

# Beverly Sills Interview

DAVID KANZEG: How'd you first become acquainted with *Baby Doe*?

BEVERLY SILLS: Well, Douglas Moore asked me to do the opera....when he first wrote it. And I wasn't able to do it; to go Central City. I waited for the New York premiere. Uh....And that was my first acquaintanceship with her. I'd never...I'd vaguely heard about her before, but I really didn't know who she was until I met up with Douglas.

DK: I presume you had a good deal of research then before you did the role?

BS: We did it, but it was actually done for me, because Douglas was so intent upon having the production as well as the people as authentic looking and performing as possible so that....loads of books were sent me; lots by a woman whose name was, I believe, Caroline Bancroft.

DK: Yes. I've corresponded with her.

BS: Yes. I have too. And then of course I visited out...took all my children out on a trip to Central City. We really had a very very interesting time.

DK: Was there any...uh...decision based upon the fact that you bare a striking resemblance to the early photographs of Baby Doe?

BS: Well, no. As a matter of fact, the hairdo that I wore I copied from the photograph, which I believe is in the museum out there. Um...the uh...'course I'm much bigger than Baby Doe was. She was a very tiny blonde lady. And the only concession I made was that I made my hair blonde for it. And I based my characterization on a line in *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, which Douglas wrote, where he describes her as "a fluffy kitten on a satin pillow."

DK: (laughs) Uh huh!

BS: So that's the picture I very much had to keep that in my head as I was playing her.