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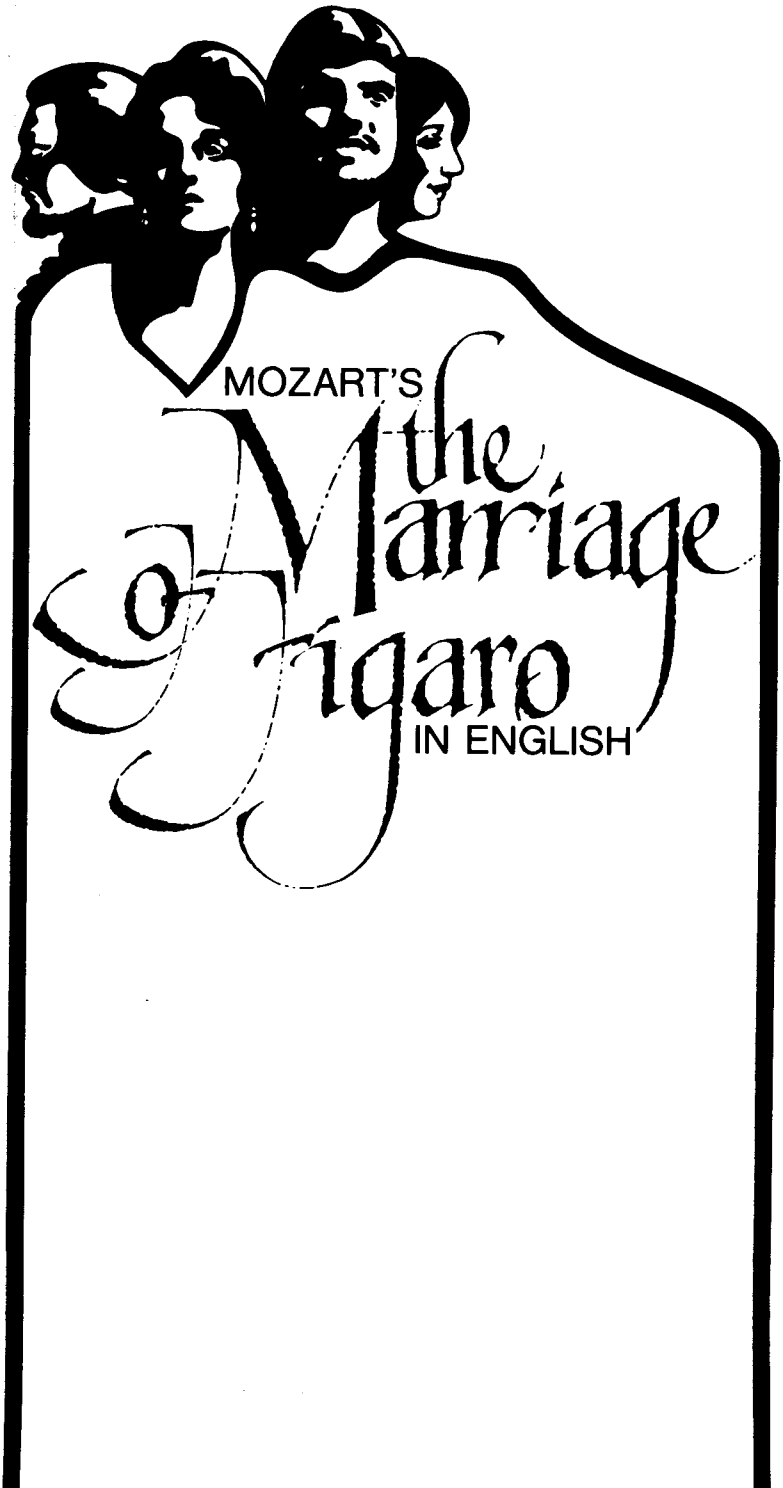

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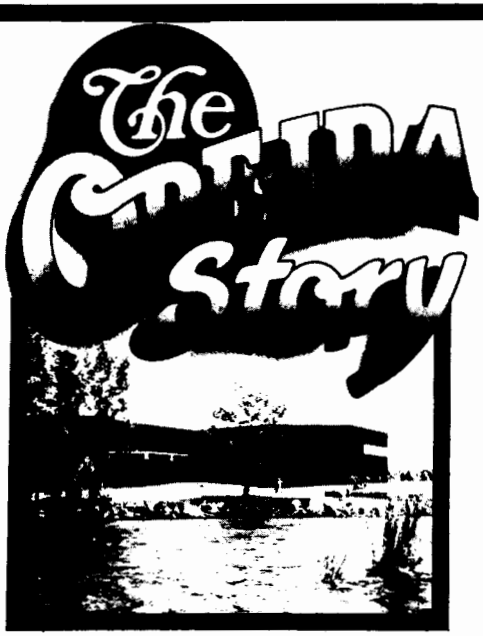

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Upheavals in the social order of things were not uncommon in Mozart's day. The Marriage of Figaro foretells of a greater upheaval in France that was to occur some three years after its premiere in Vienna in 1786. Himself a poor man, Mozart well understood the injustices of social discrimination. The idea of a lower class peasant (Figaro) rising to a higher station in life by virtue of his talent and wit was abhorrent to all upper class thinking of the period. Mozart and his librettist, Da Ponte, managed in their way to engrave their political philosophy into history's record. The genius of Mozart's opera is indisputable. It stands today as one of the oldest, if not the oldest, operatic works still popularly performed in the current repertory. Letters from Mozart to his father recounting the opera's success in Prague a year after the premiere indicate that "Figaro tunes were heard wherever he (Mozart) went . . ." They were the top numbers of the hit parade. And so it has been ever since.

OPERA THEATRE

ACT 1.

As Figaro, former barber of Seville now in the service of Count Almaviva, and the Countess' pretty maid Susanna prepare the room they will occupy after their impending marriage, Susanna warns Figaro that the Count has amorous designs on her. Figaro angrily vows to outwit Almaviva. When the room is empty, Dr. Bartolo, the Countess' former guardian, enters with his aging housekeeper, Marcellina; still seeking revenge on the man who made him lose his ward to Almaviva, he persuades Marcellina to sue Figaro for breach of promise. Susanna returns and spars with Marcellina, who leaves in a huff. Soon the young page Cherubino comes to ask Susanna's protection from the Count, who found him courting Barbarina, the gardener's daughter. After confessing that he is "in love with love," the boy hides as Almaviva arrives. The approach of the music master Don Basilio, however, causes the Count, too, to hide. At Basilio's insinuations that Cherubino loves the Countess, the Count steps forth; reenacting how he found the page with Barbarina, he again discovers Cherubino. Amid the ensuing confusion Figaro leads in a group of peasants. They extol the benevolence of Almaviva, who drafts Cherubino into his regiment and departs with the others. Figaro teases Cherubino about army life.

ACT II.

In her boudoir the Countess laments her husband's fading love. With Susanna and Figaro she plots to chasten him: Cherubino, disguised as Susanna, will meet with the Count, who will then be caught red-handed. Cherubino, who comes to bid the Countess farewell with a song in praise of love, is disguised by Susanna in girl's clothes. Hearing her husband approach while the maid is out of the room, the Countess locks Cherubino in a closet; when the jealous Almaviva hears a noise inside, he

leaves (with his wife) to secure tools to break the lock. Susanna, who has overheard, helps Cherubino escape through the window and takes his place, completely baffling the Count on his return. All seem relieved until the gardener Antonio enters to complain that someone has jumped into his flower bed. Unaware of what has happened, Figaro takes the blame, but the Count proves hard to convince. Marcellina, Bartolo, and Basilio burst in with a court summons for Figaro, to the delight of Almaviva.

ACT III.

In the palace audience room, Susanna promises the Count a rendezvous, but he suspects a ruse when he overhears her laughing with Figaro. Furious, he vows revenge. Marcellina arrives to demand that Figaro pay his debts or marry her at once but soon discovers he is her long-lost natural son, fathered by Bartolo. The Countess enters; alone onstage, she mourns her lost love. To further the conspiracy she dictates a note for Susanna to sign, inviting the Count to the garden. Peasant girls, among them the disguised Cherubino, now bring flowers to their lady. Just as the page is discovered by Almaviva, the wedding processions of Figaro and Susanna and of Bartolo and Marcellina advance. During the festivities, Susanna slips the note to the Count.

ACT IV.

In the moonlit garden Barbarina has lost the pin the Count has given her in reply to Susanna's note. After she tells Figaro and Marcellina of the secret assignation, Figaro delivers a tirade against womankind and leaves. Susanna and the Countess appear, dressed in each other's gowns; dropping her disguise for a moment, Susanna rhapsodizes on her love for Figaro, who, overhearing her, thinks she refers to the Count. Susanna hides. Next the Countess, protesting, is wooed by Cherubino, who mistakes her for Susanna. This angers the Count who chases the page away and sends the disguised Countess ahead to an arbor. He then disappears. By now Figaro has caught on and makes exaggerated love to Susanna, who, believing he loves the Countess, boxes his ears. But the couple is quickly reconciled, pretending when the Count returns that Figaro has won the Countess. Just as the outraged husband calls everyone to bear witness, the Countess reveals herself. Grasping the truth at last, Almaviva begs his wife's pardon; all are happily united.

CAST

(in order of appearance)

FIGARO, *Valet to the Count* ..... *Thaddeus Valdez, Bass-Baritone*

SUSANNA, *Maid to the Countess and Figaro's Fiancee* ..... *Carolyn Piccone Soprano*

BARTOLO, *A Doctor, Attorney* ..... *Steven Johnson, Bass*

MARCELLINA, *Bartolo's Housekeeper* ..... *Machelle Aaron, Mezzo Soprano*

CHERUBINO, *Page to the Count* ..... *Tina Poole, Mezzo Soprano*

COUNT ALMAVIVA ..... *Keith Tackman, Baritone*

DON BASILIO, *A Music Teacher* ..... *Michael Stafki, Tenor*

COUNTESS ALMAVIVA .... *Pam Piccard-Johnson, Soprano*

ANTONIO, *A Gardener and Susanna's Uncle* ..... *Todd Bedal, Baritone*

DON CURZIO, *A Notary* ..... *Ted Totorica, Tenor*

BARBARINA, *Antonio's Daughter* ..... *Jennifer Hubler, Soprano*

DANCERS ..... *Bruce Carroll*
Laurie Carrol

PEASANTS

Paula Solee
Sarah Munroe
Maria Lewis
Tami Eymann
Greg Johns
Theron Brown
Ted Totorica

TIME: Late 18th Century
PLACE: Castle of Count Almaviva, Outskirts of Seville, Spain

PRODUCTION STAFF

DIRECTOR ..... *Victor Chacon*
CONDUCTOR ..... *Michael L. Samball*
RECITATIVES AND REHEARSAL PIANIST ..... *Anna Holly*
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR AND DESIGN ..... *Dr. Steve Buss*
LIGHTING ..... *Steve Frank & Cathy Robran*
COSTUMES ..... *Dr. Steve Buss & Cherry Bragg*
HAIR DESIGN ..... *Betty Sackett*
MAKE UP ..... *Carolyn Crooks*
PROPERTIES ..... *B.J. Jefferson & Paula Solee*
STAGE MANAGER ..... *Roberta Henderson*
CHOREOGRAPHY ..... *Bruce Carroll*
PUBLICITY ..... *Anne Howie*
CAMPUS PUBLICITY ..... *Jocelyn Fenwick*
PROGRAM COORDINATION ... *Thaddeus Valdez & Stephan Smith*
GRAPHIC DESIGNER ..... *Stephan Smith*

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Alison Paige
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Eva Fothergill
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ANECDOTES

From the memoirs of Mozart's sister (1800):

"In London where our father lay dangerously ill, we were forbidden to touch a piano. And so, in order to occupy himself, Mozart composed his first symphony (aged 8) for all the instruments of the orchestra — but especially for trumpets and kettledrums. I had to copy it out as I sat at his side. Whilst he composed and I copied he said to me: "Remind me to give the horn something worthwhile to do!"

From William Jackson's memoirs (1882):

"An anecdote of him may be worth preserving. When he was a mere infant (I think under six years of age), he was exhibited as a great performer on the harpsichord, and an extraordinary genius for music. John Bach took the child between his knees and began a subject on the instrument, which he left, and Mozart continued — each led the other into very abstruse harmonies, and extraneous modulations, in which the child beat the man. We were afterwards looking over Bach's famous song "Se spiego" in Zanaida. The score was inverted to Mozart, who was rolling on the table. He pointed out a note which he said was wrong. It was so, whether of the composer or copyist I cannot now recollect, But it was an instance of extraordinary discernment and readiness in a mere infant."

From Doris Stock's memoirs (1871):

". . . Mozart himself, during his short stay in Dresden was an almost daily visitor to the Korner's house. For the charming and witty Doris he was all aflame, and with his south German vivacity he paid her the highest compliments. He generally came shortly before dinner and, after he had poured out a stream of gallant phrases, he sat down to improvise at the pianoforte. In the next room the table was meanwhile being set and the soup dished up, and the servant announced that dinner was being served. But who could tear himself away when Mozart was improvising! The soup was allowed to grow cold and the roast to burn, simply so that we could continue to listen to the magic sounds which the master, completely absorbed in what he was doing and unaware of the rest of the world, conjured from the instrument. Yet one finally grows tired even of the highest pleasures when the stomach makes known its demands. After the soup had grown cold a few times while Mozart played, he was briefly taken to task. 'Mozart,' said Doris, gently laying her snow-white arm on his shoulder, 'Mozart, we are going in to dine; do you want to eat with us?' — 'Your servant, Mademoiselle, I shall be with you in a moment.' But it was precisely Mozart who never did come; he played on undisturbed. Thus we often had the rarest Mozartian musical accompaniment to our meal.

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