

Our First Two Seminars

By Anne Russell Sullivan

I am happy to report that our very first Seminar of the season was a wonderful success. We entertained more than 160 attendees, and fed over 130. Thank you all for your much appreciated support. Everyone in attendance was extremely lucky to have been enlightened by our fabulous speakers: Simon Williams, always amazing, who deconstructed *Così fan tutte* and convinced us all that Mozart and de Ponte wrote a 21st century opera in the 18th century; UCLA Professor Dr. Michael Heim, introduced us to the original Pushkin text, the foundation of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, recited by every Russian school child, but unfamiliar to most of us. Hopefully these delicious incites will enhance our opera experience tenfold. Of course we delighted in listening to aria selections presented by Young Domingo-Thornton artist Alexey Sayapin, accompanied by vocal coach Nino Sanikidze on a Kasimoff Bleuthner piano. As always we are so thankful to the Kasimoff family for providing us with their wonderful pianos.

Please join us again on October 23, 2011 at 10:00 am for a day of *Romeo et Juliette*. Our well beloved speakers, UCLA Drama Prof. Michael Hackett and UCSB Prof. Simon Williams will immerse us all in the story of the universal star crossed lovers. Our journey will transcend opera into film, drama, literature and beyond. You will not want to miss this amazing



Photo: Edward Lieb

Presenters, performers, and League members at our first seminar.
L to R: Nino Sanikidze, Alexey Sayapin, Anne Russell Sullivan,
Allan Edmiston, Diane Gray, Michael Heim, Simon Williams

experience. Their presentation will include audio and DVD presentations. Box lunches will again be available, and another young artist will entertain us with selections from the Gounod masterpiece.

Please support us in our efforts to provide you with exceptional seminars, designed to prepare you for your night or afternoon at the opera. The Opera League strives to equip its members with everything they need to insure that their opera experience is complete and extraordinary. Please take advantage of what we have to offer. And . . . see you in October!

Autumn Musicale

AN AFTERNOON OF ARIAS AND OPERA BUFFA BINGO!

By Thomas Shepard

In the past we've wowed you with costume themes, opera debate, data and Diva's.

You've heard that our Musicales always leave one a little richer in mind, aesthetic, and emotion. This time we're adding LOOT as well, in the form of bingo prizes.

Join us at a fabulous private home on Sunday, November 13, 2011, at 2 pm for our special afternoon of song, food, friendship . . . and BINGO!!!! (A special version of the game was designed by our own little Opera League elves on the theme of OPERA.) Our Musicale special event conductor and professional singer will be performing arias to inspire and compliment our game.

Our beautiful location is just minutes off the 110 freeway in San Marino with plenty of parking. Bring your competitive spirit and your stentorian voice, all-the-better to belt out your winning BINGO call.

Last Spring's Musicale with Diva Carol Neblett was sold out, so order your tickets early.

You can make reservations on our website, www.operaleague.org, or mail in your order using the Bravo "Invitations" page.



a word from our president



Diane Gray, President

American League, National League, Opera League. As I write this message, the baseball season is winding down and the opera season is just underway. Hopefully, most of you enjoyed LAO's productions of *Eugene Onegin* and *Così fan tutte*. During rehearsals for these first two productions OLLA will have served four cast dinners, serving just under 400 guests.

Our first Opera League Seminar on September 11th was a marvelous success. Over 160 persons shared a day filled with fabulous ideas and a box lunch. If you missed that seminar, try to attend our second Seminar on *Romeo and Juliet* which Anne Russell Sullivan has written about in this Bravo.

In the previous Bravo, I mentioned improving the accessibility to our website which Trevor Roper and Ed Shaff have been diligently working to upgrade. It is progressing nicely. Without having to log in, you may check out our Calendar, Membership Information, as well as Volunteer and Educational opportunities. You may also view our Seminar dates for the year and Gatherings in your area. We are looking at many ideas to make the website even more interesting and user friendly.

Our fundraising activities are gearing up for the new 2011-12 season. The Ralph's Rewards program is in its 3rd year so please

renew your participation. The bar scan can be found on our website. OLLA benefits with every Ralph's purchase. If you are interested in joining OLLA for a fun-filled trip to San Francisco in June, now is a good time to plan your calendar. Look for the "save-the-date" information in this edition.

You can get a taste of our sensational cookbook, "The Well-Plated Aria", when you look at the opening page of the website. Start salivating now! It will go on sale at the Boutique for the November 6th opening of *Romeo and Juliet*. It will also be available on the website. Think holiday gifts for friends and family!

By the way, do you have time on your hands or are you looking for a way to get involved in opera? Volunteer opportunities abound with OLLA. Look at our website under the heading "Volunteer".

More activities are in the works including our first musicale in November, the annual Preview event early in 2012, Backstage Magic, a Master Class, plus more!

Final thought: Buy a ticket; take a friend to the opera; **SUPPORT LAO.**



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Visit us at www.operaleague.org

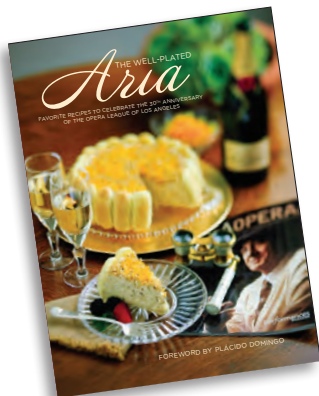
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Assistant Editors	Edward Lieb, Janet Ciriello
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OPERA LEAGUE COOKBOOK ON SALE IN NOVEMBER!

The Opera League's cookbook, "A Well-Plated Aria," will go on sale at the Boutique in time for the holidays. Contributors to this collection of favorite recipes include League members, opera artists (including Plácido Domingo and James Conlon), LA Opera Board members, and LA Opera staff members. It also includes artists' photos. You will be proud to own a copy and to give it as gifts to family and friends! The selling price will be \$30.



“Casino Night” Wrap-up

On May 21, 2011 the Opera League put on a first-time-ever Casino Night event and silent auction in honor of LA Opera’s 25th Anniversary. On June 6 at the League’s Board meeting we presented a check for \$13,327 to Christopher Koelsch, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, along with Stacy Brightman, Education and Community Programs Director. The fund is designated for the in-school opera program, that will bring a nine-week opera workshop and performance to students in 10 schools this coming season.

There were 5 opportunity drawing prizes, including a week at a New York condo near Lincoln Center. Everyone had at least 2 tickets in the drawing as part of his registration fee and additional tickets were traded in for remaining chips at the end of gaming. Forty fabulous prizes were donated for the silent auction including opening night tickets and gala activities from LA Opera, and vacation stays at condos in Hawaii and Del Mar. The poker tournament’s grand prize was an iPad2 donated by LA Opera Board Chairman Marc and Eva Stern.

In addition to typical gambling games of black jack, craps and roulette, there was a special buy-in poker tournament and tarot card readings. Generous table sponsors were able to select an opera that the decorating committee used to create charming posters placed by the gaming tables.

As impressive as the numbers are they don’t tell the

whole story. Here is a line from committee member Thomas Shepard, “The room was crackling with excitement and wild laughter till the end.” I have a mental snapshot of the end of the evening with everyone gathered around the silent auction area where the poker tournament prizes and opportunity drawing prizes were awarded. There was such an air of excitement and cheering as the names were called, and some of us will never forget the fun of seeing the least likely people rolling craps with such abandon!

So many people contributed to the evening’s success. First and foremost, the committee of Diane Gray, Judy Lieb, Brita Millard, Anne Prokopovych, Thomas Shepard and Anne Russell Sullivan expended enormous energy and countless hours bringing this to fruition. The decorating committee included Chair Kathy Crandall with important creative help from Bob Bernard, Regi Merwin, Judith Moses, Hiroko Seki-Blanco among others. A core group of LA Opera’s staff was of great help with government regulations and promotion. In addition to those mentioned above, our wonderful Board and League volunteers helping at the event were Norm Cadman, Fred Dear, Carol and Dan Donlan (and Elbert), Monica and Trevor Roper, Susan Heard, Ed Lieb, Margi Mostue, Ernie Prokopovych, Ed Shaff, and May Wong.



A few of the 40 “silent auction” prizes



Winning for the in-school opera program



Posters created by May Wang, Bob Bernard, and Kathy Crandall’s committee.

AALAO Father’s Day Event

By Dorothy Wait

The annual African-American for LA Opera Father’s Day and membership renewal event, held at the lovely Hancock Park home of Ben and Dolores Kerr, topped all previous attendance records on June 19th, when well over 100 folks were fortunate enough to be there. The Kerrs have been hosting this event for at least 15 years. Soprano Angel Blue, accompanied by Cathy Miller

Popovic, performed operatic arias, Zarzuela, gospel, and pops music that left the audience cheering. As many of you recall, Ms. Blue was a LA Opera Domingo-Thornton young artist. She was a finalist in Operalia, 2009, receiving 1st place in the Zarzuela competition and 2nd place in the Opera competition. Ms. Miller has been a part of LA Opera for many years as pianist, Supertitle Administrator, and currently as a



Left to right: Ben Kerr, Eva Grant, Angel Blue, Dolores Kerr, Diane Gray

conductor of the Elementary In-School programs for the Education Department. After the performance, the AALAO Board and other members provided the audience with a delightful reception.

calendar

October

Opera Talks at Julienne's

Monday, October 3, 7 pm

Contact: Carol Sholer

Opera Talks in Long Beach

Saturday, October 8, 2 pm (*Romeo and Juliet*)

At the El Dorado Library

Contact: John Spear

Opera for Educators

Saturday, October 1 (*Romeo and Juliet*)

Saturday, October 29 (LAO 90012 orientation)

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 4th floor

Volunteers, contact: Larry Verdugo

Opera 101

Saturday, October 22, 9 am to 3 pm

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 4th floor

Volunteers, contact: Larry Verdugo

Cast Dinner

Saturday, October 29, 5:30 pm (*Romeo and Juliet*)

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 4th floor

Volunteers, contact: Cheryl Dowden

November

Cast Dinner

Tuesday, November 1, 6 pm

(*Romeo and Juliet*)

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 4th floor

Volunteers, contact: Cheryl Dowden

Senior Center Dress Rehearsal

Friday, November 4, 9:30 am to 2:30 pm (*Romeo and Juliet*)

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion

Volunteers, contact: Larry Verdugo

LA Opera's 25th Anniversary Open House

Saturday, November 5

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion

Volunteers, contact: Larry Verdugo

Opera Talks at Julienne's

Monday, November 7, 7 pm

Contact: Carol Sholer

Musicale

Sunday, November 13, 2 to 4:30 pm

At a lovely home in San Marino

See the "Invitations" page

AAAO Fundraiser

Sunday, November 13, 2 pm

December

Opera Talks at Julienne's

Monday, December 5, 7 pm

Contact: Carol Sholer

Opera 101

Saturday, December 10, 9 am to 3 pm

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 4th fl.

Volunteers, contact: Larry Verdugo

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Education:

Larry Verdugo

Phone: 626-796-8676

lverdugo@sbcglobal.net

Cast Dinners:

Cheryl Dowden

Phone: 323.255.0265

dowden8983@roadrunner.com

Opera Talk at Julienne's:

Carol Sholer

Phone: 818.243.1818

csholer1@earthlink.net

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

Opera Talks at Long Beach

John Spear

Phone: 562-809-1331

john.spear@earthlink.net

At the El Dorado Library,

2900 Studebaker Road

(between Willow and Spring)

Antelope Valley

Dr. Harald Krueger 661.728.0671

Romeo et Juliette

Please call Dr. Krueger for additional information

Beverly Hills

Mimi Rotter 310.479.0259

Romeo et Juliette

Sunday, October 9, 10 am

10430 Wilshire Blvd, #504, Los Angeles

Claremont

Patricia O'Donnell 909.447.5038

Romeo et Juliette

Sunday, October 16, 2-5 pm

530 West 11th Street, Claremont

Hollywood/Hancock Park

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

Orange County

Sandy Persky 714.969.0589

Romeo et Juliette and La Bohème

Sunday, Sunday October 16, 2-5:00 pm

19 Bella Rosa, Irvine

San Fernando Valley

Regi Merwin 818.400.2578

Romeo et Juliette

Sunday, October 16, 2:30-5:00 pm

11615 Canton Place, Studio City

San Gabriel Valley

Michael Sholer 818.502.1988

Romeo et Juliette

Wednesday, November 2, 7-9:30 pm

5278 La Canada Blvd., La Canada

Santa Clarita

Ann Anderson 661.259.9619

Sally White 661.259.9407

Romeo et Juliette

Monday, October 24, 7 pm

25506 Longfellow Place, Stevenson Ranch

South Bay

Ifang Hsieh 310.279.9927

Romeo et Juliette

Please call Ifang for additional information

Southeast

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

Ventura County

Ann Randall 805.445.8250

Romeo et Juliette

Sunday, October 30, 2 pm

520 San Clemente Way, Camarillo

Westside

Monika Whitaker 310.826.4743

Chuck or Alice Bragg 310.454.9662

Romeo et Juliette

Monday, October 24, 7:15-9:45 pm

405 South Cliffwood Ave., Los Angeles

invitations

Opera League Seminar Romeo et Juliette

The seminar is dedicated to Sherwin Sloan,
the founder of the Opera League Seminar program

Sunday, October 23, 2011

10:00 am to 2:00 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
with a Domingo-Thornton Young Artist
Moderator: Dr. Allan Edmiston

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

(which must be preordered with your reservation)
Advance orders, \$35 (or a voucher) for members,
\$45 for guests

Same day purchase at the door, \$45.

Your order must be received by October 19, 2011.
(You may pick your reservation up at the door.)

Autumn Musicale with Opera Buffa Bingo!

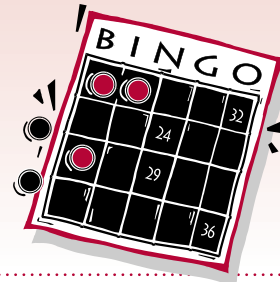
**Sunday, November 13, 2011, from 2:00
to 4:30 pm**

**At a lovely home in San Marino
(Location information will be provided to you)**

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

For orders sent by mail, please include a self
addressed stamped envelope.

Your order must be received by November 9.



EVENT ORDER FORM

Seminar Reservations

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

Musicale Reservations

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

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

For reservations by mail, use this form. Check the number of reservations you wish, then enclose your check, or credit card info, or voucher(s) for the total amount. (Vouchers are valid for seminars, master classes, and musicales.) Mail this order form to: Opera League of LA, PO Box 49-1057, Los Angeles, CA 90049.

Reservations for all Opera League events will be held at the door. Sorry, no refunds!

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.

Im Salzburg mit Brita (In Salzburg with Brita)

By Ed Shaff

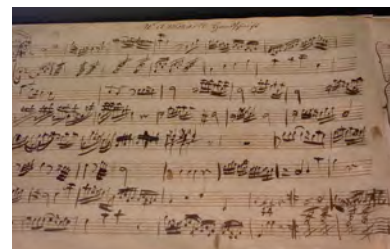
August 1, 2011 marked the beginning of an 11-day musical adventure for 24 Opera League members in Salzburg, Austria. Brita Millard, Fund Raising Chair for 2010-2011 and a long-time Salzburg resident, put together a fabulous program of music, sightseeing, and fine dining as a fundraiser for the Opera League. Brita's years of working for the Mozarteum as well as her many friends there opened doors for us that most tourists never see.

Our group was introduced to Salzburg with a guided walking tour of the "Old Town" and a welcoming reception on the Moenchsberg Terrace.

The focus of the trip was to attend performances at the world renowned Salzburg Music Festival. We saw R. Strauss's *Die Frau Ohne Schatten*, Mozart's *La Nozze di Figaro*, and Verdi's *Macbeth* (conducted by Riccardo Muti), with each opera being performed in a different theatre in the sprawling Festspiel Buildings. We also saw Gustavo Dudamel conduct the Simon Bolivar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela (augmented by the Vienna Singverein Chorus) in a performance of Mahler's "Resurrection" Symphony.



A true high point for Mozart lovers was a visit to the house he lived in during his residence in Salzburg. The president of the International Foundation Mozarteum, Dr. Johannes Honsig-Erlenberg welcomed us, then played several Mozart pieces on Mozart's own piano! (Somehow it had survived Napoleon and two world wars.) He then took us down into the vault that held many of Mozart's original scores and letters.



Brita also organized many other very special trips for us, including a visit to the Abbey of St. Florian where Bruckner had played the organ before he went on to Vienna. We are all so thankful to Brita for her terrific job of organizing this very special "Music for the Eyes" trip! (See the entire article on the Opera League web site.)



"ACE PARTY RENTS"—FRIEND OF THE LEAGUE

Bob Chapman of "Ace Party Rents" is an essential component of nearly all our Opera League soirées. He and his company have been kindly supplying our Musicales, Patron & Sustaining nights, and AALAO Membership Recitals with countless chairs, tables, umbrellas, linens, dinnerware, and have made journeys to sites throughout Los Angeles and Orange County.

The company also carries stages, dance floors, heaters, tenting, wedding items, cooking and barbecue-ware, and so-o-o-o much more!

Words cannot express our profound appreciation for Bob's generosity to the League!



Ace Party Rents

7332 Varna Avenue
North Hollywood CA 91605
Phone: 818-503-8600
www.acepartyrents.com

*Dinner for the workers at "Ace Rentals"
Bob Chapman with League members
(L to R) Laurel Howat, Bob, Fabiola
Hensley, Diane Gray, and Dorothy Wait*

SAVE THE DATE

June 16-19, 2012, the Opera League will lead a fund raising trip to San Francisco Opera featuring: Nixon in China (your choice of two performances), The Magic Flute, and Verdi's *Attila* with multiple price levels (\$369 to \$771), special rates at Inn at the Opera and Days Inn, an optional welcome dinner, and other San Francisco activities. For further information, watch Bravo or call Kathy Crandall (661-480-9661).

At Large: Then and Now

By Bob Bernard

It was a December evening at the Metropolitan Opera in 1985.

A performance of *Le nozze di Figaro* was drawing to a close, and, in short order, the cameras recorded for all time:

- As the duplicity of Sir Thomas Allen's Count Almaviva was revealed, Sir Thomas' eyes rolled about his head, as if seeking to flee the scene independently of his body
- The longest pregnant pause ever in an operatic performance followed (a full ten seconds, the tension in the theater becoming palpable), before the release afforded by the Count's plea: "Contessa, perdono"
- Then, Carol Vaness (the Countess), captured with a positively beatific expression on her face — and here we cite the words of Salieri from the movie *Amadeus* — 'sang the music of true forgiveness,' as the now penitent Count, daring not to look upward, embraced her arm as a lifeline to absolution.



Sir Thomas' Count Almaviva
Confounded



Repentant

This production of Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, additionally bolstered with cast members Ruggero Raimondi, Kathleen Battle, Frederica von Stade, Michel Sénéchal, and Dawn Upshaw, was one of the strongest *Figaros* ever staged, but was still 'just another day at the office' for Dr. Brian Large, film director extraordinaire.

Dr. Large, having now directed the filming of over six hundred fine arts films in his career to date, began with the BBC in 1965, having earned doctorate degrees in both Music and Philosophy from the University of London as prologue. A decade later, Wolfgang Wagner invited him to Bayreuth to film the major Wagner (non-Ring) operas for television.

Building upon the above, a "mountaintop experience" ensued in the early summer of 1980. The Boulez-Chéreau Centenary Ring had debuted, of course, in 1976 and since then, with the passing of these four years, the initial fierce disagreement over its merits had ameliorated into the realization that this was a production that should be preserved on film. Dr. Large was accorded unprecedented resources, liberties and time with which to do this.

Provided with over one hundred technicians and a full complement of cameras and lighting stands, Dr. Large was allowed to remove (temporarily, of course) rows of seats from the theatre, so that optimum lighting and unrestricted sight lines could be established for the filming. The rehearsal period became a cooperative enterprise, involving cast, pianists, Boulez, Chéreau, and Large.



Dr. Large at Bayreuth, 1980

Now with Dr. Large equipped with his collection of notes and marked-up scores from the piano rehearsals, the filming of each act of the four operas proceeded like this:

- One day would be spent with the lighting technicians and cameramen, correlating the proposed filming sequence to every detail of each scene.
- Another day was then devoted to a full dress rehearsal, performed solely for evaluating and modifying the filming plan
- Finally, the act at hand was then performed and filmed without stop, accepting any accidental imperfections, and thus recording for posterity a close approximation of a true theater experience for future television audiences.

Here, from Act one of *Die Walküre*, Peter Hofmann's Siegmund and Jeannine Altmeyer's Sieglinde:



The awakening of their incestuous love – with an unscripted glance at the camera

This complete Ring cycle found its way to television audiences around the world, introducing Wagner's Ring to a greatly expanded audience and earning Dr. Large the Royal Television Society's accolade as "Best Television Director" for 1981.

Although the televising of concerts and galas do not afford Dr. Large the same proportion of striking photo ops as operas typically do, his film direction always evidences a balanced ratio between close-ups, full and partial stage shots, and reaction shots, as well as a tasteful use of overlaps and dissolves.

Continued on page 8

At Large, continued from page 7

Dr. Large filmed the world premiere of *Il Postino* here one year ago, returned in March for some preliminary editing, and was here again in August to finish the job. LA Opera benefits from the continuing generosity of LA Opera Board Member Moshe Barkat, President of Modern Videofilm, one of the prominent postproduction (editing) companies in Burbank. He makes the extraordinary, in-kind contribution of the use of facility, equipment, and staff — all at no cost — for all projects involving Dr. Large and either LA Opera or the LA Phil.

Self-effacing to a fault, Mr. Barkat downplayed the use of his company for this task: “We like having you here, so that we can run some quality through the equipment for a change!” [Indeed, Editing Room #3 contained residual memorabilia associated with “Real Women Have Curves” and “Desperate Housewives”.]

The editing process for *Il Postino* was a three-man project: Dr. Large ‘calling the shots’ and Managing Editor Richard Russel at the keyboards and intercom in Editing Room #3, along with a staff member in the storage/playback room. This postproduction procedure was the polar opposite of that

employed for the Bayreuth Centenary Ring, being reactive, rather than proactive.

The filming of *Il Postino* last September included three complete performances --- two regular and one of a rehearsal, each with five cameras in operation. So, the scene-by-scene editing became the reiterative riding of a treadmill of performance selection, camera choice, cropping, cross-cutting, dissolves, fade-outs, and synchronization.

We can look forward to a PBS telecast of *Il Postino* this autumn, along with a release of its DVD about the same time. Prepare yourselves for an experience that will refresh your memories, enlarge your understanding of what was staged and, in the final scene, move you as deeply as the principals themselves were moved.



Dr. Large at Burbank, 2011



135 North Grand Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90012

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INVITATIONS ARE INCLUDED

★ Autumn Seminar
Romeo et Juliette
Sunday, October 23, 2011

★ Autumn Musicale
Sunday, November 13, 2011
See p.5 for more information