

WORTH WATCHING ON TV

By Judy Nichols

■ WEDNESDAY

Live From Lincoln Center (PBS, 8-10:30 p.m. EDT): Tenor Luciano Pavarotti delivers his seventh edition of the popular "Pavarotti Plus!" series with opera selections from Mozart, Puccini, Rossini, and Verdi. Joining him onstage are the New York City Opera, conducted by Marco Armiliato, and friends including mezzo-soprano Elena Zaremba and baritone Dwayne Croft.

In celebration of the 20th anniversary of "Live From Lincoln Center," the program presents a special intermission feature, "The Making of Live From Lincoln Center," introducing viewers to the TV-production team. "Live From Lincoln Center" is the only prime-time, live performing-arts series on television.

Barbara Walters: 20 Years at ABC (ABC, 9:30-11 p.m.):

Lucille Ball, Jimmy Carter, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Saddam Hussein, Elton John, John Wayne: That's just the start of a long, diverse, and impressive list of public figures whom Barbara Walters has interviewed over the past two decades. This tribute to the ABC News correspondent looks back to her first, somewhat-rocky days at the network, when she co-anchored the evening news with Harry Reasoner. The program also looks at her successful and long-running "Barbara Walters Special," highlighting its best, worst, and other unique moments.

Though Walters's accomplishments have been many, she considers this year her most successful: She landed first interviews with Gen. Colin Powell, Christopher Reeve after his accident, and Robert Shapiro and Christopher Darden after the O.J. Simpson trial.

■ THURSDAY

Smithsonian Fantastic Journey (CBS, 8-9 p.m.): The second special celebrating the Smithsonian Institution's 150th anniversary highlights projects around the globe led by Smithsonian scientists and researchers. Among the segments: a visit off the shores of South Africa to learn about the behavior of white sharks, and rarely seen footage from the United States space program.

Please check local listings for these programs.

Cybercrime Fingers Larger Issue of Privacy

By Simson Garfinkel

IN the crowded field of cybercrime books, "The Fugitive Game" stands alone. Jonathan Littman has written the inside scoop, intricately depicting the life of the cybercriminal on the run. His revelations about the computer world's subculture are astonishing.

Littman didn't start out to write a book about the electronic equivalent of the Brinks robbery and how cyberspace's most wanted criminal hacker, Kevin Mitnick, was brought to justice. But things took an unexpected turn in the spring of 1994, when Littman's research focused on both Mitnick, a fugitive from the FBI, and other computer-security experts at the margins of respectable society. The story already had national recognition from two front page stories in The New York Times.

Littman discovered that Mitnick, the man and the world he lived in, was a very different creature from Mitnick, the media myth.

In many ways, criminal hackers are nothing but computer-age con men, Littman writes. Their main skill is not at the keyboard but on the telephone. Littman shows convincingly how a combination of guile, sweet-talk, and impersonation allows Mitnick and other hackers to obtain valuable information and services from the most unsuspecting sources.

Its backstage look at the Mitnick story makes "The Fugitive Game" the perfect antidote to "Takedown," the one-sided book by Tsutomu Shimomura (with John Markoff), which presents Shimomura's story of the Mitnick track and capture. Littman fills in many of the missing details, and he does it in a friendly, first-person account that brings these unsavory characters to life.

He deconstructs the near mythical status of Shimomura, the computer-security expert from the San Diego Supercomputer Center. It was Shimomura's home computer that was the target of a sophisticated computer break-in that was reported weeks later by Markoff on the front page of The New York Times.

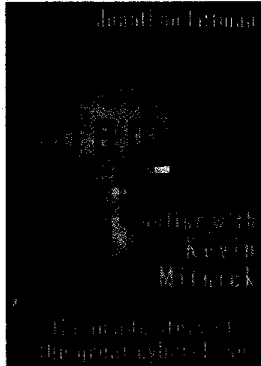
But instead of being an innocent victim, Littman asserts, Shimomura is actually a hacker whose past exploits include reverse-engineering cellular telephones and listening illegally to cell-phone conversations. Littman also suggests that Shimomura may have intentionally made his computer a vulnerable target filled with juicy hacker tools just to see who would break in in a high-stakes game of computer chicken. A good portion of "The Fugitive Game" criticizes Markoff, who Littman says actively assisted in the investigation and capture of Mitnick, while covering up his own involvement in the investigation and other apparent conflicts of interest. Littman presents some compelling evidence, though Markoff has denied the charges.

The most troubling lesson from "The Fugitive Game" is what it says about the Federal Bureau of Investigation's handling of Mitnick and other cybercriminals. According to Littman, the FBI used Mitnick as a hook on which it hung all society's computer-related fears. To catch Mitnick, Littman says, the FBI hired a truly dangerous hacker, and tolerated the hacker's continuing legal infractions. And when it finally came time to bust Mitnick, he writes, FBI agents conducted an illegal, warrantless search of his apartment, then lied to a federal magistrate to cover it up.

If true, "The Fugitive Game" is more than another cybercrime chase story. It is a chilling account of how our rights to privacy and due process are being pushed aside in pursuit of these alleged criminals. Besides being an entertaining story, it carries an important warning.

■ Simson Garfinkel is a freelance writer who specializes in computers and privacy issues.

BOOKS



THE FUGITIVE GAME: ONLINE WITH KEVIN MITNICK

By Jonathan Littman
Little, Brown and Company
383 pp., \$23.95