

A DOUBLE DEBUT AT BAM

When Mozart's early and rarely performed opera, *La Finta Giardiniera*, opens for three performances - March 15, 17 and 19 - at the Majestic Theatre of the Brooklyn Academy of Music, both The Royal Theatre of La Monnaie from Brussels, under the direction of Gerard Mortier, and director/designer Karl-Ernst Herrmann will make their American debut with the production.

Founded in 1700, La Monnaie presents not only the classics, but also boldly commissions new works by contemporary composers, and has a special penchant for stage design, with all sets, costumes and props created at the opera house. Herrmann, who is credited as director/designer for such La Monnaie productions as *Don Giovanni*, *La*

Traviata, and *Orfeo ed Euridice*, designs both sets and costumes. He is also known for his work as a designer for director Peter Stein at the Berliner Schaubühne. In his twenty-year collaboration with this renowned director, Herrmann has designed the sets for productions ranging from *The Three Sisters* to *Peer Gynt*.

A small-scale opera, *La Finta Giardiniera*, requires scaling down of the Majestic stage with use of a false proscenium and a full cyc surrounding the stage area. A false stage will be built approximately 5 feet above the actual stage floor in order to create a faux orchestra pit in front of the elevation.

In a brief storm scene, the trees covering the stage all bend on cue as a full black sur-

round falls to create midnight. The trees bend to a 30° thanks to motorised hydraulic controls. The sets for *La Finta Giardiniera* have been shipped in five containers from Brussels to New York for the premiere.

The lighting designed by Robert Brasseur has some special requirements that BAM's production manager Paul King had to solve. One of these was the request for 80 to 100 units of dimmable fluorescents to provide good day-light color.

The opera was written by Mozart just days before his 19th birthday, and prefigures many of his later great works. Sylvain Cambreling will conduct.

ELLEN LAMPERT



O. HERRMANN

■ The March 1990 production of *La Finta Giardiniera* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music marks the American debut of director/designer Karl-Ernst Herrmann.

USA / SPECIAL EFFECTS

VIVA LAS VEGAS

When the chairman of the Golden Nugget hotel-casino chain was looking for designers to create the effects for his new \$630 million (UK £395 million) complex in the heart of Las Vegas, he found his inspiration overseas. British

designers David Hersey, John Napier, and Andrew Bridge combined talents to create the look of The Mirage — an extraordinary alternative to Las Vegas' infamous pulsating neon.

Outside the main entrance

to this 3,049-room hotel is a five-story waterfall and active simulated volcano designed by Hersey. An eruption is simulated every 15 minutes. A computer controls the three-minute cycle, synchronizing lighting, geysers, and pyrotechnics as smoke and flames shoot up 100 feet above the water.

The geyser, steam, and flame effects are all regulated by a control system by Aisco International of California. Production Arts Lighting of New York provided the bulk of the lighting controls. "We supplied around 900 LMI L86 dimmers, driven by an ETC Expressions console that was specifically modified by us to run all the lighting, gas, steam, and hydraulic effects," explains Steve Terry, vice-president of Production Arts. The Aisco system sends four output signals to the lighting console,

signalling readiness to begin. The ETC console then sends back a signal ordering the Aisco controller to begin running the effects in conjunction with the dimming and lighting system.

The jewel in this resort's crown is the 1,500-seat Theatre Mirage, designed by Peterson/Vine Associates and home to illusionists Siegfried & Roy. Siegfried & Roy will appear in the show room three weeks a month in a production designed by John Napier and lit by Andrew Bridge.

Beyond this dazzle lies still more dazzle. The hotel houses 17 rare royal white tigers. To keep these cats amused, engineering consultants J. Harlan Glenn & Associates of California devised a system of waterscapes for the habitat, cued and controlled by an ETC Visions lighting console.

BILL INTEMANN

■ Burning gas at the rate of 400 million BTUs an hour and pumping water at the rate of 120,000 gallons per minute, this simulated waterfall and volcanic eruption (designed by David Hersey, with flame effects by Aisco International and water effects by Harlan Glenn Associates) cycles through a startling display of lights, geysers, and pyrotechnics — all synchronized by a single ETC Expressions lighting console.

