



Seminar on Don Giovanni and Tristan und Isolde

By Anne Kokawa Prokopovych

The second Opera League seminar of the 2007-2008 season will be on Saturday morning, November 17, from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm, in the 5th floor salon of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion at the Music Center. This noteworthy educational opportunity will cover two upcoming productions of LA Opera's performance season, *Don Giovanni* and *Tristan und Isolde*.

Robert Winter, Professor of Music at UCLA, will share his musical insights of Mozart's deftly comic drama, *Don Giovanni*, including vocal highlights by a local singer. Most of the opera about the eponymous serial seducer is comic, swaying the other characters and the audience to waver between forgiving the villain for his transgressions and

cheering him on to hell. The demonic energy of the music drives the story to the unsettling end – after the Don Giovanni character is dispatched to take responsibility for his choices, the other characters are left to take responsibility for themselves.

In addition to being a distinguished scholar of Beethoven, Schubert, compositional process and performance practice, Professor Winter has become an articulate international spokesperson for the role of content and the arts in a digital world.

Mitchell Morris, Professor of Musicology at UCLA, will explore Richard Wagner's musical idiom in his drama of fatal attraction and forbidden love, *Tristan und Isolde*. The score of this opera has often been cited as a landmark

in the development of Western music, with its use of orchestral color, harmony, and polyphony to evoke a sensory and emotional connection to the tale of passion doomed by destiny.

Professor Morris has been awarded a Distinguished Teaching Award at UCLA. His lectures cover ancient to contemporary music in a wide range of styles, and have been described as "brilliant, spellbinding and dazzling."

The Opera League continues with one of its most important goals of making exemplary opera-related educational opportunities available to its members and to the community. And we hope that you will mark your calendar and plan to join us. The invitation for the November 17 seminar is on page 5.



Carol Vaness Master Class

By Brita Millard

The Opera League of Los Angeles' "Celebrity Master Class Series" presents the world famous and acclaimed soprano, **Carol Vaness**, on Friday, December 7, 2007, 7 pm, at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion.

At the master class, several Domingo-Thornton young artists will sing prepared arias or duets. Ms. Vaness will then give each one a personal coaching session, discussing the singer's technique, breath control, language, posture and expression. The singers will be accompanied by the skilled pianist *Domingo Thornton* in the *Vladimir*

Ms. Vaness launched her singing career at New York City Opera (appearing regularly from 1979-1983), and made her Metropolitan Opera debut in 1984. She has sung at many of the major opera houses of Europe, including Teatro alla Scala, the Vienna State and Paris Operas, and the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden.

This versatile and compelling international Opera star has been recognized for her Mozart operatic roles, and particularly acknowledged as the world's leading interpreter of

a word from our president

You are going to be hearing a lot about LA Opera's forthcoming production of *The Ring of the Nibelungen*. When you look in your *Performances* magazine you will see the Opera League of Los Angeles listed on the page titled "Friends of the *Ring*." In order to participate one must make a minimum commitment of \$100,000 payable over four years. The League enthusiastically supports this long-awaited production and has contributed \$50,000 at this time and has pledged to donate \$25,000 for each of the next two years. The funds were generated from membership dues, investments and revenues from various League educational and social events.

The first two operas in the cycle, *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* will be presented in the 2008-2009 season. In the next season the final two operas, *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* will appear. In preparation for this intellectually and musically challenging cycle, our fine writer, Bob Bernard, Consulting Director for Artist Services, will offer a series of articles in *Bravo* about LA Opera's production, the first to be seen in this issue.

In addition to the Friends of the *Ring*, the League gave \$75,000 to LA Opera earmarked for Education and Community Outreach programs. Funds were derived from the Boutique



Dorothy Wait, President

profits of \$55,000 and 85% of the year's interest from the Beren Harris Trust, which was almost \$20,000.

As you know, Opera League volunteers contribute many hours of service. Not to overwhelm you with numbers, but it is important for you to know that the total volunteer hours for 2006-2007 were 25,581 hours representing work done by over 280 volunteers. Calculated at the "2005 California Average Volunteer" worth of \$20.36 per hour, this is a total value of \$520,839 for all our volunteer efforts last season.

But we won't rest on our laurels. As LA Opera continues to grow, so shall we attempt to expand to be able to support this art form we love by being their primary volunteer support organization. We welcome new members and thank our renewing members for your continued support. Please contact me or any member of the Board (via info@operaleague.org) or leave a message on the 24-hour message line (213.972.7220) with your concerns or questions and we will respond.

Warm Regards



Executive Committee

Dorothy Wait	President
Judy Lieb	Vice President
Edmund Shaff	Treasurer
Nina L. Haro	Secretary
Rebecca Bowne	Immediate Past President
Kathleen Leonard	Parliamentarian
Fred Dear	Education
Edward Lieb	Communications
Margi Mostue	Behind the Scenes
Dale Ross	Membership

Directors

Blanche Bell	AALOA Liason
Janet Ciriello	Artist Services
Carol Donlan	Boutique
Gerald Elijah	Calendar
Eleanor Gnuip	Volunteer Services
Diane Gray	Student Matinees
Alma Guzman	Community Education
Fabiola Hensley	Boutique
Laurel Howat	Cast Dinners
Jacqueline Johns	24 Hour Line
Lucetta Kallis	Public Relations
Steve Kohn	Community Education
Stella Leontsini	Gatherings
Marcia McCormack	Web Site
Brita Millard	Social
Anne Kokawa Prokopovych	Seminars
Ernie Prokopovych	24 Hour Line
Tadea Pylko	Boutique
Carlos Rodriguez	Membership
Hiroko Seki-Blanco	Boutique
Monica Gutiérrez Roper	Cast Dinners
John Spear	Overtures
Charles Stern	Assistant Treasurer
Anne Russell Sullivan	Musicales
Wendy Van Haerlem	Boutique

Consulting Directors

Bob Bernard	Artist Services
Dr. W. Allan Edmiston	Seminars

Visit us at www.operaleague.org

Send mail to: P. O. Box 65918,
Los Angeles CA 90065-0918

Send e-mail to: info@operaleague.org

24-hour League Message Line: 213.972.7220

Editor	Edward Lieb
Printer	Licher Direct Mail
Newsletter Design	Bacall:Creative

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. We would love to have all members on our e-mail list! Send your "second member" addresses also.



Photo: Edward Lieb

Dorothy Wait handing the Opera League check to Mitchell Heckel, Vice-President Administration and Chief Financial Officer of LA Opera.

Insider Preview

How fortunate for all of our Opera League members and guests that once again General Director Plácido Domingo and Music Director James Conlon will present LA Opera's next season for us on Monday, January 7, 2008. This will take place at the historic Biltmore Hotel in downtown Los Angeles.

Following Mr. Domingo's announcement, Paul Floyd, Assistant Conductor at LA Opera, will direct local artists in a selection of arias from the next season's productions.

The reception before the presentation will feature appetizers and a no-host bar.

All current Opera League members are invited to this "Insider Preview" free of charge in appreciation of all of your support throughout the season.

Advance reservations and tickets are required (however, member tickets are not transferable to non-members). Guests may pay only \$20, which may be applied towards a year's membership in the Opera League at any level. So a new Associate membership would cost only \$25 that day!

Membership in the Opera League entitles you to invitations and reduced admissions to Musicales, Seminars, and Master Class; to a subscription to *Bravo*; and to many interesting volunteer opportunities! So bring your friends and have them join at this one-time reduced rate.

You will receive additional details in your invitation that will be mailed in December.

Winter Musicale

By Anne Russell Sullivan

Please join us Friday, January 25 from 7:30 to 9:30 at a home in Brentwood Park to celebrate "Deception and Subterfuge".

Victoria Kirsch will accompany two wonderful singers with selections from operas that feature deceivers.

In keeping with the spirit of Carnevale, we are asking our Opera League audience to consider to wear either the costume of their favorite "deceiver" or to dress formally and wear a decorative mask to hide your identity.

There will be light refreshments and the option of joining us for a late night supper at a local Brentwood restaurant.

Make your reservations soon, as space is limited, and please indicate whether you would like to continue the festivities at dinner.

The address of the Musicale and directions will be sent to you with your tickets. (The invitation is on page 5.)

Hemmings Memorial Award Nominations

We are proud to announce the request for nominations for the Fourth Annual "Hemmings Memorial Award". The recipient (or recipients) will be honored at the Opera League's award event in April of 2008.

This award is a tribute to the many accomplishments of Peter Hemmings who became the Founding General Director of LA Opera in 1986.

This annual award recognizes an individual's dedication to the development of opera in Los Angeles. Last season the honor was given to Flora Thornton, who not only helps support the pre-performance opera talks, but generously donates to many other musical causes.

As an Opera League member, you may participate in the selection process by nominating a person that you would like to see receive this award. You may submit your nomination to the Opera League by letter at: "**Hemmings Nomination**", P. O. Box 65918, Los Angeles CA 90065-0918. Or you may email us at: hemmingsaward@operaleague.org.

Your nomination must be received no later than **February 15, 2008**. A selection committee composed of individuals who have long been involved in the promotion of opera in Los Angeles will make the final selection.

If you have any questions, call the Opera League 24-hour line: 213.972.7220, or email us at info@operaleague.org.

calendar

November

Opera Talks at Julienne's

November 5 (Monday) 7 pm.
2649 Mission, San Marino
626.441.2299
\$10 cash: beverages & nibbles
Additional \$10 cash: light "box supper"

Cast Dinners**

November 13 (Tuesday) 5:30 pm
November 16 (Friday) 5:30 pm
Don Giovanni (for both)
At the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion

Seminar

November 17 (Saturday) 9:30 am
Don Giovanni and *Tristan*
Banquet Hall on the 5th floor of the
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion.
\$25 members/vouchers, \$35 non-
members or at the door, \$10 students

Educational Programs*

November 3 (Saturday)
Opera for Educators
La Bohème

November 21 (Wednesday)
Senior Dress Rehearsal
Don Giovanni

November 28 (Wednesday)
Student Matinee #1
La Bohème

Education Programs*

Contact: Steve Kohn
kohnybonny@earthlink.net

Cast Dinners**

Contact: Monica Gutierrez Roper

December

Opera Talks at Julienne's

December 3 (Monday) 7 pm.
2649 Mission, San Marino
626.441.2299
\$10 cash: beverages & nibbles
Additional \$10 cash: light "box supper"

Educational Programs*

December 1 (Saturday)
Opera 101

December 6 (Thursday)
Student Matinee #2
La Bohème

Carol Vaness Master Class

December 7 (Friday) 7 pm.
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion
4th Floor Artist's entrance
Domingo-Thornton Young Artists
\$25 members, \$35 non-members or at the
door, \$10 students

January, 2008

Insider Preview

January 7 (Monday) 4 pm
The Biltmore Hotel

First Ever Met Simulcast Event

January 12 (Saturday)
After the simulcast of Verdi's *Macbeth*
Anne Russell Sullivan, Moderator
In Pasadena, lunch \$10

Winter Musicale

January 25 (Friday) 7:30 to 9:30 pm
"Deception and Subterfuge"
in Brentwood Park
Come dressed as your favorite deceiver.

Gathering Schedule

Antelope Valley

Don Giovanni and *La Bohème*
Sunday, Nov. 18 (2 to 5 pm)
43422 25th St. W, Lancaster
Dr. Harald Krueger 661.728.0671

Claremont

Don Giovanni
Sunday, Nov 11 (2 to 5 pm)
150 Mountain Ave., Claremont
Patricia O'Donnell 909.447.5038

Orange County

Don Giovanni
and *Tristan und Isolde*
Sunday, Nov. 11 (2 to 5 pm)
19556 Grandview Circle,
Huntington Beach
Claire Chambless 714.533.4186

San Fernando Valley

Don Giovanni
and *Tristan und Isolde*
Sunday, Oct. 28 (3 to 5:30 pm)
11615 Canton Place, Studio City
Jackie Johns 818.980.5743

San Gabriel Valley

Don Giovanni and *La Bohème*
Thursday, Nov. 8 (7 to 9:30 pm)
5278 La Canada Blvd., La Canada
Michael Sholer 818.502.1988

Ventura County

Don Giovanni
and *Tristan und Isolde*
Sunday, Nov 18 (2 to 5 pm)
520 San Clemente Way, Camarillo
Ann Randall 805.444.6021

Westside

invitations

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

Don Giovanni and Tristan und Isolde Seminar

Saturday, November 17 from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm

Coffee and Pastries at 9:30 am, the seminar begins at 10:00 am.

The Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 5th floor Banquet Hall

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

Speakers: Dr. Robert Winter

Professor of Performance Practice at UCLA

Dr. Mitchell Morris

Professor of Musicology at UCLA

Moderator: Dr. Allan Edmiston

Your reservations must be received by November 7.

x Member (or voucher) @ \$25 ..\$ _____

x Non-member @ \$35

(or at the door)\$ _____

x Student member @ \$10\$ _____

Total \$ _____

"First Ever Met" Simulcast Event

Saturday, January 12, 2008, after the Met simulcast of Macbeth

At a home in Pasadena

x Lunch @ \$10Total \$ _____

Your reservation must be received by January 1. You will receive tickets and directions in your self addressed stamped envelope.

Carol Vaness Master Class

Friday, December 7, 7 pm

**The Dorothy Chandler Pavilion
4th floor Artist's Entrance**

135 North Grand Avenue

Domingo-Thornton Young Artists

Your reservations must be received by November 28.

x Member (or voucher) @ \$25 ..\$ _____

x Non-member @ \$35

(or at the door)\$ _____

x Student @ \$10\$ _____

Total \$ _____

Winter Musicale: "Deception and Subterfuge"

Friday, January 25 from 7:30 to 9:30 pm

in Brentwood Park

Do you plan to attend the late night supper? Yes No

Your reservations must be received by January 15. You will receive directions to the musicale in your self addressed stamped envelope.

x Member (or voucher) @ \$35 ..\$ _____

x Non-member @ \$45

(or at the door)\$ _____

x Student member @ \$10\$ _____

Total \$ _____

ORDER FORM

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

Credit Card (circle) M/Card Visa AmEx Total amount \$ _____

Credit Card # _____ Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

Enclose your check, credit card info, or voucher(s) for the total amount. Make your check payable to the **Opera League of Los Angeles.**

Enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope. Sorry, no refunds!

Mail to: The Opera League of Los Angeles, PO Box 65918, Los Angeles CA 90065-0918.

Opera in Vienna

By John Welch

Many of our Opera League members have the opportunity of traveling overseas, we thought it would be nice if they could share some of their experiences with us. John Welch was fortunate enough to see Edita Gruberova in Vienna recently. Here is his report (Editor).

Just past her 60th birthday, Edita Gruberova offered one of the finest vocal and dramatic performances I have ever seen in any opera house. Her portrayal of the aging Queen Elizabeth I was nothing less than superb!

Overcome with remorse at having allowed herself to be forced into signing her lover Roberto's death warrant and facing her own mortality, Ms. Gruberova rose majestically to the challenges of her final scene, suddenly snatching off her traditional auburn wig to reveal an emotionally and physically broken woman. The loud gasps of the audience at the sight of the bald head of this instantly transformed queen made it a truly never-to-be-forgotten operatic moment.

After some 10 minutes of curtain-calls for the full cast, Ms. Gruberova took at least 12 solo calls, proof of her place in the affections of Viennese opera-lovers — and mine!

First Ever Met Simulcast Event

The Opera League is pleased to initiate the First Ever Met Simulcast Event on Saturday, January 12. We will meet in a home in Pasadena after we see the Metropolitan Opera Simulcast of *Macbeth*.

The moderator for the discussion of the opera that we've just seen will be Anne Russell Sullivan, a member of the Speakers Bureau, who has given many talks to our League members. And, "Yes," lunch will be available. Should the attendance be what we hope it will be, and our attendees think that it is worthwhile, we will attempt to hold future events in different parts of the southern California region.

To make a reservation (and space will be limited), please see the invitation on page 5. The lunch ticket and directions will be sent to you.

Vaness Master Class

Continued from page 1

Vitellia in *La Clemenza di Tito*. She has performed opposite every major tenor of the day, including Plácido Domingo, Richard Leech, Marcello Giordani and her friend, the late Luciano Pavarotti.

In 2006 Carol Vaness accepted an Indiana University faculty position in their voice program, in order to "nurture young singers while still allowing their voices to be, to produce the best version of themselves."

For ticket information see the "Invitation" on page 5. But remember, seating is limited!

Our "Pay at the Door" Policy

When planning an event, the hotel/caterer/host of the event want to know our final head count several days or sometimes up to a week prior to the event. They need this information to provide sufficient refreshments and seating so that everyone will have a good experience. To encourage League members to make a reservation secured with a payment, we have offered them a discount and added an additional charge for those paying at the door. At times one doesn't know until the last minute or has forgotten to send in a reservation in time. We admitted them, but charged the "pay at door" amount. An exception will be made for those using flexible vouchers for admission. Our members may use a voucher — a benefit of their League membership. But please, dear members, you are strongly encouraged to make a reservation ahead of time so that all attendees can be easily seated and everyone can have refreshments.

behind the scenes

Introducing: *The Ring Bearer*

By Bob Bernard

“Heil sei dem Tag!” [Hail the day!]

That is how LAO's chorus concludes *Fidelio*, and that is exactly how we felt on September 28th of last year when General Director Plácido Domingo announced the details for the Los Angeles premiere of Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*.

We know from the lore of *The Ring* that the god Wotan strikes a bargain with the giants Fasolt and Fafner, calling for them to build Valhalla, a home suited to the gods.

Similarly, in order to construct our *Ring*, Los Angeles Opera reached an agreement with a giant from the World of Art. To be our “General Contractor”, to do the stage direction, set design, costumes, and lighting, we have – Achim Freyer. Mr. Freyer, long ago the prize pupil of Bertolt Brecht and first educated as a painter, ultimately turned his attention to the theater and the opera, where his work as stage director, et al., has been based primarily in Europe, but with occasional forays into Los Angeles and New York.

Following last year's announcement, work began forthwith, and, in order to learn of the extent of the progress made to date, conversations were held with Christopher Koelsch, LAO's Vice President of Artistic Planning, and Julia Diamond, Artistic Planning Coordinator, working in Artistic Administration.



Achim Freyer
(Frank Sygusch for “The Giessen Server”)

In reviewing the casting and projected performance dates with Mr. Koelsch, it was gratifying to learn that all was proceeding on schedule. LAO, never before casting so deeply or so far in advance, will be performing *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* as part of the 2008-2009 season. Then, continuing, *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* will be part of the 2009-2010 season, with three full cycles of *The Ring* filling our summer of 2010.

Most pleasing to learn was that the announced casts (with a single exception) would appear in all of the 2008 and 2009 performances, besides, of course, the three full cycles in mid-2010.

LAO's preparations for *The Ring* are taking directions never used before here: Soon a Bauprobe [literally, “Build Rehearsal”] will be held. This will involve

a full-scale set, being built now at a shop in Midland, Texas. This edifice will have rough set pieces, materials, furniture, etc. Using this, the creative team will be able to move about, checking spacing, adjusting dimensions, and, what is so important to us who will be sitting at either the sides or balcony of the Chandler, checking the sight lines.

Mr. Koelsch, citing, as an example, the story-telling aspects of Mr. Freyer's production of Berlioz' *La damnation de Faust*, is looking forward to Freyer's leading us in an exploration of *The Ring's* mythological roots, relating, using conventional tradition, a stripped-to-the-essence telling of Wagner's *Ring*, but still one that is accompanied by staging that is both spectacular and grandiose.



Freyer and assistant set designers Weikert and Nitsche examining a metal frame for a horse.
(Bühnenservice)

Continued on page 8

Ring Bearer (cont'd. from page 7)

Ms. Diamond, having worked for both the Zeitgenössische Oper and the Neuköllner Oper in Berlin, has represented LAO on three occasions already this past year, working as a facilitator and translator at both Freyer's home/studio in the western suburb of Lichterfelde and at the Bühnenservice, a workshop used by all three of the major opera houses in Berlin.

As Julia reports, the Freyer residence right now is more studio than it is home. The second floor, nominally the living space, has given way and all three floors are functioning as studios. When she was there last, each floor had been allocated to support the design of an opera production: one for *La*

Traviata, one for the premiere of Unsuk Chin's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* for the Bavarian State Opera in Munich, and, of course, one very busy floor dedicated to the Los Angeles *Ring*.

Mr. Freyer, as much art collector as he is artist, has every square inch of wall space covered with art. (When last in Los Angeles for the Berlioz opera, Mr. Freyer filled a super-sized SUV with Mexican artwork, which he acquired during his stay here.)

Having worked with Achim Freyer more than any other person from LAO, Julia's impression of him is, "One who has never lost that childlike sense of wonder about the theater, and

who fills all of his hard work with that sense of wonder."

Ms. Diamond has also observed firsthand that modern Stage Directors pay attention to what one another say and do. Mr. Freyer, taking note that Patrice Chéreau recently put together a DVD, "The Making of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*", a re-visiting of Mr. Chéreau's 1976 Centennial production of *The Ring* at Salzburg, declared that his (Los Angeles) *Ring* would be the "Millennial *Ring*".

So, with this article as a starting point, the four future issues of BRAVO will follow the work of Mr. Freyer and his creative team as they develop and put together the sets, costumes, lighting and special effects for *The Millennial Ring*.



135 North Grand Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90012

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

INVITATIONS ARE INCLUDED
★ Giovanni and Tristan Seminar - 11/17/07
★ Carol Vaness Master Class - 12/7/07
★ Met Simulcast Event - 1/12/08
★ Winter Musicale - 1/25/08

PRESORTED
FIRST-CLASS MAIL
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Pasadena, CA
Permit #740