



## Opera League Seminars 2007-2008

By Anne Kokawa Prokopovych

The Opera League Seminars are opportunities for newcomers as well as seasoned fans to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of featured operas. Each distinguished speaker shares unique insights on aspects of an opera, which may include the composer, the librettist, the story, the cultural and musical context, historical performances, or critical and popular response.

All Opera League seminars this season will take place in the 5th floor salon of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion at the Music Center. The moderator for the seminars is Dr. Allan Edmiston, who also shapes each program by carefully selecting speakers with masterly depth and range of scholarship and experience.

The first seminar will be on Sunday afternoon, September 2, from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm, and will cover the first two works of LA Opera's performance season, *Jenufa* and *Fidelio*.

Perry Lorenzo, Director of Education for Seattle Opera, will explore Beethoven's only operatic work, *Fidelio*. This opera tells how Leonore, disguised as a prison guard named "Fidelio" ("Faithful"), rescues her husband Florestan from death in a political prison. The opera emphasizes heroism and the triumph of humanity over evil tyranny, all underlined by exceptional scoring and soaring vocal lines.

As Director of Education for the Seattle Opera, Perry Lorenzo produces more than 200 educational events each opera season. Mr. Lorenzo directs the Seattle Opera's Young Artists Program, teaches in the Honors Program at Seattle University, writes widely on the arts and humanities, and lectures on opera nationally and internationally.

Dr. Simon Williams, Professor and Chair of the Department of Dramatic Art at UC of Santa Barbara will address thematic and aesthetic aspects of *Jenufa*. This opera was the work that first drew

serious attention to Leos Janacek as a composer. Musically, it bridges the romantic with a more modern idiom, laced with Moravian folk music. *Jenufa* is a story of human love and frailties, and the transformative power of forgiveness and compassion to save us from despair.

In addition to his current position at UCSB, Dr. Williams has taught at universities on four continents. He has published widely in the fields of European continental theatre, the history of acting, Shakespearean performance, and operatic history. His current projects include co-editing *A History of the German Theatre* for Cambridge University Press.

The second seminar will be on Saturday, November 17, from 10 am to 1 pm. Dr. Robert Winter, Professor of Performance Practice at UCLA, will share his musical insights of Mozart's deftly comic drama, *Don Giovanni*, including vocal examples by a local singer. Dr. Mitchell Morris, Professor of Musicology at UCLA, will discuss Wagner's drama of fatal attraction and forbidden love, *Tristan und Isolde*.

A full-day seminar is planned for February 9, 2008, from 10 am to 4 pm, including a luncheon, to explore Verdi's greatest tragic opera, *Otello*, and two works that are a part of LA Opera Music Director, James Conlon's multi-year "Recovered Voices" project.

Fred Plotkin, performing arts professional and educator, will bring fresh insights into *Otello*. Dr. Michael Hackett, Professor of Theater at UCLA, will introduce us to the Alexander Zemlinsky's *The Dwarf* and Viktor Ullman's *The Broken Jug*. We also hope to include James Conlon, conductor for both operas, as a speaker, as well as other special features to highlight this seminar.

The invitation for the September 2 seminar is on page 4.

## West Side Musicale

By Anne Russell Sullivan

Please join us Sunday, November 4, 2007 at 3:00 pm at a Westside home to celebrate "Opera Turkeys – Selections from Great Operas that BOMBED on their Opening Nights!"

The ever talented Victoria Kirsch and two wonderful singers will entertain us with selections from these operas.

In keeping with the festive Thanksgiving spirit, we are asking our Opera League audience to send in a "Favorite Thanksgiving Recipe" along with your reservation. Then, as we prepare for this event, we will have a "Musicale Cook-Off" on November 3 where we will shop and prepare as many of these recipes as possible. Then our Musicale guests will sample them on the 4th. At the Musicale, we might be asking you to describe your dish and the fond memories it brings forth.

Anyone who would like to join us in the kitchen on Saturday, November 3rd, is welcome to lend a hand.

Make your reservations soon, as space is limited. The address of the Musicale and directions will be sent to you with your tickets. (See the "Invitation" on Page 4.)

## a word from our president

Dear Members and Friends,

The start of a new season brings a feeling of revitalization, of new possibilities as we take on new assignments and welcome new directors to the Board. Each of us brings our life's experiences and talents that are rich and varied as together we form a team to build on what has come before to help this wonderful organization, this Opera League of Los Angeles, grow and prosper.

With sincere appreciation and gratitude we acknowledge the myriad accomplishments and years of dedicated hard work of Rebecca Bowne, outgoing President (she will stay on the Board for two years as Past President), Margaret Merrett, Treasurer, Monica Weil, Chair, Toni Bird, Social Chair, Bob Bernard, Artists Services and E-mail Communications (he will continue in that role as consulting director), Beverly Johnson, Seminars, Dress Rehearsal tickets and AALOA liaison, and last but certainly not least, Stanley Stocks, Assistant Treasurer.

A big welcome to our new directors: Blanche Bell, Janet Ciriello, Carol Donlan, Diane Gray, Fabiola Hensley, Laurel Howat, Lucetta Kallis, Carlos Rodriguez, Hiroko-Seki



**Dorothy Wait, President**

Blanco, and Charles Stern. We are confident you will make significant contributions as you take on your new assignments.

At the outset I have identified three goals for the coming year: (1) to grow our membership, the lifeblood of our organization, (2) to foster more communications with our members in order to better serve their needs, and (3) to evolve electronically to support our various activities and needs. There will be other goals and objectives as the Executive Committee and Board have a chance to get their bearings and as we hear from you.

I enthusiastically look forward to the new season. Please contact me or any member of the Board via [info@operaleague.org](mailto:info@operaleague.org) or leave a message on the 24-hour message line 213.972.7220 with your concerns, questions or suggestion and we will do our best to respond in a timely manner.

Warm regards,

**Dorothy Wait**



### Executive Committee

Dorothy Wait	President
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24-hour League Message Line: 213.972.7220	

### Visit us at [www.operaleague.org](http://www.operaleague.org)

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**If you want to be eligible for last minute benefits, Inside Opera and League notices, please send your e-mail address to [info@operaleague.org](mailto:info@operaleague.org). We would love to have all members on our e-mail list! Send your "second member" addresses also!**

## Patron Members Dine Alfresco

The lovely poolside area at Toni Bird's home was the setting for the annual event to thank patron members of the League. On June 13, 2007 current and past Board members prepared and presented a gourmet dinner to more than 50 guests. Chaired by Monica Weil, the chefs extraordinaire were hostess Toni Bird, Monica and Trevor Gutierrez Roper, Roy Hamilton, Nina Haro, Kathleen Leonard, Brita Millard, Anne and Ernie Prokopovych, and Dale Ross.

The menu included many delicious appetizers, a cold passion fruit cantaloupe soup served in glasses rimmed with crystal sugar,

poached salmon with dill sauce, a vegetable terrine, a festive rice dish and raspberry pie topped with whipped cream.

Immediate past president Rebecca Bowne introduced our special guest, Christopher Koelsch, Director of Artistic Planning at LA Opera, who spoke about future plans for the "Ring". Among other things he mentioned that it was truly a luxury to be working so far in advance on this massive project; that director and designer Achim Freyer is building prototypes of sets, lighting and costumes in Berlin; and that the ring shaped stage will move in all directions.

## c a l e n d a r

## august

**Cast Dinners\*\****August 26 (Sunday) 5:30 pm***Fidelio***August 29 (Wednesday) 5:30 pm***Jenufa**

## september

**Seminar***September 2 (Sunday) 1:00 to 4:00 pm***Jenufa and Fidelio**

Banquet Hall on the 5th floor  
of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion  
\$25 or voucher/members  
\$35 non-members or at the door

**Education Programs\***

Opera for Educators (No. 1)

*September 15 (Saturday) 8 am***Fidelio**

Opera for Educators (No. 2)

*September 29 (Saturday) 8 am***Jenufa****Cast Dinners\*\****September 1 (Saturday) 6:00 pm***Fidelio***September 21 (Friday) 5:30 pm***Jenufa**

## october

**Education Programs\***

Opera for Educators (No. 3)

*October 13 (Saturday) 8 am***Don Giovanni**

Opera 101 (No. 1)

(An introduction to opera)

*October 20 (Saturday) 8 am*

## november

**Westside Musicale***November 4 (Sunday) 7:00 - 9:00 pm*

**"Opera Turkeys: Selections from Great Operas that BOMBED on their Opening Nights"**

\$35 voucher/members, \$45 guest

See the "Invitation" on p. 4.

**Education Programs\***

Contact: Steve Kohn  
kohnybonny@earthlink.net

**Cast Dinners\*\***

Contact: Monica Gutierrez Roper  
monylamony@yahoo.com

24-hour message line  
213.972.7220

**Gathering Schedule  
Fidelio and Jenufa****Antelope Valley**

Sunday, Sep. 16 (2 to 5 pm)

43422 25th St. W, Lancaster

Dr. Harald Krueger 661.728.0671

**Claremont**

Sunday, Aug. 19 (2 to 5 pm)

150 N. Mountain Ave, Claremont

Patricia O'Donnell 909.447.5038

**Orange County**

Sunday, Aug. 26 (2 to 5 pm)

3064 Java Rd, Costa Mesa

Claire Chambliss 714.533.4186

**San Fernando Valley**

Sunday, Aug. 26 (3 to 5:30 pm)

Special "Requiem" presentation (2 pm)

15926 Valleywood Rd, Sherman Oaks

Jackie Johns 818.980.5743

**San Gabriel Valley**

Fidelio on Tuesday, Aug. 28

Jenufa on Thursday, Sep. 6

(Both at 7 to 9:30 pm)

5278 La Canada Blvd, La Canada

Michael Sholer 818.502.1988

**Ventura County**

Sunday, Aug. 26 (2 to 5 pm)

520 San Clemente Way, Camarillo

Ann Randall 805.444.6021

**Westside**

Monday, Aug. 27 (7:15 to 9 pm)

425 South Burlingame Ave, Los Angeles

Monica Whitaker 310.826.4743

Chuck and Alice Bragg 310.454.9662

**Beverly Sills: The Passing of a Legend**

By Bob Bernard

**W**ith the passing of Beverly Sills, we spoke with an operatic "neighbor" and friend, Dr. Henry Price, the head of Pepperdine's Flora L. Thornton Opera Program. Dr. Price, having shared the stage with Ms. Sills many times at the NYC Opera, is uniquely qualified to speak to us of her loyalty to her company and her helpfulness to her friends.

To that end, Dr. Price graciously shared with us some remarks he made at the 2005 Award Dinner for the National Opera Association (NOA):

Beverly is a woman who is driven by her passions—for her art, for her opera companies and for her family. Here are a couple illustrations of these passions.

Once we were sitting in the opera house at the [New York] State Theater—1977—preparing *Manon*—she said to me tiredly, "Henry, I did NOT want to do this." I said, of course, "Why?" She said, "Well, they write about Leontyne's *Aida*... Monserrat's *Norma*... Joan's *Lucia*... and my *Manon*. How can I compete with that?" She didn't feel she could compete with the Beverly of 8 or 10 years earlier,

*Continued on page 6*

# invitations

**Please note that this is the ONLY invitation you will receive for these events.**

## Opera Seminar

*Fidelio and Jenufa*

**Sunday, September 2, 2007 from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm**

**Dorothy Chandler Pavilion 5th floor Banquet Hall**

135 North Grand Avenue\_ (the entrance is just south of the garage on Grand Avenue)

Speakers: **Perry Lorenzo**, Director of Education for Seattle Opera

**Dr. Simon Williams**, UC Santa Barbara

**Moderator: Dr. Allan Edmiston**

Tickets: \$25 or 1 flexible voucher for Members,  
\$35 for Non-members and at door, \$10 for Student Members

## Westside Musicale

**“Opera Turkeys: Selections from Great Operas that BOMBED on their Opening Nights”**

**Sunday, November 4, 2007 at 3:00 pm**

Tickets: \$35 or 1 voucher for Members, \$45 for Non-members, \$10 for Student Members. Seating is limited.

You will receive directions to the musicale with your tickets.

### ORDER FORM

Seminar (September 2)	_____ x Member or vouchers @ \$25	\$ _____
	_____ x Non-member @ \$35	\$ _____
	_____ x Student members @ \$10	\$ _____
		Subtotal \$ _____

Seminar reservations must be received by August 22.

Musicale (November 4)	_____ x Member or vouchers @ \$35	\$ _____
	_____ x Non-member @ \$45	\$ _____
	_____ x Student members @ \$10	\$ _____
		Subtotal \$ _____
		Total \$ _____

Musicale reservations must be received by October 24.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Enclose your check made out to the Opera League of LA or voucher(s), together with a self-addressed, stamped envelope so the tickets may be mailed to you. Sorry, no refunds! Mail to: The Opera League of LA, P. O. Box 65918, Los Angeles CA 90065-0918

Questions? Call the Opera League 24 Hour message line at 213.972.7220 or e-mail OLLA at: [info@operaleague.org](mailto:info@operaleague.org)

## getting together

### “Bar-they-lob-nah” Trip

By Edward Lieb

One of the really nice things about meeting with other Opera League members is to hear about their experiences at other opera houses, especially those in Europe.

In July a group of us had the chance to hear two operas at the “Gran Teatre del Liceu” in Barcelona. (In Catalan, “Liceu” is pronounced “li-thay-oh”.) It was organized by one of the Opera League board members, Marcia McCormack, who has been going to Barcelona for many years and knows the Artistic Director of the Liceu, Joan Matabosch.

First, we saw Massenet’s *Manon* starring Natalie Dessay as Manon Lescaut, Rolando Villazón as the young des Grieux, and Samuel Ramey as his father. Dessay and Villazón generated an amazing appreciation of their singing and acting, and the Liceu audience brought them back for many curtain calls.

One pleasant surprise: There was an English translation available on a small screen attached to the chair in front of us. It also had a Spanish translation while the supertitles were in Catalan.

The other opera we saw was a concert version of Massinet’s *Thaïs* with the role of Thaïs sung by René Fleming. Again, the cast generated a lovely appreciation by the audience who demanded they return for many curtain calls.

As an extra special treat, we went into the “exit” area of the Liceu in order to greet René Fleming. She was quite delighted to see so many OLLA members waiting for her as she emerged.

The Liceu theater itself is an older opera house, first built in 1847. The filigree on the many balconies helps create the good acoustics of the house. In 1994 the auditorium and stage areas were totally destroyed by fire. There was a general agreement to rebuild the house on



Opera League members standing front of the stairs leading up to the “columned hall” in “Güell Park” (designed by Gaudi).  
Our guide, Jose Soler, took the picture.

the same site. They preserved the parts of the building unaffected by the fire, but completely rebuilt the auditorium to look as much like the original as possible.

They also added a number of rehearsal rooms and dressing rooms. Money came from private, public, and state donations. The building was finished within five years.

We were taken on a very nice tour of the building. We did notice that every door we went through was a heavy *fire door!* The biggest change to the house is backstage where machinery was installed that can move an entire stage set into large bays on the left and right of the main stage.

They also installed a very sophisticated video set up for videotaping or broadcasting the shows. There were at least five cameras visible in the house (and we were told that others can be lowered from the ceiling). Quite often other opera companies often use the Liceu to video tape their own productions.

I know that many of our Opera League members have great stories about operas and opera houses they’ve seen all over the world. We’d love to hear about them and share them with others.

*Beverly Sills: The Passing of a Legend, continued from page 3*

but the company was in dire straits, and its very survival depended on Beverly's appearing in her star vehicles, [and] so she did it—over and over again—and magnificently!

One other story involves the time 12 years ago when I accepted a position at Pepperdine. When I arrived on campus, the President of the University greeted me excitedly and said that he had received a handwritten note from Beverly Sills, congratulating the University on its new association with me! I hadn't asked her to do that, but all of you in academia know what that meant to me as a fledgling professor.

The University, of course, jumped on the opportunity to get Beverly Sills on campus and offer her an honorary degree or present her in a lecture. I sent word to her, and she got right back to me and said, "Henry, I've got enough honorary degrees, and I don't think you want me for a lecture because my fee is very high." And, when I said "How high is it?", she said, "VERY, VERY high." Then she explained, "I have to do that because it's the only way I can get money for my charities."

[So] it was at that moment that I found out that ALL [of] her lecture fees went to her charities.

These are just two examples of the passions that drive this

magnificent artist and human being. So, to this great and passionate champion of our common cause, the NOA presents its lifetime achievement award for 2005 to Beverly Sills."

Dr. Price further recalled, "Her charismatic presence was certainly at its peak at retirement. She could do no wrong on the stage. Take a look at her "farewell song" on YouTube — her final public appearance as a singer—*brehtaking*."

If you haven't done so already, you can 'live the moment' of this final encore at her last recital by directing your computer to: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=KoXHfNGtccc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KoXHfNGtccc)

Here, in this seven minute video clip, Ms. Sills recalls her "alpha and omega"— her role as Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus*— and then closes with a song taught her by her beloved voice coach, Estelle Liebman: "The Time Has Come For Me To Leave You."

As you finish watching this video, you may decide to raise a glass of "bubbly" as a toast to Bubbles, or, if you decide to simply follow the lead of her pianist, Charlie Wadsworth, you can just close your eyes and lower your head...that would be all right, too.



135 North Grand Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

**INVITATIONS ARE INCLUDED**

- ⊗ Seminar • September 2
- ⊗ Westside Musicale • November 4

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