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Opera fan likes her arias loud

By JUNE RADO
Opera nabbed my husband by the ear on a Tuesday. I had just finished the first hearing of my new Leontyne Price recording.

Still vibrating gently in the grip of her oiled-satin voice, I surfaced from my swoon to hear him say, as if from afar, "What was that?" High time! I crowded to myself and scurried to hook him beyond help. Tenderly setting the needle on a surefire aria, I consoled him. "Don't think, just listen!" LEONTYNE LET him have it. As the long aria died away, I looked to see how he fared.

HALLELUJAH! He had TEARS in his eyes.

"She marvelous! Isn't she magnificent? The truth, now. You liked it?"

"Mmh!" he said. He grimaced with emotion, his hand to his mouth. "I just bit my tongue."

Sometimes I become anti-social. Swathed in gooseflesh, I languish in my chair, the Love Duet from "Tristan und Isolde" pouring over me like warm molasses, and someone, I hope never to see again, hollers, "Can you turn that down?"

I do not mistake Tristan for background music. In order to hear opera, one must turn it up. I choose my times with care.

WHEN THE HOUSE is empty of infidels and the neighbors have left for Texas, I shut the windows and turn it up loud enough to dent the doorknobs. Loud lets you hear the softness.

Take the duet sung by Pinkerton, the anti-hero of Puccini's "Madama Butterfly" with Sharpless, the American consul in Japan. (As Pinkerton I have in mind Jussi Björling, the Swedish miracle — now gone, alas, to his reward — whose phrasing reminds me of eagle flight, whose sound must resemble closely the voice of the Angel Gabriel.) I take Butterfly LOUD.

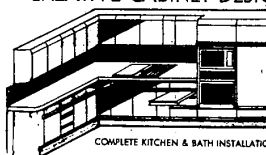
I was not always an opera buff. In my youth Brunnhilde's war cry sounded to me like a runaway cal-

lopie. Truth to tell, I still do not voluntarily hear Brunnhilde's war cry, but I have discovered that she has more on her mind than battle.

OUT OF COMPASSION, she disobeys and, capping insult with injury, argues with her father — not just any father, you understand. (Continued on page 10B)

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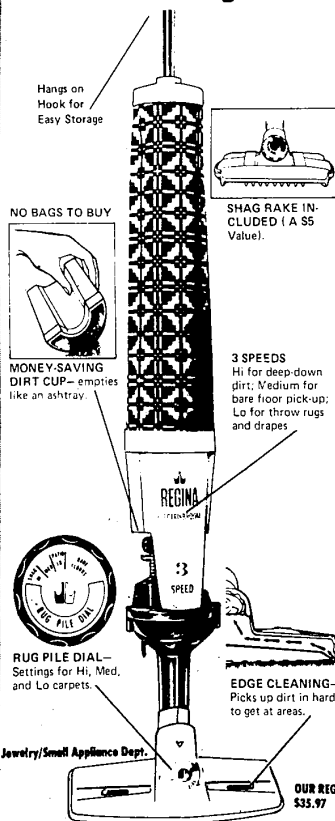
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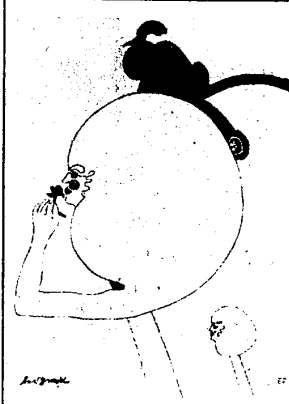
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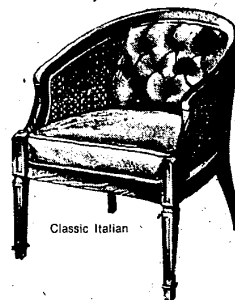
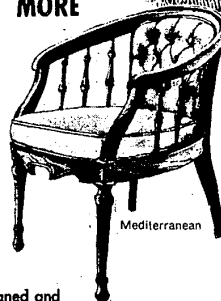
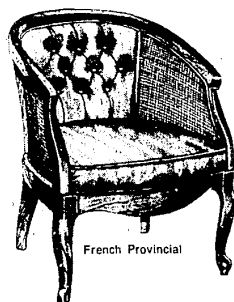
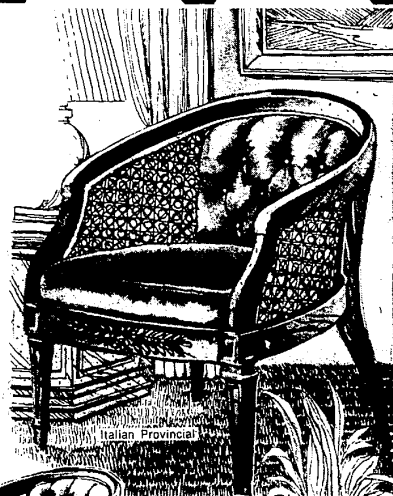
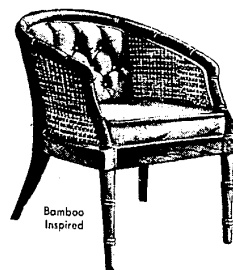


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