

Labor Day Weekend Siegfried Seminar

By Ann Russell Sullivan

Kickoff the 2008-2009 LA opera season with our very first LA Opera League Seminar! Join professors **Simon Williams** and **Mitchell Morris** on Saturday, September 5, from 1 to 4 pm at the 5th Floor Salon in the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion as they explore Wagner's fascinating third chapter in the four opera *Ring Cycle*. **Dr. Allan Edmiston** will be the moderator.

Simon Williams, Professor and Chair of the Department of Dramatic Art at University of California Santa Barbara, has taught at universities on four continents, including the University of Regina, of Alberta, Cornell University and, since 1984, at UCSB. He will discuss the dramatic aspects of *Siegfried*. Mitchell Morris, Professor of Musicology at UCLA, will then share his incites regarding *Siegfried* as a musical drama. Both professors are familiar and welcome guests to our Opera League seminars. You won't want to miss this informative and entertaining afternoon. (See the "Invitation" on Page 5.)

And, Wagner fans, mark your calendars for January 30, when we are planning a full day brush-up seminar on the complete ring cycle in preparation for our "Spring Ring Festival." This seminar will introduce you to the last of Wagner's *Ring* operas, *Götterdämmerung*, and refresh your memories concerning *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, and *Siegfried*.

The third seminars for this season include a session on Handel's *Tamerlano*, our new production starring Maestro **Plácido Domingo**. This seminar is scheduled for a half day on November 15, 2009.

Save a half day on April 10, 2009 when our last seminar will explore Franz Schreker's *The Stigmatized (Die Gezeichneten)*. This will be Maestro **James Conlon's** fourth installment of LA Opera's *Recovered Voices Project*. This fabulous new production will mark the anticipated return of Anja Kampe, James Johnson, Robert Brubaker and Martin Gantner to our stage.

Our New Web Site is 6 Months Old

By Ed Shaff

The Opera League of Los Angeles website is now six months old and is fulfilling the goals set for it by Immediate Past President, Dorothy Wait. The idea of creating a website that would be the center of the League's communications network was presented to the OLLA Board by Dorothy in her first year as President. She appointed a committee of Board members to develop an overall plan for the website, to find a web designer, and to implement the plan. Under the chairmanship of Ed Lieb, the program moved forward. A design firm, Cannon Associates, was contracted to construct the underlying framework for the site. We brought the system on line in December 2008 and have been adding to it continuously. We feel we have now reached our goal, and that the site is the center of our communication network.

The heart of our web site is the "Membership Data Base." It is designed to provide a regular mail and e-mail communications system. Each member of the League has an account. which will

allow that member to have access to the features of the system: a method to place orders for tickets to the League's many events, renew memberships, and to keep up with the latest news of the League.

There is a "Calendar of Events" which shows all League Events, LA Opera performance schedule, listings of Gatherings for the various locations throughout the area, with dates, times, topics and speakers. The calendar is updated daily as new information is received.

If you haven't already taken advantage of the website, you are cordially invited to do so. It is extremely easy to log on to the site, as long as you know your user name and password. Every member has been assigned these two items by the Webmaster, Ed Shaff. If you don't know yours, send an email to webmaster@operaleague.org requesting your "log-on" information. It will be sent to you as soon as your message is received.

a word from our president



Judy Lieb, President

Dear Members and Friends,

As your new president I find that this is an exciting time to be a member of the Opera League. We have so many wonderful and fun opportunities for our members to grow in their knowledge and appreciation of opera. Watch our Calendar page in the "Bravo" and on our Opera League Web Site for listings of our upcoming events.

The League also continues to provide much appreciated volunteer assistance to LA Opera. Last year our marvelous volunteers had about 24,000 volunteer hours from July 1, 2008 to April 30, 2009 which has a value of \$546,960. And that figure does not include May or June!

The 2009-2010 season at LA Opera continues with the next two operas of *The Ring: Siegfried* and *Gotterdammerung*. We'll also see *The Elixir of Love*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Tamerlano*, and *The Stigmatized*—the fifth opera in LA Opera's "Recovered Voices" series. If you have not yet purchased tickets, I urge you do so soon. The season will conclude with three complete *Ring Cycles* in May and June of 2010. Also, our Opera League is a partner in the "LA Ring Festival," so we are planning some exciting events with our other partners during this period. More information about "Ring Festival" volunteer opportunities will be available in upcoming "Bravo's" and on our Opera League Web Site.

This past June, five of our directors retired from the board. I gratefully acknowledge their hard work and many hours spent enriching the Opera League: Rebecca Bowne, Past President, Golden Hanger Award Winner, Lead Boutique Manager, and Inspiration (and a former Volunteer Coordinator and Nominating Committee member, among other responsibilities); Millicent Gappell, Fundraising Chair and Beverly Hills Assistant Gathering Head; Alma Guzmán, former Hemmings Event Chair, Assistant

Community Education Chair (among other responsibilities); Stella Leonstini, South Bay Gathering Head and Volunteer Assistant; and Tadea Pylko, Boutique manager and Mailing Chair. They will be missed at our Board meetings, but we will see them at events as they continue their volunteer work in many areas.

I also heartily welcome our new directors; William Green, Paul Lippe, Judith Moses, Amalia Shebby, and Jacque Lyne Wallace. I know they will make great contributions to the League during their service on the Board.

As we move into the new season, I have several goals for this next year:

- Recruit and retain Opera League members
- "Go green" by increasing the use of our website and email for communication with our members, and create streamlined Board procedures.
- Continue to develop new fund raising opportunities (in addition to the Boutique) such as our current online auction of LA Opera props and pictures.

You can contact any member of the Board or request more information via email at info@operaleague.org or leave a message on our 24 hour message line at 213.972.7220. Since we do not have paid staff, an Opera League volunteer will respond to your inquiry in a timely manner.

Yours,
Judy

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As your League evolves electronically, we need your current email address so you can be kept up to date. So please send your e-mail address to info@operaleague.org. And, since we would love to have ALL members on our email list, send us your "second member" address also!

The Opera Volunteers Conference

By Rebecca Bowne

Nine members from The Opera League of Los Angeles met with volunteers from over 27 opera companies during July 9-12 in Santa Fe for a conference on "Volunteerism in Today's World." It was co-sponsored by Opera Volunteers International (OVI) and The Guilds of The Santa Fe Opera, Inc. Our Opera League delegates included President Judy Lieb, Rebecca Bowne, Nina Haro, Margi Mostue, Ernie and Anne Prokopovych, former board member and now "OVI Vice President for Outreach," Gerry Elijah, and Warren and Melody Schubert, OVI board members who now reside in Maine. Opera League delegates wore their volunteer appreciation tee shirts and "Season tees" from LA Opera productions.



Members of the Opera League:
Nina Haro, Rebecca Bowne, Ernie and Anne Prokopovych, and Judy Lieb
(plus Margi Mostue who took the picture.)

Stimulating morning workshops included highlights of volunteer projects, tips on advocating for the arts, a panel discussion on finding, rewarding and retaining volunteers, and effective methods of communication. Awards were given to individuals and guilds for projects of merit. Afternoons were reserved for enjoying the Santa Fe area. Evenings included a backstage tour of the theater workshops and grounds, followed by dinner in the tented "cantina," with a lively lecture by Desiree Mays prior to the charming performance of *The Elixir of Love*. The following evening, Natalie Dessay, dressed in a fuchsia gown and boots, jumped onto the stage emitting a scream to begin an exciting *La Traviata*. This was a very successful conference which provided extensive networking ideas from other guilds as well as grand opera entertainment.

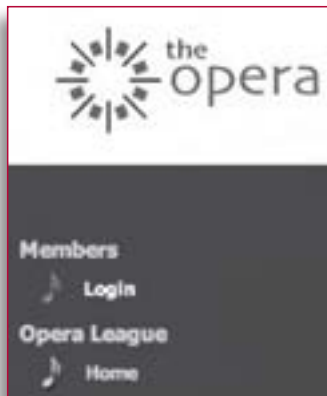


Members of the Opera League:
Gerald Elijah and Margi Mostue at
the OVI reception.

Photo: Judy Lieb

OLLA Web site - Continued from page 1

Logging into the website is easy. When you go to the Opera League website at www.operaleague.org, you will see the "home" page. The "Members Login" is at the top of the left column.



Opera League Web site,
Home page

When you click on "Login," you'll go to the next screen which will let you enter your User Name and then your Password.

When you click the blue "Login" button, you'll get more choices on the left hand side. That's all there is to it.



Opera League Web site,
"Sign In" page

You'll find many pages of interest to our members. And every month we continue to add new information about our Opera League events. So, hopefully, you will continue to visit our web site often!

calendar

August

Cast Dinner (at the DCP)

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 4th floor
Sunday, August 30 at 5:30 (Siegfried)
Contact Laurel Howat, Ldhowat@aol.com,
562.810.5724



A scene from Siegfried.
Photo courtesy LA Opera

September

Cast Dinners

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 4th floor
Saturday, September 5, at 5:30 pm (Elixir)
Tuesday, September 8, at 6:00 pm (Elixir)
Wednesday, September 16, at 5:30 pm (Siegfried)
Thursday, September 17, at 6:00 pm (Siegfried)
Saturday, September 19, at 6:00 pm (Siegfried)
Contact: Laurel Howat,
Ldhowat@aol.com, 562.810.5724

Opera For Educators

Saturday, September 26, 8 pm to 4 pm
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion,
4th floor
Contact: Wendy Van Haerlem,
vanhaerlem@pacbell.net



Opera League volunteers serving food at a Cast Dinner.

Photo: Laurel Howat

Antelope Valley

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

Beverly Hills

Elixir
Sunday, September 13, 10 am
2816 Tilden Avenue, Los Angeles
Mimi Rotter 310.479.0259
Anne Russell Sullivan 323.697.9733

Claremont

Elixir and *Siegfried*
Sunday, August 23, 2-5 pm
530 West 11th Street, Claremont
Patricia O'Donnell 909.447.5038

Hollywood/Hancock Park

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

Orange County

Elixir and *Siegfried*
Sunday, August 30, 2-4:45 pm
410 North Angelina, Placentia
Claire Chambless 714.533.4186

San Fernando Valley

Elixir and *Siegfried*
Sunday, August 30, 3-5:30 pm
5100 Quakertown Avenue, Woodland Hills
Jackie Johns 818.980.5743

San Gabriel Valley

Elixir
Tuesday, September 1, 7-9:30 pm
Siegfried
Thursday, September 10, 7-9:30 pm
5278 La Canada Blvd., La Canada
Michael Sholer 818.502.1988

Santa Clarita

Elixir
Monday, September 7, 7 pm
Siegfried
Monday, September 21, 7 pm
23710 La Salle Canyon Rd, Newhall
Kathy Crandall 661.255.9661

South Bay

Location, date and time to be arranged.
Please call for information
Ifang Hsieh 310.279.9927

Southeast

Location, date and time to be arranged.
Please call for information
Carlos Rodriguez 562.692.5577

Ventura County

Elixir
Sunday, September 6, 2 pm
520 San Clemente Way, Camarillo
Ann Randall 805.445.8250

Westside

Siegfried (two meetings)
Monday, September 14, 7:15-9:45 pm
Monday, September 21, 7:15-9:45 pm
585 Almar Avenue, Pacific Palisades
RSVP required for either date
Monika Whitaker 310.826.4743
Chuck or Alice Bragg 310.454.9662

invitations

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

Opera League Seminar *Siegfried*

Saturday, September 5, 2009, 1 to 4 pm
at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 5th floor salon
135 North Grand Ave.

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

Speakers: Dr. Simon Williams and Dr. Mitchell Morris
Moderator: Dr. Allan Edmiston

Refreshments will be served during the break.

Tickets at the door: \$35 (or a voucher for Members)
Your mailed reservations must be received by August 28.
Online reservations must be received by September 1.

Number of Seminar Tickets

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



*Scenes from Siegfried. Photos courtesy of LA Opera.
Bottom photo: Monika Rittershaus*

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

Remember, you can use our web site to order tickets for any Opera League event. Log on to **www.operaleague.org**, enter your User Name and Password, then click on the "Click Here" text in the description of in the event.
If you are mailing in a reservation, 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 form above) the number of tickets you want for this 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.

Our Wonderful Volunteers

By Judy Lieb

Last June our Opera League volunteers were honored during the Annual Volunteer Celebration in a rehearsal room at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. Every volunteer received a gift, enjoyed homemade light refreshments, and saw a slideshow of the events held throughout the year.

From July 2008 to April 2009, our volunteers donated about 24,000 hours which had a value to LA Opera of nearly \$547,000.

The program began with a welcome from President Dorothy Wait, then Gary Murphy, Director of Communications and Public Relations, LA Opera, greeted the volunteers on behalf of the Company.

We then had presentations from the Volunteer Chairs:

- Artist Services Bob Bernard
- Boutique Wendy Van Haerlem
- Cast Dinners Laurel Howat
- Education Fred Dear
- Light Walking Lynn Mitchell
- Mailing Tadea Pylko

The highlight of the evening was an interview with Stuart Canin, the concertmaster of the Los Angeles Opera Orchestra. Charles Stern was our interviewer.



Stuart Canin talking about his early days with interviewer, Charles Stern.

Stuart getting ready to play his Stradivarius violin.



Photos: Edward Lieb

Stuart told us many stories about his career, which started when he was very young.

In 1936, when Stuart was only 10 years old, his father took him to an audition to appear on Fred Allen's weekly radio show called "Town Hall Tonight." The show paid \$75 an appearance. (Stuart's father was then earning \$25 a week!) Stuart was accepted, and played a short composition on the show called "The Bee." Fred made an offhand remark that a 10-year old played better than "that 39 year old comedian out in California who can't even play on the linoleum!" Well, this remark began the "feud" between Fred and Jack that went on for many years.

Stuart went into the army at the end of World War II when he was about 19 years old. He took his violin with him and ended up playing at a banquet for Truman, Stalin, and Churchill during their Potsdam Conference in Germany.

He also talked about his years as concertmaster with the San Francisco Symphony and about the differences between an orchestra that plays opera music and concert music. He described the responsibilities of a concertmaster, which, surprisingly, is much more difficult for an opera performance.

Stuart then talked about what it was like playing on a Stradivarius violin ("simply marvelous!"). He finished the evening by playing several unaccompanied violin pieces, including "The Bee."

Don't Miss Out on the Ring Cycle!

As an Opera League member, you should have received a letter from LA Opera with a special offer. League members can take advantage of graduated payments when you order a *Ring Cycle*.

- Cycle 1 is from May 29-June 6, 2010
- Cycle 2 from June 8-June 16, 2010
- Cycle 3 from June 18-June 26, 2010

Order now for best seating as seats will be assigned in January. No single ticket sales are anticipated. You do not want to miss out on LA Opera's first *Ring Cycle* and support our company at the same time.

Wotan and Magic Fire in Die Walküre



Photo: LA Opera

Understanding What ‘The Fat Lady’ Said

By Bob Bernard

“DAS IST KEIN MANN!”

Siegfried’s exclamation—“This is no man!”—upon removing Brünnhilde’s breastplate at the onset of the third scene of Act Three of *Siegfried*, would likely — *if* projected as a supertitle — elicit some inappropriate giggles, perhaps even more so from those of us who already had in mind comedienne Anna Russell’s citing of what she declared to be the classic understatement of all time: “I mean: Have you seen the average Brünnhilde?”

The art of writing and displaying supertitles has evolved in just over twenty-five years. Iranian-born, UCLA graduate Lotfi Mansouri, then manager of the Canadian Opera Company, began it on this continent with a production of *Elektra* in Toronto in January 1983, projecting simultaneous translation of the libretto onto a screen above the proscenium. Beverly Sills introduced them stateside with a production of Massenet’s *Cendrillon* [Cinderella] in September of the same year at the New York State Theater.

This innovation, met with initial opposition from some critics and administrators. In remembrance of those who once shouted, “Get a horse!” at the pioneers driving one of Henry Ford’s early creations, we recall these initial reactions to the use of supertitles:

- 1) “a pathetic marketing grab for the fringe public” ... opera “is not a reading experience.” (Robert M. Jacobson, then editor of *Opera News*)
- 2) New York Post Opera Critic Clive Barnes called Beverly Sills “a philistine”, because of her introduction of supertitles...
- 3) “Over my dead body will they show those things at this house ... I cannot imagine not wanting the audience riveted on the performers at every moment.” (Maestro James Levine, in 1985)
- 4) “That device from Hell” (then Long Beach Opera General Manager, Michael Milenski, circa 1995)

With time, almost all opera houses are now pro-supertitles: The assuaged Maestro Levine’s concerns in 1995 by installing individual, switch-able screens on seatbacks, and Long Beach Opera, a bit slower, first used supertitles at its 2004 Summer Festival. Los Angeles Opera, recognizing a good thing immediately, used supertitles from its very beginning in the autumn of 1986.

Lola, the seductress in Adler & Ross’ “Damn Yankees”, accidentally summarized the state-of-the-art for creating supertitles with her show-stopping number [*Whatever Lola wants, Lola gets*]:

“You gotta know just what to say and how to say it.”

To the above, one must, if including the necessary adjunct of displaying the supertitles, add:

You also gotta know just when to say it ... and how quickly!

The “what” and “how” of supertitling was recently discussed with Dr. David Anglin, presently Associate Director of Opera and Vocal Studies of the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music at CSULB. Dr. Anglin [D.M.A. from USC] now has a personal supertitle catalog of thirty-five entries, most all them having been created during his tenure at LAO, beginning with *Otello* for the 1988-89 season.

Dr. Anglin, in discussing the “what” of supertitling, includes in his guidelines several recommendations of what not to translate:

Use as few titles as possible, allowing the exercise to be a listening, rather than a reading idiom

Eliminate as many adjectives as possible, because the music, good acting, etc. are ultimately the best way to describe something

Avoid introducing unintentional humor

[Right away, one can understand that “Das ist kein Mann” should not be translated!]

When more than one artist is singing/speaking, the “how” of a supertitle must be addressed:

Dashes may be used to distinguish between characters, a technique best used when the action is restricted to two people

Simultaneous singing is handled readily by left/right titling, providing the characters are sufficiently separated on stage

The audience is, of course, profoundly affected by the cueing — the “when” and the “how quickly” of supertitle projection. Cathy Miller, another classically trained artist [a Julliard grad, plus a degree in Collaborative Piano from USC], directs this task at LA Opera. Ms. Miller’s activity is largely accomplished in sequence:

- A rented set of Titles [LAO rents *The Ring* Titles from SFO] is converted from whatever format it is delivered in to MS-WORD or the like.
- Ms. Miller, working with a piano/vocal score, tentatively chooses the Titles to be used and annotates this score, indicating, now only the “when”, but also the “how quickly”, the degree of fade-in, fade-out, and/or cut [rapid switch] to be effected for each proposed Title.
- Using a software program developed by Corey Cooper for LAO, the set of Titles is loaded into the computer, which, in turn, will drive the projector.

Continued on page 8

Supertitles, continued from page 7

- Throughout the series of technical rehearsals, these initial annotations are revised, reiteratively accommodating inputs from LAO V-P C. Koelsch, LAO Production Stage Manager Lyla Forlani, the Stage Director, and the Conductor.
- For each performance, two people are on-station: Ms. Miller [Cathy alternates performances with Dr. Linda Zoolalian] in an alcove, secreted on the west side of the Pavilion, approximately at the Founders' level, and Curtis Carlson, operating the computer/projector apparatus in the Followspot Booth, located high atop Balcony B.
- Each succeeding supertitle is called by Ms. Miller and then executed by Mr. Carlson.

Now, having recently cued the titles for the amalgam of incest, love, eroticism, bliss, ecstasy, hubris, rage, redemption and reconciliation that is *Die Walküre*, we now look forward to Ms. Miller guiding us through the sometimes rapidly-changing dialogue and recitative of *Siegfried* and into its concluding duet between the world's greatest hero and Brünnhilde, the woman about to embark on her own odyssey of awakening love, betrayal, shame, vengeance, and redemption.



Cathy Miller, on station in the Chandler and ready to call supertitle cues.

Acknowledgements:

1) *Dr. David Anglin, Cathy Miller, and LAO Executive Technical Director Jeff Kleeman were roused out of their respective quiescent states this early summer — much easier than Wotan was able to awaken Erde — and gave generously of their time and experience to this article.*

2) *OLLA member Jim Eninger, facilitated the coordination of the interdisciplinary research for the material in this article.*



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INVITATION IS INCLUDED

★ Opera League Seminar
Siegfried

September 5, 2009

See p.5 for more information