DON PASQUALE: A PROJECT IN

THEATRICAL DESIGN

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DON PASQUALE: A PROJECT IN THEATRICAL DESIGN

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Opera as an art form reflects the society in which it received birth, nourishment, and prosperity. It is an art form deeply rooted in the tradition of European aristocracy. In America, which has a culture partially developed by fugitives from that aristocracy, there exists a gap between opera and the life which surrounds it.[1] In the past opera has survived as a brilliant and extravagant form of entertainment and social display for the wealthy segment of society. However, these wealthy patrons of the arts are beginning to diminish; and opera, supported in Europe by the state, is being forced to make itself acceptable to a greater segment of the American public.[2] This is evident in the rise of civic opera companies, university opera workshops and increased production facilities. In the three decades since 1940 more than 550 opera-producing organizations have been established in the United States. In 1969 more than half of these organizations were sponsored by

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[1]Robert Cumming, "Editorially Speaking," Music Journal, XX (October, 1962), 12.

[2]Ibid.

universities.[3] In order for this trend of increasing interest in opera to continue, there are four needs which must be fulfilled: (1) financial support adequate to guarantee an artistic and economic future, (2) more opera performed in the language of the audience, (3) training centers offering young singers experience, and (4) greater emphasis on experimental production.[4] As interest in opera grows, the need for financial support is lessened by increased box office receipts and donations. Performances in English rather than a European language are becoming more common through the slow standardization of translations, while university music schools are playing an important part in the training of new voices. Experimental production provides an area in which the theatrical designer, as well as the composer and librettist, can contribute to the growth and popularity of opera in America. One type experimental production is the creation of a production scheme not steeped in the tradition of European opera. By doing this the designer attempts to have his audience to associate more freely with the imported art form.

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[3]Maria F. Rich, "U.S. Opera Survey: The Multiest of Media," Opera News, XXXIV (November 22, 1969), 14.

[4]Frank Merkling, "Twenty Years After," Opera News XXVI (November 18, 1961), 22.

The problem of this thesis was to design for production a popular European opera. The design emphasized the social background of the American audience. The subject of the problem was Gaetano Donizetti's comic opera Don Pasquale. The opera was first performed in 1843 and is one of the three most popular Italian comic operas performed today. It is the only work for which Donizetti wrote both the libretto and the music. The opera contains a universal message; and although it normally takes place in Rome during the early 1800's, the setting can be effectively altered so that it is restricted in neither time nor place.

The purpose of this project was to create an original production scheme which will prove acceptable to the American audience. The production of Don Pasquale adhered to the following guidelines: (1) the production was adapted in terms of the American audience for which it was being performed, it was sung in English and all allusions to the opera's European origin were either omitted or altered to conform to the American stylization, (2) the adaptation of the opera centered around an American historical perspective, a point in American history with which the audience could nostalgicly identify. It was hoped that opera produced in such a manner would provide a greater appreciation of the art form by the American public.

Don Pasquale has traditionally been produced with emphasis placed on its Italian setting. This project was concerned with solving the design problem posed by the adaptation of Don Pasquale to an American style. After the solution was found, the opera was mounted and produced during the first week of May, 1970, in the Main Auditorium at North Texas State University. The vehicle which was used in the production was a stylization of the period in American history from 1890 to 1900. This period was chosen because the spirit of the "Gay Nineties" corresponds with the comic spirit of the opera.

Introduction to Opera

The desire to add music to drama has formed a part of the dramatic instinct since the first cavemen listened to the chants of their elders around the campfire. Opera as something more than the sung mass of the Catholic Church grew out of a group of artisans whose center of activity was the palace of Giovanni Bardi in Florence about the year 1600.[5] The first opera was written by Jacopo Peri, a poet-composer of the group, who upon completion became so widely known that he was given a commission to write another to celebrate

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[5]Wallace Brockway and Herbert Weinstock, The Opera (New York, 1941), p. 3.

the marriage of Maria de' Medici and Henry IV. The first operas of Peri and his associate Giulio Caccini were little more than pastorales. The productions were always staged with rich costumes and scenery, but the action, carried by a solo voice, was slow and often monotonous.[6] At this stage in the development of the art form, the word "opera" had not gained its present connotation. It literally meant a "work," and the production itself was termed a "dramma per music" or drama by means of music.[7] It was not until 1656, when the English imported and vulgarized the word, that it received its present connotation.

Any definition of opera must by necessity return to the two men who invented the form. Peri was primarily a composer, but kept the music of the work subordinated to the dramatic interest. Caccini, on the other hand, was not only a singer, but the father of the first prima donna and approached the opposite direction. Whether opera is primarily musical or dramatic is a question that has been argued for almost four hundred years. Most will concede, however, that it is both and cannot exclusively be relegated to a single discipline.

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[6]Ethel Peyser and Marion Bauer, How Opera Grew (New York, 1956), pp. 29-30.

[7]Donald Jay Grout, A Short History of the Opera (New York, 1965), p. 1.

Opera no longer exists when it can be performed without music. However, the music must be read with full recognition of its correlations with stage action, costumes, scenery, and the stage conventions which govern the librettist.[8] According to composer Richard Wagner, opera is drama that is sung.[9] It is a dramatic action performed on the stage with scenery and costume and is sustained as a whole by orchestral music. Dialogue is conveyed entirely, or for the most part, by the use of song.[10] Ideally opera consists of a balance of music, song, drama and acting welded into a highly complex unit designed to please the audience. Like other art forms, opera has survived various periods of purism and experimentation. However, only those composers who have achieved an equal balance of music and drama have become the masters of their art form.

Opera distinguishes itself from drama in its idealistic portrayal of nature. Rather than attempting to present a dramatic situation realistically, opera uses the voice as an extension of the actor to portray such emotions as love, hate, and joy in a way which transcends the limitations of

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[8]Ibid., p. 2.

[9]Joseph Kerman, Opera as Drama (New York, 1959), p. 3.

[10]Grout, p. 4.

instrumentation or written dialogue. For this reason, the idea of logic and reality must give way on the operatic stage to emotion and the experience of art. The difference between a good play and a good opera libretto is one of emphasis.[11] A play centers around characters involved in a sequence of events or episodes conventially designated as a plot. If there exists within the plot an episode which can be omitted without affecting the content and action of the play, the episode is considered to be a flaw. Opera, on the other hand, does not regulate itself with a strict sequence of events. It often includes, if not demands, episodes within the production which contribute nothing to the plot sequence. The best example of this is the aria. It is a brief disruption in the action of the libretto in which the singer will traditionally move toward upstage center and display his virtuosity. Other such episodes--dances, choruses and ensembles--serve as little more than stage effect. Drama, as the more realistic of the two art forms, attempts to present a dramatic situation in terms of its prosaic qualities of theme and plot, while opera strives for a more poetic ideal and feeling. Such a striving for the idealistic has given

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[11] Ibid., pp. 4-5.

rise in opera to an artificiality, the need for a set of conventions that people must accept, while at the same time acknowledging them to be ridiculous.

Generally, the conventions of opera are additions to the conventions of the theatre. Since opera is a stage performance, it must rely on the conventions developed by the theatre before the birth of opera. For example, the invisible fourth wall and changes in time, place, and action must apply equally to opera and drama. The idealism and musical form of opera, however, dictate that more imagination be provided by the audience. People singing to each other rather than speaking may in some ways seem totally ridiculous. It is no more ridiculous than people speaking in the blank verse of Shakespeare. Both serve as the medium in which the artist best expresses himself, each attempting to convey a poetic idea or feeling. For this reason blank verse is considered a convention in Shakespeare and sung dialogue is considered a convention in opera.

Opera conventions are in a constant state of flux. Each new movement in opera has brought a change in its conventions. Thus, a work considered to be a masterpiece during one era becomes outdated in another. The emotional content of opera

linked to various universal characters is a convention which serves as a foundation for the rest of the work. Character types correspond with contrasting voices. The lyric tenor has a voice with the qualities of a young man and usually portrays the lover. His voice compliments the lyric soprano, whose qualities of beauty and delicacy provide the image of a young woman. While terms such as "tenor" and "soprano" accurately describe the range of a singer, modifiers such as "lyric," "dramatic" and "heroic" must also be used to describe the style of each singer. In contrast to the lyric soprano, the dramatic soprano is more forceful, has greater range and is able to sing more difficult music. In much the same way, the lyric tenor is more youthful and graceful than the heroic tenor, who adds the qualities of richness, power and endurance.[12] Finally, the more dramatic characters of the mezzo soprano, contralto, and bass are associated with age and dignity.

A convention which has become a point of controversy, especially in circles of American opera production, is the singing of opera in the native language. Opera is difficult to stage and perform because it requires a great number of experts, such as composers, librettists, conductors, singers

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[12]Joseph Machlis, The Enjoyment of Music (New York, 1963), p. 154.

and designers, who must work in close association with each other. Gathering such a group has always been an expensive operation, and for this reason opera in Europe fell under the patronage of the aristocracy. Since the composers and librettists were not writing for the common people, little attention was paid to writing opera in languages other than French, German, and Italian, which were spoken by the aristocracy. By the time opera became popular in America, the Romantic Age, which had spawned opera in Europe, had given way to the more realistic Industrial Age. The realistic American audience was unable to appreciate an idealistic art form when presented in the realistic medium of the native American language. Instead, they chose opera presented in a foreign language. The argument in favor of presenting opera in the native language was that translations are not true representations of the composer's art. Recently, however, more emphasis has been placed on establishing standard translations of operas and performing them for American audiences in English. The arguments for doing this are strong. First, not all opera has been written with impeccable form and language. Translation might well improve them. Secondly, the American audience is often not content with listening only to the melody of a foreign language; an understanding of the dramatic situation

must also be available. Finally the performance of opera in the language of the audience would encourage young singers and composers to participate in the art form.

Since its birth, nourishment, and prosperity all depended on the benevolence of the aristocracy, opera became a visible and audible extension of its patron's power, wealth, and taste. Its luxuriousness and stylizations have always provoked parodies and reactions. Opera buffa, opera comique, ballad opera, intermezzi, comic opera, baudeville, operetta, and musical comedy have been designed to appeal to persons of less wealth and culture than the noble patrons of opera. They have all been less expensive than opera, appealed to people of lower social standing, had a more familiar tone, usually parodied serious opera, and had an artistic merit that equalled or exceeded that of opera.[13] Of these lesser forms opera buffa was the first serious reaction to opera.

Opera Buffa

Opera buffa, loosely defined, is a general designation for the Italian operas during the early and middle eighteenth century which did not come under the heading of opera seria.[14] Opera seria, the forerunner of grand opera, was an attempt

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[13]Grout, p. 247. [14]Ibid.

at combining classical drama sources and music. Rather than adhering to classical plots, however, foolish and fantastic adventures were invented to enable the singer to display his ability.[15] Because opera seria was typically long and tiresome, short comic scenes were introduced as entertainment during the intermissions. These scenes were usually based on local satire, were fast-paced and ended with a rousing finish. The scenes were eventually tied together and gained such popularity that often they were presented after opera seria as a separate performance. At the same time that these comic intermezzi were developing into an individual form of opera, a special type of commedy in music appeared in Naples utilizing the local dialect and drawing its characters from the commedia dell' arte.[16] Around the middle of the eighteenth century the two separate forms of opera began to lose their peculiarities and merge into one common type. As the century continued, the new form, now identified as opera buffa, continued to grow more ambitious. A chief characteristic was the use of the bass voice, which, along with the higher voices, allowed emphasis to be placed on the use of ensembles. The association of librettists and composers with Italian dramatist

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[15]Waldo Fullerton, "Early Italian and French Opera," Fundamentals of Musical Art, edited by Edward Dickenson (New York, 1927, p. 22.

[16]Grout, p. 247.

Carlo Goldoni marked the turning point in the history of opera buffa. Goldoni was a reformer in eighteenth century Italian drama. He rejected the use of stock characters and improvised plots in favor of more personal characterizations and tightly knit structure. In addition to writing drama Goldoni collaborated on several comic operas, and his influence on the librettists led to more dignity and order in the opera plot and language. Rather than changing opera buffa completely, the new ideas of Goldoni were combined with old and tested ideas to form a new and more interesting type of opera.

Although opera buffa is a comic form of opera, it is not comedy in the same sense that some drama is comedy. The main difference between the two lies in the necessity for the audience to laugh as a sign of approval. In its comedy, opera provides its own laughter through the medium of music.[17] Unlike drama, its purpose is not to elicit a spontaneous reaction through a series of comic devices, but to use music as a more exhaustive display of comic character. In order to create the contact between performers and audience which is necessary for the comic nature of opera buffa, translation into the native language is required. Furthermore, opera

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[17]Gian Carlo Menotti, "Reflections on Opera Buffa," National Music Council Bulletin (New York, 1963-1964), p. 18.

buffa relies on the support of a greater segment of society. Unlike today, when opera lovers are content to see old opera performed in new facilities, opera buffa attained its greatest popularity at a time when audiences demanded entirely new productions with new music and librettos. The composers who provided them were Piccinni, Paisiello, and Cimarosa. The most famous of the early opera buffa was La Serva Padrona, an intermezzi by Pergolesi written in 1733 and still somewhat popular. It had only three characters, one of which was mute, and a small orchestra. Although opera buffa was championed by many now lost or forgotten composers, it also received support from more famous musicians. Mozart's Don Giovanni, Rossini's Barbiere di Siviglia and Donzetti's Don Pasquale developed a comic tradition that led ultimately to Verdi's Falstaff. It was Gaetano Donizetti's Don Pasquale, however, that served as the final success of opera buffa. Even though no successful opera buffa was written after Don Pasquale, the success of the form was evident; and Barbiere di Siviglia, L'Elisir d'Amore, and Don Pasquale are still permanent members of opera repertoire.[18]

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[18]Ernest Newman, More Stories of Famous Operas (Philadelphia, 1943), p. 301.

Donizetti and Romanticism

The period between the early nineteenth century operas of Rossini and the dramatic late nineteenth century operas of Verdi can be summed up in the work of Gaetano Donzetti and Vencenzo Bellini. Of the two composers Bellini was the individualist. A master of the routine of operatic composition, he worked more slowly than his contemporaries, attempting to obtain a more perfect union of words and music. Unlike Bellini, Donzetti did not attempt to be an unmistakable music personality. He lived in a period when the public demanded new operas, and over-worked composers were expected to fulfill this demand.[19] He borrowed and adapted from previous unsuccessful operas, perfecting what he used. He believed an opera must have a viable libretto, and his power is derived from the way he directed all of his resources toward expressing his dramatic belief in the libretto at hand.[20] At the time of his early death Bellini had produced eleven operas, of which Norma and La Sonnambula are his most famous. In contrast, Donizetti, who enjoyed a long life, composed a phenomenal sixty-four operas. His most famous, Lucia di

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[19]Herbert Weinstock, "Donizetti Today," Opera News, XXIX (January 9, 1965), 10.

[20]Ibid., p. 11.

Lammermoor, was composed in six weeks, while his masterpiece Don Pasquale was written in only eight days. Donizetti wrote his music for the popular audience which supported him. His work showed the heartier, more extroverted qualities of romanticism.[21] Thus, Donizetti is more representative of his time than Bellini. His work cannot be classified in one trend, for it crosses the boundaries from classical to romantic opera.

Gaetano Donzetti was born in Bergamo, Italy, on Nobember 28, 1797, to a twenty-year-old son of a family of poor artisans. Since early times Bergamo had been a city of music, and its people were inclined to clownish playacting and decorative gaiety.[22] Andrea Donizetti enrolled his youngest son in the school of Giovanni Simone Mayr, a Bavarian who had adopted Italy as his native country and who had brought with him expanded notions of symphonic orchestral elaboration in opera. Mayr and the early operas of Rossini had the most stylistic influence on Donizetti's work. From Mayr, Donizetti learned a certain solemnity of melody and the care that must be taken to make orchestration an instrument of dramatic effect.[23]

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[21]Grout, p. 357.

[22]Herbert Weinstock, Donizetti and the World of Opera (New York, 1963), p. 5.

[23]Weinstock, "Donizetti Today," p. 10.

The influence of Rossini led him to the use of comic crescendos for emotional and comic effect. He also learned the techniques of supervising the staging of opera so that the impresario's forces would carry out his intentions rather than their own.[24] By the time he was eighteen Donizetti had finished his study of voice, counterpoint, and harmony under Mayr and was composing minor pieces of his own. He continued his study at the Liceo Filarmonico Comunal at Bologna where he took courses in fugue and counterpoint and composed, among other works, his first two operas. From Mayr and Stanislao Mattei, his professor at Bologna, he acquired only the technical proficiency that he needed for his vocation. His fame as a composer was to rest, not on his educated musical ability, but rather on a spontaneity and a theatrical flair that allowed him to give musical emphasis to dramatic situations on the stage without probing below their surface.[25] His first opera, Enrico di Borgognia, was produced while he was in Venice. Unfortunately, the audience was more interested in the newly redecorated theatre than in Donizetti's labors, and work was received less than enthusiastically.[26] Four

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[24]Ibid. [25]Ibid., p. 11.

[26]Ibid., p. 23.

years later the young maestro traveled to Rome where the success of Zoraide di Granata brought him to the attention of Italy as the claimant to the throne of Rossini. Indeed the early death of Bellini and the retirement of Rossini left only Donizetti as the transition between Rossini and Verdi. Rossini was operatically inactive when Donizetti wrote his most popular work, Lucia di Lammermoor, and Verdi, at the time of Donizetti's death in 1848, had yet to compose Rigoletto, Il Trovatore, La Traviata, Don Carlos, Aida, and Falstaff. By 1831 Donizetti had written twenty-eight operas, all frank and obvious imitations of Rossini's style.[27] His tragedies were shallow and superficial, meant primarily for the entertainment of the moment, rather than for a lasting impression. With the success of Anna Bolena, Donizetti's name became known outside the world of Italian opera. His greatest achievement in opera occurred in 1835 when Lucia di Lammermoor was performed at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples. The opera, based on a story from the British Isles, provides an outstanding example of Donizetti's ability to portray character through the dramatic flexibility of the singer's

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[27]Ruth Berges, "Melody Musician," Opera News, XX (January 9, 1956), 13.

voice. Lucia di Lammermoor provided Donizetti with a position as professor of counterpoint at the Royal School of Music in Rome, but like many composers before him Donizetti soon left Italy for Paris. While in Paris, Donizetti wrote La Fille du Regiment and Don Pasquale, which is the unchallenged masterpiece of his comic operas. This opera buffa was written in the fall of 1842 and proved to be Donizetti's last major success. Giovanni Ruffini collaborated with Donizetti on the libretto, an adaptation of an unsuccessful opera, Ser Marcantino, for which Angelo Anelli had provided the libretto.[28] The opera was at first received coldly by the singers and orchestra. It was not until Donizetti composed and added Ernesto's "Com'e gentil" that its success was assured.

By 1845 the composer showed signs of exhaustion and melancholy. He had become paralyzed as the result of a cerebro-spinal disease and spent a year and a half in an asylum. In October, 1847, he moved to his native town of Bergamo, where in April of the following year he died.

Donizetti's contributions to opera cannot be summed up in a single work. Donizetti at his best can be found in the

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[28]Newman, p. 302.

tenor aria "Una furtiva Lagrima" from L'Elisir d'Amore, in the "Mad Scene" of Lucia di Lammermoor and in the "Com'e gentil" from Don Pasquale. His operas contained heightened comic activity, robust characterizations and beautiful expressive melodies. His opera seria provided models for Verdi; and his opera buffa, especially Don Pasquale laid the foundation on which Verdi build his Falstaff. Unlike many of the composers of the early to middle nineteenth century who have lost favor with the modern opera-going public, Donizetti has remained fresh. In 1951 Lucia di Lammermoor was chosen one of the ten most popular operas of the Metropolitan Opera's repertoire.[29] Don Pasquale has been revived as recently as 1965. In summary, the success of Donizetti has been attributed to his sense of theatre and to the abundant fund of melodic invention which never failed to provide his characters with situation and emotion, two fundamental characteristics of successful opera.

Opera in America

By the second half of the eighteenth century opera had found its way to America and had been overcome by a surge of patriotism. During this period opera consisted of simple

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[29]E. F. Flusser, "Donizetti--The Missing Link," Opera News, X (December 24, 1951), 14.

English ballad-operas given in New York, Charleston, Baltimore, Williamsburg, Philadelphia, and Boston. It was in these larger cities that opera became a distinct social occasion. The first recorded opera was Flora, or Hob in the Well, given on February 18, 1735, in Charleston, South Carolina. This imported opera consisted of a dramatic piece interspersed with popular songs, and it maintained its popularity for many years. The ballad-operas drew their themes from everyday life, were spoken in English and employed simple folk tunes patterned after The Beggars' Opera, which had its New York premiere at the first Nassau Street Theatre in 1750.[30] The first American attempt at grand opera came in 1781. It was an allegorical-political opera resulting from the new found freedom gained after the War of Independence. The opera was called The Temple of Minerva and was performed in Philadelphia. Opera during the early period of independence closely reflected the thinking of the time, and such operatic titles as Columbus, The Fourth of July, and The Temple of American Independence were common.

The theme of independence gave way during the latter years of the eighteenth century and the first part of the

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[30]Herbert Graf, The Opera and Its Future in America (New York, 1941), p. 209.

nineteenth century to a period of French influence, sparked in part by the French Revolution and in part by the increase in communication across the Atlantic. Traveling companies brought the opera comique of Gretry, Monsigny, and Dalayrac and also the Italian opera buffa of Pergolesi and Rossini. The operas of Europe were adapted to the limited stage facilities of the eastern seaboard theatres. Often large portions of the European originals were omitted, and arias were replaced by popular songs. With the advent of the steamship, New York saw its first real season of grand opera. Manuel Garcia's Italian Opera Company came to America and enjoyed the patronage of the wealthy segment of New York society. Garcia presented nine Italian operas in their original language; his production of Rossini's Barber of Seville was the first opera ever to be heard in Italian in this country.[31] The Italians were soon followed by the French from New Orleans, and in 1859 the first Wagnerian opera, Tannhauser, helped to establish the production of German opera. The singing of opera in its native language did not go unopposed in America. In 1839 Fidelio was sung in English with much success at the Park Street Theatre, and composers such as William H. Fry and George F. Bristow made attempts at establishing a native

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[31]Ibid., p. 214.

American opera. The flood of musicians fleeing the revolutions of Europe stifled these attempts, and opera in a foreign language became the standard by which other opera in America was to be judged.

The remaining history of opera in America can be summarized by a listing of the major opera organizations that have been formed. The first of these was the Metropolitan Opera which opened in the Metropolitan Opera House in 1883. It was financed by those made rich from the rapid development of industry in the North and West after the Civil War. Such families as the Rockefellers, Morgans, and Vanderbilts provided the boxes around the Metropolitan stage that became known as the "Golden Horseshoe." Earlier, in 1791, the French had presented on the stage of Le Spectacle de la Rue St. Pierre in New Orleans a troupe of French comedians with a series of performances resembling drama, opera, and ballet.[32] The success of the troupe was evidenced by the building of the Theatre d'Orleans and the subsequent construction of the French Opera House. The tradition of French opera was upheld in New Orleans, and new singers from Paris were added each season. French opera in America enjoyed a golden age

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[32]Ronald L. Davis, A History of Opera in the American West (New York, 1965), p. 2.

of prosperity while the French Opera House was open. Unfortunately, the house was beset by financial difficulties during World War I, when its supply of artists and materials from France was halted. Attempting to revive after the war, the house burned on December 4, 1919 and was never restored. Since that time the New Orleans Opera House Association has maintained opera productions in New Orleans, but has been financially unable to restore French opera to its previous grandeur.

In 1770, The Beggars' Opera was the first performance of opera in Boston. By 1854, the Federal Street Theatre and the Boston Street Theatre Provided the city with opera on a grand scale. Opera companies were invited from New York and Chicago. In November of 1909 the Boston Opera House was built and the Boston Opera Company formed. The company survived until 1914; since then Boston has been without an opera company. The Boston Opera Association, however, was formed in 1923 with the goal of assuring annual seasons of opera performed by an outstanding visiting opera company. In Chicago opera was also beset by fire and financial difficulties. In 1910 the Chicago Grand Opera Company and the Chicago Opera Association were founded, but with the fall of the stock

market in 1929 opera was all but destroyed. The Civic Opera House continued but was still under a heavy financial burden. Of all opera in America only that in San Francisco rivaled the supremacy of the Metropolitan Opera Association. In 1922, the San Francisco Opera Company was formed and housed in the Civic Auditorium. It remained there until the completion of the War Memorial Opera House, which is still one of the three best opera houses in the United States. The San Francisco Opera Company became known for its aggressiveness in opera innovations and achieved a quality of performance that even the Met found hard to equal.

The preceding examples have shown that opera in America has, at best, been a risky venture. Opera organizations such as the Metropolitan and San Francisco companies have met with tremendous success, while at the same time other opera groups in almost every major city have succumbed or been beset by pressing financial problems. One of the hardest blows ever dealt opera in America was the depression of the 1930's. The patrons of opera found themselves no longer able to support such an extravagant luxury. Since that time opera as an art supported by and for the entertainment of the wealthy segment of society has existed only in a somewhat altered state.

Opera companies, composers, librettists and singers have progressively realized that in order for opera to survive they must extend their foundation to include the support of a broader portion of the people. The prosperity in America since World War II has proved to be an invaluable aid in helping opera achieve this goal. Increased wages and a shorter work week have lessened the economic and social distinctions in our society and provided the leisure time needed to indulge in artistic pursuits. Education and culture in America have gained increased importance as social standards. Where at one time opera was an expensive form of entertainment, it became common to hear opera on the radio and see it on television. In such an atmosphere the future of opera has become brighter than ever before. Chicago, Dallas, San Francisco, and New York are now considered international opera centers. In order for an art to progress it must be willing to change. Although encouraged by the increased support it has found among the American people, opera in America is still essentially European in its traditional music, plots and productions. In general, opera is still sung in the language of the composer. Rather than attempting to write new operas, companies have adopted a

standard repertoire and their productions continue to emphasize what is traditional. With such restrictions opera in America can grow to be no more than a form of diversion. In Europe opera has developed as a symbol of the society which supports it, but as long as the restrictions of the European society limit opera in America, it cannot exist as a native art form.

One important step which can be taken in the creation of an American form of opera is the development of production schemes that may be associated with the American audience. Many American production styles, such as the "western" are being used continually in television, in movies, and on the stage. Might not these be of equal benefit in establishing a form of opera which appeals to the American audience. Hopefully an atmosphere could be established in which the audience feels greater security and willingness to respond to the stage presentation. The responsibility of synthesis for these new production schemes would rest primarily with the production designer.

Primarily schooled in theatre, the designer when faced with the task of developing a production scheme for opera finds himself surrounded by the unfamiliar discipline of music. Instead of developing his own ideas around the vague

interpretation of a director, the designer of an opera finds that his scheme must correlate with guidelines and restrictions established in the composer's music. A designer attempting to create an American production scheme finds he must be original while at the same time adhering to traditional restrictions in the music. For this reason it will be necessary to develop a musical analysis of Don Paquale before designing the opera's production scheme. The analysis of the relationship of the music to the plot will provide a greater appreciation of the composer's approach to the work and will establish a direction or style on which the rest of the production will be built.

CHAPTER II

ANALYSIS OF DON PASQUALE

When entering the planning stage of an opera production, the director and his designer must first determine the effect of the music on production. Unlike a play in which the director determines emphasis, mood, tempo, characterization, and movement, an opera production must evolve around predetermined guidelines set by the composer in his music. In his music he not only provides his own interpretation of the story, but also fixes the timing and tempo of the production. In addition the music defines the physical and emotional traits of the characters and governs the production aspects of style in costumes, scenery, and lighting. In many ways the opera director and designer stage the music, rather than the words of an opera. They must be sensitive to music as a form of expression, but at the same time work within the framework of their dramatic experience. For both, one essential truth must be maintained in an opera production; the essential congruity between what is seen on the stage and what is heard in the music.[1] It is the

[1]Sam Wanamaker, "As If It Were a Play," Opera News, XXVIII (January 18, 1964), 9.

director's responsibility to give to the eye what is heard by the ear. He achieves this through two means, his direction of the actors on the stage and his close collaboration with the designer in establishing the scenic decor.

The scenic designer is an important element of any opera production. Like the director, he must be sensitive to the music and must achieve in his design a harmony between the intent of the composer and the dramatic action. The designer must be able to interpret in terms of canvas and wood what the composer has expressed in his music. Because of the restrictive nature of music, opera design in the past has been plagued with outworn traditions. Once a production achieved success, later productions were patterned after it, establishing traditions which rapidly became virtual laws. Not more than a few generations ago opera productions used the same types of sets, constumes, and stage directions for widely differing styles. Emphasis was placed on the large, impressive, and loud.[2] Recently, however, opera has been produced with emphasis on dramatic effect and the role of the designer has become significant. Realizing that the preparation of what is seen is as important as the preparation

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[2]Jack Beeson, "Grand and Not So Grand," Opera News, XXVII (January 5, 1963), 8.

of what is heard, opera producers have started taking advantage of the new stagecraft developed by the theatre. In most cases this new and revitalized staging has resulted not only in economy of production, but increased box office receipts. The trends in new opera design have been to establish opera as a form of living theatre, rather than a dying tradition. Simplicity and stylization have served as the guidelines for new opera production. The increased use of colored light, projections, symbolic devices and varying levels have provided for an increased means of visually expressing the full intent of the music.

While searching for the visual expression desired in an opera, the designer must, as in any theatre production, consider the director's concept of production, the requirements of the libretto, and any limitations he may encounter in terms of facilities or budget. He must also take into consideration the demands that the music will make on his design. Often, as with Verdi and Wagner, the composer forms his music around a mental picture. Thus, such musical techniques as crescendos may indicate a ramp or set of stairs. Long or repeated passages of music may indicate the distance between two objects on the stage, and orchestration may

indicate special effects. The mood of the music should be reflected in the mood of the design. For example, a light comic opera might require a design reflecting the delicate, lively mood of its music. On the other hand, a Wagnerian tragedy would reflect the more somber or intense mood of the music, make heavy use of symbolism and strive to move the emotions of the audience. The tempo which the composer establishes in his music must also be reflected in the design. Often an opera production will loose its continuity because a complex design will take too much time to change from scene to scene. It is more advantageous when faced with an increased number of scene changes or lack of time to perform them, to use a less complicated design utilizing stylization and symbolism. The opera audience, usually more educated in terms of the plot than the theatre audience, supplies by imagination what is visually suggested. Finally the designer must also include within his design the characterizations which the composer creates in his mind. Opera, by its inherent nature of assigning stock characterizations to contrasting voices, provides the composer with the basis on which to build his dramatic expression. By writing for a coloratura a composer expresses the dramatic power and depth of a character.

On the other extreme, the lyric is more two-dimensional and delicate. Individual characteristics may be expressed by a musical theme. For example, "La donna 'e mobile" has become associated with the young duke in Rigoletto. Thus, in designing an opera the additional dimension of music must be integrated with the production scheme. Music can be utilized by the designer to give greater emphasis to the visual experience he wishes to create.

When analyzing an opera for production the designer has essentially a twofold purpose in mind. First he must establish the total meaning of the production by reading the score, conferring with the director and doing research. He must have a total concept of what the composer has expressed in his music, how it has been interpreted by the director and how this interpretation compares with past tradition. With a thorough knowledge of the work the designer proceeds with ~~with~~ the establishment of a production scheme which will communicate this total meaning to the audience. Conventionally a designer for drama will read the script three times, looking first for dominant mood and atmosphere, then for stylization, and finally for technique.[3] Such an analysis

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[3]W. Oren Parker and Harvey K. Smith, Scene Design and Stage Lighting (New York, 1968), p. 70.

can be applied when designing an opera; however, the additional guiding and limiting factor of the composer's music must be included before the analysis is complete.

Musical Guidelines

Don Pasquale, by Gaetano Donizetti and librettist Giovanni Ruffini is directly derived from an earlier unsuccessful comic opera, Ser Marcantino, by Stefano Pavesi and Angelo Anelli.[4] Its roots eventually reach Epicoene, by Ben Johnson.[5] The music of the opera is generally Italian. The composer is the primary transitional figure between the lyric Rossini and the dramatic Verdi and reflects the influence of the musical throne he inherited as well as the foundation he provided for his successor. The story of the opera is a simple one. It is about the foolishness of an old man. Don Pasquale, a wealthy bachelor in his sixties has for some time been trying to force his nephew, Ernesto, into marrying a woman Pasquale considers beautiful, charming, and wealthy. Ernesto, however, is in love with Norina, a woman of somewhat lower social standing. In order to punish and disinherit Ernesto, Pasquale decides that he will commission his good

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[4]Newman, p. 302.

[5]Boris Goldovsky, Bringing Opera to Life (New York), p.415.

friend Doctor Malatesta to find the old bachelor a wife. Malatesta is sympathetic to the cause of Ernesto and Norina and devises a scheme which will teach the old fool a lesson and allow the two lovers to be married with the uncle's approval. The motives of each of the characters is thus established and the opera begins with Don Pasquale awaiting Doctor Malatesta, wondering what the latest development will be in the doctor's search for a bride.

The overture of Don Pasquale primarily consists of a preview of two of the dominant melodies found in the work. About the first third of the overture is constructed around the third act serenade of Ernesto, "Com'e gentil." It is first introduced by the clarinet and continued in turn by horn and flute. The serenade is a very sentimental pastoral song and immediately introduces the romance and love interest on which the opera will be based. The remainder of the overture is based on the latter part of Norina's first act cavatina. The melody is a polka filled with mischievousness and vivacity. In following the romantic serenade of Ernesto it serves to establish the comic nature of the opera, to transport the audience from its air of seriousness to an attitude of humor and fun.

The curtain opens; and Don Pasquale, obviously in deep thought, is seen in the living room of his house. The melody which introduces the opera is a slow, smoothly flowing waltz with a base that has traditionally been interpreted as the movement of a rocking chair. The waltz underlines Pasquale's character. He is old-fashioned, frugal, credulous, and obstinate, but basically a good man. When considered in context with the period in which the opera was written, the waltz suggests the lack of propriety in the marriage he is contemplating and hints at the foolish character of the old man. The music which follows this opening melody is a further development of Pasquale's character. It reflects the excitement and anticipation of Pasquale while waiting for word from Malatesta and the foolishness he displays in thinking of the beautiful young wife that he soon believes will be his. Thus established, Pasquale's character is one of essential goodliness sparked by an impatience for youth and a foolishness of age. The next character to be introduced is Doctor Malatesta. He has come to bring Don Pasquale the news that he has found the wife of the old man's dreams. She is beautiful, quiet, obedient, and thrifty, and she will provide him with many years of happiness. Malatesta claims

that she is of a good family, for she is his sister who has been away in a convent. Malatesta's aria is also descriptive of his character. Once again it is a waltz with little ornamentation suggesting a man of means, a schemer who is friend to both Pasquale and Ernesto. The opera continues with Malatesta baiting Pasquale with descriptions of the woman he has found. The old bachelor begs for more and more. The first part of the scene ends with Malatesta promising to bring the woman to him that evening. In a lively rhythm Pasquale vents his enthusiasm, proclaiming that the burden of his sixty years has been lifted from him and once again he feels like a youth, ready to put his nephew in his place. Ernesto enters and Pasquale takes advantage of the moment to inform his nephew that he will be getting married and that Ernesto's support and inheritance are about to be terminated. At first he does not believe his uncle, but is soon convinced when he learns that the one who arranged the union is none other than the man he thought to be a friend, Doctor Malatesta. At this point Ernesto launches into his first aria, a tirade of heavy sentiment. He bewails the loss of his dream of love. Now too poor to marry Norina, he will leave forever. The aria reflects the enthusiasm of Ernesto's youth. His idealism

has been shattered and the overdone aria expresses the martyrdom he feels at the hands of the older generation. He receives no sympathy from his uncle who does not realize the tender nature of his nephew's feelings. Instead he underlines the young man's laments with comments that he has only brought it on himself through his obstinacy.

The first act ends with a scene in Norina's house. She is reading a sentimental romantic novel. She is not, however, the type of woman that will take such reading seriously. With a coquettish laugh she sets the book down and enters into an aria which introduces her as capricious and audacious, but nonetheless good at heart. Her aria is a bouncy polka filled with vocal ornamentation which displays her vivacity. By the time Malatesta enters to inform her of his plan to teach Pasquale a lesson, she has throughly convinced the audience that she is the type of woman who can wrap a man around her little finger. Malatesta enters and describes his plan. They will trick Don Pasquale into a fake wedding with Norina. Afterwards she will make the old man regret the marriage and he will allow Norina and Ernesto to marry. At first the music during the unfolding of the plan is serious. It expresses the purpose of the conspirators to help Ernesto, but once they have resolved their course of

action it increases in mischievousness. Norina displays her various male-trapping talents and the act ends in a driving, dotted rhythm which displays the determination of the two tricksters to succeed.

The second act of the opera returns the audience to Don Pasquale's house. Ernesto, alone, is indulging in self-pity before he leaves forever. The seriousness of his aria is belied, however, by the music which proceeds and accompanies it. The melody of the aria is introduced in full by a cornet solo, an instrument not usually associated with serious remorse. The solo is a common device of the period. It serves two purposes. First it allays any seriousness which might be attached to Ernesto's aria, and secondly it familiarizes the audience with the melody of the aria. The second effect is much the same as what is achieved in the overture of the American musical. Ernesto leaves; and Don Pasquale enters, instructing the servant that no one is to see him other than Doctor Malatesta and whoever may accompany him. The tempo of the music expresses his excitement, and he compliments himself on how well preserved he is for a man of his age. Norina and Malatesta arrive, she disguised as the doctor's sister, Sofronia. In her disguise she plays

the part of a modest, charming, over-protected girl who has spent most of her life in a convent. During the remainder of the scene Norina's music expresses two attitudes. In her asides, she is herself. The music is elaborate and lively. As Sofronia, however, her music consists of simple, straightforward melodies. She intends to trap Pasquale through her shy and retiring actions, and she succeeds. He is overcome by her beauty, modesty, and conservativeness. She has truly exceeded all his expectations, and he has Malatesta send for a notary to validate the wedding contract. After the doctor and the notary return, Ernesto arrives and accuses Malatesta of being a false friend. As Pasquale sings of his bride-to-be, Malatesta takes Ernesto aside and explains his plot to expose the old man's foolishness.

During the signing of the wedding contract, presided over by a fake notary hired by Malatesta, the melody of the opera is transferred from the singers to the orchestra. The techniques marks a change in events for Don Pasquale because as he attempts to embrace his new wife he finds that her character has changed. He is told that he must first receive permission to embrace his wife; but when he asks, he is denied it. The change in Norina's character is also evident in the music. There is first a reminiscence of the Norina-Malatesta

duet at the end of the first act, and the action stops as the characters simultaneously sing about how they feel. Norina, Malatesta, and Ernesto contemplate the trick they are playing on the old man; and Pasquale wonders what has brought about this sudden change and what will be the results of his foolishness. As they finish, the melody once again returns to the orchestra as Norina does everything in her power to attack Pasquale where it will hurt the most, in his pride and his pocket book. She orders everything she can imagine: a carriage, new servants, and furnishings for the house. As he protests, the music builds into what is known as an "ensemble of perplexity." A device used by Mozart and Rossini as a second act finale, it utilizes the loud, fast singing of the characters to display the main conflict in the opera. The scheme of Norina and Malatesta is beginning to work, and Pasquale worries about his foolish mistake.

The third act of the opera continues later that evening in Don Pasquale's house. The room is strewn with various items of female finery. Maids and valets are hurrying in and out of Norina's room to the busy tempo of the music. Pasquale is sitting at a table with the pile of bills that his new wife has created. He is feeling sorry for himself and resolves

that he will put an end to Norina's extravagance. The music here is little more than dialogue in preparation for the climactic duet which will follow. Norina hurriedly enters dressed to go to the theatre. When Pasquale refuses to let her go, an argument ensues. As the argument reaches its climax, the music builds until Norina slaps the old man and tells him to behave. This is the climax of the opera. Don Pasquale has finally learned his lesson. A slow, sad melody is carried in the orchestra as he sobs over the humility he has suffered at the hands of his wife. In an aside Norina provides a second melody, in which she expresses her sympathy for Pasquale, but realizes that she must continue her shrewish disguise to finalize their plan. She coquettishly sings another waltz, imploring Pasquale to go to bed. She then leaves, purposely dropping a note on her way out. Pasquale, thinking it another bill, picks it up and reads it. It is a note from his wife's lover telling her to be in the garden between nine and ten. Enraged, Pasquale sends for his friend Malatesta.

At this point in the opera Donizetti apparently feels that the audience should have some relief from the solo voices which, for the most part, have been carrying the action of the

opera. He introduces a servants' chorus letting them gossip about the relationship between Ernesto and Don Pasquale's wife. The music is a naughty little waltz. They finish and Malatesta arrives. Pasquale tells him of the note and of the plan he has devised to prove the infidelity of his wife. Malatesta talks him out of some of his more extreme ideas, such as calling the constable and the music becomes secretive and stealthy. It builds continually to the end of the scene, culminating in a "patter duet," in which the two characters say as many words as possible in a single breath. This technique is meant to excite the audience.

The final scene in the third act takes place in Don Pasquale's garden. From outside the fence Ernesto sings his serenade "Com'e gentil." It is a very sentimental love song, accompanied by guitars and chorus, describing the spell of the evening. As Ernesto finishes, Norina enters and lets him into the garden. The two sing a love duet, a nocturne in which the music shows the two characters in harmony by their singing in thirds and sixths. They finish as Pasquale and Malatesta sneak into the garden looking for the lovers. Ernesto slips away and the unraveling of the plot is swiftly completed. Malatesta informs Pasquale's wife that another woman will be moving into the house and whispers to Norina

that this is her cue to fly into a rage. She does so, proclaiming she will never live in a house with another woman. Pasquale calls for Ernesto and tells him to send for his Norina so Pasquale will be rid of his wife. He is told that his wife is the Norina to whom Ernesto wishes to be married. Realizing a trick has been played on him, he has learned his lesson. He gives the two lovers his permission to wed. The opera ends in a waltz with the entire cast giving its moral, that matrimony is an adventure best left alone by a man of Don Pasquale's age.

In general, Don Pasquale is an Italian romantic opera. The humor in laughing at the foolishness of an old man is universal, but is Italian in origin. The music of the opera is Italian, borrowing almost directly from Rossini the second act ensemble of perplexity. It resembles the second act finale in Barber of Seville. Another musical technique which is very much Italian is the pater duet in the third act. The device, meant to elicit a response from the audience, is associated with Italian opera because it is almost impossible to sing in other languages. Thus, through his music and the subject he treats Donizetti has associated a nineteenth century romantic Italian style with his opera.

It is the nature of style, however, to be interpreted in terms of its appropriateness to the individual production. For example, style in Shakespearean productions ranges from the historically authentic, to the Shakespearean authentic, to the modern expressionistic. Therefore, it will be necessary to develop the style of production before finding a solution to the design problem.

Style

Style, more than any other factor, provides the variety between various productions of a particular opera or drama. It is the basis for the enduring character of opera. With little new opera being written and performed, new interpretations of style within the current opera repertory are what give the art form the fresh appeal needed to maintain itself. Although style has many implications, to the theatre designer and director it is essentially the degree of realism found in the form and structure of a play.[6] As has already been noted, opera by its inherent nature is not a completely realistic art form. Therefore, the style of opera in general would tend toward one of many extremes. One of the major guidelines

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[6]Alexander Dean and Lawrence Carra, Fundamentals of Play Directing (New York, 1965), p. 322.

in establishing a style in opera production is what the composer has already established in his music. In Donizetti's Don Pasquale, for example, the composer has constructed his work around a series of melodies, some of which associate themselves directly with the characters and the scenic decor of the opera.

In Don Pasquale two melodies dominate the entire work. They are first heard in the overture where they set the mood for the entire opera. Each introduces a setting other than the Pasquale house and help determine the style which must be used. Although both are extremes in the same type of stylization, they help provide the opera with a sense of unity. The first of these themes is Ernesto's third act serenade, "Com'e gentil." Unlike the other serenades in the opera, this melody is the only one which is entirely serious. The overdone nature of Ernesto's first aria and the trumpet introduction of the second create a sense of falsity which keeps the audience from taking them seriously. "Com'e gentil," however, describes the cool romantic qualities of the soft and quiet night with a gentle breeze, babbling river, and full moon. Serious rather than comic in nature, it gives the production its love interest and an indication that something will be learned

as a result of the performance. The second melody, Norina's first act cavatina, reveals the opposite romantic qualities of coquettishness, scheming and vivacity. The music is written in a quicker tempo, reflects warmer, more passionate feelings and is dotted with vocal ornamentation which makes it hard to take seriously. Thus, the two melodies that dominate the opera require that it be produced in a style of pure romanticism. Each reflects romanticism in a different though complimentary form. Because the music is written and cannot be altered without affecting the intent of the composer, it is necessary that the settings reflect the melodies which introduce them. Thus, the setting introduced by "Com'e gentil" would use soft color and light and would attempt to achieve the serious romantic atmosphere called for by the music. On the other hand, Norina's cavatina requires a setting reflecting the ornamentation and coquettishness of the music. It would use warm color and light and attempt to achieve the vivacity which forms the comic nature of the opera.

While the music which introduces the two supplementary scenes in the opera is particularly descriptive of the romantic extremes which the composer wishes to express, the music which introduces Pasquale's house tends to fall between

Ernesto's serenade and Norina's cavatina in its sentiment. This music is a waltz and provides a sense of gaiety which falls short of Norina's coquettishness. At the same time the flowing melody establishes an air of sentiment which is not the seriousness provided by Ernesto. Since the flowing melody, sparked with bits of chatter, expresses the foolish character of Don Pasquale, the characteristic should also be carried into the setting. Because the waltz which introduces Don Pasquale, Norina's cavatina, and Ernesto's serenade are all highly romantic, the decor of Pasquale's setting should tend more toward the romantic ideal than the realistic. The color scheme should be lush and believable. Lighting should be used to emphasize romantic qualities of characters, costumes, and set, rather than attempt an emphasis on emotion or realism. Then the style established by Donizetti is one of romantic idealism, not realism. Each different setting within the opera can be associated with a character, and each character with a melody. Each melody provides the singer with an emotional base on which to build his character and provides the scenic designer with a starting point and direction on which to build his design.

In summary, the scenic designer for opera must expand the dramatic design conventions to include the music found

in the opera. The music will provide the general atmosphere and mood which the composer wishes to include in the production. It also includes an indication of characterization which must be reflected in the scenic decor, an indication of style, and even an indication of the physical requirements of the design. From an analysis of the music of an opera the designer is free to continue consultations with his director and establish the production scheme which he believes will be most appropriate for the requirements of the composer, director, and the audience.

The music-plot analysis of Don Pasquale has provided an indication of the composer's intent in producing the opera. The music within the opera clearly indicates a romantic or somewhat idealistic stylization. From this point it is now possible to establish a design, utilizing the direction set by the composer in his music, which will associate itself with the background of the American audience.

CHAPTER III

SET DESIGN

Past Productions

Once the designer completes an analysis of how the music of an opera will affect his production scheme, he is ready to formulate a solution for the design problem. The design problem posed by the present production of Don Pasquale concerns the creation of a production scheme emphasizing the social background of the American audience. Traditional productions of Don Pasquale have emphasized the opera's Italian origin, relegating the action to Rome during the beginning of the nineteenth century. One reason for this may be the result of the opera's first performance in 1843. In it contemporary street dress of the period was utilized. Since the audience of the early part of the nineteenth century was accustomed to ornate costume in the opera theatre, this innovation was received with mixed emotions. The lukewarm reaction which this first production received caused later productions to be dated in earlier periods, usually the seventeenth century. In the past few years the tendency of

opera critics has been to comment on the singing of various performers, rather than how the productions were staged. The recent 1956 production of Don Pasquale by the Metropolitan Opera might serve as a guideline for more creative designs. Since it had been some time since Don Pasquale had been produced by a major American opera organization, critics felt free to comment on both the production aspects of the performance and the singing.

In approaching the Metropolitan production of Don Pasquale the director, Dino Yannopoulos, was primarily concerned with strengthening the opera's plot.[1] He felt the opera could easily slip into farce and slapstick, because it was based primarily on the fusing of broad comedy and sentimental warmth and realism. In order to prevent the comedy from overriding the sentimentality and realism found in the play, Yannopoulos attempted to stress the personality of each character. Each member of the chorus was given a definite occupation and dressed accordingly. Various pieces of stage business stressed Malatesta's profession, and he was depicted as a "bon vivant member of the higher Bourgeoisie."[2]

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[1]Dino Yannopoulos, "Pasquale Pivots: The Score Must Remain Master," Opera News, XX (February 6, 1956), 20.

[2]Ibid., p. 22.

Ernesto was made a musician and sang his serenade in full view of the audience, and Pasquale was given the habit of gardening. Finally, Norina was depicted as a widow in mourning and was introduced in a black negligee. Although not entirely a traditional production, the opera had an atmosphere of nineteenth century romanticism, stressing comedy for its instructive nature, rather than as an end in itself.

The design of the opera reflected the production as a whole. It utilized the philosophy of simplicity and style developed by the new stagecraft, but maintained its traditional emphasis. The designer for the Metropolitan production was Wolfgang Roth. Realizing that the opera combined the elements of lyricism and farce, Roth strove to achieve a design that combined realism with stylistic elements.[3] The design consisted of a well-to-do bourgeois house in which the Italian nature of the opera provided the unifying theme. White walls, a grilled gate, and repeated suggestions of Italian arches were set against a brilliant backdrop suggesting the hot, dry climate and the intense Italian sky. All

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[3]Ian Strasfogel, "Pasquale Pivots: To Probability," Opera News, XX (February 6, 1956), 21.

three sets suggested an early nineteenth century influence, with Biedermeier furniture in the two interior settings and a nineteenth century fountain in the garden. Norina's room, a combination boudoir and tiny dressing room, expressed her femininity through the use of pink walls, white lace, and a dark red dressing closet. The outdoor scene once again stressed the Italian theme through its use of cypress trees, archways, and a fountain. The costumes, also designed by Roth, reflected early nineteenth century European tastes.

Although the Metropolitan production can, by most standards, be interpreted as a modern presentation of Donizetti's opera, it was still a traditional production emphasizing the same Italian characteristics that were emphasized in 1843. No attempt was made to relate the production to the American audience which was viewing it. Thus, as with most productions of this type, it served no purpose in broadening opera's base of popularity among the American audience.

The design emphasis of past productions of Donizetti's Don Pasquale has been shown, the designer of a new production must now seek to achieve a production scheme more appealing to the tastes of the American audience. He is free to develop

his own concept of the production. There are many established American stylizations from which to choose. One of these, a style based on the period known as the "Gay Nineties," will provide a basis for adapting Don Pasquale to the American audience.

The "Gay Nineties": A Concept of Production

In searching for a stylization which can be used to support a production of Don Pasquale and at the same time emphasize the background of the American audience, the period in American history known as the "Gay Nineties" was chosen for one primary reason. The nostalgic sterotype which is associated with the period corresponds almost directly with the atmosphere and social customs required by the opera. The basis for the opera's plot structure is a strict code of morality and family relationships and their acceptance by the audience. Because the opera is Italian, these relationships have traditionally been interpreted as Latin in nature. For example, the signing of a marriage contract and marriage arrangements undertaken by family or relatives are customs readily associated with Italy, Spain, and Mexico. In only slightly altered form, however, these and other rules of

conduct can be related to the late Victorian era and applied to the period in American history from 1890 to 1900. The "Gay Nineties" was a period of social conservatism in America; but it was also the end of the Victorian era, and a new social consciousness was beginning to take place. This transition from a stuffy, conservative, social attitude to a more liberal one is essential in presenting the significant message of the opera. It provides the basis for the lovers' breach with Uncle Pasquale and their attempts to get him to listen to the desires of the younger generation. The theme of social transition also provides the comic opera with the contrast needed to evoke a humorous situation. Pasquale is an individual who has misplaced himself in terms of his social surroundings, and it is from this that his foolishness is derived. What then are the characteristics of the period known as the "Gay Nineties" which establish a mood capable of supporting the opera?

In much the same way that Don Pasquale is a synthesis of sentiment and broad comedy, the period in American history, 1890-1900, stereotyped as the "Gay Nineties" is a synthesis of conservatism and an adventuristic spirit. The period served as a social transition in America from the dominance

of customs imposed by Victorian tradition to the adventuristic influence brought about by the newly discovered products of the Industrial Revolution. The period provides the contemporary American audience with a nostalgic landmark. This was the time in which Mrs. William Astor reigned as the "queen" of American society and the bicycle was blamed for a lack of church attendance on Sundays.

The members of Mrs. Astor's social register and those seeking such recognition provided the conservative example for society during the decade. Mrs. Astor's following adhered to a strict code of social behavior designed to prevent the nouveau riche from climbing the social ladder. Divorce, scandal, and informality were not allowed. Women fled from cigar smoke, abhorred improper language, and refused to receive suitors without a chaperone.[4] The older generation was expected to follow the customs established by Victorian tradition. The man of substance, for example, was distinguished by a more than comfortable dwelling on substantial acreage, which displayed an ornamental iron fence surrounding a well-kept lawn adorned with an iron stag. Gentlemen's whiskers were well-combed, and the substantial individual

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[4]Russel Crouse, It Seems Like Yesterday (New York, 1931), p. 18.

was never seen in public without a well-starched shirt, swallow-tailed coat, and gold watch chain across the mid-section. Meanwhile, ladies prominent in social circles retained Victorian fans and parasols, cultivated "wedding-ring" waists, and dismissed any opportunity to enter an intellectual discussion.[5] Thus, the social correctness of the "establishment" of the period was determined by remnants of the Victorian period. However, the youth of the period seemed to realize that the stuffy outlook of their parents was about to end. The image of the serene, high-spirited, queenly "Gibson Girl" overcame a young world looking for a symbol of the change in social consciousness. The "Gibson Girl" virtually dictated feminine and masculine attire of the period. Hemlines and trouser lengths were raised, new social amenities were established, and young people turned, with increasing numbers, to the new books and periodicals of the period which served as guidelines for the new middle class social order. Arthur M. Schlesinger estimates that some two to three hundred volumes about Victorian proprieties were circulated during this period, not to mention such household periodicals as Cottage Hearth, Peterson's, and Godey's Lady's

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[5]Gerald Carson, The Polite Americans (New York, 1966), p. 144.

Book.[6] The youth of the decade, in an attempt to combine the best of two eras, retained a concept of social standing established by the Victorian era, while taking advantage of the products of the Industrial Revolution.

No single item produced by the Industrial Revolution had a more direct effect of the social attitudes and values of the decade's young generation than the bicycle. With it came the demand for simplier, more sensible dress and increased participation by women in what was essentially a man's world.[7] At first cycling was considered a man's sport, but once it was found that the center bar of the bicycle could be removed, and the modesty of a woman mounting and dismounting a bicycle assured, the sport continued in earnest with both sexes participating. As a result of bicycling and increased female participation in tennis, the skirt was shortened for the first time. Increased female participation eventually led to her right to vote and a liberalization of the American mind responsible for the present social order.

The bicycle was not the only product of the Industrial Revolution which led to the sense of adventure, excitement, and joy of living experienced during the 1890's. The first

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[6]Ibid., p. 169. [7]Crouse, p. 58.

"Kodak" camera invented by George Eastman in 1888 enabled the public to take family photographs at a relatively low cost. By the early 1890's amateurs could process their own photographs and the decade gave birth to the concept of photography as an art.[8] The period also saw the triumph of the forerunner of the modern automobile. By 1898 the steam-driven "horseless carriage" invented by the Stanley twins proved that the automobile would soon become an effective means of fast, inexpensive transportation.[9] These are just a few examples of the industrial inventiveness of the period. The desire within the nation at this time was to try something new. In 1893 the first World's Fair seemed to exemplify this spirit and foreshadow what was to come. The World's Columbian Exposition was the first of its type in the nation; and its ferris wheel, its steam train capable of reaching a hundred and sixty miles per hour, and its balloon which carried vistors some fifteen hundred feet into the air are just some of the examples of the excitement present and desired during the period.[10] The feeling of adventure and excitement was

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[8]Beaumont Newhall, The History of Photography (New York, 1964), p. 89.

[9]John Bentley, Oldtime Steam Cars (New York, 1953), p.27.

[10]James Wilson Pierce, Photographic History of the World's Fair (Baltimore, 1893), p. 352-355.

not limited to the effects of the products of the Industrial Age. Sports also gained interest during the period. Swimming, for example, increased in popularity once the medieval fear that disease was spread by outdoor bathing was overcome. Family trips to the beach in modest bathing suits became popular. Athletic activity, as a whole, increased in popularity so much that by 1896 the Olympic Games were revived in Athens, Greece.

It was a feeling of social reform that pervaded the decade known as the "Gay Nineties." The mood of the period was a mixture of the older generation's attempt to continue Victorian tradition and the attempt of the younger nouveau riche to alter it with new inventions and forms of diversion. It was the era of youth and the middle class in America and is presently remembered by most as "the good old days." Historically it was a period of violent strikes, intense class feeling brought about by heavy immigration, and increased American imperialism. However, these problems have not remained a part of the American memory of the period. Nostalgically, Americans remember the nickel beer, the Stanley Steamer, the "Gibson Girl," and the time when youth knew the meaning of respect. These examples of what made the 1890's

gay provide the basis for a sterotype of the period. The mood and atmosphere established by this stereotype correspond to those which the composer has expressed in his opera. The period provides a nostalgic, historic perspective that will provide the opera's concept of production.

Design Solution

With the concept of production established, the design scheme for Don Pasquale can be developed. The technical requirements of the opera divide it into five scenes, with three requiring major alteration in the setting. The design idea must consider each setting separately and then provide the unifying factors of the production. The first scene takes place in Don Pasquale's house. It is the main setting of the opera, and great care must be taken in its design.

In the libretto the composer has stipulated that Don Pasquale's house requires nothing more than a box set with an entrance up center and at each side of the proscenium opening. In keeping with the concept of producing Don Pasquale in terms of the "Gay Nineties" era, emphasis in the setting was placed on the interior decor of the period. Such items as draperies with a swag valance and tassels, Tiffany lamps, Victorian furniture, beads strung across entrance ways,

and large heavy framed pictures are included within the scenic decor to give a definite idea of the period desired. There was no attempt, however, to elicit a sense of strict realism. The romantic spirit which the composer has established in his music and the comic nature of the opera must remain intact. In designing the room it is important that it reflect the character with which it is associated. The set should obviously be the living room in the house of a wealthy bachelor and reflect his fancies and tastes. Don Pasquale is essentially a good man, conservative and frugal by nature, but prone to bursts of foolishness which may at any time lead him into a situation which he will later regret. In establishing this mood within the setting, the design element of "line" plays an important part.

The design for the interior of Don Pasquale's house (Plates 1-3) includes walls consisting of wood paneling and wall paper, a turret window, a picture window, an alcove forming a main entrance and a hall with a set of stairs. The wood paneling, as a unit, presents a strong horizontal line which serves as a foundation for the rest of the set. Within the paneling itself further strength is derived from the series of vertical and horizontal lines which construct it.

The strength or "soundness" of the line surrounds the entire setting through the use of moulding. Within this frame of strength, the line suggested by the wall paper pattern creates a contrasting movement. The individual pattern was designed to strengthen and add vitality to the form of the design. Because the solid base suggested by the wood paneling provides the mood for the conservative side of Pasquale's character, the wall paper pattern in the set was given a diagonal line to suggest his inner compulsions and foolishness. A strong sense of conflict presented by diagonal lines or a total emphasis of horizontal and vertical lines suggesting strength and stability would not correspond to the elements found in Pasquale's character. He is neither impulsive nor conservative, but a distinct combination of both. His character has a conservative foundation within which his impulsiveness is controlled.

Color within the set is also important. Within the Pasquale house setting, it serves two major purposes. The first of these is to establish the romantic and comic qualities of the opera. Through the use of a color scheme not usually associated with the period of the design, the comic nature of the opera is established. Thus, for Don Pasquale

the comic nature is established, not by using hues of a lower or darker value which are those associated with the 1890's period, but by using the lighter colors of yellow and red. These colors are used as the basis for the color scheme of the set because they provide the intensity necessary to express the comic atmosphere of the opera. The intensity of the colors is controlled, however, through the use of complimentary hues. Thus, the setting expresses a vibrant comic atmosphere, but does not dominate the action of the opera. The second purpose of color in the Pasquale house setting is to provide a sense of distance. The light to dark variance of color's value will create either a sense of recession or of projection. A color of a warm, intense value tends to fill space, whereas a color of a cool, less intense value tends to create space. The two, when combined, create a sense of distance. Because of the shallow stage on which the production was performed, the sense of distance created by varying intensities of color was essential. For this reason, the picture window, the turret window and the entrance alcove were provided to allow the introduction of colors less intense than the rest of the setting and thus establish a sense of depth which is essential to the opera. Although

comic in spirit, the opera is not entirely two-dimensional and must be treated with some sense of sincerity. It is through the use of line and color, then, that the character of Don Pasquale has been carried from the music of the composer to the wood and canvas of the designer. The period is established through the use of furniture and dressing items associated with the "Gay Nineties" era. The second scene of the opera is technically of lesser importance than the first setting, but it can provide the audience with a greater idea of the events to come.

The second scene takes place in a parlor or boudoir in the home of Norina (Plates 4-6). It is designed to be feminine in every detail, for in the opera Norina represents both sides of the female character. She can be either the sweet, unassuming girl who will capture men's hearts with her loveliness or the vivacious, challenging woman who commands, rather than appeals to a man's instincts. For this reason, the room should reflect a combination of the two extremes, a coquettishness which will follow her throughout the entire opera. Any use of line in such a setting would probably betray the various types of femininity Norina displays. If, as in Pasquale's home, a combination of

conflicting and subdued lines are to be used, the effect is to negate the whims of feminity that Norina portrays. Line as an active force in the setting is excluded to provide a contrast to Pasquale's home. The walls of boudoir are free of pattern and display only a feminine rose tint. Because only the character of the woman is shown in the walls of the setting, the period, mood, and theme of the opera must be supported in the scanty furnishings which complete the setting. Period within the setting is expressed primarily by Nornia's costume and the furniture within the set. Her costume is patterned after the mode of dress established during the turn of the century by Charles Dana Gibson. The dress consisted of a shirtwaist with a high stiff collar and full leg o'mutton sleeves worn with a long skirt which was tight-fitting around the hips. The costume is unique, establishes the period, and corresponds to what should be worn inside the house during the day. The furniture which complements the costume consists of a heavy overstuffed chaise and various small tables and chairs.

In order to present the theme of the opera within the setting of the second scene, a large frame, representing a

mirror, hangs downstage left. In Norina's attempts to portray the character which will enslave Pasquale, her actions and gestures will be played into the frame, as if she were watching herself in a mirror. The mirror frame serves two purposes. First, it allows the audience to see Norina's gestures, and at the same time limits the action of the opera to the stage area. Secondly, it serves to support the theme of the opera. As the mirror serves as a reflection of Norina's coquettish motions, Pasquale's friends serve as a mirror in which he will discover his foolishness. Although it may not be entirely obvious to the audience, the symbol of the mirror provides thematic emphasis to the setting. The mood and atmosphere of the setting is once again provided by color. The romantic and comic nature of the opera is expressed in this setting by a red and white color scheme. The color red has long been associated with love, femininity, and the coquettish spirit which comprises Norina's character. The color is expressed in the set in as many forms as possible and used as an expression of Norina's character whenever she appears in the opera. The rose color of the walls of the boudoir expresses her romantic spirit and true love for Ernesto. The dark red bordering the walls suggests the

more passionate, coquettish air with which she treats Don Pasquale, and the presence of white on the red or rose background found throughout the room on the furnishings provides an indication that she is essentially a good woman and is entering the scheme with Malatesta only to help her lover. The composition of the set lends itself to simplicity with the element of line playing a small part in the form of the setting and the use of color providing most of the support for the setting in the areas of theme, character, period, mood, and atmosphere. It is essentially symmetric with the door entrance on stage left balancing the chaise on stage right. The setting provides a small intimate atmosphere which is necessary in portraying a woman's boudoir and the meeting place of schemers.

As the second of the three settings of the opera is meant to display the coquettish intrigue of Norina's character, the setting of the finale of the opera is meant to reflect the young impressionable nature of her lover, Ernesto. It is an exterior setting, a garden outside of Don Pasquale's house. To accentuate the "Gay Nineties" period, various objects easily associated with the turn of the century are included within the setting. For example, the house with its white

wood exterior, red foundation fence, turret window with stained glass, round alcove window, and arched picture window resembles the late Victorian architecture which is associated with the period. The gazebo and street lamp, also Victorian relics, are kept from establishing the earlier period by the silhouette of an automobile behind the wrought iron fence. The set is meant to express the idealistic romanticism of Ernesto's youth. Line and color once again play important parts in establishing this mood.

The use of line found in the setting is directed primarily at achieving a sense of perspective. The line provided by the house, fence, and direction of the automobile silhouette help achieve the sense of spaciousness needed in an exterior setting. Perspective is also achieved by the use of measure as the relationship between different shapes on the stage. Large shapes such as the house and gazebo are used in those objects closest to the audience and smaller shapes are used against the blue cyclorama to give a feeling of distance. The dominant characteristic of the setting, however, is found in the color scheme used. As in Norina's setting the expressions of character, theme, mood and atmosphere are brought about primarily through the use of color.

The composer has defined more clearly what he wishes to express in the final setting. In his music Donizetti has included a pastoral meter, and in the words that are sung he has included a description of the soft, light qualities he desires. For the first time in the opera the romantic sentiment which forms Ernesto's character is displayed without it looking foolish and overdone. For a moment the love interest has returned to the opera and the final setting must serve as a balance to the vivacity and coquettishness found in Norina's boudoir. The color scheme of the setting centers around the blue hues of the evening. The green found in the plants of the garden and the blue of the evening sky suggest the romantic qualities found in an early summer's evening and also support Ernesto's idealistic character. The background of the evening serves the thematic purpose of providing a contrast to Pasquale's nature, thus expressing the opera's theme for the last time. The romantic qualities of the evening support beautifully the love shared by Norina and Ernesto while they sing their duet, but provide sharp contrast when Pasquale and Malatesta enter the garden with a lantern and begin thrashing around in the shrubbery. Pasquale in his age and foolishness simply does not belong in this young garden

of romance. He has long since lost the impressionism of his youth. Through this contrast the setting supports the final statement of the theme, that it is foolish for age to identify itself with young.

The mood and atmosphere of the setting have already been discussed at some length. Essentially the final scene serves the purpose of setting a romantic mood for the young lovers which will contrast to the actions and character of Don Pasquale. The opera is a comedy and will end happily, so there is no need to introduce serious realism into the design. Having discussed the design solution of each setting within the opera, it is now appropriate and necessary to provide a summary of the design which will include an analysis of the unifying factors used in this production. Each setting is a unit within itself, expressing the character, theme, mood, and atmosphere of the dramatic situation it supports. In order to convey the total meaning of the opera to the audience, however, these separate units must present a logical sequence of thought and preserve the continuity of the production.

Unifying Themes in Production

The discussion of the designer's solution for a production of Don Pasquale must include a development of the unifying

themes and ideas within the production. As with all other aspects of the production the designer must return to the composer to determine the type of balance and unity provided in the music. In Don Pasquale unity and balance within the composition are very evident. The opera's structure is based on Norina's cavatina, which is balanced by Ernesto's serenade. Don Pasquale's various waltz melodies provide the point of balance between them. Each of the melodies is romantic in nature, but each shows a different extreme within a love conflict. Because the designer has attempted to express the mood and atmosphere expressed by the composer within the visual elements of the production's various settings, the balance which the composer incorporated into the music is also reflected in the designer's setting. One of the sets reflects the coquettish vivacity of a woman; the second provides a balance with its over-sentimental qualities of a young man in love; and a third becomes a synthesis of both the first and second. Thus, in the designer's intention to express the composer's music within the scenic decor of the production, the general unity and congruity between what is heard and what is seen is assured.

Although the overall design concept may assure congruity between the music and the scenic decor of the opera, this does

not prevent an incongruity within the scenes of the opera itself. For this reason, it is necessary when designing a production to provide a scenic theme which will present itself in each setting of the production and provide a sense of continuity within the opera itself. In the production of Don Pasquale two such scenic themes will be provided, each with a different purpose. The first and most obvious to the audience will take form in a frame around the proscenium opening of the stage. The frame is intended to present the idea of a large oval frame around an old photograph. The purpose behind this is primarily to establish the period in which the opera will be produced. The photography craze was one of many during the "Gay Nineties," and it is hoped that the suggestion of an old family photograph will help orient the audience to this period. The family photograph idea provides an added dimension to the context of the opera. The opera is constructed around internal family affairs, and adding this increase in domestic atmosphere will help the production scheme as a whole. The framing of the stage does little to emphasize the theme of the opera. It is necessary to include a second scenic theme which will give some indication of what is being emphasized by the composer.

The second scenic theme found in the production of Don Pasquale is not as obvious to the audience as the first. It consists of a pattern which is carried through each of the three settings. A simple statement of the theme of Don Pasquale might be one which concerns foolishness. The opera expresses the foolishness of age trying to stay young. The symbol which was selected to express this theme is that of a fool's hood. In a sense Don Pasquale begins wearing the hood of a fool when he decides to marry young Norina as a means of punishing Ernesto. The pattern which provides the second scenic theme is modeled after the traditional concept of a fool's hood. In the first setting of Don Pasquale's home, it provides the design of the room's wall paper. Everpresent, it provides the setting with the sense of dissonance one finds in Pasquale's character. The shape of the pattern itself is obvious to those members of the audience with an acute eye for detail. For other members of the audience it is not distracting; it simply becomes a pattern on the wall paper. In the second setting the pattern provides the design for Norina's dressing screen. Because she and Malatesta are the schemers who will expose Pasquale's foolishness, it is only appropriate that the symbol be associated

with her change in attire. The pattern is more obvious in this setting than in the first. It confirms the questions posed by the pattern's appearance in the first set and provides an even greater segment of the audience with an indication of the theme of the opera. Finally in the exterior setting of the opera the fool's hood appears disguised in as many set pieces as possible. The idea of its appearance in the setting is to present the audience with an even greater idea of the opera's theme. Any member of the audience who pays attention to any one piece of the setting should be able to encounter a fool's hood. The most obvious location is found within the lattice of the garden's gazebo. The design of the fence skirting around the bottom of the house will contain the scenic pattern, as does a large knot in a tree and various silhouetted cut-outs. Even the man in the moon may resemble a fool. The fool's crown is established in every setting of the opera, giving emphasis to the theme the composer wishes to express.

The final unifying factor of the design scheme is reflected in the color which is used throughout the opera. The presence of color in the opera, rather than the lack of

it, is important to establish its romantic-comic nature. For this reason the heavy drab colors of the 1890's are not used. The blue cast of the garden setting provides the sense of sentiment and romance necessary to balance the comic rose color of Norina's boudoir. Between these two atmospheres a third is needed to provide further balance in the production. The yellow cast of the Pasquale setting provides the presence of the third primary color and the general balance which is needed. In each setting all three colors are evident according to the influence of each character within the dramatic situation. In the first and third scenes color in Pasquale's house reflects his character. With the addition of red in the fourth scene, the dominance of Norina is expressed. In Norina's boudoir red is the dominating color with blue indicating the presence of Ernesto and yellow the involvement in the scheme against Pasquale. Finally in the garden scene blue expresses the final triumph of Ernesto's desires, red is present, and yellow is virtually eliminated. Color then is the final unifying factor in the opera. Each character within the romantic triangle is identified with a particular color, and his dominance within the dramatic situation is reflected by it.

With the development of the unifying factors of production, the design scheme for a "Gay Nineties" production of Don Pasquale is complete. It must be emphasized that the preceding discussion does not constitute the execution of a design for the opera, but a design idea or production scheme which was executed at a later date. Part of this thesis problem was to mount the design idea on the stage and evaluate its effectiveness. However, the thesis is primarily concerned with a new emphasis in opera design, rather than its execution. Before mounting the design idea there are two important factors which contribute to it and must be developed in terms of their relationship to the design scheme of the opera. The first of these factors is the costume design which was used in the production. The costume design must reflect the over-all production concept of producing Don Pasquale in a "Gay Nineties" atmosphere. Since time, budget, and facilities did not permit the construction of costumes for this particular production, their design must remain hypothetical. It is important, however, to discuss the type of costumes which best support the production and to use this as a guideline when looking for rentals. The second factor which must be considered before mounting the production is the lighting

which is required by the set. Due to the lack of facilities, lighting in this production did not play as important a part in the production scheme as it could. It was necessary in designing the set to strengthen those areas where conditions prohibit effective lighting. Like the costume design of the opera, however, the lighting design is an important area which must be discussed in terms of what is and what is not possible.

CHAPTER IV

COSTUMES AND LIGHTING

Costume Background

In her book Historic Costume for the Stage, Lucy Barton suggests that human beings like to think of history as following a "pattern of man-made chronology," with each century determining a unit within the design. Thus she continues, the young romantics of the first decade of the nineteenth century discarded the 1700's in favor of the new civilization of liberty, justice, and beauty. Eventually these naive Victorian ideals were denounced by their grandchildren; the generation of the last decade of the nineteenth century proclaimed that with them civilization had reached its climax. The "deluge" would come after them and the nineties were to be gay.[1]

The "Gay Nineties" represents the last decade of an era in America known as the "Gilded Age." It was a period during the last half of the nineteenth century when the comfortable middle class in the United States had apparently found all

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[1]Lucy Barton, Historic Costume for the Stage (Boston, 1935), p. 142.

the answers to the social problems which surrounded them. Religion revealed what was right and wrong. American faith in progress gave assurance that the world was moving in the right direction. Social justice consisted of sending turkeys to the poor at Thanksgiving; and maladjustments, while regretted, were recognized as part of "God's own plan."[2] Although problems of immigration, strikes, anti-trust laws, and a new policy of American imperialism prevailed throughout the period, the decade provides a nostalgic landmark for most Americans. It was a period when the dollar still retained most of its original value, the bicycle provided all classes with a means of recreation and transportation, interest in sports increased, and Delsarte provided the method used by the parlor elocutionist. In fashion the individual responsible for the "Gay Nineties" stereotype is Charles Dana Gibson. A New York illustrator, he created the queenly "Gibson Girl" in such drawings as "His Move" and "You Are Going on a Long Journey." The Gibson Girl provided the basis for a fashion trend in clothes, hats, spoons, plates, wallpaper and umbrella stands.[3] Every young woman wanted to look

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[2]Gerald Carson, The Polite Americans (New York, 1966), p. 142.

[3]Ibid., p. 154.

like the high-born Gibson Girl, for she shaped the manners and attitudes of the generation.

In researching the trends of turn-of-the-century fashions, the most helpful aids available are library collections of popular periodicals. Illustrations and photographs in such magazines as Life, Harper's, and the Illustrated London News provide an accurate record of the mode of dress of the period. Extremes in fashion often find themselves in these collections, but the dress of the period is still dominant and the magazines are helpful in establishing styles within the period. A general view of the trends in fashion during the last decade of the nineteenth century shows an increased interest in simplicity and informality, although not comfort. The Nineties were "gay" in spite of an ever-tightening corset and heavily starched, high-winged collars. The fashionable lady of the decade constricted her waistline to an acceptable eighteen inches, squeezed her feet into patent leather, high-heeled shoes with "tooth pick" toes and donned shirtwaists with sleeves the size of balloons.[4] Men, on the other hand, dressed very much as they had done during the Eighties with frock coats, somewhat tighter trousers, and informal sack

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[4]Barton, p. 498.

suits. Men's dress was fashioned to complement the ladies, and as outdoor activities increased in popularity specific costumes were invented for each.

As in ladies' fashion, the dominating influence in the fashion for men of the decade was Gibson. One of the reasons for a young woman of the decade to admire Gibson's girl was the appearance of the young man who escorted her. He was a clean-shaven, strong-chinned young man who fashionably had his hair parted in the middle and courted the young lady in a dress suit.[5] Smooth-shaven faces increased in popularity during this end of a whiskered century partially because of Gillette's invention of the safety razor and later the disposable blade. The waxed moustache was popular for middle aged men, and older adherents to Victorian tradition developed "Walrus" moustaches. No element of the male attire of the decade deviates more from modern tradition than the collar the "Gibson Man" wore. Very high winged collars were the rule. Occasionally this rule was relaxed in athletic activies, but usually the throat found itself encased in stiff linen. Aside from frock coats, silk hats, and formal evening wear the male attire of the period can be considered in line with the more modern wear of the 1930-40 period. Tailoring

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[5]Carson, p. 137.

was square and boxy; the "tuxedo" had been introduced from England as informal evening attire. Cardigan jackets, slipover sweaters, and blazers established the wardrobe for younger men, but with trousers being somewhat tighter than the more modern period. Usually dark coats went with lighter trousers on formal occasions, sack suits were made of one material, and summer suits were made of light-colored wash material such as white linen or seersucker. Various outing costumes were in vogue during the period. Knickers from the previous decade found use in the increased cycling activity. The striped ice cream jacket and white ducks were popular for picnics or playing tennis, and the trench coat and goggles became practical for those rich enough to own automobiles. These were the unusual and more colorful costumes of the decade and help establish a stereotype which might be associated with the "Gay Nineties."

The change in style which separates women's dress of the 1890's from that of previous decades was the change in emphasis from the skirt to the bodice.[6] During the last half of the nineteenth century the skirt and its complexity of drapery and ornament became the main feature of feminine

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[6]Anne Buck, Victorian Costume and Costume Accessories (New York, 1961), p. 74.

attire. By the early Nineties, however, the drapery gave way to plainer lines, was closely fitted at the waist, and achieved fullness as the material fell from the center of the back to the ground. During this period of increasing plainness in the skirt, emphasis on the bodice created a fashion unique to that period of history. The 1890's were the years of the wasp waist, and the bodice generally remained in a rigid, corset-like form. In the day dresses of the early Nineties the high collar of the bodice had gained as much as two inches, sleeves were narrower, and a small puff appeared on the upper half of the arm rising above the level of the shoulder. By 1896 the puff enlarged to the full balloon sleeve associated with the period. The puffed sleeve motif was carried through in women's evening fashion with a short puff appearing at the shoulder and ending just above the elbow. The new bodice fashion and increased simplicity in the line of skirts led to a form of informal wear which persists to the present day. This was the concept of the skirt and blouse. The blouse, a loose informal bodice, was worn with a contrasting skirt and varied from plain shirt-like garments to those made with elaborate trimmings of silk and lace. The blouse and skirt offered the woman of the decade the variety of being able to interchange basic parts

of her wardrobe. The style remained popular throughout the decade and was used by Gibson in his illustrations.

With the less ornate skirt and more fashionable bodice providing the characteristic fashion of the "Gay Nineties," women adapted the rest of their wardrobe to complement the new style. Mannish straw hats which had come into vogue during the Eighties increased in popularity during the decade and were usually worn with the hair combed back into a knot. Lengths of skirts varied according to their purpose. Ankle length was appropriate for athletic activities such as tennis, golf, bicycling and skating. For daily routine the hemline dropped to the instep and evening wear called for floor-length gowns. Shoes and slippers had sharp pointed toes and dark stockings were considered correct for most daytime wear. Accessories were added to the basic blouse and skirt to achieve the correct costume for various outdoor activities. Short skirts won over breeches and boots were used for riding with a flat derby replacing the high silk hat. The enthusiastic cyclist occasionally wore bloomers.[7] For the most part women's fashions, like everything else in the decade, were caught between what could properly remain within the bounds

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[7]Carson, p. 514.

of good taste and what was practical. Unlike women in any previous decade, women of the Nineties participated in athletic events outside their homes. The individuality of women increased, and recognition of this is reflected in their costumes.

The preceding paragraphs have attempted to survey the trend in fashion during the last decade of the nineteenth century. With this background it is now possible to formulate some ideas for costuming Don Pasquale in this period. As was stated at the end of the previous chapter, the design ideas for costuming Don Pasquale will not be tested on the stage. Due to lack of budget and facilities for their construction, the costume design must remain hypothetical and serve as an aid to the production when choosing rentals. However, since costume is an integral part of the total design concept, it is included here to provide a more complete idea of the production scheme.

Individual Characters

In designing the costumes for a "Gay Nineties" production of Don Pasquale the same guiding factors must be used as were used in the set design. The production must present a unified visual picture rather than the individual personalities

of designers. Since the opera is a romantic comedy, realism in costume can be subordinated to the nostalgic stereotype which the present audience will associate with the period. As is true with most historic associations, the things best remembered will be the extremes of the period. For this reason styles of dress indigenous to the "Gay Nineties" stereotype will be used wherever possible as support for the total production scheme. Each costume must reflect the personality of the character who wears it. In general the color scheme of the costumes should give a light romantic feeling to the characters, but not be so comic as to strip them of all reality. Each of the characters must remain a believable individual and remain aware of the part they are playing in the plot to teach Pasquale his lesson.

Don Pasquale

Don Pasquale, the central figure of the opera, is a man in his sixties. He is essentially good-natured, but his long bachelorhood has instilled within him a sense of thrift which borders on stinginess. For this reason his dress should tend toward the conservative extreme of the period with plain lines and subdued colors. The composer gives an indication of this in his music; however, he also shows that Pasquale

has not yet accepted all of the restraints of his years and is still inclined to foolishness. Within the conservative basis for his attire, then, it becomes necessary to include some symbol of the new decade, one which is in fashion with the new trends of the decade and is not quite in harmony with the man's position or age.

In the opera Don Pasquale may require as many as three or four costumes; however, two are often more than sufficient, lest the viewer lose the feeling of thrift which should surround him. The first is a simple robe and nightgown (Plate 10). The robe should be plain and reflect its many years of use. It may be any color, although a dark red has been chosen to complement the red-yellow color scheme of the set. The robe should, in no way, attract undue attention to itself. It is early morning and Don Pasquale has not yet become actively involved in pursuing his foolishness. The nightgown is standard calf length, light blue or white, a possible relic of the just past Victorian age. Depending on the individual portraying Pasquale, a night cap may or may not be added. Accessories would include house shoes rather than slippers, and the only hint of the character's somewhat foolish impluses, a pair of bright red shorts under the nightgown. These become

visible to the audience, while Malatesta rocks Pasquale in the rocking chair.

Although sack suits were rarely used during this period when entertaining a young woman, Don Pasquale's second costume (Plate 11) is an attempt to break away from the Victorian tailed coat, thus establishing a further indication of the character's impulsive nature. The detail of the coat is somewhat more ornate than would be expected of a man of Pasquale's age; however, the character's conservative nature is maintained by not allowing too bold a pattern. The dark blue color of the coat and dark red vest become the first indications of a red-blue color scheme which will be worked throughout the opera. Red in the opera becomes associated with coquettishness and scheming, while blue reflects the sentimental qualities of love. By using these two colors in a darker value in Pasquale's costume, the two passions which motivate his character are presented. The trousers which complete the costume are tan, rather than the more nondescript grey pinstripe. Pasquale is attempting to look young for his bride and every manner of his costume should express this. Accessories would include an ascot, gold watch chain, and brown shoes.

Doctor Malatesta

Doctor Malatesta, the second character introduced in the opera, is a substantial middle-aged individual who is Pasquale's confidant and is a close friend of Ernesto and Norina. He is a respectable, well-liked person, something of a man about town who, because of his position, is not inclined to excesses in his appearance. His costume (Plate 12) should reflect the dress of the period, and because he serves as the opera's catalyst, it should also express the qualities of the other characters he is manipulating. A dark purple frock coat, with yellow-brown vest and winged collar establish him as a man of the period as well as of the opera. The purple of the coat once again represents the blue-red color scheme of the opera, and their combination as Malatesta's ultimate goal. The coat overshadows the yellow-brown vest, the color suggested in Pasquale's trousers as a possible indication that the old man will eventually be put in his place. To complete the costume the doctor will wear a fedora, black shoes and spats, and will carry a medicine bag and straight walking cane. Although short handle-bar moustaches were in style for men of his age during the period, the doctor might also wear a short pointed

beard. During this period these short, waxed chin whiskers became trademarks of the medical profession.

Ernesto

The last of the leading male characters in the opera is Ernesto, nephew and sole remaining relative of Don Pasquale. He is a young man, at times too confident, dependent on his uncle for support and accustomed to a rather high standard of living. His is the young, overly sentimental, impressionable lover of Norina, a young widow whom he wishes to marry. In his youth he falls somewhat short of the man Gibson had in mind. He is clean-shaven, his hair is combed in the middle, and for this production he has been depicted as a tennis enthusiast. His costume throughout the opera reflects these youthful attributes and his athletic endeavor (Plate 13). It consists of a bold striped ice cream jacket, white ducks, flat straw hat and tennis shoes. The tennis racket is a necessary accessory as it completes the final athletic quality of the costume. In connection with the color scheme utilized throughout the set and costumes his jacket should have blue stripes. He is the symbol of sentiment and love within the opera. In general Ernesto should have a young naive look about him, reminiscent of the idealistic world in which he lives.

Norina

The only female lead in the opera is Norina, a young widow whose vivacious, coquettish character enables her to take part in Malatesta's plan to expose Pasquale's foolishness. She is Ernesto's lover and for the most part is a good-natured woman. At one point in the opera she even wishes she could keep from hurting Pasquale. But she is well aware of what a woman's glance can do to a man, and her costume, as her character, should evolve around her coquettish nature. The opera calls for Norina to wear three different costumes, each reflecting a different aspect of her character.

The first of Norina's costumes (Plate 14) is a day dress which is to help her resemble the modern "Gibson Girl" of the period in every detail. Hair combed back into a knot, balloon sleeves, high starched collar, bow tie, and tight-fitting skirt are essential to achieve the desired look of the period. The yellow dress with red trim foreshadows the old man she is about to encounter and is topped with a white starched blouse. The appearance is that of the simple fashion of the day, and there is no excessive ornament. Other than what is drawn, the only necessary accessory might be a large

fan. The appearance is not to be one of naivete, but rather of good birth and vivacious character.

After agreeing to Malatesta's proposition Norina changes to a simpler dress, more characteristic of the qualities she wishes to portray as Sofronia, Malatesta's sweet, unassuming sister (Plate 15). The dress is plain except for ribbons at the waist, collar, and wrist. The color is pink with black ribbon and lace protruding from the collar and cuffs. A small hat with veil is included to complete the ensemble. Since she has been removed from the red surroundings of her sitting room, the color follows her in this dress as a foreshadowing of the shrewish and coquettish nature she will display for the rest of the opera. Little does Pasquale realize how fast unassuming pink can change to a full vivacious red.

Norina's final costume of the opera becomes the strongest statement in the design scheme correlating her character and the color which has thus far surrounded her (Plate 16). Her deep red evening dress is a representation of her womanly appeal, strength, and coquettishness. The color of the dress itself is not meant to suggest a harlot but the full range of powers Norina has brought to bear in her plot against the

old man. In the final act of the opera Norina is no longer the shy wallflower of the earlier part of the evening. She is a fully adorned woman with gown and jewels according to the fashion of the period. She will accept neither the old man's affections nor his restrictions. The effect is the final blow for Pasquale. He realizes what a fool he has been and is determined to reverse his misfortune. The dress itself is an evening gown patterned after the fashion of the period. High puffed short sleeves have been eliminated in an attempt to bring the costume closer to the nineteenth century. Although modesty prevailed during the period, high busted corsets allowed the more daring women to wear lower front necklines. The rest of the dress is plain, although elegant in line. Norina is, for all her mischief, a good woman and gaudiness in her evening dress would detract from this quality. She should, however, display a fair amount of jewelry because this is one of the things on which she has been spending Pasquale's money. Other accessories would include a feather boa and plumes attached to a hat band.

Minor Characters

The costumes of the principal characters in the opera are designed in terms of the fashion of the period and the

blue--red color scheme used throughout the opera. These costumes are meant primarily to express the individual personality of the character wearing them, and for the most part provide only a general indication of the period. For this reason the costumes of the chorus members of the opera serve an important role in establishing the period, variety, and comic effect needed by the production. Three of these costumes have been included in the costume appendix. The notary (Plate 17) is meant to represent the average man during the "Gay Nineties." The derby, vest, high collar, frock coat, ascot or tie, and walking cane or unbrella all formed part of middle class attire. The automobile driver (Plate 18) provides an oddity indicative of the period with bow tie, goggles, and overcoat. Finally, the maid (Plate 20) provides the less formal look of the servants of the period by wearing a cotton or gingham print dress and apron. Other costumes used for chorus members will empahsize the bold stripes and checkered suits of the period. The costume design of the opera, like the set design, is meant to enhance, rather than overpower the desires which the composer expresses in his music. Costumes are not meant to detract from the characters who wear them, but support their personalities,

and through a workable color scheme reveal some of the basic conflicts of the opera.

Lighting

In the previous chapter a design scheme was presented for producing Don Pasquale in a "Gay Nineties" stylization. Ideas for costume design have also been discussed. The total design of the opera is not complete, however, without including a discussion of the lighting design and how it may be used within the production concept to enhance the setting and costumes. Like the previous discussion of costume design this analysis of how light may be used within the production will remain on a hypothetical basis. The lack of facilities where the opera will be staged prevent any effective use of movement, color, distribution or intensity in lighting, and for the actual production illumination must remain the principal goal of the light designer.

As a stage production Don Pasquale provides little room for creative lighting technique. Almost in the "well made play" tradition, it requires general lighting for its two interior scenes and dim lighting for its exterior evening scene. Although the opera is a comedy, it was necessary to provide a complete, conventional set to maintain the late

Victorian, turn-of-the-century atmosphere. The secondary purpose of lighting in the opera, then, is to be the illumination of the setting, for the comic nature of the opera must not be overcome by the heavy, stuffy atmosphere of its surroundings. For this reason lighter values of color in light will be used in the interior scenes with a limited use of the darker amber light. Each of the five scenes within the opera will present a different lighting atmosphere as the plot against Pasquale develops. A summary of the lighting in each of these scenes will provide an indication of the total desired lighting effect within the opera.

The first scene of the opera occurs in early morning. The time of day is set by the early morning glow of a light amber sky outside the picture window. Before the action of the opera begins, the room will be dark with a single beam of light isolating Pasquale's rocking chair. The source of the light enters the room through the stained glass above the picture window. The mood is that of the quiet of early morning before the activity of the day begins. As Pasquale begins to sing, the day and the opera have begun with all lighting for this interior setting raised to a position of general daylight. General lighting in this particular scene

will utilize light pink colors to enhance the appearance of the characters and subdue the heavy qualities of the set. Amber colors will occasionally be used with a contrasting pink color to spotlight such events as the Pasquale--Malatesta duet and aria, but generally amber will be avoided due to the yellow--red--brown color scheme of the set. Never within the scene should there be a lack of quantity in light, with the exception of spotlighting an individual character or portion of the set for an aria. For example, Ernesto's aria may be staged on and around the center stage love seat. Because there is no significant action by other members of the cast at this time, attention may be focused on this area by dimming the lighting on other areas of the set. The first scene is short, and little takes place other than an explanation of the dramatic situation at hand. The scene ends with an argument between Pasquale and his nephew, and an abrupt blackout terminates the action.

The beginning of the second scene of the opera offers an opportunity for the light designer to enhance the setting with light. The scene is an intimate one, taking place in Norina's boudoir or sitting room. Within it three main articles of furniture provide the feminine atmosphere

necessary for the setting. During the first part of Norina's aria the lighting of these three items alone should establish the mood for the rest of the scene. Norina is reading a book of romantic stories while sitting on the first item, the love seat. It should be lighted from above to provide a circle of light around the character and from in front to eliminate shadows. To show the feminine qualities of the rest of the room, a small dressing table with a large mirror down stage left should receive a small circle of light, and to provide balance so should a small dressing screen on the stage right curtain line. Because she is singing of romance, the effect should be one of intimacy, which is suggested by each of the articles mentioned. Once she has begun her cavatina; however, the light on the stage should be raised to full, for the mood has changed from sweetness to coquettish comedy. For the remainder of the scene lighting should remain the same with the exception of added emphasis on the dressing screen while Norina is making her change behind it. The scene will end with a quick fade as Norina and Malatesta make their exit.

The third scene begins the second act of the opera. It returns the action to Don Pasquale's house, where it will

remain until the final scene. Lighting changes during this scene will be difficult due to the possibility of distracting the audience's attention. General lighting as described in the first scene should prevale throughout the second act with these few exceptions. The beginning of the second act finds the set empty as Ernesto enters to write a last farewell note to Norina. If the aria he presents during this time is staged around the stage left entrance, the setee, and the writing desk, spotlighting these three areas would prove effective support for the overly sentimental qualities of the aria. After this, however, the opera continues with the rapid complication of the plot. There are many characters on the stage, and division of lighting within the set becomes extremely difficult without a rapid succession of subtle lighting changes that may, in the final analysis, do no more than distract the audience's attention. The time of day is mid-afternoon or early evening, so the lighting within the house will alter very slightly, with the color of the sky outside the window slowly showing the amber and red colors of evening.

By the beginning of the fourth scene evening has definitely fallen around the house of Don Pasquale. Light

outside the window should show the blue color of the evening, and the light within the house should be maintained at a lower level than in earlier parts of the opera. Tiffany lamps in the turret window and on the writing desk should be burning. The first servant's chorus should be brightly lighted, emphasizing the two characters rather than the rest of the room. It is the point where Norina makes Pasquale realize and regret what he has done, and all attention should be focused on the two main characters. As the encounter between Pasquale and Norina ends and the servants return to the stage, the lighting within the set should once again increase in level, but not to that of the earlier servants' chorus. Rather than emphasizing the setting in which the action is taking place, light should be directed on the group of characters centered around the setee. Their gossiping waltz is a part of the unraveling of Malatesta's plot to teach Pasquale a lesson. From this point to the end of the opera the composer is attempting to present his message; and emphasis on the characters, rather than the setting, is essential. For this reason the final sequence in the fourth scene between Pasquale and Malatesta should take place within one general area of the stage, and only this area of the stage

should receive sufficient light to illuminate the characters within it.

The final scene of the opera is an exterior scene which takes place in the evening and provides the best opportunity for effective lighting in the production. It has been designed to take place in the garden of Pasquale's home with the outside of the house on stage left, a gazebo on stage right and a cyclorama providing the backdrop for the evening sky. The scene opens with Norina and Ernesto embraced in a love duet on the gazebo. They are lighted in light pink to distinguish them from the other colors of the evening. The stage is covered with a wash of blue light to give the effect of an early summer evening. The cyclorama is backlighted with a light yellow gelatine frame to give the effect of a full moon. Against the sky is silhouetted the outline of an early automobile, a wrought iron fence, a street light in the distance, and various trees and shrubbery. The only artificial light to enter the stage picture streams from the stained glass of the turret and picture windows. A lavender spotlight streams from stage left to center stage to provide balance, color, and modeling light for the stage picture. The scene continues in this manner until the entrance of Pasquale and Malatesta with their lanterns. As the action

of the scene continues, the down center area of the stage gradually grows lighter, eventually reaching the point where the final moral of the story can be delivered without disrupting the total effect of the scenic picture with which the opera comes to a conclusion.

It must be remembered that the above lighting scheme is not meant to be a description of lighting technique peculiar to opera. In general, lighting practices are common to all stage productions. The light plot discussed for Don Pasquale is meant to be a description of how light design enhances and supports the total concept of the production. With this discussion the analysis of the design concept of doing Don Pasquale in a "Gay Nineties" stylization has come to a close. The next chapter will be concerned with a summary of the principles involved in initiating such a project and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the project in supporting them.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

In the introductory remarks of the first chapter it was stated that the problem of this thesis would be to design for production a popular European opera. Emphasis in the design would be placed on the social background of the American audience, the purpose of this being to provide a new production concept which would prove acceptable to the American audience. The problem and purpose of this design thesis have been developed along two basic guidelines. The first is that opera could be adapted to the audience for which it is being performed; secondly, that such an adaptation for the American audience can be achieved in terms of an historical perspective. It was hoped that such an adaption would provide a greater appreciation of the art form by the public. The success or failure of the design solution will give greater stability to these assumptions and provide greater direction for future opera productions.

The first chapter of this thesis provides the foundation and background material necessary for an understanding of the

thesis problem. A brief introduction of the nature of opera as an art form and the specific type of opera which will be the vehicle for the thesis solution are presented. In these sections evidence is presented to support the assumption that opera is essentially dualistic and European in nature. It is a synthesis of unequal amounts of music and drama which owes its existence to the European aristocracy. The chapter also provides a discussion of the composer of Don Pasquale and the musical era in which he lived. The period in which Donizetti lived was one of transition from classical to romantic music, a fact which is fully apparent in Don Pasquale. The first chapter ends with a discussion of the development of opera in America. The discussion illustrates the dominance of European opera production methods in American performances and the dependence of American opera on its wealthy patrons. With this brief resume of the nature of opera in its development, its significance to the composer and its significance in America, sufficient background has been provided to begin design of the opera production.

The second chapter introduces the underlying problem encountered by the designer when developing a production

scheme for opera. This problem is the synthesis of the musical and dramatic arts. Unlike a play in which all aspects of production are centered around the director's interpretation of what has been expressed by the playwright, an opera production must evolve around what the composer has included within the words and music of his score. What is seen with the eye must remain true to what is heard with the ear in order to maintain a total production experience. For this reason a musical--plot analysis of Don Pasquale is executed in an attempt to discover the mood and stylistic interpretations of production the composer has included in his score. These are the musical guidelines which restrict and give direction to the opera designer.

With the third chapter an actual discussion of the design to be used in the present production of Don Pasquale is initiated. The chapter provides a brief explanation of previous productions of the opera and an investigation of the "Gay Nineties" period which will provide the basis for the design concept. The chapter is completed by the development of an original set design. It must be emphasized at this point that the design solution in the thesis provided for the basic limitations of the stage on which it was to be

executed. The design is not, however, meant to represent actual execution on the stage, and to satisfy the theoretical nature of the thesis problem, limitations were often ignored. The goal was to produce a workable design scheme which, in its execution, would retain its essential design qualities.

With the major design problem of the setting completed in the third chapter, the fourth chapter deals primarily with the completion of the design scheme, by discussion of the contribution of costumes and lighting.

In order to test the effectiveness of the production scheme presented in earlier chapters, the design was executed for performance on the stage of the Main Auditorium at North Texas State University. Due to deficiencies in budget, time, and facilities it was necessary to modify the design execution; however, the essential color scheme and design idea remained intact and the "Gay Nineties" theme suffered only slightly. Among the specific items lost in the process of transition from paper to the stage was the photographic frame which was meant to surround the stage and create an atmosphere of looking into the past. A great deal of the trim and dressing items desired for each of the

settings was also lost. Had these been included, a greater completeness in execution, character, and period would have been achieved.

Examples of desired items missing in the final production can be found in each of the sets. The Pasquale set lacked the large ornate paintings desired for each wall, sufficient drapery for the picture window, and ornamentation for the main entrance. A lack of lighting circuits, instruments, and power all but eliminated any effective use of lighting technique in the set. Thus, general lighting remained the same throughout three-fifths of the opera. The design for the scenic background of Norina's boudoir reached the stage essentially intact. The most important modification of this set was the elimination of a large oval dressing mirror due to cost, and replacing it with a small square mirror attached to the dressing table. The setting in general could have used more furnishings, especially along the line of art nouveau which would be characteristic of the young moderns of the period. The deficiency found in the final scene of the opera, Pasquale's garden, lies mainly in the failure to achieve a truly outdoor atmosphere with the setting. The gazebo, while essentially recognizable, could have been more

ornate and more nearly complete. The exterior of the house, as designed for the present facilities, might well have been enhanced by the addition of an entrance porch with roof and swing. Finally, the garden sorely lacked foliage, once again the inevitable effect of a small budget.

Although not complete by many production standards, the production of Don Pasquale under the auspices of the School of Music and its Opera Workshop proved to be very successful. Four performances of the opera were given with the audiences varying from early grade school and junior high school students bussed in for matinee performances to general audiences for the evening performances. The reaction of the school children was essentially gratifying. The chattering young third, fourth, and fifth grade students reacted equally to the setting, characters, and music. For most it was the first opera they had seen. The more sedate junior high school students expressed greater interest in the characters of the opera. A number of the school children who had seen the first matinee returned with their parents. Teachers on their own time and inclination called to express their appreciation and students did the same in letters. General audiences reacted favorably to the production as a whole. There seemed to be

greater appreciation for the total visual picture than there would have been for the mere presentation of a singer on the stage with something behind him. For the most part, the design solution, as executed on the stage, was successful in supporting this production. Comment from the audience provided evidence that the "Gay Nineties" theme could be recognized within the setting and was effective in supporting the opera. Editorial criticism from local newspapers was not available, but this is not unusual with a university production. Even though the design scheme was not presented in a final polished form, the suggestions it was intended to convey apparently reached the audience and was accepted. For this reason the design must be considered a success.

With the success of Don Pasquale produced in a "Gay Nineties" stylization, the project of this thesis has come to a conclusion. The problem of designing a popular European opera for the American audience has been solved. By producing the opera in this form and performing it in English, added foundation has been given to the idea that opera in America can be adapted in terms of the audience for which it is being performed. Just as it is not always possible to

directly translate a language or find American equivalents for foreign customs, so there are many European operas which do not lend themselves to adaptation. If opera is to survive in America, however, it must broaden its base of popularity among the American audience. Present opera production in America is still essentially European in nature, although American opera, still in its infancy, is steadily growing as its audience increases. If adaptations of European operas should find themselves appealing to the American audience it is hoped that this technique will find greater emphasis in future opera performances. Such opera adaptation may at least provide a transition for the American audience from musical comedy to serious opera. This design of Don Pasquale is an attempt to express the designer's role in such opera adaptation.

APPENDIX A:

SET DESIGN PLATES

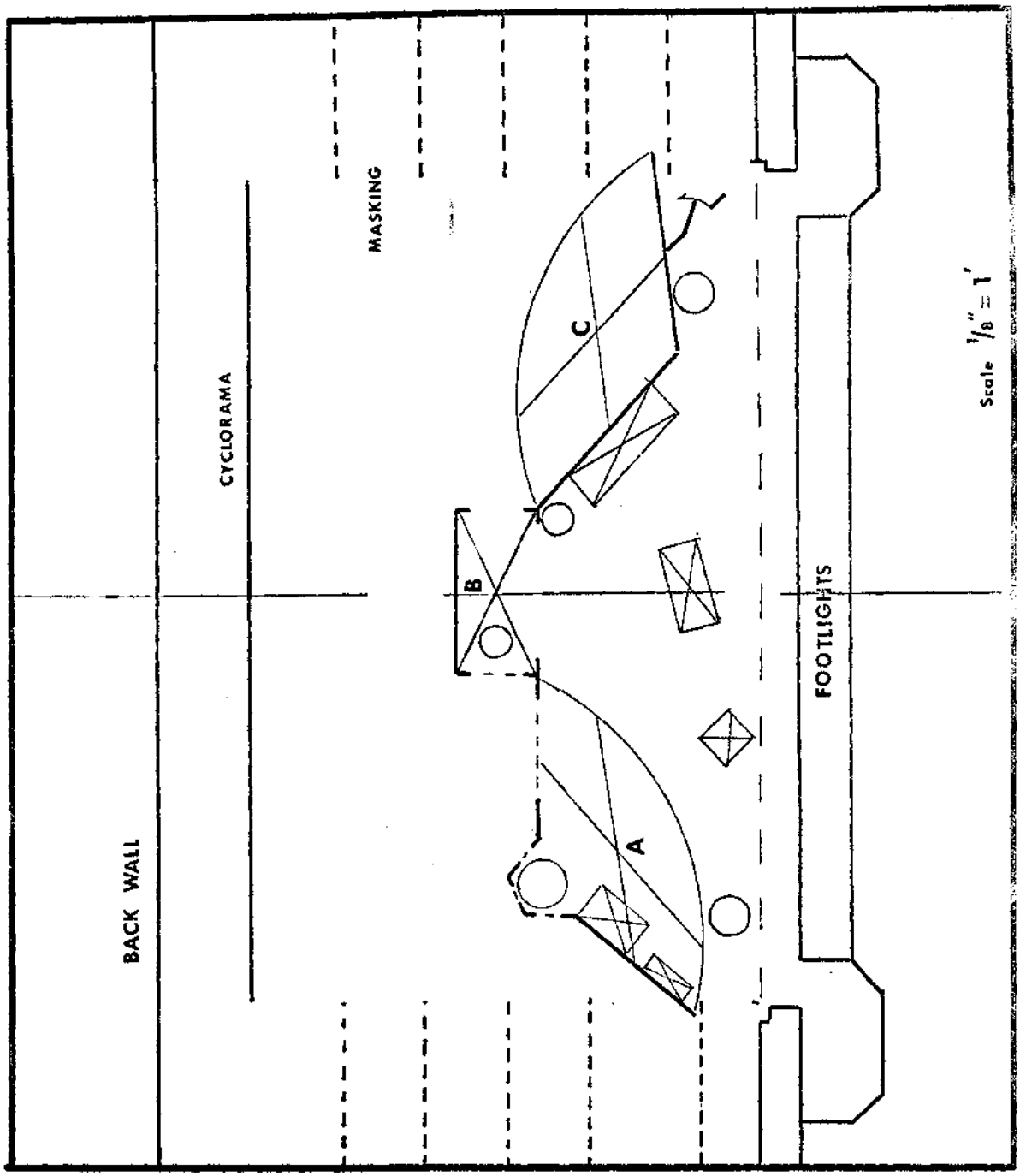

Plate 1

Floor Plan of Don Pasquale's House

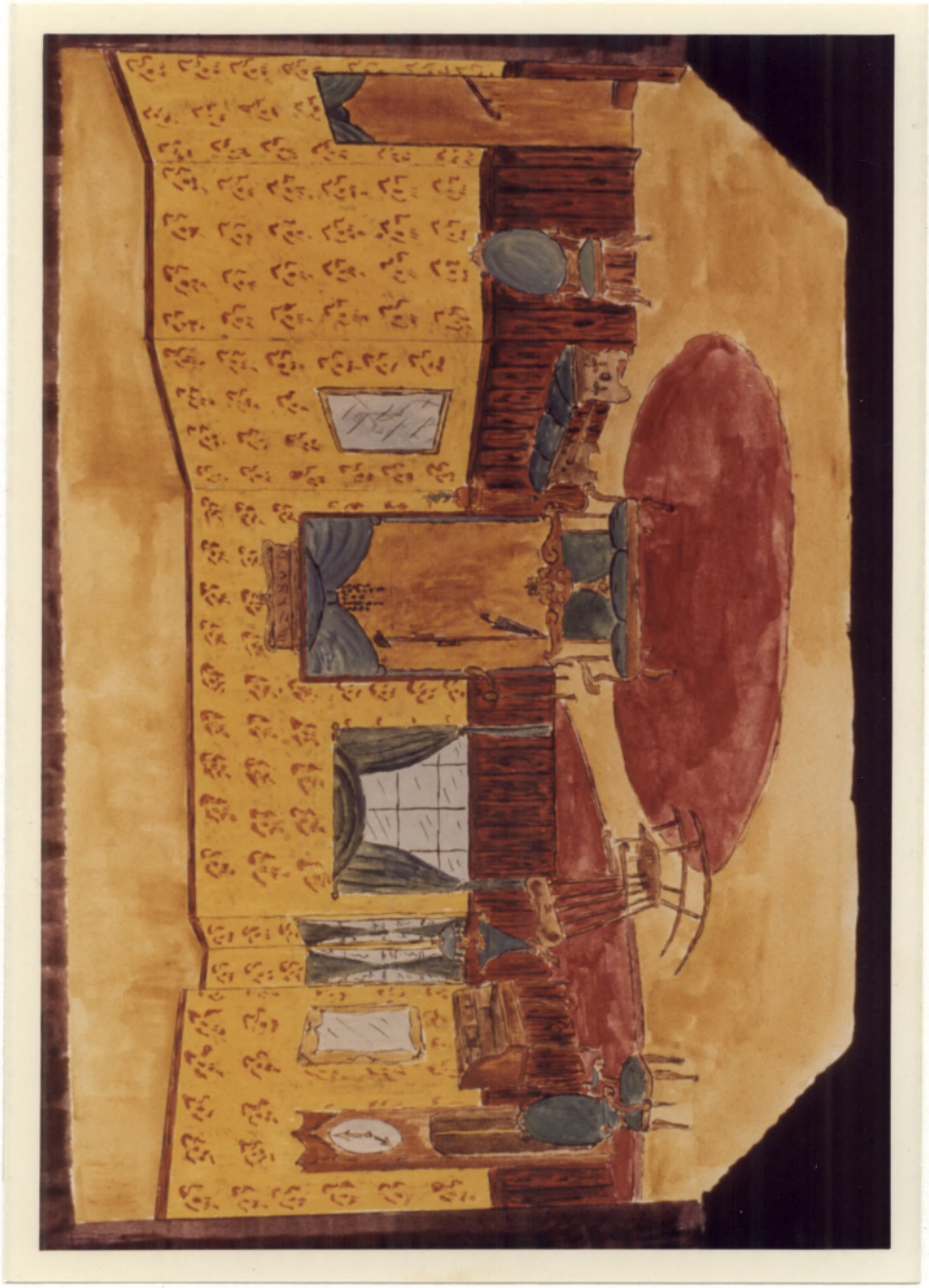

Plate 2

Design Sketch of Don Pasquale's House

Plate 3

Photograph of Finished Pasquale Set

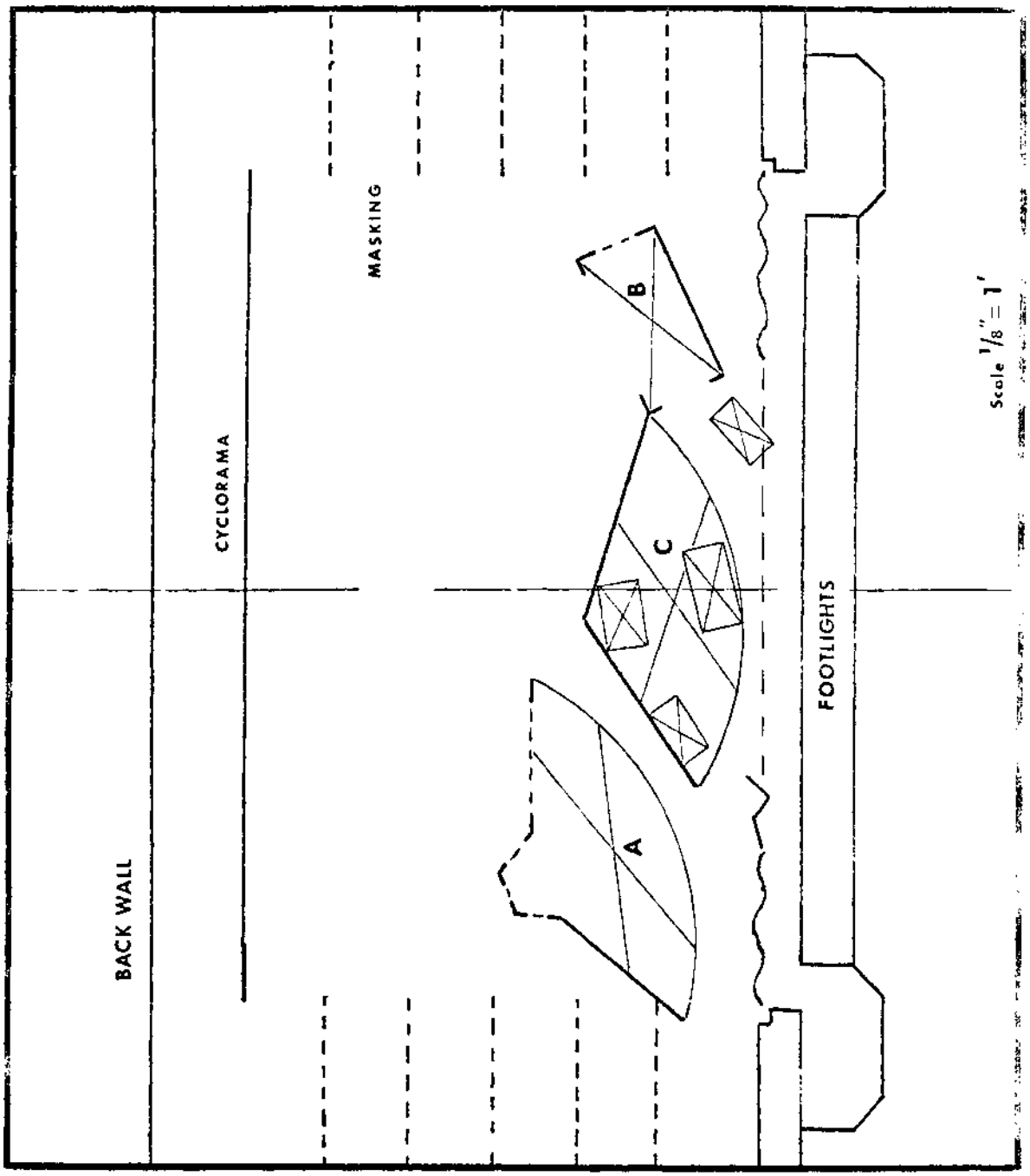

Plate 4

Floor Plan of Norina's Boudoir

Plate 5

Design Sketch of Norina's Boudoir

Plate 6

Photograph of Finished Norina Set

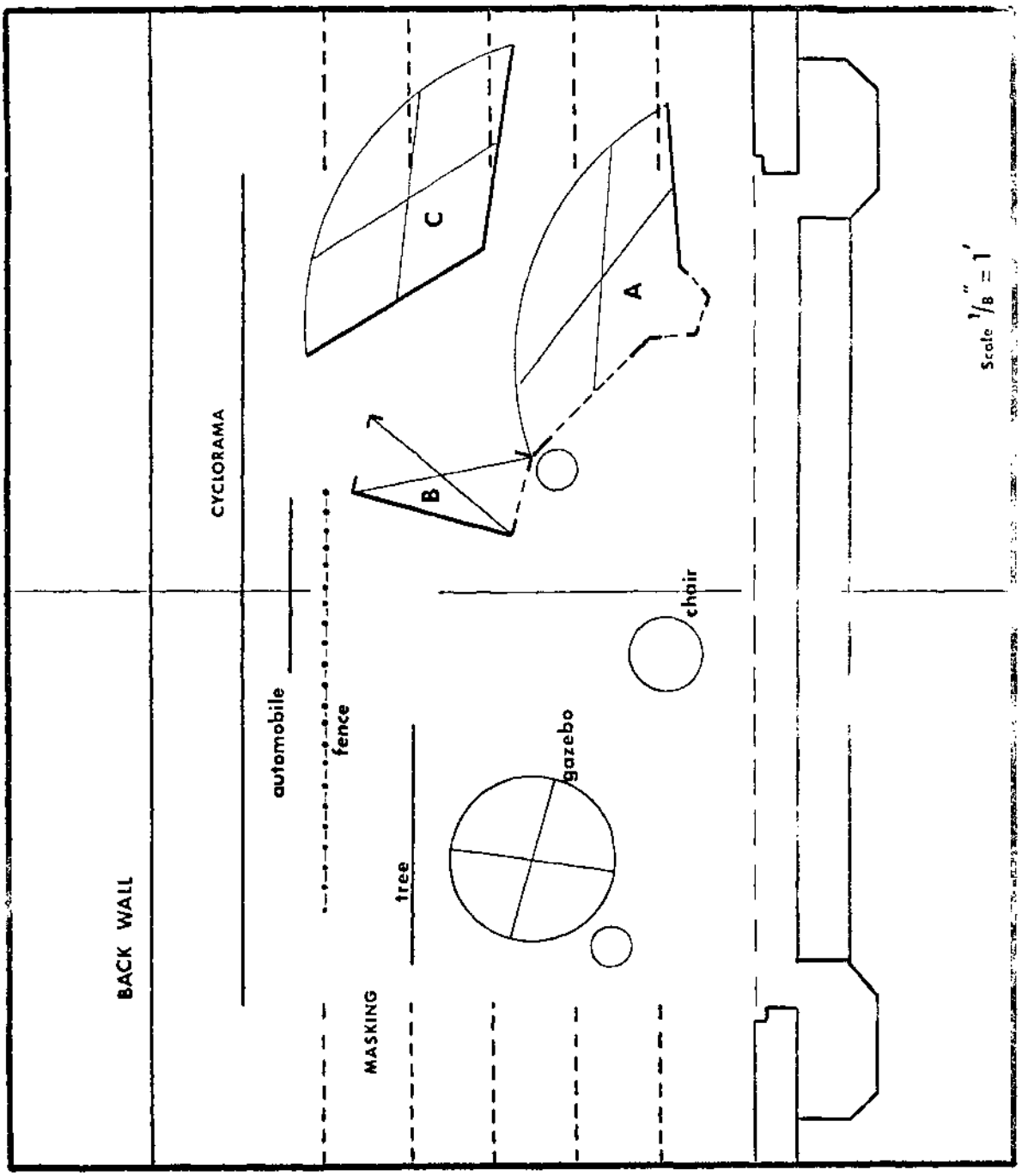

Plate 7

Floor Plan of Pasquale's Garden

Plate 8

Design Sketch of Pasquale's Garden

Plate 9

Photograph of Finished Garden Set

APPENDIX B:

COSTUME DESIGN PLATES

Plate 10

Pasquale in His Nightgown

Plate 11

Pasquale in Day Dress

Plate 12

Doctor Malatesta

Plate 13

Ernesto

Plate 14

Norina in Gibson House Dress

Plate 15

Norina in Day Dress

Plate 16

Norina in Evening Dress

Plate 17

Notary

Plate 18

Automobile Driver

Plate 19

Delivery Boy

Plate 20

Maid

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