

Wagner's *Lohengrin* and Verdi's *Rigoletto*

By Anne Russell Sullivan

Join us Sunday morning, November 7th, at 11 am, for our second Opera League Seminar, dedicated to Sherwin Sloan. Dear friends Michael Hackett and Simon Williams will discuss these well-beloved operas, and young soprano Ashley Knight will serenade us with selections from *Rigoletto*.

This time around our new Seminar price will be \$35 for advanced member reservations; \$45 for guests and for same day purchases at the door. Of course vouchers are still welcome to cover the cost of admission. New to our seminars this year is a wonderful optional boxed lunch provided by Patina, to be ordered in advance and now costing a very reasonable \$15.

Lohengrin brings us Ben Heppner in his LA Opera debut, together with Finnish soprano Soile Isokoski as Elsa. The cast also includes our Recovered Voices alumna James Johnson and the wonderful Dolora Zajick as Ortrud. Wagner's fairy tale opera of the Swan Prince, who saves the honor of a young Duchess in combat, betroths her, but ultimately leaves her to return to his sacred task of guarding the Holy Grail (like his father Parsifal before him), was a favorite of Wagner's young patron King Ludwig II of Bavaria. "Der Märchenkönig" ("The Fairy-tale King"), as he was dubbed later, built his ideal fairy-tale castle and named it "Neuschwanstein" ("New Swan Stone") after the Swan Knight.

Rigoletto stars baritone George Gagnidze in the title role and hunky Roman tenor Gianluca Terranova, both making their LA Opera debuts. Gilda will be the glorious Sarah Coburn, last

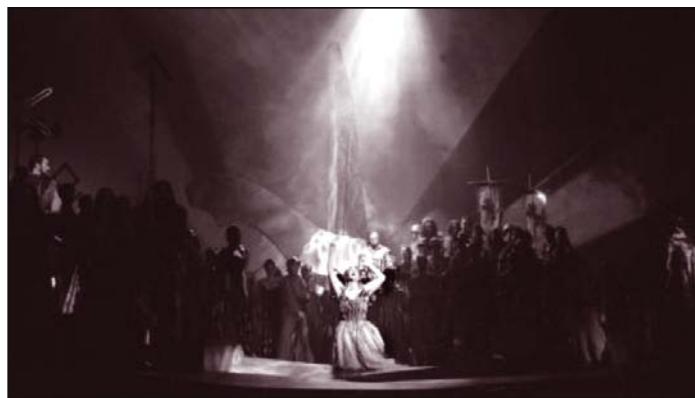


Photo: Ken Howard (LA Opera)

Production photo of "Lohengrin"

seen here as Asteria in *Tamerlano* and as Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. This opera needs no introduction, but it is interesting to note that the subject matter, based on Victor Hugo's highly controversial "Le roi s'amuse", was a very risky topic for Verdi and his librettist, Piave. They had to tap dance around the Austrian censors to get this story—about an immoral, cynical, womanizing Royal and his nasty, vengeful jester—on its feet in 1850 Venice.

Also interesting is the fact that *Lohengrin* premiered that very same year in Weimar, Germany. Will we explore the connections? Could be . . .

Sign up soon so you don't miss this engaging morning of music and musicology.

THE GRAVY OFF THE TURKEYS!!!

By Thomas Shepard

On that first Thanksgiving day, as every American knows, the pilgrims gathered in the spirit of celebration in thanks to their Creator for the bountifulness of their lot. And, of course, above the din of the cooking as they did the dishes, they could be heard singing their hearts out. Hymns . . . alright, one or two, mostly arias from their favorite great operas including a great duet from *I Puritani*, the Laughing Song from *Die Fledermaus*, Blanche's aria, "I Want Magic!" from *Street Car Named Desire*, and the final trio from *Der Rosenkavalier*.



And, of course, who could forget that glorious moment when the whole lot of pilgrims and pilgrimesses joined to do the whole 20 minute finale from *The Mikado*. (*The Fly*, however, they did not sing!!)

These are things every opera buff knows. HOWEVER, it is a little known fact that after the sun went down and the Indians headed back to their teepees, the pilgrims and pilgrimesses went down by the Blarney stone and—in secret by the camp fires of the dark November night—they covertly sang their favorite arias from really **BAD** operas. Yes, it's true. It's a guilty pleasure we all indulge in

Continued on page 6

a word from our president

Dear Members and Friends,

Opera League events and support for the company are in full swing with the start of the 25th Anniversary Season. Approximately 170 members and guests attended our *Il Postino* seminar on September 12. There were 12 Gatherings on *Il Postino* and *Le Nozze di Figaro* in August and September. Artist Services volunteers picked up, returned, and assisted artists. Hospitality volunteers hosted four cast dinners, and the Community and Education Committee assisted at Opera for Educators and the new program for students, "Opera Prep". The Boutique has been stocked with new merchandise, and planning for this year's social events is underway.

The Opera League hosted the Opera Volunteers International Conference on September 23-26. It was a very nice event, and members of the League were able to renew acquaintances with volunteers from 38 opera companies in attendance.

The Membership Committee designed and printed a new membership brochure, which will be available at the



Judy Lieb, President

Boutique and at all League events. Remember that a membership in the Opera League makes a great gift, and talking about the League with your friends is the best way to gain new members. Also, thanks to our members for being so patient during our recent membership database problems.

I want to extend my thanks to the companies who support the Opera League: Ace Rentals, Kasimoff-Blüthner Pianos, Miceli's Italian Restaurant, Ralph's Reward Program, and Uniworld River Cruises. 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.

See you at the opera!

Judy



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THANKS TO HELGA KASIMOFF

The Opera League thanks Helga Kasimoff for providing one of their Blüthner pianos for our seminars. If you want to know more about this company and its amazing tradition, go to their website at: www.kasimoffpianoslosangeles.com.

There you will find more about this most intriguing company, which weathered the trying times during World War II and afterward, and learn about the many famous people who have chosen this piano for their own use.



Accompanist Jeremy Frank at the Blüthner piano during our September seminar

Photo: Edward Lieb

Editor	Diane Gray
Assistant Editor	Edward Lieb
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If you want to be eligible for last minute benefits and Opera 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!

Master Class with Dolora Zajick

By Thomas Shepard

Please join us on Tuesday, November 23, at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion for a very special evening when the League in association with the LA Opera will present mezzo-soprano Dolora Zajick (pronounced ZAH-jick) presiding over one of the League's most acclaimed seasonal events, Master Class 2010. Ms Zajick will be taking time out from her busy schedule in her role debut as Ortrud in the current season's production of *Lohengrin* to coach young singers from the Domingo-Thornton Young Artist Program. It is a unique opportunity for opera lovers to gain insight into the intricate demands and the extremely high level of technical and artistic accomplishment required of the professional singer. And you can be sure that the lessons will be suffused with a vibrant sense of wonder, joy, and humor that are the special gifts this Diva always brings to her public.

Hailed as "THE Verdi mezzo of the day" (Opera News), Dolora Zajick has been internationally acclaimed as that rare voice type, a true dramatic Verdi mezzo-soprano. Oregon-



Dolora Zajick

Photo: John-Francis Bourke

born but Nevada raised, she studied voice with Ted Puffer, the conductor and former artistic director of the Nevada Opera, as well as professor at the Manhattan School of Music. She graduated from the University of Nevada with both a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in music, before going to New York for further music studies at the Manhattan School of Music. After winning the Bronze Medal at the 7th International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow and being accepted in the San Francisco Opera's

Merola Program, she made her major operatic debut with the San Francisco Opera as Azucena in *Il Trovatore*.

Ms. Zajick has previously appeared with LA Opera as Azucena in *Il Trovatore* (2004) and as Eboli in *Don Carlo* (2006). She will also be seen this season as Amneris in *Aida* at the Metropolitan Opera in the high-definition simulcast. (See the "Invitation" on p. 5).

Member Profile: John Spear

John Spear joined the League in the Olympic year of 1984, the year that he served on the Long Range Planning Committee of the Board. He was a member of the Opera League Board of Directors from 2005-2010. He has held many positions during his 5 years on the League Board, including Fund Raising, Overtures, Backstage Magic Chair, Nominating Committee Chair, Hotline, Assistant Artist Services Chair, and the Ring Festival.

In addition, John was one of the founders of "Opera Talks at Julienne's" and started "Opera Talks in Long Beach", which he hopes to continue this year, once a new location is secured.

John is a consummate volunteer. He has been a member of the Speakers Bureau (now called Community Educators) for many years and loves giving opera talks at various venues around town. He is a huge Jussi Björling fan and can tell you anything you want to know (and more!) about his favor singer. John is a good cook, and we enjoy his creations at cast dinners, remembering especially his smoked turkey at one memorable musicale!

John, we are so glad that you are a member of the Opera League!



Photo: Edward Lieb

John Spear helping at an Opera League Musicale

calendar

October

Opera Talk at Julienne's

Monday, October 4

Contact: Carol Sholer

LA Opera 90012

Saturday, October 9, 9 am - 2 pm

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 4th floor

Contact: Wendy Van Haerlem

Opera 101

Saturday, October 16, 8 am - 4 pm

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 4th floor

Contact: Wendy Van Haerlem

November

Opera Talk at Julienne's

Monday, November 1

Contact: Carol Sholer

Seminar: *Lohengrin* and *Rigoletto*

Sunday, November 7, 11 am

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 5th floor

See the "Invitations" page.

Opera for Educators

Saturday, November 6, 8 am - 4 pm

(*Lohengrin*)

Saturday, November 20, 8 am - 4 pm

(*Rigoletto*)

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 4th floor

Contact: Wendy Van Haerlem

Musicale: "Gravy Off the Turkeys"

Saturday, November 13, 2 pm

See the "Invitations" page.

Cast Dinners

Tuesday, November 9, 3:30 (*Lohengrin*)

Sunday, November 14, 5 pm (*Lohengrin*)

We expect a very large cast!

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 4th floor

Contact: Cheryl Dowden

Master Class with Dolora Zajick

Tuesday, November 23, 7 pm

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 4th floor

See the "Invitations" page

Opera Prep

Wednesday, November 17,

3:30 pm - 10:30 pm (*Lohengrin*)

Wednesday, November 24, 10 am -

4 pm (*Rigoletto*)

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion

Contact: Wendy Van Haerlem

Senior Dress Rehearsal

Wednesday, November 24,

10 am - 4 pm (*Rigoletto*)

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion

Contact: Wendy Van Haerlem

December

Opera Talk at Julienne's

Monday, December 6

Contact: Carol Sholer

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Education:

Wendy Van Haerlem

Phone: 714.998.4815

email: vanhaerlem@pacbell.net

Cast Dinners:

Cheryl Dowden

Phone: 323.255.0265

email: cheryld10@sbcglobal.net

Opera Talk at Julienne's:

Carol Sholer

Phone: 818.243.1818

email: csholer1@earthlink.net

Call Julienne's at 626.441.2299, to make a reservation, \$10, and to order a "Light Supper Box", \$10.

Antelope Valley

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

Beverly Hills

Mimi Rotter 310.479.0259

Anne Russell Sullivan 323.697.9733

Lohengrin and *Rigoletto*

Sunday, November 14, 10 am

2816 Tilden Avenue, Los Angeles

Claremont

Patricia O'Donnell 909.447.5038

Lohengrin

Sunday, November 14, 2-5 pm

530 West 11th Street, Claremont

Rigoletto

Sunday, November 21, 2-5 pm

Location TBA

Hollywood/Hancock Park

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

Orange County

Dianna Penza 949.348.2453

Sandy Persky 714.969.0589

Lohengrin and *Rigoletto*

Sunday, October 24, 2-4:45 pm

410 North Angelina, Placentia

San Fernando Valley

Regi Merwin 818.400.2578

Lohengrin and *Rigoletto*

Sunday, November 7, 2:30-5:00 pm

11615 Canton Place, Studio City

San Gabriel Valley

Michael Sholer 818.502.1988

Lohengrin and *Rigoletto*

Tuesday, October 26, 7-9:30 pm

5278 La Canada Blvd., La Canada

Santa Clarita

Kathy Crandall 661.480.9661

Lohengrin

Monday, October 25, 7 pm

Rigoletto

Monday, November 22, 7 pm

23710 La Salle Canyon Rd, Newhall

South Bay

Ifang Hsieh 310.279.9927

Lohengrin and *Rigoletto*

Tuesday, October 26, 7 pm

1437 East Oak Avenue, El Segundo

Southeast

Carlos Rodriguez 562.692.5577

Lohengrin and *Rigoletto*

Please call for the date, time, and location

Ventura County

Ann Randall 805.445.8250

Lohengrin and *Rigoletto*

Please call for the date, time, and location

Westside

Monika Whitaker 310.826.4743

Chuck or Alice Bragg 310.454.9662

Lohengrin and *Rigoletto*

Monday, November 1, 7:15-9:45 pm

585 Almar Avenue, Pacific Palisades

invitations

Opera League Seminar *Lohengrin and Rigoletto*

Dedicated to Sherwin Sloane,
founder of the Opera League Seminars

**Sunday, November 7,
11:00 am to 1:30 pm**

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion
135 North Grand Avenue

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

Speakers: Michael Hackett
and Simon Williams

Moderator: Dr. Allan Edmiston

Soprano Ashley Knight will perform
selections from *Rigoletto*

A box lunch (vegetarian or meat/fish)
will be available for \$15

Advanced orders, \$35 (or a voucher) for
members, \$45 for guests

Same day purchase at the door, \$45

Your order must be received by
November 2

Musicale: "Gravy Off the Turkeys"

In the spirit of the Pilgrims,
we will hear
favorite arias from really
BAD operas

**Saturday,
November 13, 2 pm**

At a lovely home in the
westside

(Location information will
be emailed to you)

Advanced orders, \$35
(or a voucher) for members,
\$45 for guests

Same day purchase at the
door, \$45

Your order must be received
by November 8

Master Class with Dolora Zajick

Ms. Zajick will coach a small
group of Domingo-Thornton
Young Artists

**Tuesday,
November 23, 7 pm**

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion
135 North Grand Avenue

*(Enter at the Artist's Entrance on Grand,
then take the elevator to the 4th floor)*

Advanced orders, \$25 (or a
voucher) for members, \$35 for
guests

Same day purchase at the door,
\$35

Your order must be received by
November 18

EVENT ORDER FORM

Seminar Tickets

___ x Member (or voucher) @ \$35...\$ _____
 ___ x Non-member @ \$45.....\$ _____
 ___ x Student member @ \$10.....\$ _____
 ___ x Vegetarian box lunch @ \$15....\$ _____
 ___ x Meat/Fish box lunch @ \$15.....\$ _____
 Total.....\$ _____

Musicale Tickets

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

Master Class Tickets

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

You can order tickets for any Opera League event using our web site, www.operaleague.org. Log in with your User Name and password, then click on the "Click Here" link for the tickets you want to order.

For orders by mail, use this form. Check the number of tickets you wish to order, then enclose your check, credit card info, or voucher(s) for the total amount. (Vouchers are valid for seminars, master classes, and musicales.) A confirmation of your order will be emailed to you.

Tickets to all League events will be held at the door. Sorry, no refunds! Mail this order form to: Opera League of LA, P.O. Box 8266, Calabasas, CA 91372.

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

African-American Performers of Classical Songs and Opera

By Michael Melton

As far back as the beginning of the nineteenth-century, long before the beloved contralto, Marian Anderson, made her debut in January of 1955 as the first African-American to perform on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera House, there were many great black performers of operatic arias and songs. These singers left legacies which paved the way for Anderson and many other great black singers who followed. Among these were artists like Elizabeth Taylor-Greenfield (1820-1876), who performed for Queen Victoria with a voice spanning three octaves, and Marie Selika (1849-1937), the first black classical singer to perform at the White House. By the end of the nineteenth-century and during the second decade of the twentieth-century, the two most famous African-American performers of classical music were Sissieretta Joyner Jones (1869-1933) and Roland Hayes (1887-1977).

Matilda Sissieretta Joyner Jones studied at the Providence Academy of Music and the New England Conservatory of Music. Jones made her debut in New York City in 1888. In subsequent years, in addition to performing throughout Europe, Africa, South America, and Australia, the soprano gave recitals at the White House for Presidents Harrison, Cleveland, McKinley, and Theodore Roosevelt. Antonin Dvorak wrote a solo aria in his Symphony No. 9, "The New World", for her. Sissieretta Jones continued to perform until her retirement in 1918.

Roland Hayes, tenor, born in Georgia, was a definitive interpreter of the Negro spiritual and he helped to champion

these purely American songs to be included in the standard repertoires of many classical singers. Hayes made his debut in New York's Carnegie Hall in 1923, with a program that included arias and songs by Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Monteverdi, Berlioz, Wolf, and Glinka. Prior to his breakthrough New York concert, he had received great critical acclaim in 1922 after his Buckingham Palace recital for King George V and Queen



Mary. Hayes also performed in Washington's Constitution Hall during the mid-1920's before the Daughters of the American Revolution banned black performers at their auditorium.

In addition to his singing career, Roland Hayes discovered, researched, and arranged the music for hundreds of Negro spirituals. He continued to perform well into the 1960's, a few years after he attended a performance of Verdi's *A Masked Ball* at the Metropolitan Opera House, where there was featured a singer he had discovered and mentored in Philadelphia back in 1918, by the name of Marian Anderson.

Introducing "OPERA PREP", the New Student Education Program

By Wendy Van Haerlem

For years LA Opera has been one of the only opera companies providing fully-staged performances to secondary school students. They came by the busload and filled the hall. Recently, the \$400,000 price tag and budgetary concerns at the schools whittled the program down to a single performance. LA Opera's Education and Community Programs Department brainstormed with area teachers to create an innovative pilot program: "OPERA PREP"

Starting with *Il Postino* on September 21, 400 students, teachers and chaperones will attend each of the 7 final dress rehearsals of the 2010/2011 season. These smaller groups will offer the flexibility to meet the specific needs of each school, and LA Opera will still be able to enhance the opera experience for tomorrow's audience.

That's where our wonderful Opera League volunteers come in. We have been invited to serve as "Host-Ambassadors" for Opera Prep. Hosts will meet their school, escort the group to pre-performance talks on a variety of behind-the-scenes subjects (given by members of LA Opera staff), and then enjoy the dress rehearsal with the students.

Stacy Brightman, Director of Education and Community Programs, is pleased with how teachers have responded to the new program and especially in how it fits the trend in education towards career preparedness. According to Dr. Brightman, "The first two rehearsals are filled to capacity, and we are delighted by the schools' eager response to this opportunity".

If you are interested in volunteering as an Opera Prep Host, please contact Wendy Van Haerlem at: vanhaerlem@pacbell.net

We'll see you at Opera Prep!

'OperaTurkeys', continued from page 1

from time to time. Admit it. (Think of Dick's aria from Puccini's *Girl of the Golden West*!!)

So, in the same spirit of thanksgiving to the Creator(s) of just such gorgeous hits from truly bad operas, we invite you to our November 13th MUSICALE to discuss, debate, pontificate, and hear some of what we are calling THE GRAVY OFF THE TURKEYS! There'll be the usual cast of characters there for your entertainment: conductor and singer, platters of sweets, your best opera buddies from the League.

Last season's Musicales were sold out affairs so make your reservation now either by mail or on our website: www.operaleague.org

And come prepared to defend yourselves with your own personal GRAVY OFF THE TURKEYS!

Postmarked Los Angeles

By Bob Bernard

How does one write an aria for a protagonist who is inarticulate?

That was the problem facing composer Daniel Catán as he approached the situation in the plotline of *Il Postino* where Mario Ruoppola begins his metaphorically-powered journey, evolving from a barely-literate, rural villager into a writer who would inspire personal love and political action.

That question — and many others — was posed during ‘An Evening With the Composer’ at the home of Jay Galbraith and Ralph Ellis on July 23 (and then reprised as part of ‘Poetry, Postcards, and Pasta!’, the last installment of LAO’s Speaker Camp 2010, on August 25).

Addressing this question, Dr. Catán explained, “I’ve written something that is different from a typical aria: It is more of an accumulation of quirky stops and starts, with the Pablo Neruda character first singing something and Mario haltingly repeating and imitating the line. More than a tune, it is a rhythm. This continues until Mario, “jumping the gun”, takes the lead when the duet is repeated. Ultimately, of course, by the third act, Mario is singing ‘like a god.’”

Dr. Catán thrives in discussions such as the above that are rooted in a modified Socratic method, with himself as the perpetual responder and his audience as the collective questioner.

Il Postino has never been far from the mind of Maestro Catán for the past fifteen years. When he first considered this material as potentially suitable for an opera, he did nothing about it. He was deeply involved in finishing up the work on *Florenzia en el Amazonas*, and, as he puts it, “When you’re ‘married’ to one project, you don’t go around looking for an affair with another.”

Catán has come to appreciate the value of choosing operatic material that is based upon either a well-known novel or film. He has found that, if he begins with established subject matter, this gives him a useful “foot in the door” when presenting a project to an impresario. Moreover, this approach enables him to obviate the need for extensive, time-consuming character identification and concentrate, instead, on character development, allowing the audience’s prior knowledge to ‘fill in the blanks’, as it were.

When first considering the film, Dr. Catán admits to associating with the character Mario, the young postman. However, with the passing of time, he has found himself now being simpatico with the older poet, Pablo Neruda. This changed perspective inspired him to enlarge the role of the poet, having Pablo Neruda be transformed from a comprimario role into that of a co-protagonist, while taking care so as to avoid introducing any changes to the libretto that would contradict the

film’s primary story line. This character enlargement follows naturally with the depiction of a mature romance between Neruda and his wife Matilde: In the scene where Neruda is seen dancing with Matilde, Catán has written a tango for them.

As Dr. Catán continued to enlarge the Neruda character, it became obvious that the two poets were mirror images of each other, separated only by the years: Each now had his own love interest, and the opera begins with the attempted assassination of Neruda, and ends with the death of Mario. So it was most appropriate that, with Domingo assuming the role of Neruda, these two poets speak with the same tenor voice.

Maestro Catán recalled, “The voice I have always written for naturally is the soprano, it being strong and versatile. I have learned to use the tenor voice more carefully. Because it is so delicate, that is what drives the girls crazy.” (This brings to mind the aphorism: ‘Tenors get women by the score.’) The audience will then hear a finished product that blends these two voices, not separated so much as by range, but only by gradations of lyric versus dramatic.

With *Il Postino* as an opera, Dr. Catán has the benefit of drawing upon the resources of not only the novel and the film, but also the poetry of the historical Neruda. In one scene Domingo sings lyrics taken from one of these poems. The scene is “framed”, using the same front and rear projection technology as was employed for *The Wagner Ring*. The lyrics describe the sea (a Spanish masculine noun) repeatedly pounding against a rock (a Spanish feminine noun). Now, the projections will show these images coalesce, forming a web covered with foam, and the audience members will experience a combination of implicit, subliminal, and sensual messages limited in intensity only by each one’s imagination.

Writing the libretto for *Il Postino* has been a pleasure for Dr. Catán. Although he expressed admiration for independent librettists: “I like collaborating with a librettist, especially if he/she pushes you in a direction that you hadn’t thought of.” He then adds, “Librettists are a pain-in-the-neck. They write, perhaps, forty or so pages over a period of months and then either resist or are slow to implement changes. This way [writing my own libretto] I never lose an argument, I get my changes implemented instantaneously, and I don’t have to split paychecks!”



Opera League President Judy Lieb and Maestro Catán meeting at the Speakers Bureau Summer Camp

Photo: Bob Bernard

Continued on page 8

Postmarked Los Angeles, continued from page 7

Dr. Catán cited a piece of advice from one of his early professors—having to do with avoiding “up-staging”—that could have come from channeling W.C. Fields: “Never write for a child; never write for a chorus.” There are no child arias in *Il Postino*, but we can look forward to two choruses: One takes place on the beach as Mario is struggling to compose his first love poem for Beatrice: The chorus, a group of returning fishermen, echoes Mario’s thoughts. The second chorus is integral to the layering process that comprises the opera’s closing scene: the narrative of Beatrice and the vocal line of Neruda (singing lyrics as from a letter) merge with the soon-to-be-massacred assembly, who sing the *Internationale*.

Maestro Catán waxes enthusiastically when discussing the creative team assembled for this world premiere: Set and Costume Designer Riccardo Hernandez and Stage Director Ron Daniels. Mr. Daniels, a native of Brazil, has considerable experience directing Shakespeare and, as such, is of one mind with Dr. Catán when it comes to expediting the transitions between the many short scenes that make up a Catán opera. The

intervals between scenes will be minimalized, but the staging and direction will most definitely not be minimalist.

From an interview in the Chilean newspaper *El Mercurio* we learn that Hernandez was inspired by the ‘Blue Period’ of Picasso. Hernandez explains, “The idea is to suggest an island of exile. Capri is treated as if it were a floating isle, with a blue rectangle and three lemon trees.” Then, explaining further, “For Neruda, we see him with his classic cap and more relaxed colors, while for Mathilde Urritia, [the costume] is inspired by Christian Dior, without falling into extravagance.”

Los Angeles Opera stamps its postmark on *Il Postino*’s world premiere performance run in September and October. Then this operatic package is slated to be “forwarded” to venues around the world next year: first to the University of Houston’s Moores Opera Center in April; then to the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris in June; and, finally, to the Theater an der Wien in Vienna in December of 2011.

Acknowledgement: To Messrs. Galbraith and Ellis for supplying us with a DVD recording of Dr. Catán’s talk.



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- ★ Opera League Seminar
Lohengrin and Rigoletto
November 7, 2010
 - ★ Musicale — “Gravy Off the Turkeys”
November 13, 2010
 - ★ Master Class with Dolora Zajick
November 23, 2010
- See p.5 for more information