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BLOODING, RANDIE LEE

DOUGLAS MOORE'S "THE BALLAD OF BABY DOE": AN INVESTIGATION OF ITS HISTORICAL ACCURACY AND THE FEASIBILITY OF A HISTORICAL PRODUCTION IN THE TABOR OPERA HOUSE

The Ohio State University DMA 1979

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DOUGLAS MOORE'S THE BALLAD OF BABY DOE: AN INVESTIGATION
OF ITS HISTORICAL ACCURACY AND THE FEASIBILITY OF A
HISTORICAL PRODUCTION IN THE TABOR OPERA HOUSE

DOCUMENT

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Musical Arts in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

Randie Lee Blooding, B.M.E., M.M.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1979

Reading Committee:
Marion Alch
Herbert Livingston
Burdette Green

Approved By

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Co-Adviser
Department of Music

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Studies in Vocal Pedagogy. Professor John Muschick

Studies in Vocal Literature. Professors Irma Cooper, Marion Alch, and John Muschick

DEGREE RECITALS

October 19, 1976, 8:00 p.m.
Hughes Auditorium
Columbus, Ohio

Professor - John Muschick

Randie L. Blooding, Baritone

Paul Dorgan, Pianist

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February 24, 1977, 10:30 a.m.  
Ohio Theatre  
Columbus, Ohio

Professor - John Muschick

The Marriage of Figaro

By

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Evan Whallon, Conductor  
Leonard Treash, Stage Director

**Cast**

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Marcellina
Cherubino
Count Almaviva
Basilio
Countess Almaviva
Curzio
Barbarina

Columbus Symphony Orchestra

* * * * *

May 23, 1977, 3:00 p.m.
Mershon Auditorium
Columbus, Ohio

Professor – John Muschick

Carmina Burana

By

Carl Orff

Maurice Casey, Conductor

Jon Shaw
Mario Alch
Randie Blooding

Soprano
Tenor
Baritone

Combined Choirs from Lakewood, Colerain, Westland, Whetstone High
Schools, and The Ohio State University Symphonic Choir

Joyce Kibut and Terry Boltz, Pianists
Members of O.S.U. Percussion Ensemble

* * * * *

iv
May 23, 1978, 8:00 p.m.
Hughes Auditorium
Columbus, Ohio

Professor – John Muschick

Die Winterreise

By

Franz Schubert

Randie L. Blooding, Baritone
Paul Dorgan, Pianist

Gute Nacht
Die Wetterfahne
Gefrorne Tränen
Erstarrung
Der Lindenbaum
Wasserflut
Auf dem Flusse
Rückblick
Irrlicht
Rast
Frühlingstraum
Einsamkeit
Die Post
Der greise Kopf
Die Krähe
Letzte Hoffnung
Im Dorfe
Der stürmische Morgen
Täuschung
Der Wegweiser
Das Wirtshaus
Mut
Die Nebensonnen
Der Leiermann
PREFACE

The following document is intended for use as a tool in the study of *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, an opera by Douglas Moore with libretto by John Latouche. It further focuses upon the feasibility of a historical production in the Tabor Opera House. The contents of the paper have been taken primarily from research in the Colorado Historical Society, the Denver Public Library, examination of the Tabor Opera House and the Matchless Mine in Leadville, and from interviews with persons who knew Baby Doe Tabor. Much information has become available to the public since the mid-1950s when Moore and Latouche were writing the opera. The private letters, scrapbooks, mementos, and memorabilia of Baby Doe have been placed with the Colorado Historical Society in the last 20 years. These items, ranging from legal documents to love letters, number well over 1500 file folders arranged chronologically. This collection offers opportunity for an intimate glance at the lives of the major characters of the opera.

This paper speaks specifically to those people who are interested in performing *The Ballad of Baby Doe*. Care has been taken to include information that will help the performer recreate the era of the "silver kings" and, especially, the characters of Baby Doe, Horace, and Augusta Tabor. To this end, the author found it to be advantageous to deal primarily with the lives of the three lead characters and with the
historical accuracy of Latouche's libretto. Quotations have been used when possible, and information of secondary importance to the opera has been included where deemed helpful to the performer in developing characterizations or the climate of the era. It is hoped that the information provided in this document will promote a better understanding of the characters as well as a more complete comprehension of Douglas Moore's The Ballad of Baby Doe.
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INTRODUCTION

Douglas Moore's *The Ballad of Baby Doe* with libretto by John Latouche was first produced in Central City, Colorado, at the Central City Opera House in July of 1956. It is an opera based on the lives of Elizabeth Bonduel McCourt Doe ("Baby Doe"), Horace Austin Warner Tabor, and Augusta Pierce Tabor. The story of Horace Tabor's rise to fame and fortune and of Baby Doe's beauty is well-known in Colorado history and lends itself perfectly to opera. Moore, speaking of the Tabor story, said,

... In 1935 I read in the morning paper of the death of an old woman who was found frozen in a miner's shack outside Leadville, Colorado ... . This certainly seemed like opera material ... . For some reason the opera never got written in 1935, but I was overjoyed when in 1953 the Central City Opera invited me to write it for them to produce.¹

The foreword to the piano/vocal score has the following comment concerning historical accuracy of the libretto:

The dramatic treatment of Tabor's life, and the two women who dominated it, closely follows the pattern of fact. Any shifts in time element and character emphasis have been made to shape the robust chronicle of these lives into the framework of the musical theatre.²


Messrs. Moore and Latouche have done a masterful job of chronicling history in this opera, and performance of this opera will be well served by an examination of Colorado history during the days of Baby Doe. Latouche and Moore have carefully retained the American West in the libretto so that the audience feels a sense of Americanism in the production.
Horace Tabor was born in Vermont in 1830. He married Augusta Pierce at the age of 25 and moved to the Kansas Territory in 1857 with his bride. They homesteaded near what is now Lawrence, Kansas. Being unsuccessful at farming, Horace and Augusta left Kansas in 1859 for the gold fields of Colorado. Horace enjoyed marginal success as a gold miner and was able to make enough money to allow Augusta to stock a small general store. This type of business was to be the major provider of support for the Tabor family during the ensuing 18 years. With the modest profits from the store, Augusta was able to develop various businesses needed in the gold rush towns. From 1860 to 1878 she ran boarding houses, restaurants, laundries, banks, stores, and post offices. At each camp to which Horace moved his family, Augusta set up her business and supported the family with little help from Horace. A corner of the family's cabin often served as a post office or a bank as well as housing other miners for whom Augusta washed clothes and cooked meals.

In 1876, while managing the general store he and Augusta had started in Leadville, Horace "grubstaked" two miners by the names of August Rische and George Hook. The total stake was in the approximate

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amount of sixty dollars. These two men struck a very rich ore vein of silver and started Tabor on his way to riches.\textsuperscript{4} For the next ten years Horace's wealth grew at an astronomical rate. He became one of the most wealthy men in the history of Colorado.

The silver rush began in 1876 during the gold rush decline. In fact, 1876 was the first time silver ore was tested by Tabor.\textsuperscript{5} The presence of silver ore in the mine fields had probably been recognized all along by the miners, but it was more profitable to mine gold.

Silver is not pure in its natural form; it must be smelted. Since facilities needed to break down the ore did not exist much before 1876 in Colorado, it was not as profitable to mine silver. A water rinsing process was the easiest method of separating gold from other minerals. Gold is heavier than most minerals and remained in the bottom of the container after other minerals were carried away by the water. Silver ore is also heavier than most minerals and was, therefore, a hindrance to the water rinse process when it was present with the gold. The silver ore slowed the process and cost miners valuable time and money when they had to separate it from the gold.

The early life of the Tabors is important as background to the opera's characterizations of Horace and Augusta. Their early experiences helped to mold the personalities which emerged during the events following Horace's rise to wealth. Horace lived on Augusta's strength as she became comfortable and confident in guiding his life. She

\textsuperscript{4}Ibid.

displayed conservative, sound business sense, balancing Horace's tendency to speculate. Due to Augusta's strength and drive, the Tabors were already middle-class merchants when Hook and Rische entered the picture.

Elizabeth Bonduel McCourt, "Baby Doe," was born on October 7, 1854, in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, the daughter of a tailor. On June 27, 1877, Elizabeth McCourt and William Harvey Doe were married in Oshkosh and soon after moved to Central City, Colorado, where Harvey's father held mining interests. Harvey did not prove to be a successful miner, apparently lacking the drive to work hard and supervise his men wisely. Elizabeth, on the other hand, was very ambitious and took to working in the mine herself along with her husband and his crew. She soon developed an unfavorable reputation because working in a mine was not acceptable social practice for a lady, especially with so few white women living in Central City at that time.

It was in Central City that the nickname "Baby Doe" developed. By the time she met Horace Tabor in Leadville, Elizabeth was widely known as "Baby Doe." Legend attributes the nickname to the miners. She was called "The Miners' Baby." The name "Baby" was an endearment used by Elizabeth's mother and frequently appears in her letters to Elizabeth. No doubt, Harvey also used the nickname, and Horace's letters all use the name "Baby." In addition, many others refer to her as "Lizzie" in their correspondence.

Harvey and Elizabeth eventually lost all the mining property his father had entrusted to them which put more pressure on an already stormy marriage. The final episode leading to the break-up is
documented by two letters, one to Elizabeth from her mother and the other from Harvey to his parents. In the latter, Harvey claims that the allegation made against him is false. He claims that although Elizabeth observed him leaving the premises of a brothel, he had only gone into the establishment to talk with a business associate concerning a loan to continue work in the mine. In her letter to Elizabeth, Mrs. McCourt tells Elizabeth that she supports her in the changes that must be made and that she, Elizabeth, is an angel.\(^6\)

Baby Doe did actually see Harvey as he was leaving the brothel and cited this incident as grounds for divorce. Whether the incident sincerely upset Baby Doe or whether it was simply an excuse to divorce Harvey cannot be proven. It is known that previous to this time Baby Doe was dissatisfied with her marriage and wished to seek a better match for herself.

Also important to the opera's characterization of Baby Doe is the fact that she was one of the most beautiful women of her day. Tribute to her beauty was paid by her many male admirers as in the following unsolicited note from a complete stranger:

\begin{quote}
Pardon, if you care, the intrusion of this note and the very great presumption of the writer--I am well aware that [I] am trampling under foot all well-defined laws and rules of etiquette and good [manners]. I am the gentleman who sat second seat back of you and finally went forward with book in hand to read on train this a.m. I noticed you when you first entered the car and was greatly impressed by your very interesting face. Sitting directly back of you I had
\end{quote}

\(^6\)Tabor Collection, Colorado Historical Society, File Folder 3, No. 4.
fair opportunity to study it unobserved and speculate in my
own mind as to the many noble qualities of heart and mind that
its owner must possess . . . .7

It is known that Baby Doe had a close friendship with at least
one man while she was still married to Harvey. The following is a
portion of a letter from that man, Jake Sands:

... I hope you are not hangrie [sic] at me. If so, write
me, but I hope not. I always think of you as you are the
only person I care for . . . I cannot help it, I can never
forget you.8

In late 1879, Baby Doe was already separated from her first hus­
band and in the process of rearranging her life. She had disposed of
Harvey because he was not as ambitious as she and had not provided a
life as exciting or lavish as she felt she deserved. An incident in
Baby Doe's early life is representative of the determination behind a
somewhat spoiled child's expectations. In Oshkosh, it was traditional
to stage an ice skating competition during the winter. At that time,
only men competed. This was due to social etiquette rather than regu­
lation; it was improper for a young lady to compete. Entering under
a false name, Elizabeth skated onto the ice before anyone could stop
her and, thus, became the first female ever to compete.9 Her tempera­
ment and beauty inspired her home town distinction as "the belle of
Oshkosh."10

7Ibid., 2/7.
8Ibid., 1/2.

9Caroline Bancroft, Silver Queen, The Fabulous Story of Baby Doe

10Ibid., p. 12.
In comparing the libretto of The Ballad of Baby Doe to historical fact, it is expedient to examine the opera scene by scene as it relates to history. For purposes of this examination, the writer has used the piano/vocal score published by Chappell & Company, Inc., New York, N.Y.

**Act I, Scene 1**

The opera begins in 1879 at the opening of the Tabor Opera House in Leadville, Colorado. The two opera houses Tabor built are central locations for the story. The first, known as the Tabor Opera House, was built in Leadville in 1879, and its opening is the setting for the first scene of the opera. The second opera house was the Tabor Grand in Denver and provides the setting for the last scene of the opera.

The set at the beginning of the opera is designed to approximate the physical make-up of the Tabor Opera House in Leadville. The opera house was flanked by a saloon on one side and a hotel on the other. Tabor owned the saloon, and the Clarendon Hotel was owned and managed by William Bush who had been a hotel manager in Kansas as well as the manager of the Teller House in Central City, Colorado.\(^\text{11}\) The location of the hotel and opera house next to each other assured the success of Harrison Avenue. It became the main street of Leadville and remains so to this day.

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On page 12 of the vocal score of the opera, the inside of the Tabor Opera House is described as having "chandeliers aglitter, real imported velvet, brass and mahogany, [and] tapestries from Europe." These features can yet be seen, though in varying states of disrepair, in the opera house today. Although it is impossible to document the origin of the velvets and tapestries, it is most likely they were imported. Certainly, all the finer materials for the building had to be brought into Leadville from at least as far away as Denver, a distance of over 100 miles. One of the most outstanding features of the opera house was the Andrews patent opera chairs with adjustable seats which were used throughout the main floor. They were of Victorian design with red velvet seats and ornate cast iron frames. These seats were uncommon and very expensive. There were no other houses with this kind of seating closer than Kansas City, and most houses enjoying this luxury were the finer theatres of New York. The box seats were gold-leafed. Other unusual features included curtains of maroon and gold velvet with lace backing, 72 gas jets for lighting, and, in 1884, electric lights. This was the first theatre west of the Mississippi to have electric light, and Leadville was the second city in Colorado to have electricity. The theatre had a furnace with ventilators to the audience which was unusual in 1880 when most theatres did not provide vents to the audience for heat. Each dressing room had a small stove, and there was running water at each end of the hallway to the dressing rooms. 12

At the opening curtain, a miner is thrown out of the saloon and is told to keep the noise level down because the grand opening of the opera house is underway next-door. The miner shouts, "Tabor don't care what I do cause he wants to buy my Matchless Mine." It is a strong possibility that the character Moore had in mind for this part is that of "Chicken Bill," a camp character who, legend has it, sold a mine to Tabor by cheating him. Although the validity of the story cannot be established, it lends color to the Leadville mining community and provides a basis for the characterization of the part of the miner. According to the legend, Bill had sunk a shaft 75 feet into the ground without success, so he stole some ore from one of Tabor's mines to "salt" his own claim. Salting was the practice of adding rich ore to a worthless mine to make it appear more valuable than it actually was. After buying the mine, Tabor found he had been cheated, but told his men to sink the shaft deeper anyway. Only a few feet further down they hit a rich vein of ore, and Tabor eventually made thousands on the mine.13

In this first scene, Horace is among a group of cronies that accompanies him throughout the opera. The names used for these characters in the opera can be traced to a group of men with which Horace associated during this phase of his life. The opera characters do not necessarily correspond to the real men, but the similarity of the names offers possible guidelines for costuming and characterizations. Jacob in the opera may be Jake Sands who was originally Jacob Sandelowsky,

13Baby Doe Collection, Western History Department of the Denver Public Library, citing The Daily Denver Times, March 19, 1901, p. 11.
shortened to Sands after he settled in America. Jacob was originally a friend of Baby Doe in Black Hawk, Colorado, where he owned a tailor shop near the apartment in which Harvey and Baby Doe lived. Jacob was known as a gambler and a ladies' man.14

Bushy is almost certainly patterned after William Bush, owner and manager of the Clarendon Hotel. A close friend of Horace's, he had many business dealings with him during the 1880s and 1890s. Tabor first met Bush during his campaign for Lieutenant Governor in 1878. Bush was a businessman and managed several properties for Horace, including the Tabor Grand in Denver. Horace also enlisted Bush's help in obtaining a divorce from Augusta. Bush and Tabor were responsible for bringing stage performances to many western cities besides Denver and Leadville. They developed the Silver Circuit which brought performers to Denver, Colorado Springs, Pueblo, Leadville and Aspen in Colorado; to Ogden and Salt Lake City in Utah; to Cheyenne, Wyoming; and to several smaller houses in the West.15

Another of the opera characters patterned after one of Horace's associates is Barney, after I. Barnum. Barnum was the man who, on opening night of the Tabor Grand, presented Horace with the famous watch fob which is mentioned in the final scene of the opera.

The character Samuel may be taken from Samuel Leach who was an old friend of Horace and Augusta. Leach was the mail carrier for much of the time Horace was postmaster and remained a friend to the end of 

15 Smith, op. cit., p. 261.
Horace's life. Leach gave his own assessment of the Tabor family in their early Colorado days. He met them in 1862 or 1863 when Horace was in his thirties and Augusta was in her late twenties.16

These four roles are present throughout the opera and add much to the general character of the opera. Using historical figures to fill the roles of the cronies would lend authenticity to the roles. Patterning the roles after the historical figures mentioned would also provide variety, there being a politician, a tailor, a hotel manager, and a mail carrier. Of course, all of these men were probably connected with mining in many ways during the silver rush in Colorado, and the times they lived in would necessitate their being rugged outdoorsmen.

The Rocky Mountain News, April 1, 1935, said "That Baby Doe had heard of Tabor and he, in turn, had heard of her and her beauty, goes without saying." The specifics of their meeting are not a matter of record. There are at least three different stories about their meeting, but none of them can be substantiated. One such story is that Baby Doe came to Leadville specifically to meet Tabor and was able to get her introduction in the Saddle Rock Restaurant one night after an opera performance. A second story is that Bush and Tabor were in the Clarendon Hotel and Bush, who had known Baby Doe in Central City, introduced them. The third story is that Horace observed Baby Doe and introduced himself on the street. The circumstances of the actual meeting are not vitally important to the opera or to history, and Moore's treatment of the meeting on the streets of Leadville serves the drama nicely.

16 Ibid., pp. 30-32.
This scene would be particularly interesting to an audience seated in the Tabor Opera House because the setting is the Tabor Opera House. An audience would feel a real sense of history and kinship with the story being on the scene of the opera. Latouche and Moore have stayed within the confines of historical fact for the essence of this scene. As in most dramas, the action has been compressed to fit the dimensions of opera, but the story remains unaltered.

Act I, Scene 2

Scene 2 opens later the same night of Scene 1. The scene is essentially the same with more emphasis placed on the front of the Clarendon Hotel. The opera has ended and the Tabors and friends are leaving the opera house. All leave the stage except Horace who remains to have a smoke before retiring.

It is at this point that Horace meets Baby Doe for the second time and learns her name. This second meeting effects a time charge and allows the audience to see Horace and Baby Doe begin to fall in love. Latouche has not remained true to the letter of historical fact in the meetings of Horace and Baby Doe, but he has captured the character of their meetings.

Horace and Baby Doe were, perhaps, attracted to each other from the first meeting. For purposes of the opera, it is essential that they were attracted to each other immediately, and historically it is true that they were constant companions soon after they met.

It is true that Horace and Augusta were living apart at least part of the time before Baby Doe ever arrived in Leadville. When Horace was elected Lieutenant Governor in 1878, he bought the Henry C.
Brown House in Denver and moved his family to Denver. (Brown was the builder of the famous Brown Palace Hotel which still thrives in Denver.) Horace spent much of his time in Leadville attending his business and meeting with friends. In fact, some accounts say that Augusta was not even present for the opening of the Tabor Opera House in Leadville. One such account reports, "On November 5, the Tabors returned to Denver [from a Chicago trip] and Horace left for Leadville to see the completion and opening of the Tabor Opera House. Augusta remained in Denver. Tabor did not return even for Christmas."\(^{17}\)

Whether Augusta was present for the opening of the Tabor Opera House or living in Denver is not important to the story of the Tabors. If she was not present, the proceedings in Scene 1 depict a recollection of the social standing and the general attitude toward the Tabors in 1879. Neither is it important to the story that Horace and Augusta were not living together when he met Baby Doe. Even though the libretto depicts Augusta and Horace as living together still, it also shows that they were not close. Horace has lost his love for Augusta when the opera opens and is with her only because it is a comfortable arrangement at that time. The libretto shows Horace and Augusta together at the beginning of the opera in order that the audience understand that the marriage was, at one time, workable. Baby Doe's meeting with Horace in the opera, while he is still married to Augusta, serves nicely to compress the action for dramatic purposes.

On pages 39 through 42 of the score, Baby Doe sings an aria which is largely composed of exposition material. A likeable personality is revealed which leads the audience to believe she is purer and sweeter than the actual Baby Doe was. Horace hears the aria and becomes enamoured with Baby Doe, but she is not aware of his presence. When, on page 44, Baby Doe speaks to Horace, she is flattering and cajoling. This is the perfect opportunity for her to win Horace's attentions.

To end the scene, Horace sings an aria which reveals him as the dreamer he has always been. For the first time, the audience is aware of this important facet of Horace's character.

Act I, Scene 3

Scene 3 takes place in a hotel apartment and shows the deterioration of the marriage between Horace and Augusta. Augusta first finds a check made out to Jake Sands by Horace for the purchase of the Matchless Mine. Horace actually purchased the Matchless Mine from three men—Foley, Moore, and Wilgus—for $117,000. However, for the purposes of the opera, Latouche uses the name Jake Sands. This allows the librettist to use a character already introduced in the opera while at the same time demonstrating Horace's tendency to conduct business in a flamboyant manner. The incident also allows Latouche to show Augusta's conservative business nature and her tendency to disagree harshly with Horace over business matters.

Augusta also finds in this scene a pair of gloves meant for Baby Doe. She does not realize the gloves are for Baby Doe at first and

thinks Horace has bought them for her. She sings an aria recalling the hard work her hands have done over the last several years to help Horace on his way to wealth. This aria shows Augusta to be a caring, hard-working woman.

When Augusta finds that the gloves are for Baby Doe, she confronts Horace which furthers the deterioration of their marriage. In the midst of this argument Horace says to Augusta, "You should be ashamed of the coldness which divides us. What's the use of living like you're already dead?" This statement shows that Horace's ideals have become drastically different from those of his wife.

**Act I, Scene 4**

Scene 4 takes place in the Clarendon Hotel lobby where Baby Doe was a guest for much of her first four years in Leadville. Horace also kept a suite in the Clarendon, and a walkway was constructed between the upper level of the opera house and that of the Clarendon for Horace's convenience.

In this scene Augusta and Baby Doe meet face-to-face for the first time and discuss Horace. Baby Doe has decided to leave Leadville, but Augusta's arguments make Baby Doe see how much she really loves Horace. During this discussion, Augusta tells Baby Doe that she is not the first woman Horace has kept and she will probably not be the last. She also tells Baby Doe that if it were not for her, Augusta's management, Horace would be without money in a short while.

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19 Moore, op. cit., p. 68.
Such a meeting was actually recorded between the real women and is believed to be the only meeting in which they spoke to one another. The meeting was in 1884 when Augusta visited Baby Doe at the latter's quarters, not in a public place. The idea the libretto suggests, that of Augusta confronting Baby Doe publicly, is almost inconceivable. It is clear that Augusta detested Baby Doe and that any meeting she might have desired with Baby Doe would have been in private. The only other meeting recorded took place at the wedding of Maxy, son of Horace and Augusta. In October of 1885, Augusta was quoted to have said she would wait for Horace until Baby Doe had taken all his money and left him. She, Augusta, would then be in a position to take Horace back, as she had been very careful with her investments and had become a millionaire.

As this scene ends, Horace rushes in after Augusta's departure to make sure Baby Doe will not leave. Latouche has, again, compressed time in this scene to fit the opera. The meeting between Augusta and Baby Doe stays close to historical fact in that Augusta's probable motive for meeting with Baby Doe would have been to convince Baby Doe to leave. She did not consider Baby Doe a real threat to her marriage but thought of her as only a social inconvenience. Augusta was in the habit of arranging Horace's affairs and faced this situation like it was just one more challenge to her management.

Horace had been seen with other female companions long before Baby Doe came into his life. Two of these companions were Alice Morgan, an

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20 Baby Doe Collection, citing Rocky Mountain News, April 3, 1935.

21 Hall, Baby Doe, p. 186.
"Indian Club Swinger," and Miss Willie Deville whom he met in Chicago and brought back to Denver. Augusta found out about Willie, and Horace parted company with Willie publicly but saw her secretly until an acquaintance of Willie's tried to blackmail Horace. He gave Willie $5,000 as severance of their relationship.  

Act I, Scene 5

Scene 5 of Act I deals with three main points which are all inter-related. Each point has a strong foundation in history. The scene opens with Augusta's friends gathered around her telling her that they will see to it that Baby Doe is never accepted into the society of Colorado. Secondly, Augusta and her friends discuss Horace's plan to divorce Augusta. Finally, Augusta, enraged by the thought of a divorce marring her life, swears she will go to the newspapers and start a scandal.

Baby Doe was never accepted into the elite society of Denver. She was scorned by the wives of all prominent families. The reasons for this varied. First, Augusta was the recognized heir to the social standing Tabor's money could claim, and her presence made recognition of Baby Doe awkward at best. Secondly, Tabor's wealth had begun to dwindle and his social standing, while still very secure, was not strong enough to demand acceptance of Baby Doe. Finally, most of the social leaders of Denver society were friends of Augusta, as Latouche suggests, and were determined to support Augusta. These friends may have viewed Baby Doe as a personal threat to them as well as to Augusta. If Baby

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22 Ibid., p. 59.
Doe were to be accepted, perhaps it would give more husbands license to leave their wives for younger, more beautiful women.

The divorce proceedings between Horace and Augusta were of major interest to the Colorado press. Augusta used the press as a public soapbox to plead her case to the people and to strike out at Horace. Her marriage had, for all practical purposes, ended when Horace became wealthy. Horace's lust for fame and money was at complete odds with the character of Augusta. She was still the same woman who had held the family together during the years of hard work and little money; riches did not change her attitude or her ideals. Horace discovered his money would allow him to live as he had always wanted to live. If Augusta had been willing to live the "good life" with him, perhaps their marriage would have survived. Although she was not the underlying cause, Baby Doe was the final catalyst in bringing about the divorce.

Even with the great differences between Horace and herself, Augusta wanted the marriage to continue and made efforts to reconcile with Horace. The following are two of the letters she sent to Horace during their estrangement. The first was written from Denver on September 3, 1881:

Dear Husband, I am in town and would like very much to go to the Tabor Grand and witness the glory that you are to receive. Believe me that none will be more proud of it than your broken hearted wife.

Will you not take me there and by so doing stop the gossip that is busy with our affairs.

God knows that I am truly sorry for our estrangement and will humble myself in the dust at your feet if you will only return. Whatever I said to you was done in the heat of passion and you know the awful condition that I was in when it was said—Pity I beseech you and forgive me and
let us bury the past and commence anew and my life shall be devoted to you forever. Your Loving Wife.\textsuperscript{23}

The second letter was written from Denver on January 31, 1883:

Dear Husband, I am happy to say that I am not divorced and that you are still mine . . . . When I went into court and swore that I that I [sic] had not consented [sic] to it willingly and I have since ascertained [sic] that the divorce is null and void. Now this is the 26th anniversary of our wedding . . . . There is no need to having our case draged [sic] through court again. And as I am your wife I shall stand upon my rights.\textsuperscript{24}

At other times, Augusta showed a special amount of savagery in speaking of Horace, especially in dealings to get support before the divorce and a property settlement at the time of the divorce. Augusta's venomous attacks on Horace were discussed in newspapers and in letters Horace received from William Bush and other friends. Bush was hired by Tabor to find evidence to justify the divorce and to help expedite it. One newspaper article reports:

\ldots From information in her [Augusta's] possession she believes his [Horace's] income to be $100,000 per month. She states that since Jan. 1881 Governor Tabor has failed to contribute anything whatever towards her support, and she has been compelled to depend solely upon her own efforts; that she has taken boarders and roomers and invested her own money . . . .\textsuperscript{25}

Augusta filed for support of $50,000 per year, and her house was valued at $100,000.

The following letter was written to Horace from Bush, May 8, 1882, and discusses Augusta's actions in her campaign to get support from Horace and to slur him in the courts:

\textsuperscript{23}Tabor Collection, 7/4.

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., 13/1

\textsuperscript{25}Baby Doe Collection, citing The Daily Denver Times, April 19, 1887.
When I think of the concentrated venom of the woman in her fight against you, I damn myself for what I have done for her. Judge Steck is about disgusted with her and I think he would like to throw up the whole thing. Willard Teller told me Saturday it was not to be entertained for a moment brought as it is. I mean that she cannot bring action for division of property without suing for a divorce. She should have looked forward to this when March last she let her temper get the better of her judgment . . . . Jesus Marie, what a lucky thing she is so violently tempered . . . . I think she thought that when the papers were served that you were trying to frighten her. It is funny she should not have made inquiry of me about it. I suppose she was so mad she forgot all about it.\textsuperscript{26}

A letter to Horace from his sister, E. J. Moys, dated April 25, 1882, also discusses Augusta's actions:

\textellipsis Of course, I see the Leadville papers and know of the course Gusta is taking and must say she has much audacity. I do not blame you for leaving her. You could not bear her fretting and complaining any longer. I saw enough when I was in Denver. Never satisfied with one thing you did or one thing you got for her. Neither house, carriage, diamonds or anything you did ever pleased her. I have gotten tired of her letters of complaint to me and have not written her for some time.\textsuperscript{27}

When the divorce finally became final, Augusta's strategy had been successful. She received the sympathy of the people and Horace was thought to be the villain. The following is a newspaper account of the final decree:

The Tabor divorce suit was concluded January 2, 1883, with . . . "the harassed wife" accepting real estate worth from $250,000 to $300,000 . . . . The sympathy of the people will be strongly with the heart-broken woman, of whom Judge Steck speaks so feelingly . . . .\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{26}Tabor Collection, 9/3.
\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., 9/4.
\textsuperscript{28}Baby Doe Collection, citing unidentified source.
The divorce of Augusta and Horace was clouded by many conflicting stories. Since the deaths of the principal characters, the true story that has emerged is so full of intrigue it need not have been sensationalized.

Horace used his political power to obtain a divorce in La Plata County, a remote county in southern Colorado. That divorce was predicated on false papers which stated that Augusta was aware of the proceedings and had no objections. Tabor's ownership of some land there allowed him to visit Durango without arousing suspicion. The Complaint for Divorce was filed by Horace on January 28, 1882, and a summons to Augusta was returned as "served on February 7." The Final Decree was granted on March 24, 1882. Augusta contested this divorce, however, on the grounds that she had never been served with the summons. The divorce was overruled in Denver.

In the interim between the granting of the Durango divorce decree and its being overruled, Horace and Baby Doe were married secretly in St. Louis. When the Durango divorce was overruled, it became very important for Horace and Baby Doe to hide their marriage. Conjecture about the status of Horace's and Baby Doe's relationship became a favorite pastime for journalists, but they were not able to prove a marriage had taken place. In recent years, conclusive evidence has come to light. Horace A. W. Tabor was married to Elizabeth B. McCourt on September 30, 1882, by Justice of the Peace John Young in the law offices of D. P. Dyer who was an old friend of Tabor's. The newspapers

29Smith, op. cit., p. 353.

30Hall, Baby Doe, p. 127.
learned of the marriage and printed the story, but the parties involved denied everything. One article quotes the officer who performed the marriage:

This denial that comes from Oshkosh that I did not marry Senator Tabor and Miss McCourt last September is absurd . . . . I'll bet the fee that neither she nor the Senator will deny in my presence that I married them. If it was not Miss McCourt, the belle of Oshkosh, it was some other Miss McCourt that I married to Tabor.\(^\text{31}\)

In all probability, the initial reason for keeping the marriage secret was Tabor's desire to obtain the Republican nomination for Senator. A wedding would have brought public attention to an already stormy personal life and would have been devastating to Tabor's political ambitions. In retrospect, the publication of a divorce and subsequent marriage probably could not have hurt Horace any more than the suit Augusta had already brought against him for support in which she had charged desertion. In Colorado during the 1800s this claim was probably more objectionable to the public than divorce.

On January 2, 1883, the divorce between Horace and Augusta finally was completed. Augusta received $300,000 in property and was quoted to have said the divorce was "... not willingly asked for."\(^\text{32}\) This time the divorce was legal, and both parties were completely involved in the proceedings.

Public notoriety of the Tabors was not solely due to Augusta. Horace was a natural target for the newspapers of early Colorado. He was wealthy, held political office, and had a stormy personal life.

\(^{31}\)Baby Doe Collection, citing unidentified publication dated March 10, 1883.

\(^{32}\)Ibid.
His flamboyant attitudes and desire to be in the limelight made him a favorite target of the press. This attention by the press, coupled with the less than ethical reporting practices of the newspapers of the early West, led to many of the legends that grew up around Horace Tabor. In a letter to Horace, Bush speaks of the treatment Horace has received from the press. The letter is dated March 12, 1883:

Of all the damned lying newspapers, the Republican takes the cake. I have collected all of the mean things they have said of you for future reference and I think the time will come when you can get even with all of them. Some of your friends criticize you severely, but I suppose you can stand it. At any rate, I cannot see that your private affairs should interest anyone more than yourself . . . .

Tabor's political life accounted for much of the material written about him. Horace was frequently the subject of the Denver Tribune editor Eugene Field's sarcastic jabs. Field, by his own admission, made up or exaggerated tales concerning Horace that were printed as truth by many other papers of the day.

Field was a reporter who later gained fame for his poetry and was widely known as a satirist. Most of his articles are believed to have been intended as mere jest or as vehicles for his own political views; however, many readers believed his stories were true and passed them on. Thus, legends were born. Field was especially influential concerning Tabor from 1881 to 1883 while he, Field, was managing editor of the Denver Tribune. All of Field's writings were tongue-in-cheek;

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33 Tabor Collection, 17/2.

34 Hall, Baby Doe, p. 79.
nevertheless, this gave rise to an image of Tabor as "a rather naive, country boy who did not wear his wealth well."\(^{35}\)

In one article, Field suggested that Horace had a lace nightshirt worth $250 and that he hung it in the window of his sleeping car for the people to "feast their eyes on."\(^{36}\) Another story which was probably initiated by Field tells of an instance when Horace was inspecting the Tabor Grand and came upon a picture that he did not recognize. When he inquired about the portrait, he was told it was Shakespeare. Tabor's purported reply was, "Who is Shakespeare? Well, what the hell has he ever done for Colorado! Take it down and put my picture up there." This story is almost certainly an invention of the writer's imagination. Tabor had at least an average education for his day from the New England public schools which were among the best schools of the time. He had also acted as the superintendent of public schools in Lake County and would surely have recognized Shakespeare's name, if not his picture.\(^{37}\)

**Act I, Scene 6**

The finale to Act I is set in the Willard Hotel in Washington, D.C. on March 1, 1883. Horace is just completing a 30-day appointment as a Senator from Colorado and he and Baby Doe have just been married. The scene opens as the reception is getting underway. Latouche has followed historical fact carefully in this scene. President Arthur is in

\(^{35}\) Tabor Collection, 13/4.

\(^{36}\) Baby Doe Collection, citing *The Denver Westerner*, July–August, 1976.

\(^{37}\) Ibid., p. 19.
attendance as well as many members of Congress. The party is completed by members of Baby Doe's family. None of the Congressmen's wives are present.

Horace had attempted to garner the Republican nomination for senator in 1883 but was defeated by Thomas Bowen. As runner-up, he was awarded the unexpired term of Henry Teller who had resigned his Senate seat to accept a Cabinet post. Horace was a member of the U.S. Senate for slightly more than a month, from February 1, 1883, to March 3, 1883.38

Tabor served as Lieutenant Governor of Colorado under Governor Frederick Pitkin from 1878 to 1882. He was included on the Republican ticket for that term in order to deliver the Lake County vote. Lake County had become a powerful county due to mining discoveries there. On page 15 of the opera score, Horace is referred to as the Lieutenant Governor. He enjoyed the honorary title "Governor" which was bestowed upon him by his friends until the mid-1890s.39

During the month of Tabor's Washington career, he married Baby Doe for the second time. The wedding was a much publicized event. Horace had been in Washington for 28 days, but the story of the divorce scandal had preceeded him. The wedding took place on March 1, 1883, at the Willard Hotel, the finest hotel in Washington, D.C. The groom was 52 years old and the bride was 28, although the marriage license states she was 23. The guest list included President Arthur, Thomas Bowen, Jerome Chaffee, Henry Teller, the Colorado Congressional Delegation, Maxey

38 Smith, op. cit., p. 222.
39 Ibid., p. 82.
Tabor, William Bush, and the McCourt family. In view of the scandalous circumstances surrounding Baby Doe and Horace, the wives of the congressmen refused to attend as well as several others who had been invited. Henry Teller's attitude toward the wedding and Tabor's conduct in Washington is revealed in the following letter he wrote:

Tabor has gone home, [sic] I thank God he was not elected for six years; thirty days nearly killed us, [sic] I humiliated myself to attend his wedding because he was a senator from Colorado (but Mrs. Teller would not). I felt that I could not afford to say that the state had sent a man to represent her in the senate that I would not recognize socially, but I could not have kept up . . . . Tabor is an honest man in money affairs, and I believe he is truthful, but he has made a great fool of himself with reference to that woman, and he ought now to retire and attend to his private affairs.40

Horace and Baby Doe were married by the Reverend Dr. Chappelle, a Catholic priest. When he found out both Horace and Baby Doe had been divorced, he returned the marriage fee of $200 and declared that the marriage would not be recorded in the parish register of St. Matthews in Washington. The marriage was never recorded, and Father Chappelle swore that he was not aware at the time of the wedding that both had been divorced and that he would not have officiated at the ceremony had he known.41

The bride wore a marabou gown trimmed with heavy brocaded white satin that cost $7,000. The groom wore a black dress suit. Horace's wedding gift to Baby Doe was a $75,000 diamond necklace. Horace believed that necklace contained some of the jewels Queen Isabella had used to finance the discovery of America. Horace had been swindled

40 Henry Teller to Thomas Dawson, March 8, 1883, Teller Collection, Colorado Historical Society, Denver.

41 Hall, Baby Doe, p. 156.
because this has since been disproven.\textsuperscript{42} Baby Doe's wedding gown is now on display at the Colorado Historical Society in Denver, Colorado, situated near the Denver Post Office which is built on land donated by Horace Tabor to the City of Denver. Legends mention other expensive articles of clothing such as the $2,500 nightshirt, but these stories were probably the invention of journalists like Eugene Field.

Politically, Tabor's days in Washington were undistinguished. One month is too short a time to accomplish much. Horace's appreciation for his temporary post in the capital is summed up in a letter he wrote to Baby Doe prior to the wedding: "... I do not like very much the office of Senator but the honors are great, [sic] they are next to President ... ."\textsuperscript{43}

\textbf{Act II, Scene 1}

Act II opens 10 years after the marriage of Horace and Baby Doe. They have lived happily and had all the rewards his money could bring, save social standing. The women of Denver will still not accept Baby Doe. In Scene 1, the setting is the Governor's Ball in 1893. The major points of this scene are the continued rejection of Baby Doe, a meeting between Augusta and Baby Doe in which Augusta pleads with Baby Doe to urge Horace to sell out his silver interests before silver coinage is dropped, and a final confrontation between Horace and Augusta.

Historically, Baby Doe was never accepted into Denver's social circles. This scene simply serves to reinforce the point. Augusta and

\textsuperscript{42} Baby Doe Collection, citing Colorado Magazine, p. 18.

\textsuperscript{43} Tabor Collection, 14/14.
Baby Doe were never known to have met after their first meeting; however, it is true that Augusta kept close track of financial matters, especially where silver was concerned. She was interested in helping save the Tabor fortune she had helped build and, thus, may have had sentiments about helping Horace save his money. She kept informed about Horace's financial position and would have been aware of the devastation the end of silver coinage would mean to the Tabor fortune.

Perhaps most important in this scene, however, is the final meeting between Horace and Augusta. History does not record such a meeting, but the sentiments expressed in the scene have been drawn from fact. Augusta was willing and anxious to help Horace. She offered him a helping hand. Many historians believe she still expected Horace to return to her one day. Horace, on the other hand, wanted nothing to do with Augusta and spurned her help each time it was offered.

At the end of this scene, Baby Doe offers Horace her jewelry to be pawned. Most of Baby Doe's jewelry was, in fact, sold or pawned during the last six years of Horace's life.

**Act II, Scene 2**

Scene 2 of Act II has the purpose of depicting Horace's desperate struggle to retain his wealth. He approaches the four cronies who, at the beginning of the opera, were his disciples. They have invested wisely and are comfortable businessmen in Colorado. Horace has continued to speculate and has lost most of his holdings. He approaches his friends and asks for their support in his fight to save free coinage of silver. The cronies have faced facts and realize that the silver cause is lost and they must find other means of making money.
This scene is historically correct in its major premise. Latouche has taken Horace's blind faith in his own luck and the power of silver and has used it to write this scene. Horace's financial plight was a result. He lost his money, the public trust, and the backing of his business associates when he failed to recognize the fate of silver.

Act II, Scene 3

Scene 3 is the setting for the historical visit of William Jennings Bryan to Leadville during the presidential campaign of 1896. Bryan did visit Leadville, and he was an associate of Horace. Bryan's platform included the reinstatement of silver as a standard for the U.S. dollar. Bryan had tried to warn Tabor in earlier years that silver was in danger of being dropped as the standard and that other investments should be made. If Tabor had taken Bryan's advice more seriously, much of his fortune might have been saved. Bryan's running mate was Arthur Sewall. Sewell was a former associate of Tabor's and also a silver man. In 1879 he had been a trustee of the Chrysolite Silver Mining Company of which Tabor owned at least 25 percent.⁴⁴

A legend which Latouche includes in the opera associated with the Tabor fortune, and more especially Bryan's visit to Colorado during the presidential campaign, is a meeting with "Silver Dollar." "Silver Dollar" was part of the given name of the second daughter of Horace and Baby Doe. The story says that upon seeing Rosemary Echo Silver Dollar Tabor, Bryan exclaimed the baby's laughter had the ring of silver dollars, and it was supposed to be from this meeting that "Silver Dollar" became

⁴⁴Smith, op. cit., p. 119.
part of the child's name. The calendar proves that this could not be true. Silver Dollar was born December 12, 1889, and Bryan did not visit Colorado until 1896.

Act II, Scene 4

Scene 4 of Act II is a short scene involving a visit to Augusta from Baby Doe's mother. Horace has lost his money, and free silver coinage has been defeated. Mama McCourt asks Augusta to help Horace and Baby Doe, and Augusta refuses saying that if Horace needs help he should ask for it in person.

This scene has no historical connection. Latouche uses the scene to show the complete loss of the Tabor empire and to allow Augusta to deliver her last aria in which she shows that she still loves Horace and would help but for her own strict character.

Act II, Scene 5

The final scene of The Ballad of Baby Doe is set in the Tabor Grand Opera House in Denver in 1899. Horace wanders onto the stage of the theatre which he had lost to mortgage foreclosure years earlier. He has become disoriented and has hallucinations recalling different episodes in his life. His reveries include the presentation of a watch fob to him from the people of Denver at the opening of the Tabor Grand; his mother scolding him for fighting in school; Augusta before they married and later as his disappointing wife; his days of rich silver strikes; and the futures of his daughters.

Moore and Latouche have done a masterful job of weaving history into a moving and believable finale for the opera. Each event in this scene recalls historical fact.
Horace was given a watch fob by the people of Denver at the opening of the Tabor Grand Opera House in 1881. The first performance was given by a company headed by Emma Abbott. Ms. Abbott began the performances with the "mad scene" from Lucia di Lammermoor. Following this opening, Horace appeared on stage and was given a watch fob by the people of Denver. I. Barnum presented the fob and gave the following description of it:

... an ore bucket filled with gold, from handle of bucket is suspended a spade, shovel and pick woven into the monogram of Governor Tabor. Then follows a picture of a mule standing in front of the old store and hotel where the Governor passed so many years. Steps of a golden ladder, upon this ladder Tabor began to climb, and at the top is a beautiful engraving of the magnificent edifice in which we are tonight.45

Horace describes the interior of the Tabor Grand in this final scene. Latouche has accurately recounted the details of the theatre.

The Tabor Grand Opera House in Denver was the most extravagant building in Colorado and, perhaps, in all of the western states with the exception of California. Horace charged his builders with one responsibility and that was to build the finest opera house in the world. The material was brought to Denver from all parts of the world. While it may not have turned out to be the finest opera house in the world, as some reports claimed, it was certainly an oasis in an unsettled region of the country.

The decor was elegant. A brochure given out at the first performance in the newly finished opera house details some of the furnishings and their origins: cherry wood pillars from Japan, mahogany from Honduras, carpets from Brussels, tapestries from Paris, Maine granite, ....

45 Baby Doe Collection, citing Rocky Mountain News, September 6, 1881.
Manitou sandstone, English tiles, stained cathedral glass, and tiers of boxes lined with imported silks from Lyons, France, at a cost of $50 per yard. Concerning the construction of the Tabor Grand, Tabor said, "I thought Denver was not... building as good buildings as it ought to and I thought that I would do something towards setting them a good example."  

Sarah Tabor, Horace's mother, was a strict disciplinarian and was often displeased with Horace. She felt he was much like his father, Cornelius, an underachiever who never attained success as a businessman. Horace's brother John, on the other hand, was much like his mother: ambitious, hard-working, and conservative. Horace grew up without a strong father figure and with a mother who was the central figure in his life. Sarah continually tried to make Horace more like herself and his brother John.  

As Horace approaches his mother in this scene, she throws back her hood and Augusta is revealed. This is an especially clever idea of Latouche's. Augusta was, in many ways, a mother figure to Horace. She replaced his mother as the strong and often disapproving figure in his life. He was able to let her run his life to the point that he was almost never responsible for his own actions.  

A chorus sings a quote from Shakespeare to Horace in this scene. The lines are: "So fleet the works of man, Back to the earth again,  

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46 Tabor Collection, 477/3.  
47 Smith, op. cit., p. 316.  
Ancient and Holy things fade like a dream." This was the inscription on
the curtain in the Tabor Grand Opera House and accurately describes
Tabor's life.

Horace sees his daughters leave Colorado and forget him in this
last scene. Both daughters did leave Colorado. Soon after Horace's
death, Lily, then fourteen years old, moved to the Chicago area to live
with relatives of Baby Doe. Lily was old enough to remember the wealthy
days of the Tabor family, and the loss of the money together with the
public notoriety of her family made Lily desire to leave Colorado. Lily
had been known as the most photographed baby in America. A picture of
"Baby Tabor" appeared on the cover of Harper's Bazaar, January 8, 1887.
Her christening gown alone is said to have cost $4,000. Perhaps it was
this wealthy beginning that turned Lily against her family in later
years. At Baby Doe's death in 1935, Lily denied that she was the daugh-
ter of Horace Tabor and claimed her father was John Tabor, Horace's
brother. It is ironic that Lily would have preferred John Tabor to
Horace just as Horace's mother had preferred John 60 years earlier, as
Latouche points out in this scene. At the inquest of the death of
Silver Dollar in 1925, Lily said,

I haven't seen my sister for 26 years. Not since I was 14
and she was a few years younger. I did not approve then of
the life my mother lived. I got my grandmother in Chicago
to let me come and live with her. I went back, but seldom.
I don't want to be reminded of my sister or of my mother. I
wanted a quiet, decent, sheltered life. Why should I have
pride and position, and like only quiet and nice things, and
have a claim now in this kind of death. 49

49 Baby Doe Collection, citing Denver Post, March 8, 1935.
Lily married John Last, a cousin. Lily had stayed for some time in the Last home. Mrs. Last was the sister of Baby Doe. In a letter to Baby Doe from John Last dated July 12, 1908, he explains why he and Lily were married without notifying her and asks her forgiveness. Lily was living at the Last home and she and John made plans to marry at a later date. However, his mother passed away suddenly, and his sisters moved away from home, so they were forced to marry or find a new home for Lily.

There are no letters from Lily to Baby Doe in the papers found after Baby Doe's death, but one other letter from John Last was found. It is dated April 11, 1910, and discusses Lily's children, a girl and a boy. The letter also assures Baby Doe that Lily was not in any danger during the birth of either child and that she is in excellent health.

Silver Dollar was only nine years old when her father died, and she remained with her mother for 15 years after Horace's death. In 1914 Silver Dollar left Leadville with the help of Peter McCourt, Baby Doe's brother. Baby Doe believed that Peter had betrayed her and was taking her daughter away just to hurt her. Several letters concerning Silver's departure give an idea as to the reasons she left Leadville. In a letter to Lizzie (Baby Doe) on September 15, 1914, Peter McCourt says that he had no objection to Silver's getting married and that Silver had written to him "bewailing the way you had treated her . . . and saying she was going off to Colorado Springs to try to get a position

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50 Tabor Collection, 624/6.
51 Ibid., 635/5.
and promised to write me there . . . ." In a telegram from Baby Doe to Peter dated September 15, 1914, she says:

She gone eloped have someone meet her save her she has lost her mind don't let her stay in Colorado Springs save her for her father's sake I did not know anything about it save her, save her give that horse away save her or I shall die.  

The horse mentioned is probably one that Silver often rode in Leadville where she was known as a fine rider.

Silver moved from place to place during the years between 1914 and 1925. She wrote to Baby Doe from Colorado Springs, Denver, Chicago, and Lincoln, Nebraska, using assumed names in many cases. Most of these letters are asking for money. In one such letter, Silver writes disconsolately that she has been fired from her job because of her threadbare clothes. Furthermore, she was behind on her rent and would probably be thrown out of her apartment.

Silver Dollar met her end in Chicago in 1925 where she died of burns received from boiling water. She had been living with a host of men over the previous years and was found dead in a cheap hotel in one of the worst parts of the city. Baby Doe refused to believe that Silver was dead and maintained to the end of her life that Silver was living in a convent.

During Horace's last hallucination, Baby Doe appears and Horace comes back to reality. She suggests that he rest, and he lies down and

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52 Ibid., 1214/1.
53 Ibid., 744/6.
54 Ibid., 1195-1196.
55 Baby Doe Collection, citing Rocky Mountain News, March 8, 1935.
dies. Baby Doe stands and sings the last aria during which the scene is
shifted to the Matchless Mine.

Although Horace did not die on the stage of the Tabor Grand, he did
die in the year 1899, and the scene Latouche and Moore suggest serves
the drama well without greatly altering historical fact. Latouche and
Moore have condensed the action to include the last 35 years of Baby
Doe's life during this one aria. After Horace's death, Baby Doe moved
to the Matchless Mine and guarded it until the end of her life. She
died in the miners' shack next to the shaft of the Matchless.

Tabor's Wealth

One part of the story of Baby Doe that is of paramount importance
cannot be dealt with in a scene to scene discussion of the opera. That
part is the rise and fall of the Tabor fortune. The story of the rise
and fall affects all of the proceedings in the opera. Without it, The
Ballad of Baby Doe would hold only marginal interest for the audience.

In 1876, while managing the general store he and Augusta had
started in Leadville, Horace "grubstaked" two miners by the names of
August Rische and George Hook. The total stake was in the approximate
amount of sixty dollars. These two men struck a very rich ore vein of
silver and started Tabor on his way to riches.56

Overnight, Tabor became a very wealthy man. His first big strike
was the Little Pittsburgh mine found by Rische and Hook on May 1, 1878.
In September of that year, Tabor and Rische bought Hook's share of the
mine for between $90,000 and $100,000. (Hook retired from the mining

life and was not heard from again in connection with Tabor.) The daily average of ore taken from the Little Pittsburgh in 1878 was worth approximately $8,000.

All of this wealth was not problem-free, however. Tabor was involved in at least two lawsuits over the ownership of the Little Pittsburgh with other miners who felt their claims had been infringed upon by the claim of the Little Pittsburgh. Tabor was to deal with similar lawsuits for the rest of his life. Several claims involved him in court battles which cost him thousands of dollars.

In order to stay out of one such battle, Tabor and Rische purchased half of the New Discovery Mine in the fall of 1878 for $125,000. With his earnings from the Little Pittsburgh and the New Discovery, Tabor bought several undeveloped properties which proved to be excellent investments. The Chrysolite Mine was first, followed by mines such as the Scooper, Dunkin, Union Emma, Empire, Denver City, Henrieth, Maid of Erin Hibernia, May Queen and, especially, the Matchless.

Tabor did not limit himself to mining property; he also invested heavily in land and business. Businesses he started included an ore processing plant, hotels, saloons, restaurants, and banks. In addition, Tabor organized many civic services. He bought Leadville's first fire apparatus for $1,200 and donated $10,000 to organize a cavalry company. He was founder of the Colorado Telephone Company and owned the Leadville Daily Herald from 1881 to 1885.57 Two more public utility services started by Tabor were the gas works and water department. Tabor was the first postmaster and the first mayor of Leadville.

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By 1879, Tabor was already a wealthy man and was dissatisfied with his marriage to Augusta. He had been lucky in his financial dealings, and his penchant for wild spending and high-risk financial dealing was at its peak. Conservative Augusta continued in her efforts to keep Horace under control. Documentation of these tensions can be found in the writings of Samuel Leach, a long-time friend of Tabor who was the mail-carrier at Buckskin Joe (one of the mining camps where Tabor settled). The story is told that one evening he had gone to visit Horace and they were discussing the future. According to Leach's account:

The evening ended with Augusta lecturing Horace on his spending habits and how he ought to be more careful about business and not so leisurely about life. She further claimed that he did not exact himself as he should and that if she hadn't looked after the family affairs they would not have a penny.

Leach stated that he believed Augusta's claim to be true. 58

Horace's fortune rose sharply in the five-year period between 1878 when the Little Pittsburgh was discovered and 1883 when he married Baby Doe after divorcing Augusta in 1882. At the time of his marriage to Baby Doe, Horace's fortune was substantial. It is impossible to make an accurate estimate of his worth due to the diversity of his holdings. Horace owned mines in all parts of Colorado as well as in California, New Mexico, and Nevada. He also invested heavily in mining territory in Mexico for a period of 15 years. In addition to mines, he owned such properties as a mahogany forest in South America, railroads, and real estate in all parts of the United States. He was constantly buying and

58 Smith, op. cit., pp. 31-32.
selling property, often retaining stock in those he sold. He took out mammoth loans for some of these transactions and used the properties already in his possession for collateral. It was this practice, coupled with the decline of silver, that led to his financial ruin. If Tabor had kept what he owned when the silver standard was dropped instead of continuing to speculate in high-risk business deals, he would have remained a very wealthy man. Loans and bad investments continued to chip away at the Tabor empire until it finally collapsed. Most of Tabor's property was heavily mortgaged at the time free silver coinage was curtailed. The Tabor name on the board of directors became a liability for companies. Due to bad press, Tabor was thought to be totally corrupt, and when his money was gone so was the public's faith in him. The following excerpts concern Tabor's financial plight. John Brisbane Walker of Cosmopolitan Magazine wrote to Tabor on August 31, 1896, regretting his inability to help Tabor with a loan:

... With great regret that I am unable to do as you desire and with best wishes that you may live [to] see prosperity both for yourself and the country. . . .

Letters of appraisal, such as the following which concerns the Tabor Block, were used to back up loans:

... The Opera House proper I regard as the most popular place of first-class amusements for twenty years to come that can possibly be constructed in Denver . . . .

John F. Bell, Secretary to International Trust Company of Colorado, wrote to Horace August 24, 1894, and valued the Tabor Grand and Tabor

\[59\] Tabor Collection, 131/1.

\[60\] Ibid., 88/7.
Block at $1,690,000, stating, "... I consider these two properties good security for a loan of $1,000,000 ..." 61 The following magazine article discusses the loans on the opera house and Tabor's further troubles:

Senator Tabor returned the other day from his new gold mine in Sonora, Mexico, and fixed up a mortgage on his big opera house which was about to be foreclosed. Mrs. Swickheimer hypothecated her stock in the City National Bank and thus raised $350,000 to place in a second trust on the opera house, which is now plastered with mortgages amounting to $750,000, due inside of eighteen months. 62

Lewis Rockwell, attorney, was the legal counsel for Horace for many years, but in the following letter written on December 18, 1896, he resigns his position due to non-payment of fees and discusses the Tabor financial situation:

... I asked you several months ago to allow me to take a judgment or give me security on the property of the Tabor Mines and Mills Company. It might possibly have done me some good, although I know of no property that is clear or anything like clear that the company owns. 63

O. L. Linch, representing the Colorado Mutual Fire Insurance Company, wrote to Horace on October 18, 1898. In the letter, he asks Horace to resign as president of the company. He points out that the business is not doing well and that Horace, in his financial trouble, has been the cause of the public's mistrust:

... that it would be to the best interest of the company for you to hand in your resignation as President of the

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61 Ibid., 116/2.
62 Baby Doe Collection, citing Field and Farm, May 26, 1894.
63 Tabor Collection, 133/1.
company, and that the same would be accepted, and someone would be elected whom people could not find so much fault with . . . . 64

Finally, in two letters from Mrs. Emma Moys, Horace's sister, sympathy is expressed over the loss of the family wealth. On September 27, 1896, Emma wrote to Lily, daughter of Horace and Baby Doe, saying:

. . . Well, if the opera house is gone we will, of course, not go into it again but will be thankful for the pleasant time we have had in it. I would hate to see anyone else in your mamma's box . . . . 65

On November 30, 1897, Emma wrote to Horace and family:

. . . How I do hope you will strike something good in your mine. Not that you may help others. You have done that too much. But that you may have all needed comfort and happiness yourself . . . . 66

Tabor's financial problems were not solely his own doing. This was a time when fortunes changed hands often and without warning. One of the financial disasters of Tabor's declining years was the closing of twelve banks in Denver during 1893. Horace had extensive holdings in each of these banks and was forced to put Baby Doe's jewelry up as collateral for a loan to overcome the financial shock of his losses. The jewels were never reclaimed by Tabor. 67

The switch from a double standard of gold and silver to a single standard which used gold as the commodity was the fatal blow to Tabor's empire. Tabor was a silver king and, although he first moved to

64 Ibid., 164/5.
65 Ibid., 131/4.
66 Ibid., 139/2.
67 Hall, Baby Doe, p. 194.
Colorado in search of gold, it was silver that made him rich and upon which he built his financial empire. The price of silver during the 1880s and 1890s dropped in value almost fifty percent. Horace recognized the threat posed by a change in the monetary standard and fought to keep silver a part of the standard.

It was with this interest that Horace stepped into the political arena. A. C. Fisk, President of Pan American Bi-Metallic Association, wrote a letter to Horace ca. 1890 urging Horace to take part in the fight to retain silver:

It is a critical time for silver and I think that men of your character and influence should certainly lend their presence to such a gathering, and by your voice aid in advancing the silver cause.68

Horace entered the fight and, in a letter to Baby Doe dated February 17, 1892, speaks of success: "I have done [sic] good for the silver cause here . . . ."69

By 1897 Tabor had lost virtually all of his empire save the Matchless Mine and a few personal properties which were of no value to him as income property. He had no salable skills because he was too old to work in the mines, and public opinion was so low the business world had no interest in employing him. Colorado was moving out of the "Old West" and into the 20th century, but Horace was not able to make the move with society.

In December of 1897, Horace was given the position of Postmaster of the Denver Post Office. He was not in public favor, nor was he in

68 Tabor Collection, 87/4.
69 Ibid., 79/8.
political favor due partially to the stand he had taken against the Republican Party in the presidential campaign of 1896. The reason for Tabor's appointment was probably a mixture of pity and a sense of duty on the part of the politicians in power. After all, Tabor had donated the property on which the Post Office stood, which property was among the finest in Denver even in the 1880s. The people of Denver did rally around the appointment of Tabor, and he describes it in a letter to Baby Doe:

... the people are not simply pleased, they are delighted and it is unanimous with probly [sic] the exception from 6 to 10 people in the state .... My salary is 3700$ [sic] per annum ....

A salary of $3,700 per year was an above-average income in Denver during the 1890s, but for Tabor it must have seemed a very small amount. Some of his mines were known to have produced more than $1,000 per week in their prime. Nevertheless, the postmaster position probably saved the Tabors from becoming wards of the state.

Horace retained the job of postmaster until his death in Denver on April 10, 1899. He was 69 years old and was survived by one son, Maxy, from his marriage to Augusta; two daughters, Lily and Silver Dollar; and his wife, Baby Doe.

\[^{70}\text{Ibid., 156/3.}\]
CHARACTERIZATIONS

In any dramatic production, characterizations of the persons depicted by the various roles are important to the interpretation of the piece. This principle is especially true in The Ballad of Baby Doe. Any performer hoping to sing the role of Baby Doe, Horace or Augusta would benefit from learning as much as possible about these individuals. It is to this end that the following character sketches have been prepared.

Baby Doe

Baby Doe was approximately five feet tall. A picture of her standing next to the cabin at the Matchless Mine makes her appear to be even less than five feet tall. Her eyes were blue and her hair was honey-blond. She had a round face and was rather buxom. By today's standards, Baby Doe would be slightly overweight. The following description of Baby Doe appeared in the Rocky Mountain News in 1883:

Her cheeks were the rose blush mingling with the pure white lily; a great wealth of golden, redish [sic] hair that is always dressed in simple but artistic manner and shows that it grew upon the head that wears it; large, dreamy, blue eyes that kindle with enthusiasm, twinkle and flash like that brilliant gem that fastens the lace about her swan-like neck; a Mary Anderson mouth and chin and a shoulder and bust that no Colorado Venus can compare with; delicate feet and a tiny hand with taper white fingers; unostentatious, richly dressed and she walks as majestically as a queen.\textsuperscript{71}

\textsuperscript{71} Baby Doe Collection, citing Rocky Mountain News, April 7, 1935.
Another account says of Baby Doe:

She was regarded as a devotee of fashion and was particularly noticeable for the elegance of her attire. That she was beautiful and bewitching and the admiration of not a few of the sterner sex and the envy of her own, to some extent, is a matter of current report.\(^7\)

Baby Doe's personality was one which few seemed to understand. Her personality must have undergone great changes from the time she first came to Colorado as the wife of Harvey Doe to the time of her death at the Matchless Mine in 1935. Baby Doe was probably a child in many ways when she first arrived in Colorado. She had always been the favorite daughter of her family and was known as the "belle of Oshkosh," which indicates that she had enjoyed much attention during her young life. When she married, it was to one of the most attractive young men of her city who, also, happened to be from a wealthy family. It was the disappointment of not having all the comforts wealth can buy that probably paved the way for divorce.

When she married Horace, it was the public's consensus that she would not stay with him. It is probable that at the time of their wedding this was an accurate appraisal of Baby Doe's intentions. If Horace had not been a wealthy man it is almost inconceivable that Baby Doe would have married him. Likewise, if he had lost his fortune in 1885 instead of 1895, she might have deserted him. It was Horace's strength, wealth, and the adversity of society toward his marriage to Baby Doe that held their marriage together. These circumstances lead to an interesting change in Baby Doe during the course of the opera.

\(^7\)Ibid., citing unidentified publication dated March 8, 1883.
Baby Doe, at the beginning of the opera, should be played as a woman who has come to Leadville to find her fortune, much in the same way the miners had come to Leadville. She most certainly knew who Horace was and, in all probability, set out to make him interested in her. Thus, the first meeting between Baby Doe and Horace should be played as a carefully planned meeting by Baby Doe. She did not just happen along the street when Horace was alone. She most probably waited for an opportunity to catch him alone. She is very flattering to Horace, and her motives are clear at the outset.

In examining her life between the time she left Harvey and the time she met Horace, there is much to suggest that Horace was not her first conquest. Jake Sands is the most obvious example of Baby Doe's flirtatious tendency. Jake was a merchant whose place of business was near the Doe home in Black Hawk, near Central City. Baby Doe was often seen with Jake near the end of her marriage to Harvey. It was Jake who brought her to Leadville and, although there is no evidence to show why he left Black Hawk and Central City, it is possible that he decided to move himself and Baby Doe to Leadville for a fresh start. Jake may have wanted to marry Baby Doe.

After her marriage to Horace, Baby Doe became more responsible. The addition of children, the responsibilities of being the mistress of the grand homes they owned, and the pressures of being the wife of one of the most prominent men in Colorado account for much of this change in Baby Doe. Perhaps the greatest force affecting Baby Doe's life was her rejection by society. She had to make a personal accounting of her actions and, no doubt, resolved to make her marriage work.
when she heard of the expectations Denver society had concerning her.

She would not leave Horace.

After Horace died, Baby Doe was credited with the following:

Say, if you must say anything, that the property losses are as nothing compared with the loss of my noble husband. Deal gently with him, for the best thing he left the world was his memory, which I love.  

Phillip McCourt, brother of Baby Doe, was present when Horace passed away. His account, in part, is as follows:

Tabor used to say, "We must keep the Matchless, Phil, there is still money in it," and that's what he said when he died. When he died he told Elizabeth [Baby Doe] to hold on to it [the Matchless].

This deathbed plea to hold on to the Matchless followed by Baby Doe's steadfast efforts to retain the property to the end of her life make the irony of this tragic story. Baby Doe's aria at the end of the opera must reflect this irony as well as her untiring devotion to the memory of her husband.

That Baby Doe remained with the Matchless Mine is evidence of a growth in character from the beginning of the opera to the end. She had pushed Harvey Doe out of her life because he was unable to give her the comforts she craved in their early married life; but she remained at the Matchless living as a pauper with only the memory of Horace.

Baby Doe grew from a young woman admired for her physical beauty to a mature woman respected as a moral heroine at the end of her life. Her love for Horace grew from an infatuation to a bond that sustained her for 35 years after his death. She was a woman of unusual beauty

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73 Ibid., citing Denver Times, October 7, 1900.

74 Ibid., citing Denver Post, March 10, 1935.
even at the end of Horace's life. If she had chosen to remarry, she could almost certainly have done so. These changes and growth in character can only be shown by carefully pacing the sincerity of Baby Doe throughout the opera. In Act I, her life is still that of a school girl dreaming and expecting the world to give her an easy life. By the beginning of Act II, she has grown to truly love Horace and stays with him even when his empire falls and he is without money or position.

In the final aria, Baby Doe must convey an everlasting faith in the memory of her husband and their life together. She wins the sympathy of the audience because her love was not rewarded with a return of money. She receives the audience's respect for her determination in forsaking the material world for her ideals.

Opera heroines often kill themselves or accomplish nearly impossible feats in the name of love. Baby Doe lived the last 35 years of her life quietly, remaining true to her love for Horace and trying to live according to her ideals. Her feat may have been more difficult than that of other heroines because she had years to reflect on her decision and countless chances to reverse the course of her life. That she did not reconsider her choices makes her a character who seems larger-than-life and is perfect for the operatic stage.

Horace

Horace Tabor was a personality that only an era of excitement and adventure could produce. He dreamed of being rich and famous, so he took chances. First, he moved to Kansas, leaving a job in his father-in-law's business in search of a better life. When Kansas life proved to
be difficult, he moved to Colorado in search of gold. This would not be considered such a wild move if he had been a single man, but he was married and had an infant son. He moved his family no less than six times from 1859 to 1878, when Hook and Rische finally made him a rich man. Tabor's luck over the next few years was phenomenal. Perhaps he did have a special sense for business that led him to make the right decisions after his first lucky strike. A more probable explanation might be that he invested so heavily in different businesses that, by the laws of chance, some of them had to pay off. Horace's bookkeeping was something less than perfect and, therefore, not all of his investments are a matter of public record. Colorado was experiencing tremendous growth during Tabor's wealthy years, and most people with capital were able to make a handsome return on their money. When the economy began to level off, so did Horace's income. He, mistakenly, did not level off his speculating. He continued to expand while the economy was refining that which had already been developed. His wealth became a "paper empire" before he realized what was happening.

Horace continued to dream even after his dreams were shattered by the first financial disasters. He was unable to stop himself from chasing rainbows. His involvement in mines all over the West and his purchase of other properties attest to this. His dreams took him to the top of the world, and they also brought him back down.

Horace was a man of large size, by most accounts between five-foot ten and six feet tall. This was at a time when the average height for a man was around five-foot six. He was much maligned as a not-so-handsome figure after he became famous. One newspaper carried this description
of Horace: "... stoop shoulders, ambling gait, awkward with hands, black hair, inclined to baldness, large head, rugged features, big black mustache." One must remember that this was written during one of his political campaigns and was intended as a slur. Yet, it does give one some idea of the man's physical make-up. He was a man who had worked with his hands all of his life and, so, may have been stoop-shouldered. Other accounts speak of his attractive eyes and gentle manner.

Samuel Leach, a long-time friend of Horace, described him as a good-natured and easy-going man who displayed the desire to make enough money to live comfortably and who was given to dreaming about this desire. Horace was a generous husband and father.

Horace sought a comfortable economic standing all of his life, and this is an overriding theme in his character. Horace was not averse to spending himself physically and mentally. He had a native intelligence and ability to combine business matters and opportunity. He was, at times, conservative and at others times daring. His businesses were alternately well-run and undisciplined. Some investments were shrewd and others were naive. Horace was honest, optimistic and trusting of his fellowman. This regard for people was demonstrated by the number of civic projects and organizations he initiated in Leadville and Denver.

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76 Smith, op. cit., pp. 30-32.
77 Ibid., pp. 317-318.
Horace begins and ends the opera with the blind trust and beliefs of a little boy. He must be characterized as a man who had tremendous faith in himself and his luck. He followed the most exciting paths during his life. If he had matured the way Baby Doe did, the Tabor fortune probably would have remained intact. Perhaps it was his boyish attitude that forced Baby Doe to mature and led her to love him enough to stay with him.

Horace is to be pitied only insofar as his hopes and dreams were smashed by the realities of a hard world. He was a true romantic and was unable to comprehend the decline of the silver era. He died believing that his fortune would one day be restored by the Matchless Mine.

Augusta

Historians say Augusta was an unattractive, sharp-tongued woman. This appraisal of her physical traits may be over-critical, but a look at her photograph prompts one to understand their assessment. Augusta's toughness was an asset to the Tabor family. She was capable of managing the family and strong enough to endure the many hardships in mining camps where she was often among the first white women inhabitants. Without Augusta's shrewd business mind and her energetic application to any task, it is doubtful that Horace would ever have had the means to grubstake other miners.

A newspaper account of Augusta seems to sum up her marriage to Horace and their eventual break-up:

... Augusta Tabor who, nonetheless many say was something of a shrew. There is no denying Augusta Tabor had a sharp
tongue. And Augusta Tabor used her tongue. Maybe Augusta Tabor overdid her job. Many a wife has before—and since.\footnote{Baby Doe Collection, citing Rocky Mountain News, March 31, 1935.}

Augusta is to be played as a sincere but austere woman. She was a product of hard times and was always as tough as the situation demanded. She lived and behaved in the manner she felt was right and fair. Her sharp tongue with Horace was intended to keep him on the proper course, not to intimidate him.

Augusta was baffled when her marriage with Horace failed. She had been married to him for such a length of time that she could not imagine their being separated. She was from a time and a morality that did not accept divorce as an alternative to marital disagreements. She intended to wait until Horace finished his "fling" with Baby Doe and came to his senses. She would, then, have taken him back. She loved his boyish ways in a different way than did Baby Doe, but both women realized they must take care of Horace and not expect to be taken care of by him.

The audience's sympathy is with Augusta because she did nothing wrong but was wronged in return. She never cheated on Horace, spent money foolishly, or expected him to give her riches. She did expect him to work hard, not gamble on business deals, and make his job his first priority. She was, in these ways, more a mother-figure than a wife in Horace's eyes, much like his mother, Sarah.

The change in Augusta during the opera is perhaps the most difficult to portray of the three main characters. At the beginning of the opera, she is happy about the opening of the opera house and pleased to be a part of helping the community, but she is fearful of the life...
Horace's new-found wealth has brought. She is unable to give up the old ways of frugality and the struggle to curtail Horace's extravagant ways. Her fear turns to anger when she finds that Baby Doe has entered Horace's life, but she has dealt with his infidelity before and sees no great danger with this infatuation. When Horace divorces Augusta, she wants revenge and uses the newspapers to slur him. In the end, hurt replaces the anger and she only wishes life had dealt more gently with her. It is difficult to keep Augusta's character from becoming too austere and appearing to be unfeeling and uncaring. Augusta cared a great deal for Horace but was forced by circumstances and her own temperament to react harshly against him.
PRODUCING THE OPERA IN THE TABOR OPERA HOUSE

The Ballad of Baby Doe has never been performed in its entirety in the Leadville Tabor Opera House. Mrs. Evelyn Furman, current owner of the opera house, has offered the use of the house for a production. Mrs. Furman is in the process of renovating the house, and it is becoming a major tourist attraction during the summer months in Colorado. Thus, a summer production would be the most successful, potentially, from an audience standpoint. Leadville is a growing tourist center and is near much of the population of Colorado.

There are many physical limitations to consider in planning the production in the Tabor. It was built in 1879 for the types of performances that were popular in the United States at that time. Traveling companies were small, and orchestras usually consisted of less than 20 pieces. The stage area is 34 feet deep and 42 feet wide. This is a sufficient area in which to stage the opera as long as sets are kept compact and portable. Some of the original backdrops are still in the opera house and could be used to augment the set. There is a limited fly space for drops, but very little backstage area exists for storing sets. Any sets intended for the fly space would have to be lightweight due to the age and condition of the theatre.

This theatre provides an intimate setting for the opera. Singers would have no trouble being heard in all parts of the audience area.
The front edge of the stage is curved toward the audience, making it five feet closer to the audience at its center than at the sides. This will allow the singers to get in front of the proscenium and even closer to the audience. Although the theatre is rather "live" acoustically throughout, the space in front of the proscenium will offer even better sound reverberation for the singers. The original stage had a straight front edge. The curve was added in 1884 when electricity was brought into the house. The curve was installed to facilitate footlighting. Unfortunately, it was added at the expense of the space in the orchestra pit. At the time of this change, the pit was still large enough for the orchestras used, but for modern opera orchestras it is much too small.

In order to accommodate an orchestra for *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, it would be necessary to place some players in the boxes on either side of the pit as well as under the curved area of the stage. The boxes at either end of the pit could each accommodate as many as five players. The facing of the pit's back wall could be removed to accommodate percussion and some of the wind players under the lip of the stage, and 18 players can be seated in the pit. In addition, the front row of audience seats could be kept vacant to allow more room for the players and the conductor. Sight lines for the conductor and musicians are excellent in this theatre. With the above-mentioned changes in the pit area, an orchestra of 36 players could be used. This number of players will pose no special problems for the production of the opera. It was originally written to be produced in the Central City Opera House which provides no more space than will the Tabor Opera House.
The auditorium is 57 feet wide and 65 feet deep and utilizes a balcony. The opera house was originally designed to seat 880 guests, but it was later expanded to include seating for 1,000 when the Elks Club purchased the house in 1900. Since that time, several of the seats have been broken, and the auditorium will now accommodate approximately 900. After adjustments were made for the orchestra, as described above, the auditorium would seat approximately 825 guests.

The original electric lights for the theatre are still in the opera house and are operable according to Mrs. Furman. They would not, however, provide sufficient light for the production and are no longer dependable. Therefore, if they were used, they would have to be augmented. Any final decision concerning the use of the lights would have to be made at a date near the time of the performance. The fire inspector would have to inspect the wiring, and arrangements would have to be made to satisfy whatever restrictions were deemed necessary on the use of the lights during performances. There is a light booth in the balcony which would provide ample room to run the technical portions of the opera. An intercom system from the backstage area to the booth and pit would have to be installed.

A special problem encountered by performers in Leadville is the high altitude. Singers from lower elevations find that even Denver, at 5,280 feet, is a difficult place in which to sing due to the low level of oxygen in the air. Likewise, singers engaged to perform in Central City, Colorado, elevation 8,500 feet, find singing very difficult, and many find it necessary to arrive several days in advance to become acclimated. Because Leadville is 10,002 feet above sea level and the
oxygen level is considerably lower still, a period of adjustment would
be imperative for anyone planning to sing. A two-week period of adjust­
ment, living in Leadville, before the performances should give the
singers ample time to prepare for the performances in the decreased
oxygen.

During the 1880s, it was common practice to place fainting couches
in the off-stage areas for the convenience of performers upon leaving
the stage. It was reported that few dancers were able to perform for
more than three minutes without a rest period. Of course, the adjust­
ment period needed would be different for each individual, but unless a
performer is accustomed to these altitudes, it would be wise to take
the couches with a degree of seriousness.

Summer of 1981 will be the silver anniversary of the first produc­
tion of The Ballad of Baby Doe and provides an excellent target date for
a Leadville production. This silver anniversary of the opera about
silver in the Tabor Opera House would most likely provide a major
tourist attraction. Mrs. Furman is in favor of a production at that
time. Friday, July 31, and Sunday, August 2, are dates being held open
for the production by Mrs. Furman.

Funding for the project has not yet been finalized. It is the hope
of the writer to obtain funding through various governmental and music
organizations. The groups which have shown preliminary interest in the
project include The National Endowment for the Arts, Colorado Arts
Commission, Tennessee Arts Commission, Denver Symphony, Middle Tennessee

State University Research Grant Program, and the Leadville Chamber of Commerce.

The size and number of grants awarded for this production will dictate which artists may be retained for the performances. It is the hope of the writer that the three lead roles may be hired from the ranks of well-qualified, if not well-known, professionals. The rest of the cast will be made up of students from the surrounding area. There are several universities in the state with very active opera workshops among which are the University of Colorado and Colorado State University.

The three lead singers will be selected as early as possible. They must be chosen no later than November of 1980. If funding is finalized before this date, the selection of lead singers will be made earlier. Auditions will be held in early January of 1981 for secondary roles. If necessary, a second round of auditions may be held in late April or early May.

Rehearsals with piano will begin for minor roles on Saturday, June 27, in Denver, when a run-through of all secondary roles will take place. Rehearsals will be set on ensuing weekends, including July 5, 6, 12 and 13 for these singers. Additional rehearsals will be called for individuals if needed. It is to be expected that many of these singers will have obligations during the week which will not allow them to rehearse except at specially arranged times during these first weeks.

The following is a suggested rehearsal schedule for July 18 through July 30. All rehearsals for this time period will be held in Leadville. Suggested performance dates are July 31 and August 2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Rehearsal Description</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 18</td>
<td>Full Cast, Musical run-through</td>
<td>Piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 19</td>
<td>Full Cast, Staging Act I</td>
<td>Piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 20</td>
<td>Principals, Staging &amp; Musical</td>
<td>Piano</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 21</td>
<td>Principals, Staging &amp; Musical</td>
<td>Piano</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 22</td>
<td>Full Cast, Staging Act II</td>
<td>Piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 23</td>
<td>Principals, Musical</td>
<td>Orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 24</td>
<td>Principals, Staging &amp; Musical</td>
<td>Piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 25</td>
<td>Full Cast, Run-through music only</td>
<td>Orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 26</td>
<td>Full Cast, Run-through with staging</td>
<td>Piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 27</td>
<td>Full Cast, Run-through with staging</td>
<td>Piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 28</td>
<td>Dress Rehearsal</td>
<td>Orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 29</td>
<td>Dress Rehearsal</td>
<td>Orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 30</td>
<td>Rehearsals called as needed</td>
<td>Piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 31</td>
<td>Opening Night, 8:30 Curtain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2</td>
<td>Matinee, 3:30 Curtain</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1. Sketch of the Tabor Opera House Stage
CONCLUSION

Opera in the United States has been traditionally an imported art. It has been left up to composers like Douglas Moore to write operas that are truly American. Americanism is the element that makes *The Ballad of Baby Doe* one of a small group of unique operas. Only operas such as Floyd's *Susannah* and Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* have been as successful in presenting a truly American story through the medium of opera. It is important, therefore, that this opera be presented with an American "flavor."

Nineteenth century Europe, where so many operas are set, was a totally different world from the 1880s in the western United States. It would be a mistake to approach *Baby Doe* in the same way one would approach any European opera. The people were hardened by the experiences of a new land and development of a new social atmosphere. European society of the 19th century was built upon an already centuries-old tradition. Western Americans had to build a society where there had been none.

Moore and Latouche have carefully woven early western society and history into the fabric of their opera. *The Ballad of Baby Doe* is best served by diligent attention to historical fact in developing the characters of the opera and preparing for performance. A production on the site about which the opera was written and incorporation of the
knowledge of those people and places represented offers an excellent avenue for an accurate performance.

An interesting European review of the first performance of *The Ballad of Baby Doe* had this to say about the opera:

In this romantic drama of love and wealth and scandal and ruin, with a dash of politics, performed in a lush, gay eighties setting, lay the stuff of the West, set to music from the East. The twain had met, not in an America initially Europeanized by an immigrant culture, as on the eastern seaboard, but in an America initially American in its culture, and now selecting at will from the European heritage. It was a harmonious meeting. I began to understand what my shrewd American friend had meant when he advised me to start my journey not in the East but in the middle.  

Unlike a number of opera characters, Baby Doe and Horace were not royalty, or characters of mythology, or gypsies, or European peasants. Neither are there any dukes, kings, castles, enchantments, or sword duels in the opera. The common elements between *The Ballad of Baby Doe* and other operas are the strength and weaknesses of the characters, the undying love between the lead characters, and the tragedy of fate.

Until recent years, Leadville, Colorado, has been a quiet mining town with little of interest to attract outsiders. Roads to Leadville from Denver were not kept in good repair, and lodging and dining facilities were not ample or of good quality. The ski industry, interest in summer cabins in the mountains, and a large molybdenum mine near Leadville have encouraged improvement of facilities and access to Leadville. Still, it trails such Colorado mountain resorts as Central City and Estes Park in popularity. With tourism improving, the production of this opera in Leadville would boost the popularity of the city as a tourist attraction and would certainly be well attended.

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APPENDIX A: PHOTOGRAPHS
Plate I. Elizabeth (Baby Doe) Tabor

(Courtesy of Colorado Historical Society)
Plate II. Horace A. W. Tabor

(Courtesy of Colorado Historical Society)
Plate III. Augusta Tabor

(Courtesy of Colorado Historical Society)
Plate IV. Watch Fob Presented to Horace Tabor at the Opening of the Tabor Grand Opera House in Denver, Colorado

(Courtesy of Colorado Historical Society)
Plate V. Wedding Gown and Portrait of Baby Doe Tabor

(Courtesy of Colorado Historical Society)
Plate VI. Room in the Willard Hotel, Washington, D.C., Where Horace and Baby Doe Were Married, March 1, 1883

(Courtesy of Colorado Historical Society)

Baby Doe Collection, Western History Department of Denver Public Library. Contains clippings cataloged chronologically.


The Tabor Collection, Colorado Historical Society, Denver, Colorado. Contains personal letters, clippings, and scrapbooks.

The Teller Collection, Colorado Historical Society, Denver, Colorado. Contains personal letters and clippings.