

*there is nothing  
like our Dame—*

## *The Incomparable Eva*



*I got a longing to see you all, and I suddenly took  
the idea that I must come and visit you—and here I am.*

*photos by Julie Hunt  
text by Carol J. Burr*

We all knew she'd be back someday—and there she was—Eva Turner, England's greatest prima donna, Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire—sweeping onto the stage of Holmberg Hall as if she owned it—and if she wanted title to the whole campus, we would have given it to her.

"I got a longing to see you all, and I suddenly took the idea that I must come and visit you," she said majestically, "and here I am." Dame Eva had been gone much too long—since 1959 when she ended her 10-year stint as a "visiting" professor of voice at O.U. to return to London and a life-time chair at the Royal Academy of Music. An invitation to lecture on opera during the annual Focus on Fine Arts had provided the opportunity for her visit.

Dame Eva had a lot to say—about singing, the future of opera, her own career, including her greatest triumph as Turandot, and, of course, her students. The audience could not have been more attentive—but then she could have recited Mother Goose rhymes and no one would have complained. If anything, the diva is getting younger every year; at 71 she is the same vivacious, witty charmer who first staked her claim to Sooner hearts on a hot summer day in 1949.

She thought we had weathered the years rather well, too. "What an enormous pleasure it is to be here with you," she declared, "and to find you all flourishing and looking so wonderful and to renew my acquaintance with this beloved campus."

And even as she was saying goodbye, we had a feeling that we had not seen the last of our favorite Dame.

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## *Dame Eva spoke on a singing career*

Singing is very much a part of our whole being. You know I have found that many people don't realize that, and they sing from the neck up. That is what we call "white" singing. This is a pity because singers don't always feel very comfortable when they sing on those lines. Then of course there are the "hooty" singers. This is a pity too because that kind of singing does not go out to impinge itself on the ears of the public and arrest their attention. Therefore they don't become what we term "box office" . . .

There is a certain lethargy to combat where singing is concerned . . . I have found that singers must have vitality and resistance. The young people today love to "live it up." Well, living it up does not always contribute to being a good singer. I do warn you of that. You must conserve your vitality if you want to sing . . .

I must say that I think that the singer of all people of applied music is involved much more in giving of himself, perhaps, than those who find the piano ready to play, the organ ready to play, the cello, the violin and so on, because in singing the subconscious forces are involved . . .

Students must realize that often to bring about achievement, you must go along with blinkers. You cannot have too many diversified interests, because time—the lack of time—often defeats us . . .

You know nothing is achieved without perspiration, application, dedication, sacrifice—well, I don't know how many other -ations I could mention. Students, I warn you to listen to that. You can't expect it to come from outside. It must be you—you yourself who achieve it.

### *on proper training*

Vocal students must have a good musical background. I know many times I ask them what other subjects they are taking. They say piano, ear tests, harmony and counterpoint, music theory, and so on. Then they say, "I don't need to learn music theory, because all I want to do is to sing." I say, "You don't need to learn music theory? You astound me!" I remember when I was singing the Brünnhilde in Die Walküre of the Ring. I came to a part where I was face down on the stage. The orchestra was silent and I had to find my own note. Now where would I have been if I had not studied music theory? I would not have known my roots or my first or second inversions and so on. I know when you are studying you are rather outraged that you're not allowed to do as Puccini did and have consecutive fifths and consecutive octaves. I know myself I made the most lovely tunes but they were always full of consecutive fifths and consecutive octaves, and therefore it wasn't so good from

the professor's point of view and I had to redo it. I didn't succeed so well without them. I wonder why as students we weren't allowed to use them. I've come to a much fuller understanding. You see it makes us much more resourceful if we are not allowed to go along the lines of least resistance. And so it is in everything.

### *on opera's future*

At the request of the chancellor of the exchequer in London, the arts council has formed a board of governors to bring into being an opera center. This will come into being, I understand, next September. I myself am the only lady on that board. I am hoping that we shall collect many students of great aptitude and talent to feed the Royal Opera House, Sadler's Wells, Glyndebourne and the Edinburgh Festival. I hope with time, here in America, the arts will be given very much more importance, an outlet brought about for students who are now in these opera workshops in the universities and colleges where there are so many. Often until these people can get the necessary experience, they cannot really find their feet and achieve what they so very much desire. This is not too easy, but I am hoping that with time these students will have outlets for their talents.

### *on her Turandot*

When I went for my first rehearsal at La Scala, it was October 26 or November 26, 1924. I went to the foyer and everyone said "quickly to the window." There was



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the funeral cortege of Puccini passing below. In 1926 Toscanini decided to produce Puccini's opera which he had commissioned Franco Alfano to finish. I little knew that later Turandot was to be as they say in Italian my "cavallo di battaglia." But the first night at La Scala I was not, contrary to the accepted idea, the first Turandot. The first Turandot was Rosa Raisa, the first Carlos was Michele Fleta, the first Liu was Marie Zamboni. But I certainly did it very soon after and for the first time in many of the opera houses . . .

One thing I always found very moving. At the point in the opera where the pen fell from the hand of Puccini, I was alone on the stage with a veil over my head. That is after the body of Liu is taken out. Here the conductor would turn to the audience and say, "At this point died the maestro." The audience would rise and a two minute silence was observed. And if it happened that we had gone to perform it for the first time, I was intensely touched. Well, it was lucky for me that the tenor was the first to rebegin and complete the opera . . .

It has been said that after the wonderful duets of Butterfly, Bohème, Manon Lescaut and so on, that perhaps this opera, could Puccini have lived, would have transcended all. That of course is denied to us to know. But I have found this opera a wonderful opera to sing—always inspiring. And now I have much pleasure in attending the performances of my student, Amy Shuard, who is the leading British dramatic soprano at the Royal Opera House, Covent Gardens.

### *on her Sooner students*

Now I'm going to be a hen with her chickens here. I would like to tell you of the success of the students of this music school. William James Harper, a tenor who I taught here, is the leading tenor at the opera in Karlsruhe. And next year he passes on to Stuttgart which is quite an advance for him. Then there is Judy Coleman, who will teach summer school here, and who is making great success with performances of Ulrica in *The Masked Ball*, Azucena in *Il Trovatore*, Suzuki in *Butterfly* and so on. Roberta Knie, who was a student here, has 18 performances of Cherubino in the *Marriage of Figaro*. And so you see that they are all getting their experience . . .

And it is very wonderful that this is from Oklahoma. I remember when William James Harper earned a Fulbright, I myself wrote to Senator Fulbright and expressed my personal thanks and told him how thrilled I was that William James Harper would have this experience, that he really deserved it and I was sure would make the fullest use and prove a wonderful ambassador for his country. Well, this was proved because in Rome his Fulbright was extended for a further year. I believe it was one of the first times that had happened for a singer . . .

Of course Mildred Andrews has had unlimited Fulbrights. You know her fame is far and wide. Sir William McKay, the organist at the Westminster Abbey, and I

*continued on page 23*



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Force Officer Training School at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. He was honored as a distinguished graduate at graduation ceremonies for his class. He has been assigned to Otis Air Force Base, Massachusetts, as a photographic officer.

2nd Lt. Frances A. Schuler, '62, Fort Worth, Texas, has been assigned to the Air Force hospital at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland. She is a physical therapist.

2nd Lt. Stuart M. Scoggin, '62ba, Oklahoma City, recently completed the 8-week officer orientation course at The Southeastern Signal School, Fort Gordon, Georgia.

2nd Lt. James E. Stuckey, '62bus, Burlington, recently completed an 8-week field artillery officer orientation course at The Artillery and Missile Center, Fort Sill.

2nd Lt. Thomas A. Wood, '62bs, Davenport, Iowa, has entered Air Force pilot training at Webb Air Force Base, Texas. Wood will fly T-37 and T-33 jets and will be awarded the silver wings of a pilot upon graduation. Mrs. Wood is the former Patricia A. Waganer, '61bus.

2nd Lt. Dan Rae Harlow, '62bs, Norman, has been assigned to Walter Reed Army Institute of Research as a research parasitologist in the department of medical zoology. Before going to Walter Reed, Harlow was an instructor in parasitology at the Medical Field Service School at Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas.

Sybil L. Hall, '62ba, is now living in Dallas, Texas, where she is an elementary school teacher with the Dallas Independent School District.

**MARRIAGE:** Donna Jean Hudiburg and Richard Wayne Dodson II, '62pharm, both of Midwest City, were married February 23 in Wickline Methodist Church, Oklahoma City. The couple has established a home in Oklahoma City.

**BIRTH:** R. Leon Brining, '62pharm, and Mrs. Brining are the parents of a daughter born December 27 in Norman.

## Bubble Trouble

*(Continued from Page 14)*

After obtaining his M.S. in petroleum refinery engineering, Dr. Eldib went on to the University of Oklahoma. In 1955, he was awarded his Ph.D. degree in chemical engineering. For the next six years, Dr. Eldib worked for Esso Research and Engineering Company.

At Esso, Dr. Eldib discovered that air bubbled through petroleum products could remove metal impurities. In 1960, at a conference of scientists, he delivered a talk on the uses of foaming techniques to purify petroleum. After the speech, engineers from the U. S. Public Health Service

brought up the problem of foaming at sewage treatment plants.

"A bell immediately rang in my mind," Dr. Eldib said. "I wondered if perhaps the foaming technique might be a solution to their problem."

Laboratory experiments soon demonstrated that foaming was indeed a possible solution. Since then, Dr. Eldib has concentrated his efforts on water pollution problems.

In August 1962, Dr. Eldib founded his own research and engineering company. In his laboratory, he daily seeks new answers to challenging problems in the world of chemistry. His next frontier: new methods of removing salt from seawater to make it drinkable.

## The Incomparable Eva

*(Continued from Page 5)*

often speak of her. They all know about her. I have no need to speak of her because they know before ever I open my mouth . . .

And also there are the students such as Elsa Porter, who is now professor of voice at Canyon, Texas, near Amarillo, and Harold Thompson, who is in Arkansas at Hendrix College, and there are many who are teaching and having great success. Harold Thompson is one of the judges for the Metropolitan Opera auditions. I could go on

ad infinitum to tell you the students from this campus who are doing splendid work around the state and well out of the state, in many other states and other countries. There is this boy John Turnbull, the organist, who is in Holland now on a Fulbright and having enormous success. . .

Well, of course, I was here for 10 years, so you can imagine that when I hear of these things, I swell with pride—and I really mean that. It is a great pleasure always to me to hear of the success of the students of the University of Oklahoma.

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