

Opera League Seminar on Two Operas We Love— *Carmen* and *The Magic Flute*

By Anne Kokawa Prokopovych

The second Opera League seminar of the 2008-2009 season will be on Saturday morning, November 1, 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, Bizet's *Carmen* and Mozart's *The Magic Flute* (*Die Zauberflöte*).

Simon Williams, Professor and Chair of the Department of Dramatic Art at UC Santa Barbara, will explore the exoticized romantic construction symbolized by the iconic Spanish Gypsy in one of the most popular operas of our time, Bizet's *Carmen*. The story of the beautiful but reckless Carmen, whose volatile life is ended by the hand of her refused lover, captures the combustible mix of love, jealousy, and divided loyalties.

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.

Mitchell Morris, Professor of Musicology at UCLA, will present fresh insights into the playful yet profound ritual and symbolism of Mozart's masterpiece, *The Magic Flute* (*Die Zauberflöte*). The opera lends itself to elaborate, whimsical staging that heightens the contrast with the serious look at the human search for love and struggle to attain wisdom and virtue.

Dr. 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 stated goals of making exemplary opera-related educational opportunities available to its members and the community, and we hope that you will mark your calendar and plan to join us. The invitation for this November 1 seminar is on page 5.



Photo: LA Opera

a word from our president

Dear Members and Friends,

What a start to the new season! Our outstanding, dedicated League volunteers rose to meet the challenges of many cast dinners and transportation of artists in August and September. The casts of *Il Tabarro*, *Suor Angelica*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *The Fly* and *Madama Butterfly* were picked up and returned to LAX and fed sumptuous dinners night after night. Thank you volunteers!

Fundraising is taking a new turn. In addition to the excellent profits generated from the Boutique (see article on page 6), we have been talking for some time about adding additional activities so that we can meet all the demands in the upcoming "Ring" years. Therefore, our new Board member, Millicent Gappell, is overseeing this area. She will host and perform a concert of operatic music at her home. (More information will appear in next *Bravo*.) Our second activity is the development of a cookbook by Board members Anne Russell Sullivan and Monica Gutiérrez Roper. It will include original recipes from League members (we know what great cooks they are from



Dorothy Wait, President

cast dinners) and also from performing artists who have appeared here.

Another new Board member, Joe Lee, approached us about extending membership invitations to a group of Korean-Americans that he has been leading. This dovetailed nicely with our outreach goals and is a win-win situation: hopefully it will bring new members to the League, and it will broaden the world of opera knowledge and education for the participants.

Please continue to contact us. The volume of calls to our 24-hour message line and e-mail inquiries have substantially risen and we are happy to assist you within the scope of our abilities. Please note, however, that volunteers staff the resources and that it may take a day or two to receive a response.

Warm regards,
Dorothy



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Visit us at www.operaleague.org or
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Send mail to: P. O. Box 65918,
Los Angeles CA 90065-0918

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Printer	Licher Direct Mail
Newsletter Design	Bacall:Creative

We need your current e-mail address! Please confirm your address by sending an e-mail to www.operaleague.org and remain eligible for last minute notices and benefits. As we evolve electronically more of our communication will be done

Member Profile: Cat Pollon

"I was working at *Gucci's* in Beverly Hills when the background music sound system played Pavarotti's 'Che gelida manina' from *La Bobème*. It was a life altering experience and my love of opera was born." That was 1991. Cat Pollon listened to and learned about opera, became an LA Opera subscriber and joined the Opera League. She has served on the Board of Directors and has assisted with seminars and cast dinners. Her financial contributions through the years have been especially helpful for the Insider's Preview and the Peter Hemmings Award events.

Pavarotti and Puccini, the artists she reveres, have provided many hours of enjoyment. She even named her cat Puccini. Cat took opera singing lessons as a joke but found she had a talent for it and it turned into an avocation as she found opportunities to sing in restaurants and other venues in New York and Italy.

The League takes great pleasure in recognizing and acknowledging Cat Pollon for her most valuable



Opera Goes to the Movies *Musicale in the San Fernando Valley*

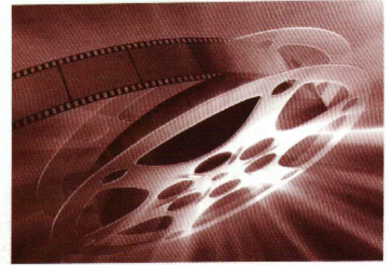
The winter solstice will be beckoning and the holiday decorations will be hung as we celebrate our second musicale called "Opera Goes to the Movies." Join us on Saturday, December 13, 2008 at 7 pm where many musicales have been held in the past, at the wonderful home of Marge and Ethmer Roten in the San Fernando Valley.

Once again Victoria Kirsch, program planner and accompanist will lead two artists in opera songs from movies we may - or may not - recognize.

Musicales Chairs Steve Kohn and Thomas Shepard are planning a delightful evening. (Steve once said, what do two guys know about planning social events? We'll give them beer and pizza!) We know from the success of our

Island Enchantment musicale in September that they know quite a lot, and that this musicale will live up to our expectations.

Please see the invitation on page 5 to make your reservation. Once received, our Treasurer, Ed Shaff, will send directions to you. You can find more information through our e-blasts and on the Opera League website.



Carol Vaness Returns for Another Master Class

For those who attended last year's master class presented by renowned artist, Carol Vaness, you know what a terrific evening it was. Ms. Vaness' coaching skills were clearly evident and equally appreciated by the Domingo-Thornton Young

Artists and those of us who were lucky enough to attend. We are delighted to invite you to another class on Thursday, December 11 at 7 pm, in Rehearsal Room 3 at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion.

Ms. Vaness launched her singing career at New York City Opera. She has sung at many of the major opera houses of Europe, including Teatro alla Scala, the Vienna State and Paris Operas, the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden and of course the Metropolitan Opera.

In 2006 Carol accepted an Indiana University faculty position in their voice program in order to nurture young singers while still allowing them to produce the best version of themselves. With that background it is easy to see why she is in demand for master classes. She will give each of the participating Domingo-Thornton Young Artists a personal coaching session, discussing the singer's technique, breath control, language, posture and expressions.

For ticket information, see the invitation on page 5.



Ms Vaness and Domingo-Thornton Young Artist, Angel Blue

New Gathering in the Southeast Region

On October 27th at 7 pm, the newest Opera League gathering will meet at the Whittier Public Library (7344 South Washington Ave.) to learn more about *Carmen*. Thanks to Opera League Board Member Carlos Rodriguez, members who reside in Whittier, Downey, Norwalk, Montebello, Bellflower, La Mirada, Pico Rivera, Monterey Park and environs now have a gathering of their own.

This gathering grew from the work of the Outreach

Committee. Members who live in this area of Los Angeles County typically have had to travel to San Gabriel Valley or Orange County to attend the closest gathering. This new location should make it easier for members to spend less time on the freeway and more time learning about opera.

As always, Opera League members are welcome to attend any gathering, no matter the location. The Gathering Schedule on page 4 gives more details about upcoming events and contact information.

calendar

October

Opera For Educators

Saturday, October 4, 8-4 pm
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 4th floor
Contact Alma Guzmán, Nr1Hugr@aol.com

Opera Talk at Julienne's

Monday, October 6, 7 pm
2649 Mission St., San Marino
\$10 for program and beverage, an extra \$10 for the "Light Supper Box"
Reservations are required
626.441.2299 ext 15 or email Julie@julienne.bis

Opera 101

October 18, 8-4 pm
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 4th floor
Contact Alma Guzmán, Nr1Hugr@aol.com

African Americans for Los Angeles Opera, Fall Event

Sunday, October 26, 3-6 pm
Musical program at a home in Pasadena
Contact Blanche Bell, 909.586.2411

November

The Second Opera League Seminar

Carmen/Magic Flute
Saturday, November 1, 9:30-12:30 pm
See "Invitations" Page
Reservations are required

Opera For Educators

November 1, 8-4 pm
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 4th floor
Contact Alma Guzmán, Nr1Hugr@aol.com

Opera Talk at Julienne's

Monday, November 3, 7 pm
2649 Mission St., San Marino
\$10 for program and beverage, an extra \$10 for the "Light Supper Box"
Reservations are required
526.441.2299 ext 15 or email Julie@julienne.bis

Cast Dinner - Carmen

Monday, November 10, 6 pm
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 4th floor
Contact Laurel Howat, Ldhowat@aol.com 562.810.5724

December

Opera Talk at Julienne's

Monday, December 1, 7 pm
2649 Mission St., San Marino
\$10 for program and beverage, an extra \$10 for the "Light Supper Box"
626.441.2299 ext 15 or email Julie@julienne.bis

Student Matinees

Monday, Dec. 1 and Wednesday, Dec. 10, both at 10:30 am
Contact Alma Guzmán, Hr1Hugr@aol.com

Opera 101

Saturday, December 6, 8-4 pm
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 4th floor
Contact Alma Guzmán, Nr1Hugr@aol.com

Vaness Master Class

Thursday, December 11, 7 pm
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Rehearsal Room 3, 4th Floor
See "Invitations" Page
Reservations are required

Musicale - "Opera Goes to the Movies"

Saturday, December 13, 7 pm
At a home in the San Fernando Valley
See the "Invitations" Page
Reservations are required

January

Cast Dinners - Magic Flute

Saturday, January 3, 5:30 pm
Monday, January 5, 5:30 pm
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 4th floor
Contact Laurel Howat, Ldhowat@aol.com 562.810.5724

GATHERINGS

Antelope Valley

Carmen and Magic Flute
Sunday, November 9, 2-4:30 pm
43422 25th St. W., Lancaster
Dr. Harald Krueger 661.728.0671

Beverly Hills

Magic Flute
Sunday, January 11, 10 am
2712 Monte Mar Terrace, Los Angeles
Millicent Gappell 310.836.4676
Anne Russell Sullivan 323.697.9733

Claremont

Carmen
Sunday, October 26, 2-5 pm
Patricia O'Donnell 909.447.5038
Magic Flute
Sunday, November 16, 2-5 pm
Patricia O'Donnell 909.447.5038

Orange County

Carmen and Magic Flute
Sunday, October 26, 2-4:45 pm
5405 Camino de Bryant, Yorba Linda
Claire Chambless 714.533.4186

San Fernando Valley

Carmen and Magic Flute
Sunday, October 26, 3-5:30 pm
11615 Canton Place, Studio City
Jackie Johns 818.980.5743

San Gabriel Valley

Carmen
Tuesday, November 11, 7-9:30 pm
5278 La Canada Blvd., La Canada
Michael Sholer 818.502.1988

Santa Clarita

Carmen
Monday, November 17, 7 pm
Kathy Crandall 661.255.9661
Magic Flute
Monday, January 12, 7 pm
Kathy Crandall 661.255.9661

South Bay

Location, date and time to be arranged
Please call for information
Bob Lerner 310.543.4544

Southeast

Carmen
Monday, October 27, 7 pm
Whittier Public Library
7344 South Washington Ave., Whittier
Carlos Rodriguez 562.692.5577

Ventura County

Carmen
Sunday, October 19 2-5 pm
690 Mesa Drive, Camarillo
Ann Randall 805.445.8250

Hollywood/Hancock Park and Westside

No Gatherings scheduled for these operas.
You are encouraged to attend another location.

invitations

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

Opera League Seminar

Carmen and The Magic Flute

Saturday, November 1,
9:30 am - 12:30 pm

at the
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion
5th floor salon

135 North Grand Avenue
(Enter under the outside stairs on Grand, then take the elevator to the 5th floor)

Carmen: Dr. Simon Williams;
The Magic Flute: Dr. Mitchell Morris

Tickets at the door: \$35
(or a voucher for Members)
Your mailed reservations must be received by October 25.

Number of Seminar Tickets

___ x Member (or voucher) @ \$25 \$ _____
___ x Non-member @ \$35 \$ _____
___ x Student member @ \$10 \$ _____
Total \$ _____

Carol Vaness Master Class

Thursday, December 11, 7 pm
at the

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion
4th Floor Artist's Entrance

135 North Grand Avenue

Doming-Thornton Young Artists

Tickets at the door: \$35
(or a voucher for Members)
Your mailed reservations must be received by December 6.

Number of Master Class Tickets

___ x Member (or voucher) @ \$25 \$ _____
___ x Non-member @ \$35 \$ _____
___ x Student @ \$10 \$ _____
Total \$ _____

"Opera Goes to the Movies" Musicale

Saturday, December 13, 7 pm
at a home in the
San Fernando Valley

You will receive directions to this musicale in your self-addressed stamped envelope. Your mailed reservations must be received by December 6. See the article on page three for more information.

Number of Musicale Tickets

___ x Member (or voucher) @ \$35 \$ _____
___ x Non-member @ \$45 \$ _____
___ x Student member @ \$10 \$ _____
Total \$ _____

SEMINAR ORDER FORM (Please return this entire page with your order.)

Check the number of tickets you wish to order, then enclose your check, credit card info, or voucher(s) for the total amount. Make your check out to the **Opera League of LA**. Enclose a *self-addressed stamped envelope* so the tickets and other information may be mailed back to you. *Sorry, no refunds!* Mail to: The Opera League of LA, P. O. Box 65918, Los Angeles CA 90065-0918

Be sure you have indicated (on the forms above) the number of tickets you want for each event.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

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

Credit Card # _____ Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

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

Guilt-Free Shopping!

by Rebecca Bowne

Yes, that's at the Opera League Boutique, where 100% of all net proceeds are donated to LA Opera's Community and Education Programs. Specifically, last season's earnings of over \$70,000 will help to fund the two admission-free student matinees of *Carmen* for close to 6,000 school children. Now in the fifth season, the Opera League Boutique, located on the Grand Avenue side of the lobby during performances, is the major fundraising project for the Opera League.

- The boutique features many unique items such as:
- American wearable art by artist Susan Carli
- Hand-woven scarves, shawls, and capes
- Reversible travel raincoats inside a packing purse
- Decorative purse hooks
- Carol Kent jewelry
- Valarie Guignon silk capes
- Suzanne Visor Painted Sky scarves
- Mila Gokhman beading
- Georgina Estefania knit jackets.

Opera League computer graphics artist May Wang created a unique "opera season" ladies top with seven individual heart-themed designs representing each of the "non-Wagner" 2008 - 2009 LA Operas. In 2009 and 2010, the boutique will offer opera tops for each of the Ring Cycle productions.

A special product added last year are "gently used" opera CDs, DVDs, videos and books. These are donated by opera fans who purchased one too many copies or have recently edited their collections. Also, Dr. Armin and Barbara Sadoff watch library and book store sales to provide wonderful donations.

These value-priced items sell at less than the Amazon "used" prices! Stop by before the performance or at intermission to check them out, but they do sell quickly. If you have opera music or books to donate (in good condition), bring them with a written list to the boutique and you will be mailed a tax-deductible receipt for the value of the sales. It's "win-win" to share and recycle your collection!

Prices at the boutique are kept especially low with the all-volunteer staff and without typical shop "overhead" expenses for space, courtesy of LA Opera and LA County Board of Supervisors. Nine volunteer managers, all League Board members, conduct the business and operational aspects of ordering, pricing and displaying, while over 40 League volunteers staff the boutique. This project only succeeds if you do your part: BUY goods or gifts, VOLUNTEER your time or DONATE opera DVDs, books or music — or all three! We are open pre-performance and during intermissions. The Boutique also serves as an Opera League information and social gathering place in the lobby for League members to interact and discuss the opera. Stop and support your Opera League and the Los Angeles Opera!



Mae Wang, designer of the Season T-Shirt

Photo: Judy Lieb

Winners of the Opera League Board of Directors "Ring Contest"

In May 2008, President Dorothy Wait challenged members of the Board of Directors to submit ideas that the League could plan and execute prior to and during the Festival Los Angeles Opera is planning around the 2010 Ring Cycle. Twelve ideas were submitted by the August 1st deadline.

The overall winner is our treasurer, **Edmund Shaff**. Ed suggested that a concierge service be provided for attendees to the Ring Cycle. This service would help out of town visitors with other activities while visiting Los Angeles to attend the Ring. Festival partners would assist in making information available.

Runner-up proposals are:

- A special showing of Tony Palmer's film of Wagner's *Life* (with the producer present), suggested by **Brita Millard**
- A Ring Cooler Bag that could be stocked with snacks, suggested by **Dale Ross**
- Bicycle (or perhaps motorcycle) fun runs—circular races around LA during the Festival, suggested by **Anne Russell Sullivan**
- Cell phone "Ring" tones, suggested by **Anne Russell Sullivan**

- Additional seminars that could also be open to the general public, suggested by **Nina Haro**
- A Ring quiz, suggested by **Wendy Van Haerlem** will be a part of the February 14 seminar
- A contest for Opera League members to cast their ideal Ring with Hollywood stars and the results published in *Bravo*, suggested by **Dale Ross**

The proposals were blind-read and reviewed by a committee consisting of Dr. Stacy Brightman and Jean Oelrich of LA Opera; Dorothy Wait and Dr. Judy Lieb of the Opera League.

The Opera League and Los Angeles Opera will review and investigate the feasibility of implementing the above programs as plans for the Festival are finalized. Several other ideas submitted were either not feasible at this time or already being planned by Los Angeles Opera and their Festival partners.

Everyone who submitted a proposal will receive an Opera League voucher that can be used to attend one of our events. Runner-ups will receive *The Ring Without Words* CD and the overall winner will also receive a gift certificate.

behind the scenes

Over 99% of the Audience Is Unaware of His Existence

By Bob Bernard

Felino Jason Vasquez chose Los Angeles Opera. He, while enjoying a performance of *Pagliacci* in 1997, opened his program to the page that listed Los Angeles Opera's staff and, noting the names of Plácido Domingo and Patricia Mitchell (then Executive Director) at the top of the page, decided these must be the people to contact for a position. Mr. Domingo being out-of-town at that time, Jason walked into the Artist Entrance the next day and informed the security guard that he was there to see Ms. Mitchell.

Executive Director Mitchell interviewed him and accepted his offer to work as a volunteer. After sampling the Education and Production departments, Jason settled into Music Administration, steadily progressing from volunteer duties to contract work, then to hourly status, and finally to salary, all the while completing the requirements for a degree in Music as a Vocal Arts major at Loyola Marymount University in 2000. We see his name on Los Angeles Opera's website as: Assistant Librarian.

For those of us who think an Assistant Librarian's job is to ensure that the second violinist doesn't find the trombone score on his/her music stand, a conversation with Mr. Vasquez is an expeditious way to be disabused of this prosaic notion.

Los Angeles Opera's Library, generously endowed by the Los Angeles Philanthropic Committee For The Arts, serves as both an unparalleled resource for singers and a high-tech laboratory for organization and manipulation of orchestral scores.

As an audio resource, the Library boasts of over 8,000 opera CDs. A singer has only to make a selection



Felino Jason Vasquez at his keyboard

and then sit down with the CD and headphones to begin preparation for a role. As a written resource, the Library continues to acquire what has to be the most comprehensive study tool for a singer in the operatic world: the *Opera Libretti Translation Series*, by Nico Castel.

Mr. Castel, once a tenor comprimario with the Met and now on the faculties of both Juilliard and Mannes College, The New School For Music, has guaranteed his immortality by compiling this series of libretti that include:

- A word-by-word translation of every vocal line, including a pronunciation guide
- A paraphrase of whatever lines require an idiomatic interpretation

At present, Los Angeles Opera possesses Castel's volumes of Verdi, Puccini, Mozart, Wagner, and the French repertoire.

The high-tech area of Los Angeles Opera's Library is based upon (no surprise here!) computers. Jason's work

station uses a keyboard that is literally a KEY board, just like a piano. It is at their two work stations where Jason and Music Administrator/Librarian Robert W. Jones prepare orchestral scores.

Work begins with the purchase of a Kalmus Classic Series score, the Kalmus series being inexpensive reprints of what is in the public domain. If the coming production is rented and has an orchestral score included in the package, a line-by-line comparison between the Kalmus score and the rented score is made, the purpose being a search for errors. When differences are noted, the presumption is made that the rented score, which would have been tested, is correct. In any case, our Los Angeles Opera Library begins anew, printing a fresh set for our orchestra to begin working with.

Now, much as Siegfried worked on his sword *Notung* until that "neidliche Schwert" was primed to split an anvil, a typical score is redefined by beating on it through a progression of:

Continued on page 8

Behind the Scenes (cont'd. from page 7)

- Orchestra Sight-Readings (3)
- Sitzprobe(n) (1 or 2)
- Technical Rehearsals (3), and, of course,
- Final Dress Rehearsal, until Maestro Conlon is satisfied that every bit of orchestral color, texture, and dynamics, accommodated to the Chandler's particular acoustics, will now be heard.

Of course, all of the aural modifications dictated by Maestro Conlon must be recorded and implemented. The note-taking is done by Jason, who sits immediately behind Maestro at orchestra rehearsals. To implement these directives, Messers Jones and Vasquez repair to their work stations. This process continues reiteratively on through all of the orchestra rehearsals.

The above task is another of Jason's essential, albeit untitled, responsibilities: Assistant to the Conductor. Besides these two different "hats", Jason also serves as Personal Assistant to Maestro Domingo (when the Maestro is in town), *making sure that all appointments are kept.*

Finally, putting on his Wagnerian Tarnhelm one more time, Jason occasionally turns into a chorister, having sung

in Los Angeles Opera's productions of *Fidelio*, *Otello*, *Don Carlo*, *Billy Budd*, *Parsifal*, and the Verdi *Requiem*.

With these multiple responsibilities, it was inevitable that, sooner or later, a conflict must develop: It did, on the occasion of a rehearsal for *Don Carlo*. Maestro Conlon, noticing a missing dynamic mark, stopped the orchestra, looked over his right shoulder and called out, "Jason" When there was no reply, Maestro tried his left shoulder, calling again, "Jason?" Finally Maestro appealed heavenward, "Jason!" At this point, Jason, situated at his position in the front row of the chorus on stage, stepped tentatively forward, replying, "Right here, Maestro," as the entire ensemble of orchestra and chorus exploded in laughter.

Felino Jason Vasquez:

- Officially: Assistant Librarian
- Sometimes: Member of the chorus
- Sometimes: Personal Assistant to Maestro Domingo
- Always: Assistant to the conductor for orchestra rehearsals

Over 99% of the audience is unaware of his existence, but a solid 100% of the audience is positively affected by his work.



135 North Grand Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90012

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

INVITATIONS ARE INCLUDED

- ★ Seminar – Nov 1
 - ★ Master Class – Dec 11
 - ★ Musical – Dec 13
- See p.5 for more information

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