of an opera, designed to stimulate interest in opera. CINDERELLA was presented at L.W. Higgins High School in Marrero on March 25, and the Family Day took place on a sunny afternoon, March 24, at the Theatre of Performing Arts. Anyone interested in next year's "Introduction to Opera" performance should contact the Opera Office at 529-2278.

ENR: What a story! Tell me, do you find it difficult to combine your new career as a singer, which requires a great deal of travelling, with your family life?
SJ: I suppose I would, if my wife Marlon would not travel with me. I enjoy my engagement involving a longer absence from home. My three-year-old daughter Eva and my six-month-old son David usually stay with their grandparents then. But the entire family will join me on my trip to New Orleans. We really look forward to it. My wife and I enjoyed our stay in New Orleans very much last time. Next year we will spend two months in London, where I will sing Eric in The Flying Dutchman at Covent Garden. 1987 we'll be in New York for Idomeneo at the Metropolitan, which I will repeat in 1989, as well as Idomeneo there in 1988.

ENR: As a last question, do you see any difference between working in the United States and Europe?
SJ: Not really! Some houses in Europe may provide more rehearsal time, others, especially in the south actually less. Maybe your productions tend to be a little more elaborate and, of course, the opera houses in the States, like in New Orleans, are much larger.

ENR: Thank you very much Mr. Jerusalem. We look forward to your performance with the New Orleans Opera Association.

Introducing To Opera

Children and adults alike enjoyed this year's opera special of Rossini's charming and happy opera CINDERELLA. Every spring the New Orleans Opera Association, with the support of the City of New Orleans and Jefferson Parish, offers a free, usually shortened, youth-oriented performance of an opera, designed to entertain and educate the students at your child's school, please contact Betsy Smith, Chairman of Operations, at 837-1047, or Dr. Mary Anderson at 246-5700.
Louisiana Portraits by Debbie Caffery, Lee Crum, and A. J. Meeke

BY NANCY BARRETT
Curator of Photography, NOMA

The current exhibition in the second-floor photography gallery is *Louisiana Portraits by Debbie Caffery, Lee Crum and A. J. Meeke*. The photographs, on view through November 4, are selected from portrait series made by these photographers in the regions where they reside. Debbie Caffery photographs the workers of the cane fields around Franklin, Lee Crum the personalities of New Orleans, and A. J. Meeke the residents of small towns around Baton Rouge. The photographers share the pursuit of documenting an area through the portraiture of its people, a fitting undertaking in Louisiana, a state which derives much of its distinctive character from its diverse citizenry. Each of the series, however, is defined by the choice of sitters for the document, the style of portraiture employed, and determining all else, the purpose for its creation.

Lee Crum, a free-lance photojournalist, is compiling a collection of portraits which he calls a "physical document of New Orleans." As a photographer for the *Times-Picayune/States-Item* from 1978 to 1982, he came to know New Orleans as a city of personalities, ranging from dignitaries to street people. In 1983, he began assembling portraits of them with the belief that they, perhaps more than history or architecture, give the city its special glamour and piquancy. The task is reminiscent of that of the French photographer Nadar who set out in the 1850s to produce an extensive catalogue of prominent Parisians called the "Panthéon-Nadar." Members of Crum's pantheon are of no particular type or station, although many are easily recognizable such as Tuts Washington and Police Chief Henry Morris, and include art patrons, religious leaders, flambeaux carriers and "Lucky Dog" vendors. What unites them all is the possession of a distinct persona.

The task of their chronicler is first to recognize this attribute, and second, to distill its essence into an accessible form. It requires a style of portraiture, that is, of overall simplification with exaggeration of the most salient details. Crum photographs his sitters in a mobile studio environment of canvas sheeting and portable strobe lights. The background is bland, the lights producing slight tonal variations upon the canvas. The props are only those considered essential for the understanding of a particular sitter; the photographer Clarence John Laughlin, for example, is posed with his camera. Crum's camera is concentrated upon the sitter at close range, allowing little else into the frame. The prints from the two and one-quarter inch negatives are crisp with detail and value; skin tones are tactile, and expressions are finely defined.

This sparse portrait photography style was made famous in the 1960s by Richard Avedon and Irving Penn, although it extends back to early daguerreotype portraiture, and nineteenth-century painted portraits influenced by the naturalizing tendency of the period. Crum acknowledges Avedon and Penn as influences, and quite obviously derives his method from them. There is, however, a notable difference. In the preface to his book, *Worlds in a Small Room*, Penn described his experiences traveling to remote regions to photograph isolated peoples in a portable canvas studio. What he found most interesting was the transformation of his sitters during the process of being photographed. "As they crossed the threshold of the studio," he wrote, "they took on a seriousness of self-presentation that would not have been expected of simple people." "I am struck," he continued, "that . . . they rose to the experience . . . with dignity and a seriousness of concentration that they would never have had . . . in their own surroundings." One wonders, "Why wouldn't they?" In Crum's portraits, however, there is not Penn's patronizing attitude towards people of a different culture, but one of equality with the sitters. Many of them are, in fact, his friends, and in this, he is closer in spirit to Nadar whose moving portraits of sitters such as Camille
Corot and Sarah Bernhardt came only after long association.

While Crum is assembling what might be called his "New Orleans Pantheon," A.J. Meek is photographing the people of the small towns around Baton Rouge as part of his documentation of the rural environment of the area. His portraits grow out of his studies of the surrounding landscape which he began photographing in 1977 when he took a teaching position at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge. It was a natural progression for him. He found the people and the land integral here, the character of either dependent upon the other. Because of this, a sense of place is heightened in Meek's portraits. He is careful to note the names of towns such as Plaquemine Bayou, Port Allen, or Rosedale in the titles, and to include details such as a yard planted with garlic, a pickup truck, or a local roadside tavern. The portraits are made out of doors, usually from a middle distance. The sitters are at rest and composed, and assume an unposed naturalness. The overall mood of tranquility is respected by Meek's cool and restrained style. The eight- by ten-inch negatives are usually printed full-frame, maintaining the inherent stability of their horizontal format. The compositions are anchored by a central placement of the sitter, and a classical ordering of the simple adjacent pictorial masses.

Meek's portrait style has clear correspondence with that of August Sander, one of the leading photographers of Germany during the first half of the twentieth century. Sander had the grand ambition to compile a complete portrait of the German people. He called the series the "Man of the Twentieth Century," and grouped the individual portraits by sociologic, economic, and professional classifications. His sitters were photographed against a plain background or in what he felt were their natural circumstances, and often included an accessory suggestive of their rank, such as a postman with his bag, or a workman with a load of bricks. His style was straightforward, his attitude towards his sitters unflinchingly direct. Their individual personalities were rarely disclosed, as their importance was as a member of an aggregate. "The individual," Sander said, "does not make the history of his time, he both impresses himself on it and expresses its meaning."

Sander's analytic style is echoed in Meek's portraits which often possess the detachment of a catalogue. The distance of the camera to the sitters gives the portraits the air of anthropological investigations and encourages the use of the term "subject" instead of "sitter." This is suitable for a document of an environment. Meek's sitters are not only significant as individuals, but equally as representatives of groups that might be classified "farmers," "rural ministers," or "owners of small-town businesses."

This does not diminish Meek's respect for the small-town people he photographs. His physical distance from them is as much his observance of "respectful distance," and he seems careful not to intrude upon them. Instead, he allows what he calls a "mutual attraction" to bring them together and includes their full names in titles--"Mr. J. Businella," or "Mrs. Joel Alcado." In short, his sitters are not "caught" by the camera, but allowed to present themselves to it with great self-awareness and dignity.

Meek's correspondence of subject and environment is weighted in the work of Debbie Caffery towards the latter. Caffery has sympathy for the sugar cane workers she photographs, but it is tangential to her fascination with the totality of sugar production—the sights and smells of the harvest, the nature of light in the fields, the warmth and vitality of the workers—and her pursuit of a documentation of a way of life that is dying in Southern Louisiana as cane farming increasingly mechanizes and sugar mills close down.

The workers in the photographs are obviously poor; one assumes that their life is one of difficulty and struggle. However, Caffery's photographs are not the statement of their plight that one associates with the American tradition of documenting the rural poor culminating with the Photography Project of the Farm Security
reminiscent of Isamu Noguchi's most poetic work. While Reiter's use of color and Gordy's gestural handling might place them, albeit imprecisely, in a Neo-Expressionist vein, Nuego is their polar opposite. Working within the tradition where the simplest shapes and objects are presented virtually unadorned, he strikes one as a Minimalist in awe of pure form. Yet his "rock" has an organic beauty, like a found and treasured stone and, with it, he encourages the Eastern wont of contemplation—but applies it to man-made sculpture. (Last year, in other exhibitions, both Nuego and Terry Weldon succeeded in doing this, though with very different approaches.) The attempt is courageous and the outcome exquisite, if somewhat anachronistic. Along with Arthur Silverman's elegant Reflecting Steel, it provides the limited—and refreshing—formalist element in this show's diversity.

The notion of poetic contemplation is also at the center of Jim Richard's Sculpture Encounter III, one of his most arresting canvasses in years. Here, Richard, as in all his works depicting sculpture, offers the wonderful irony of a painting about contemplation. In his well-known interiors, he drew on the double-edged inspiration of Pop imagery; in this new instance, a lush garden-scape, his early affection for color-field painting returns. Within the
Administration during the 1930s. The quintessence of this tradition is Dorothy Lange’s *Migrant Mother* which has achieved the status of an icon within it. The FSA style was the visual equivalent of a social worker’s field notes. It is characterized by clear disclosure of fact through prominent placement of the subject and bright, even lighting, and titles of socioeconomic import, such as Ben Shahn’s 1935 *Wife and child of destitute Ozarks Mountains family* captioned “Part of the Twillings family. Their cash crop was $3.00 for the year . . .” The individuality of the sitter is subordinate in this tradition, not to Sander’s investigative scrutiny, but to a particular sociological message.

Caffery has spent most of her life in the heart of sugar cane country, growing up in Bayou Teche and Franklin, and returning to Franklin after college. She began photographing in the fields in 1972 while a photography student at the Rice University Media Center. Two years later, she received a study grant from the San Francisco Art Institute to continue, and in 1982, was awarded a Louisiana State Arts Council Artist Fellowship. She has known many of her sitters since childhood and has been photographing them for over a decade. The intimacy which results distinguishes her photographs from the FSA tradition. Psychological barriers break down as the camera moves close to the workers, and interrupts them in the midst of their labor, or telling a joke or having an argument. Caffery speaks respectfully of their strength and endurance, their harmony with the land and their purity of emotion, and titles the portraits simply *Women Laughing*, *Harvesting*, or *Bea*.

Caffery often photographs at sunrise when the workers begin their day, a time when contours of forms and details of physiognomy are diffuse in the early morning light. In the photographs made at this hour, reality seems detached, and the scenes take on the qualities of dreams. The figures are printed dark, obliterating many particulars of anatomy and stressing their function as pictorial elements in the composition. In *Woman at the Screen Door*, for example, a woman’s head and shoulders obscured behind a wire screen is barely discernible against a dark interior. Only her light and dark striped shirt is apparent, outlined through a tear in the screen, and beneath that, her hands and nails lit by glancing light. These components of Caffery’s style not only remove her portraits from sociological discourse, but also give them a psychological intensity which indicates an examination of more universal emotions.