

Rossini's *Il Turco in Italia* and Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*

By Anne Russell Sullivan

Hello fellow Opera Leaguers! Thanks to you all, we had an amazingly successful November seminar on *Lobengrin* and *Rigoletto*. We renamed our seminars in memory of the much loved Sherwin Sloan. Our favorite speakers, Michael Hackett and Simon Williams, educated us, while soprano Suzan Hanson (last year's Pat Nixon and this season's *Medea* for LBO), accompanied by our fabulous Victoria Kirsch, serenaded us with aria selections from both operas. We had over 135 in attendance, and more than 90 enjoyed our new boxed lunch selections.

Next up on Sunday February 13 at 10:30 am, we will be exploring Rossini's *Il Turco in Italia* with guest speaker Desiree Mays, Santa Fe Opera's Education Director and author of the "Opera Unveiled" literary series, together with Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* presented by Simon Williams. A surprise guest artist will sing for us, and box lunches will be available in choices of vegetarian or meat/fish at \$15 each.

Il Turco in Italia was first performed in La Scala, Milan on August 14, 1814. It is an opera buffa inspired by Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, which was performed at the same theatre shortly before Rossini's work and is equally hilarious in its masqueraded *ménage* of lovers.

The Turn of the Screw is a 20th century English chamber opera composed by Benjamin Britten. The libretto is based on the novella of the same name by Henry James. Many of you might be familiar with this story in its 1961 film adaptation,



Photo: Edward Lieb

Simon Williams at our last Seminar

"The Innocents," starring Deborah Kerr. The opera was commissioned by the Venice Biennale and given its world premiere on September 14, 1954, at the Teatro La Fenice, Venice. In two acts, the opera has a prologue and sixteen scenes, each preceded by a variation on a twelve-note theme. The music mixes tonality and dissonance, with Britten's recurrent use of the twelve-tone figure perhaps as a nod to the approach of Arnold Schoenberg. Thematically, the play gives a central role to a line borrowed from William Butler Yeats' poem, *The Second Coming*: "The ceremony of innocence is drowned." It is a deliciously disturbing tale of child possession and one brave Governess' attempt to rid her wards of their malicious ghosts.



Photo: Edward Lieb

Daniel Catán and Christopher Koelsch
at last year's "Preview"

OPERA LEAGUE PREVIEW 2011

By Janet Ciriello and Diane Gray

On Monday, February 7, 2011, the Opera League will hold the "Annual Preview" announcement of LA Opera's Season 2011-2012 at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel. We can all look forward to an afternoon of information, music and treats with other opera lovers and Los Angeles Opera League supporters. This event is a part of your membership in the League. Associate

members are allowed 1 ticket to this event., all other levels 2 tickets.

Maestro James Conlon will talk to us about the new season, and the Domingo-Thornton artists will perform musical selections.

Invitations for this annual festive and informative event will be mailed in January to all League members.

See you then!

a word from our president

Happy New Year! A heartfelt thanks go to all our volunteers who worked so hard to make our events so successful this past year, as we had so many with the Ring Cycle and Ring Festival. We look forward to our 30th Anniversary Year of the Opera League of Los Angeles in 2011!

We hosted an extraordinary Musicale at the beautiful home of the Stone's on November 13. Pianist Victoria Kirsch and tenor Daniel Montenegro performed famous arias from less than successful operas. Daniel begins his Adler Fellowship at the San Francisco Opera this January. We wish him the best of luck.

This season, LA Opera's 25th Anniversary Season, the Opera League was honored to underwrite the production of *Lohengrin*.

The Opera Prep Program, with help from Opera League volunteers, has been a great success. This is the program that brings approximately 400 students to each dress rehearsal, and includes lectures before the performance given by LA Opera staff and musicians. Schools attending Opera Prep may also apply to the Opera League's Bus Transportation Fund if they need assistance getting to the performance. If you would like to make a contribution to this fund, send it to our treasurer, Anne Prokopovych at the P.O. Box address on this page.



Judy Lieb, President

I hope you had a chance to attend at least one of the many gatherings in private homes this past year. Check the calendar page for upcoming gatherings on *Il Turco in Italia* and *Turn of the Screw*. Neighborhood gatherings are a great way to learn and meet other opera lovers in an informal setting.

We hope to see you at upcoming League events during the next few months. Our 2011/2012 Season Preview will be held in early February. Our next Seminar will be on February 13. In March the Patron/Sustaining members event is planned and also we will hold our Backstage Magic event for Regular membership levels and above. A not-to-be missed Musicale will be held sometime later this spring, a special fund-raising event is planned for May, and our annual "Peter Hemmings Award" dinner will be held in early June.

See you at the opera!

Judy



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Send e-mail to: info@operaleague.org
24-hour League Message Line: 213.972.7220

Save the Date: May 21, 2011

On Saturday, May 21, 2011, the Opera League will present a "Casino Night" fund-raiser in honor of LA Opera's 25th anniversary.

It will be held at a hotel in Los Angeles where you can "gamble" for door prizes. There will be different games, all for fun and LA Opera.

You will receive an invitation to this very special event in the mail that will give you the details about this event.



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

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!

A Special Thank You to Boutique Donors

By Margi Mostue

The boutique team would like to thank all who have donated CDs, DVDs and books to the boutique. Dr. Armin and Mrs. Barbara Sadoff have been generous donors in the past. Last season and this season Anne V. Howell has been a regular donor. Cheryl Dowden, who is also very active in volunteering for our cast dinners, surprised us recently with a wonderful donation of nine Trader Joe's paper bags chock full of opera related books, CDs and DVDs.



League volunteers Mary Riggs and Margi Mostue at the Boutique

Photo: Judy Lieb

We price these donations using comparables on the internet, mainly Amazon Marketplace. We have books, CDs and DVDs as low as \$1.00 up to collectibles of about \$50.00. Be sure to stop by the east lobby to browse our selection because it is constantly changing and some items sell quickly.

The past few years the boutique has been the major fund raising source for the Opera League. Last year we raised over \$58,000 from our boutique sales. One hundred per cent of our proceeds go to fund LA Opera's education programs. We are able to do this by having no overhead and an all volunteer staff. Receiving these donations of books, CDs and DVDs helps us achieve this success. Thank you, donors!

OPERA LEAGUE'S FUNDRAISER EVENT – SAN DIEGO OPERA

By Brita Millard

The Opera League of Los Angeles initiated a Fundraiser Pilot Program for the coming year. So far we have scheduled a trip to San Diego on Saturday, April 9, 2010, to attend a performance at the San Diego Civic Theater (at 3rd and B Street in downtown San Diego). Join us and experience *Der Rosenkavalier*, a rarely performed opera featuring the international renowned opera stars Ferruccio Furlanetto and Anja Harteros in their role debuts.

The lushly scored music of Richard Strauss' opera brings to life the story of the Marschallin, a beautiful neglected noblewoman, amidst the dazzling, 18th century opulence of the Austrian Empire. A torrid affair with her young lover brings her intense pleasure, but reinforces her fear of losing him, as well as her beauty and youth.

We have put together a package which includes your Opera ticket and a Backstage Tour, a round-trip Amtrak ticket and a hotel room at the beautiful Westgate Hotel in San Diego, just a few minutes away from the Opera House. Single occupancy \$510. Double \$410 per person. This rate includes a \$100 deductible donation to the Opera League of Los Angeles, per person. If you would like to sign up for the Cast Party (black tie), please add an additional \$140 per person to the package rate.

Please make your check out to "Brita Millard Pilot Program" and mail it to P.O. Box 492330, Los Angeles, CA 90049, along with your name(s), address, telephone number and email address. Any questions? Please call Brita Millard at 310-877-6285 or email her at bmillard_99@yahoo.com.

Backstage Magic

MONDAY, MARCH 14, 2011

LA Opera will provide Opera League members with another special evening of behind the scenes magic on Monday, March 14.

This year we will have another marvelous presentation by one of the people who work "behind the scenes" at LA Opera.

There will be a reception prior to the presentation.

This event is a benefit for membership levels of Regular and above.

Because space will be very limited on each evening, there can be no guests. An invitation will be mailed to you several weeks before the event. Reservations will be taken on a first-come-first-served basis.

IF YOU MUST CANCEL, please notify the League via the hotline (at 213.972.7220) or send an email to info@operaleague.org so that members on the waiting list can be accommodated.



"Tony Tubes" surrounding Brunnhilde (Linda Watson)

Photo: Monika Rittershaus

calendar

January

Opera 101

Saturday, January 22, 8:30 am to 4:00 pm

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 4th floor

Contact: Wendy Van Haerlem

February

Season Preview

Monday, February 7

At the Millennium Biltmore Hotel

Invitations will be mailed in January.

Saturday Morning at the Opera

Saturday, February 5, 8:30 am to noon

In the lobby of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion

Contact: Wendy Van Haerlem

Opera Talk at Julianne's

Monday, February 7

Contact: Carol Sholer

Opera for Educators

Saturday, February 12, 8:30 am to 4:00 pm

Il Turco in Italia

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 4th floor

Contact: Wendy Van Haerlem

Cast Dinners

Saturday, February 12, at 4:30 pm

(Turk in Italy)

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 4th floor

Contact: Cheryl Dowden

Seminar: *Il Turco in Italia* and *The Turn of the Screw*

Sunday, February 13, at 1 pm

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 5th floor

See the "Invitations" page.

March

Opera for Educators

Saturday, March 5, 8:30 am to 4:00 pm

The Turn of the Screw

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 4th floor

Contact: Wendy Van Haerlem

Opera Talk at Julianne's

Monday, March 7

Contact: Carol Sholer

March, continued

Cast Dinners

Thursday, March 3, 4:30 pm

(Turn of the Screw)

Saturday, March 6, 5:00 pm

(Turn of the Screw)

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 4th floor

Contact: Cheryl Dowden

Cathedral Project: *Noah's Flood*

Friday, March 18, 4:00 pm to 9:00 pm

(final dress rehearsal)

Saturday, March 19, 2:00 pm to

9:00 pm and 4:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Our Lady of the Angels Cathedral

Contact: Wendy Van Haerlem

Opera 101

Saturday, March 26, 8:30 am to

4:00 pm

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 4th

floor

Contact: Wendy Van Haerlem

Backstage Magic

Monday, March 14

Invitations will be mailed to

Regular members and above.

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 Julianne's:

Carol Sholer

Phone: 818.243.1818

email: csholer1@earthlink.net

Call Julianne's at

626.441.2299, to make a res-

ervation, \$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

Turco in Italia and *Turn of the Screw*

Sunday, February 6, 10 am

2816 Tilden Avenue, Los Angeles

Claremont

Patricia O'Donnell 909.447.5038

Turco in Italia

Sunday, February 6, 2-5 pm

150 N. Mountain Ave., Claremont

Turn of the Screw

Sunday, March 6, 2-5 pm

150 N. Mountain Ave., Claremont

Hollywood/Hancock Park

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

Orange County

Dianna Penza 949.348.2453

Sandy Persky 714.969.0589

Turco in Italia and *Turn of the Screw*

Sunday, February 6, 2-4:45 pm

5305 Camino de Bryant, Yorba Linda

San Fernando Valley

Regi Merwin 818.400.2578

Turco in Italia and *Turn of the Screw*

Please call for information on date and location.

San Gabriel Valley

Michael Sholer 818.502.1988

Turco in Italia

Monday, January 31, 7-9:30 pm

Turn of the Screw

Monday, February 28, 7-9:30 pm

5278 La Canada Blvd., La Canada

Santa Clarita

Kathy Crandall 661.480.9661

Turco in Italia

Monday, January 31, 5

(with get acquainted potluck, costume party)

Turn of the Screw

Monday, March 7, 7 pm

23710 La Salle Canyon Road, Newhall

South Bay

Ifang Hsieh 310.279.9927

Turco in Italia and *Turn of the Screw*

Saturday, January 2, 2 p.m.

933 Via Rincon

Palos Verdes Estates, CA 90274

Southeast

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

Ventura County

Ann Randall 805.445.8250

Turco in Italia and *Turn of the Screw*

Sunday, February 13, 2 pm

520 San Clemente Way, Camarillo

Westside

Monika Whitaker 310.826.4743

Chuck or Alice Bragg 310.454.9662

Turco in Italia and *Turn of the Screw*

Monday, February 7, 7:15-9:45 pm

405 South Cliffwood Avenue, Los Angeles, CA

invitations

Opera League Seminar

Rossini's *Il Turco in Italia*
and

Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*

Our League Seminars are dedicated to Sherwin Sloan, founder of the Opera League Seminars

Sunday, February 13
10:30 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: Desiree Mays
and Simon Williams

Moderator: Dr. Allan Edmiston

With a surprise guest singer.

Advance orders, \$35 (or a voucher) for members,
\$45 for guests or same day purchase at the door.

Box lunches (vegetarian or meat or fish) ordered
in advance for \$15 will be served
at the intermission.

Your order must be received by February 9.

Backstage Magic

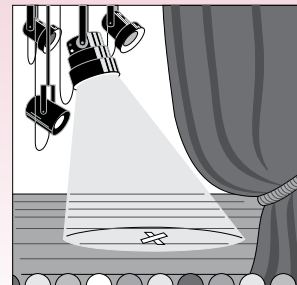
Monday, March 14, 2011, 6 pm

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion
135 North Grand Avenue

An invitation to this event will be mailed
to you in February.

This event is limited to Regular level
members and above (but no guests).

You will receive more details about this
event in the mailed invitation.



EVENT ORDER FORM

Seminar Tickets

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

Another Exhilarating Master Class

By Edward Lieb

For anyone who enjoys learning about what our young singers must go through to become a great singer, our Opera League Master Class is the place to be.

We were so fortunate to have Dolora Zajick (Ortrud in LA Opera's *Lohengrin*) be our master teacher for our latest Master Class. We all knew that she was a great performer, especially after seeing her in *Lohengrin*, but we were even more appreciative of her talents after watching her work with three of our Domingo-Thornton Young Artists: Yohan Yi, Alexey Sayapin, and Tracy Cox. Douglas Sumi was the accompanist.

Ms. Zajick let each singer perform a prepared aria, then began to work on the physical aspects of singing. We all know that you have to support the voice with your diaphragm and open your mouth wide for a good sound, but Ms. Zajick showed that you also have to "cheat" by using your tongue to help with the consonants so you don't have to close your mouth as if you were speaking. She also had the singers press down on her hands to accentuate the musculature required to support an operatic tone. "You have no idea how much strength it takes to be an opera singer!" she said at one point. Another comment, "You must support

BEFORE you begin singing". And probably her best line of the evening, directed to Tracy, "Chest voice is NOT a disease if you use it the right way."

Ms. Zajick is especially concerned about helping young artists. After the class, we all knew a little more about the effort it takes perfect this art! She has set up an Institute for Young Dramatic Voices, and believes that admittance should be based solely on merit and musical potential—regardless of ability to pay. Like the 2007 and 2008 workshop, the 2009 summer program was offered with free tuition to participants.

If you would like to know more about her institute, you can go to:

www.InstituteForYoungDramaticVoices.org

Thanks so much, Ms. Zajick, for a very marvelous and instructive evening!

Dolora telling us what it takes to be a singer



Josh Winograde introducing Dolora Zajick



Dolora helping Tracy Cox practice muscular support



Dolora helping Yohan Yi to open his mouth wider

Projections: In-House and Out-of-House

By Bob Bernard

We've lived with them for so long and enjoyed them, but painted backdrops have become an unnecessary, cost-ineffective anachronism.

The past spring's production of *Die Gezeichneten* manifested this with Projection Designer Wendall Harrington acting as catalyst. Ms. Harrington, unencumbered with false modesty, is sometimes referred to as 'The Godmother of Projection Design'. In an interview with Lucia Mauro for *Stage Review*, she revealed her predisposition as a Jungian, expressing her goal of "touching the collective unconscious." Working within the physical constraints of The Ring's stage framework and the financial restrictions of a low budget allocation, she added to her reputation as one who "illuminates the [composer's] vision."

A good example is the conclusion of the second act of LAO's production of the Schreker opera, the moment at which Carlotta reveals her just-completed portrait to Alviano. Reinforcing to the audience the impact of the portrait's impact upon Alviano does, indeed, "add new layers of meaning to the production, without overriding the [composer's] intentions."

One other example from *Die Gezeichneten*, this one illustrating how, even with accommodating the stage's steep rake, the layering of images enabled the projection of an orthogonal wall-to-floor relationship for this meeting room.

Photos: Robert Millard, LA Opera



Die Gezeichneten, Act 2



Back wall and floor projections in Die Gezeichneten

The use of projections continued with this season's premiere of *Il Postino*. The scenes of from Act 3 showing news of the poet's travels were communicated to the villagers of Cala di Sotto via television and were staged using a drop screen to facilitate audience involvement. The 'Neruda in Paris' scene, including the singing of Maestro Domingo (as Neruda), had to be performed live. This was done via a closed-circuit TV setup by establishing a mini-studio at Stage Left: lights, camera, a monitor (for Domingo to synchronize his singing with the baton of Maestro Gershon), and music stand were the essentials. Below is this scene, first from the audience's point-of-view, and then with Projectionist/Media Programmer Mike Ohsann standing in the mini-studio, illustrating where Domingo would be positioned during the scene.

Dual screen projections (front and rear) were used for *Il Postino*, with special care required for the front (downstage) scrim. LAO uses a pair of Christie projectors for this downstage



Live projection of Plácido Domingo (as Neruda)



Projectionist/Media Programmer Mike Ohsann

scrim — two units because the illumination power of just one of LAO's 18,000 lumen units is insufficient for the parameters and requirements of our house. These two projectors are focused — much as one would focus a rifle — using a grid pattern that is exercised prior to curtain time.

LAO has established the practice of both broadcasting its season's opening performance and recording it (and each succeeding production) for audio rebroadcast later in the season. To these elements of community outreach LAO added an (almost) live telecast of the October 9 performance of *Il Postino* to outdoor venues into downtowns of both Los Angeles and Costa Mesa. The camera arrangement used for these outdoor transmissions was that erected for Dr. Brian Large's filming of the October 5 performance, and these out-of-house transmissions were delayed simply because the cited performance was a matinee.

Essential to the above in-house projections and remote transmissions are, of course, a technical team that coordinates sight, sound, and their respective esthetic blending. Besides Projectionist Ohsann's work station, there are work stations at the Founders level for lighting and audio control, all working with and at the direction of the Stage Manager.



Fred Vogler (Audio Mixer) and Brad Cobb (Recordist)



Ryan Lebitsamer (Lighting Board Operator)

Those of us who enjoy re-living our in-house experience at LAO may now be confident that a DVD recording of the October 5 performance of *Il Postino* eventually will be available

Continued on page 8

Projections: In-House and Out-of-House, continued from page 7

for purchase. Dr. Brian Large worked as Video Director for this performance, adding to the litany of six hundred (plus!) fine arts recordings which he has supervised.

In conversations with Senior V-P Christopher Koelsch and Technical Director Jeff Kleeman, likely future directions for LAO in its use of in-house and out-of-house transmissions were discussed:

- Projector development and manufacture is an evolving discipline, driven by the demand (from opera houses such as ours) for evermore illuminating power. LAO, possessed of \$150K projectors must, as the industry changes, trade off the amortization of its existing equipment, weighed against new purchase of a new, more powerful, and (probably) more expensive model.
- The transmissions of that particular *Il Postino* performance will continue: A joint transmission to Guadalajara, Mexico City, and a third to-be-selected Mexican city is being planned. While continuing to stress operatic productions that are slanted for in-house

audiences, LAO is most amenable to the idea of out-of-house transmissions to local communities which have an indigenous interest in the production at hand.

- Dr. Large will return here in February to edit his filming of *Il Postino*. Following that, it is anticipated that the DVD release of *Il Postino* and *Tamerlano* (filmed and edited one year ago) will ensue in reasonably expeditious fashion, just as it has been the case for *La Traviata*, *Mabagomny*, and the Recovered Voices pair of recordings.
- Looking ahead, the remaining productions for this season will also use projections: *Il Turco* will use a simple rear projection or two, but for the Britten opera, we may expect the full complement of rear/front screen projections to add to the ghostly atmosphere.

Acknowledgement: Projections for *Die Gezeichneten* photos by Wendall Harrington



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★ Opera League Seminar
Rossini's *Il Turco in Italia*
and Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*
Sunday, February 13, 2011

★ Backstage Magic
Monday, March 14, 2011

See p.5 for more information