

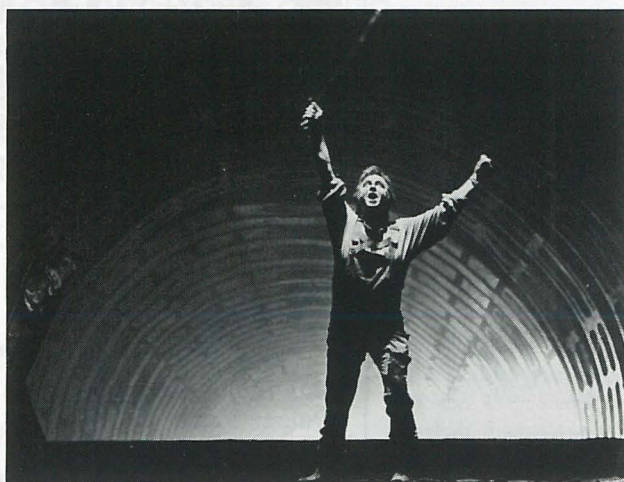
In the next issue:
 In tribute to France's bicentennial, a tour of Paris' Bastille Opera House; a visit with British theatre designer, Ralph Koltai; a behind-the-scenes look at the new Tim Burton film, *Batman*; and a profile of Sweden's AVAB Elektronik.

Dans le prochain numéro:
 L'Opéra de la Bastille s'ouvre en célébration du Bicentenaire de la Revolution Française; le décorateur britannique Ralph Koltai; sur le plateau de *Batman*, le nouveau film de Tim Burton; et un profil sur l'entreprise suédoise AVAB Elektronik.

In der naechsten Ausgabe:
 Anlaesslich der franzoesischen Zweihundertjahrfeier, eine Tour durch das Bastille Opera House in Paris; ein Besuch beim britischen theatre designer Ralph Koltai; ein Blick hinter die Kulissen des neuen Tim Burton Film *Batman*; und ein Profil der schwedischen Firma AVAB Elektronik.

GERMANY/PRODUCTION

BERLIN'S DEUTSCHE OPERA TAKES RING TO LONDON



1

Designer Peter Sykora's concept for his Ring at Covent Garden was that "The beginning is the end, the end is the beginning." This sense of absolute continuousness is illustrated in the seemingly endless tunnel Sykora designed for the underworld beneath the Rhine (1).

Artistic differences at Covent Garden have paved the way for Deutsche Oper Berlin's director Gotz Friedrich and designer Peter Sykora to take over completion of a production of Wagner's Ring cycle this fall at the famed London house. Guest Soviet director Yuri Lyubimov clashed with Royal Opera's musical director Bernhard Haitink over problems that arose during *Das Rheingold* which premiered at the house last September.

Designer Sykora is no stranger to the Ring cycle, as he designed Friedrich's highly successful 1984-85 version for Berlin, which toured Japan in 1987 and is set to be presented at Washington, D.C.'s Kennedy Center in June of 89.

Though Sykora will be making use of some of some of the set pieces inherited from the Soviet's aborted production, he will also be bringing the best things from his designs for Berlin.

The chamber representing the underworld beneath the Rhine de-

scends some 36 meters into the depths of the stage, offering a sense of limitless space. And since the structure appears at both the beginning and the end of the opera trilogy, it corresponds with the continuous cycle suggested by the work's music and libretto.

Prior to working in West Berlin, Sykora, like director Gotz Friedrich, began his career in East Germany. He completed his studies there with stints at the Dresden State Opera and East Berlin's Max Gorky Theatre before coming West.

Sykora describes himself as eclectic and says he looks at both the work itself and its themes before going to the drawing table. After consultations with Friedrich he prepares story boards, and together they fine-tune the designs to meet the director's staging needs.

In preparing for productions in Japan and the United States as well as for London, he made personal visits to each site. He wanted to not only get the atmosphere of the the-

atres but also a feeling for the people and the country. As a result he found not only differing traditions but also the different ways the houses are organised. Though not tremendously different, the subtleties which he finds he takes into consideration in the execution of his work.

"People from theatre to theatre may not have the same exact point of view," he notes. "But there is not too much difference either. Views often overlap because more and more people are travelling back and forth."

Sykora has been one of the chief designers for Deutsche Oper Berlin since 1983 and describes the atmosphere at the house as very amiable. Other Wagnerian operas he's designed for Berlin include *The Flying Dutchman*; and for the 1989-90 season he is preparing a new production of *Lobengrin*.

OWEN LEVY



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