

Your Guide To Upcoming Opera League Events

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BRAVO

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE OPERA LEAGUE OF LOS ANGELES

John Welsh speaking at a recent Gathering.
Photo by Tom Lady.

MAGIC, THE GATHERINGS

By TOM LADY

WHAT'S INSIDE

Interview with Zev Yaroslavsky, 2016 Hemmings Awardee

LA Opera's Annual Season Preview

Spotlight on Opera League Volunteers

Opera topic? Check. Host and venue? Check. Okay, but is it a venue capable of holding a good number of opera lovers? Check. Speaker? Check. More than one speaker? Check. Equipment? Check. Right, but will someone get there early enough to set up and test the equipment and face Murphy's Law of Technology head on? Check.

Gatherings are among the Opera League's most popular events, a crowning jewel that dates back almost to the League's beginning. Nowhere else but at a gathering can you experience the crème de la crème of volunteerism, subject matter expertise, and a vibrant, passionate community, all centered around the vital art form that is opera.

From the President



YOU MATTER ~ to the Opera League of Los Angeles (OLLA), to Los Angeles Opera (LAO), and to your community. Volunteering creates positive, authentic connections in your life. Volunteering for OLLA offers you the opportunity to fulfill your spiritual and emotional needs, and become part of our community of opera lovers.

OLLA needs your talent and energy. Get involved and you will meet opera lovers who share your passion. This 30th anniversary season has increased LAO's mission to provide opera to students and seniors by inviting them to dress rehearsals. Through our bus fund, we provide free bus transportation for schools that have limited funding for cultural endeavors. We are aware that art and music programs have been cut from curricula. LAO is dedicated to inspiring future audiences. Our volunteers assist LAO by providing support to greet the students and organize the event. League volunteers and LAO staff host students at rehearsals and work with college students and teachers. You are needed. Leave a message for Larry Verdugo, Education, at the League's 24-hour hotline 213.972.7220.

Plácido Domingo, our beloved general director, complimented the League for creating a warm atmosphere for arriving artists. He personally asked me to thank OLLA for picking up artists at the airport and getting them settled in their hotels. Nowhere in the world has he experienced this level of hospitality and graciousness. Leave a message on the hotline for Nina Haro, Artist Services.

Maestro Domingo also praised OLLA for providing sumptuous buffets for the cast during rehearsals. He attends these dinners when he is in a production. (A secret, he loves sweets.) *We need your help:* your creativity and cooking skills. Don't cook? Make a donation and join us in welcoming the artists and production staff. Leave a message on the hotline for Diane Henderson, Cast Dinners.

Our community educators are our ambassadors who speak at libraries, schools, and senior and community centers. They are a dedicated group who research and write their own presentations. If you have intellectual curiosity and enjoy interacting with people, *we need you.* Applications for the eight-week summer training class will be available in 2016. Your reward will be compliments and adulation for your efforts while you serve the community. For information, contact laopera.org/community or call 213.972.3157.

Do you love to shop and do you love clothes? *We need you* to volunteer for the Shop at the Opera. Profits are donated to LAO for their educational programs. Be dazzled by the variety of jackets, jewelry, scarves, and other wares and receive a discount as a reward for serving visitors. With your help, you will transform ordinary women into divas. Leave a message for chair Mimi Rotter at 213.972.7220.

The League also provides educational experiences for our members: seminars, musicales, master classes and neighborhood gatherings. All events are listed here in BRAVO and on our website. Check out our cover story on gatherings. If you can't volunteer, we welcome donations to help fund our programs.

Get involved: *we need you.* You will add fulfillment, experiences, culture and friendships that will enrich your lives.


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MAGIC, THE GATHERINGS

CONTINUED FROM COVER

So did I forget anything in my checklist? Apparently I did, and it's a biggie. "The operative word is food," says Beth Dymond, San Fernando Valley co-host along with her husband Alan. "No food, no one comes."

Indeed, when I attended the San Fernando Valley gathering on *Moby-Dick* and *Norma* in late October (my first gathering!), it was clear that the potluck was the lynchpin. The dishes were as varied as a diva's wardrobe. Homemade, ordered, traditional, ethnic, you name it, brought by the attendees to supplement their diet of culture with a diet of culinary pleasure. And don't forget the vino.

that volunteers didn't know each other and were missing the happy excitement in the life of the company. Regionalizing was a special interest of mine. So at a board meeting, Joan said to me, "It's something you really care about, you might as well do it." We formed a committee and did it!"

Currently the gatherings are organized by eight regions: Beverly Hills, Hollywood / Hancock Park, Orange County, San Fernando Valley, San Gabriel Valley, Santa Clarita, South Bay and Westside.

So what's involved in being a gathering head? Gathering Chair Ifang Hsieh explains: "Although all gathering heads are provided

Sometimes, however, the speaker doesn't have the needed equipment and will therefore depend on the host to provide it. "You have to match the venue to the speaker," says Regi Merwin, gathering head for the San Fernando Valley. "You may need a TV and DVD already at the venue. Other speakers bring a whole setup." She laughs and adds: "No two remote controls are created equally."

The technically-inclined frequent speaker Steve Kohn agrees. But what do you do when something goes awry in the machine? Steve smiles as he quotes the troubleshooting credo of engineer and League member Ron Streicher: "There's always another button to press."



Photos by Ifang Hsieh

The hosts' hospitality is very much appreciated. OC regional head Lorna Blancaflor says, "When we did *The Barber of Seville* and *The Marriage of Figaro* last season, our gracious hostess Sylvia Traub not only set up a special display related to the productions, but also prepared the opera-themed table decorations and program!"

Gatherings have evolved quite a bit over the decades. Past president Anne Combs remembers: "When we began, the gatherings were very different in character from now. League members would bring their recordings. We would read an upcoming opera's synopsis. We all had a great time learning from the ensuing discussions. The more formalized presentations that we have now came about after we had a Speakers Bureau [now known as Education and Community Engagement]. Graduates of that program began to share their knowledge at the gatherings as well."

Gatherings are unique among the League's oeuvre of offerings in that they are regionalized. League co-founder Alice Coulombe explains: "By the time Joan Thompson became the League's fourth president, the League was nearing the size it is now. We began to fret it was so large

with a detailed task list, they tailor each gathering as they see fit. Finding venues is always a challenge. Special thanks go to Santa Clarita regional heads Ann Anderson and Ron Gordon who host every gathering at their home, and San Gabriel Valley long-time hosts Barbara and Jack Dawson.

"The gathering heads are multi-tasking specialists and seasoned volunteers," Ifang continues. "Their enthusiasm, creativity and people skills are the League's most valuable asset."

"Chuck Bragg and I have been organizing Westside gatherings for about ten years," says Monika Whitaker. "These events are truly fascinating and educational thanks to the high caliber of our speakers. I have made many wonderful friends."

League President Marlene Chavez teams up with Sean Muhlstein to organize the Hollywood / Hancock Park gatherings. She reserves a special shout-out for Anne Russell-Sullivan. "Anne is gracious, efficient, and entertaining. She should be commended for doing double duty. Anne might speak at her own Beverly Hills gathering at 10am, then head over to my house for the 2pm gathering."

Speaking of lots of buttons to press, I ask Ifang what's involved in being the big brain behind all this. "I keep a separate list and update it often. Notable tasks include informing the regional heads of the League's administrative and policy changes such as membership-related updates, recruiting new organizers, and interfacing with LA Opera, which then coordinates with their Education and Community Engagement program.

"Anyone who enjoys event planning is encouraged to volunteer for an existing group, or start a new gathering in other SoCal regions. I also plan and host the annual meeting. Though the tasks can get quite involved, anyone who can prioritize and organize will be able to do the job."

Here's the good news: It's so worth it!

"It's a nice little community," Regi says. "And you see different kinds of people all over town because we're all into the same kind of cultural things."

"I'm so happy that it continues," Alice Coulombe gushes. "With the gatherings and group activities, it makes it so much better when volunteers know one another and work together." 🌸



FROM A TO ZEV:

AN INTERVIEW WITH ZEV YAROSLAVSKY By BILL KENNEDY

Opera wasn't exactly love at first song.

Dragged away on a field trip, the preteen had to sit through a school performance of Humperdinck's *Hänsel and Gretel*, and recalls now: "I couldn't stand it. I swore I'd never go to another opera."

Some 50 years later, that young critic is now an opera lover and arguably the single individual who has done more to foster, sustain and help the arts prosper in his community than any other American elected official in the last 20 years.

For his service to the arts in general and opera in particular, former Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky has been selected for the Opera League's 2015-16 Hemmings Award and will be honored at the League's annual dinner April 2 at the California Club.

Yaroslavsky's achievements in 20 years as a member of the five-member Board of Supervisors—like the growth of the arts in Los Angeles over that same period—reads like something no other person or place could accomplish in a century:

- A pivotal role in getting a stalled Disney Hall project moving forward again when it appeared it might have to be scrapped.
- Leadership in the development of the Valley Performing Arts Center at Cal State Northridge.

- Fighting for the transformation of the iconic Hollywood Bowl from a mid-century monument to a state-of-the-art performance facility.
- Working with his colleagues among the supervisors to insure a \$15 million loan to LA Opera when the sudden economic downturn in 2009-10 overlapped with the company's planned, ambitious staging of Wagner's *Ring Cycle*, threatening to bring the company to its knees.
- Putting civic and financial muscle behind private-sector supported renovations and improvements at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Natural History Museum.
- Toward the end of his service (he was termed out last December), being the key proponent of the simulcast performance of LA Opera's opening night performance on the Santa Monica Pier and pushing for a nearly \$60-million renovation of the Ford Theater, now underway.

Photo by Craig T. Mathew



Appreciation for arts came naturally for Yaroslavsky. His mother and father were classical music lovers and insisted he play the piano. His great uncle played bass for Sol Hurok orchestras that accompanied the great ballet companies of the world in the middle of the last century.

Yaroslavsky himself might have gone on to be an oboist had not an admitted bit of rust and a finger broken on the basketball court led him to “blow an A that sounded much more like a B flat” during a high school orchestra audition.

But Yaroslavsky’s support for the arts stems from far more than a personal interest.

He recognizes the intangible contributions a robust artistic sector can provide for a community—a sense of pride in place, an exposure to things that can lift the human heart and soul. But—a lifelong student of politics—he is nothing if not a pragmatist.

Yaroslavsky says: “The arts can provide a common language for a community and help transform it socially and economically.”

Concerning the economic value, he points out that the arts employ more Angelenos than the defense industry. And, recalling a colleague’s remark some years ago that “people don’t go to New York to see the crime and graffiti,” he is proud to point out that Los Angeles’ own emergence in music, art, theater and, of course, film and television have helped make it the tourist destination it is today, with nearly \$20 billion in annual visitor spending.

But how did the early opera hater (well, okay, skeptic) change his mind?

While in high school 16 years ago, his son David (now an Opera League volunteer and, according to his father, the true opera buff in the family), was preparing for an academic decathlon contest with a major theme being knowledge of opera. Yaroslavsky would often be working at home and hear cassette recordings of operas wafting from his son’s room.

“Hey,” he thought. “That’s good. I’ve heard that before.” And that led him to LA Opera and performances of “*Carmen*, then *Traviata*, *Pagliacci*, *Bohème*...”

Yaroslavsky—like most of you readers—was hooked.

So hooked that he now sits on the board of LA Opera—one of the few board seats he was willing to take upon leaving office. And so hooked that he accepted LA Opera CEO Christopher Koelsch’s invitation to be a supernumerary in last season’s opening night performance of *La Traviata*.

No, he wasn’t asked to sing. But in most ways, Zev Yaroslavsky had already sung for his supper... and much more. 🌸

ELBERT, OPERA CRITIC

By MARLENE CHAVEZ

Opera league member Dan Donlan, who is sight impaired, is the guardian of Dan’s Guide Dog Elbert. With his aristocratic genealogy, Elbert is one of eight siblings. They each have a name starting with E to identify the litter.

My husband Victor and I arrived at the Donlan residence to interview Elbert to find out what it’s like to be a canine companion to an opera fan. Usually the very portrait of calm, Elbert bounded down the hallway, tail a-wagging and ears a-perked.

Dan’s two requirements for his choice of guide dog was that he or she must love kids and music. When they first met, Dan bonded with Elbert over song. Since then, music and travel have been Elbert’s lifestyle. Dan’s wife Carol and Elbert regularly attend opera, music and theater venues in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and Europe.

Like anyone else who listens to music, Elbert is a critic. What you need to know about this guide dog is that he does not care for bel canto opera. The extended applause after each and every aria makes his floppy ears burn. Wagner is his favorite composer since his very long, drawn-out music isn’t frequently cut off by those annoying humans clapping.

Opening night at the opera is a gala event for the Donlans and Elbert. Carol and Dan wear their finest while Elbert sports his formal white bow tie purchased from his preferred clothier. Pre-performance dinner usually sees the trio with friends at Taix. The restaurant caters to their distinguished canine guest with a bowl of fresh carrots. You might also catch Elbert lounging at Kendall’s.

As we all do, Elbert sometimes likes to take his pals to an opera. Last season, for instance, Elbert and crew took in a show of *The Barber of Seville*, and since nobody barked or howled, they have been invited back to attend a performance of *La Bohème* this season. He also got Symphonian and Opera League member Fabiola Hensley to take them on a tour that included Disney Hall. These four-legged culture vultures are becoming regulars at the



Photos by Carol Donlan

Ahmanson, attending performances of *Matilda* and *The Sound of Music*.

All work and no play would make Elbert a dull pooch indeed. That’s why you can frequently catch him cavorting with his female friend Sasha, a cute and fluffy Cairn terrier who resides in his building. Some observers might say that Elbert and Sasha are an “item.”

Elbert is not just another pretty face who’s been petted by the likes of Plácido Domingo and Renée Fleming. He is an avid Opera League volunteer who attends Saturday Morning at the Opera to greet the kids and demonstrate how he sits, stays, comes and lies down on command. Elbert loves the attention and the kids love him.

Like the rest of us, Elbert is getting old. Soon he will retire to a life of leisure and pleasure. Of course, he will still live with Dan and Carol, enjoy music, eat great food, nap and play with Sasha. While the Donlans will get another working dog, they’ll never get another Elbert. His many admirers, of which I am an avid one, will miss seeing him around town. 🌸

PROJECTING HER VOICE

AN INTERVIEW WITH
ALISA LAPIDUS, LA OPERA
PRODUCTION MEDIA MANAGER

By TOM LADY

When I phone her up for an interview, Alisa Lapidus is literally on her way from one job to another. “I was working on *Norma* this morning. Now I’m on my way to *Dracula*.”

I’m calling LA Opera’s Production Media Manager the day before the first screening of the 1931 *Dracula* starring Bela Lugosi at the Theatre at Ace Hotel. Part of LA Opera’s Off Grand series, this is no ordinary screening. Philip Glass and the Kronos Quartet will provide a live original soundtrack from literally right behind the screen.

Is everything all set for tomorrow? Any stress?

“No stress at all. Just a few finishing touches.”

In addition to *Dracula* and *Norma*, Alisa (pronounced with the long E so it sounds like uh-LEE-suh) has also started working on *La Bohème*, not due to take the stage until next May. I ask her if it’s normal to start work on a piece six months ahead of time.

“We usually start six to eight months ahead of time,” she says.

The “media” in Alisa’s job title often refers to the projection backdrops that lend an atmosphere to every scene, contributing to the world of the show. Among the reasons that kind of work has to start half a year or more ahead of time is the collaboration.

First, Alisa creates a storyboard of each projection, a series of still images that collectively convey what she imagines the final product will look like. She and the director and/or designer go back and forth to chisel away at the media’s definition until all sides are happy.

Before Alisa’s time, projections were essentially painted slides. Nowadays, like most everything else, it’s all done on computer. “I still might try to convey the hand-made look and feel,” she says. “It depends on the production.”

Sometimes operas come with pre-existing media. Exhibit A: *The Magic Flute*. Alisa contacted the original animator in Berlin to have him translate into English a few



animated moments with German text. Meantime back in the Dorothy Chandler, Alisa and projection technician Mike Ohsann taught themselves Catalyst, the software program that was used for the original Berlin production. “Mike’s a programmer so he has to be there for every show to build and run it,” Alisa says. “I provide him with the media and any other pertinent information, which he needs in order to program the show correctly.” They could’ve used LA Opera’s in-house program. “But we would have had to reprogram the entire show that has hundreds of cues. The media would have stayed the same, but we would have had to time everything out and program it from scratch to match the original.”

In general, if the opera has pre-existing media, Alisa has to get her hands on it as early as possible to make sure it’s formatted correctly. This usually involves a lot of adjustments and tweaks. The original projection designer will likely have a preference for how they want their projections rendered. If Alisa chooses to rebuild the show with LAO-preferred tools (instead of the original production’s program like *The Magic Flute* on Catalyst), the original projection designer will get involved to provide input and the eventual sign-off.

While each production varies, Alisa says one recurring theme is the skyscape. Afternoon skyscape, twilight skyscape,

pre-dawn skyscape, stormy skyscape, skyscape with a big honkin’ moon, you name it. Alisa says directors love those almighty skyscapes. “I’ve done tons of weather research,” she laughs.

Her relaxed way of talking, without any accent, is the very reason it’s jarring when she tells you she hails from Nizhny Novgorod, Russia. When Alisa was seven, her family became part of the great wave of Russian Jewish migration of 1989-91 while the USSR disintegrated. They landed first in Sherman Oaks, then Woodland Hills. As the daughter of hardcore movie buffs, Alisa grew up exposed to lots of Eastern European and Russian animation, which featured storytelling styles that were more somber and perhaps deeper and more emotionally wrought than Western animation.

By now you’re probably guessing someone like Alisa would naturally fall into a field of study like Experimental Animation. You’d be spot on. She parlayed her Cal Arts degree into landing gigs doing stop-motion animation and armatures before landing at LAO in the fall of 2008. The opening production that year was Puccini’s *Il Trittico*, three one-act operas including the comedy *Gianni Schicchi*. When the 2015-16 season kicked off with a bill that also included *Gianni Schicchi*, it served as the first real mile marker for Alisa’s LAO tenure. “It made me realize I’ve been here eight years now. It’s gone by fast.” ☀



SO By TOM LADY YOUNG, ARTIST

AN INTERVIEW WITH SOPRANO SO YOUNG PARK

“When I first met you, I had no idea how I could get through it,” she says. “But now I did it and it went well!”

So Young Park, a second-year member of LA Opera’s Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program, is referring to the 21 performances across four productions she’s done in the seven months since my first meeting with her.

This would include stints at Opera Colorado and Houston Grand Opera followed by three months at the Glimmerglass Festival. And then, thanks to a talent manager she landed in April just before her epic journey began, So Young spent September at Hawaii Opera in Honolulu.

Across all those productions, So Young sang just one role: the Queen of the Night in Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*, the same role she’ll be singing in LA Opera’s upcoming production in early 2016. Yes, one of our very own Young Artists is part of an elite sisterhood who can say they’ve mastered one of the most challenging roles in the repertoire.

“The Queen of the Night is a challenging role, but I love to sing it.” To keep her language skills fresh, So Young has the language settings on both her iPhone and Siri set to German.

So Young first “met” the Queen while an undergrad at Seoul National University in her native Korea. How do you learn a role like that? “My voice teacher at the University recommended that I sing the aria during my sophomore year. I believe that I was too young to realize how difficult an aria it is, which may have been a blessing. I spent a lot of time in the practice room working on the aria and supplemented my studies with YouTube clips, especially with [German soprano] Diana Damrau. She is my role model for this part.”

After getting her bachelor’s in vocal performance, So Young headed Stateside to get both her Master’s and Artist’s Diploma at the New England Conservatory in Boston. She finished that up in the spring of 2014. That fall, she joined LA Opera’s prestigious ranks of Young Artists.

So Young was in high school when she saw her first opera, *Tosca*. “It was my first experience seeing an opera. It is such a dark story and I really did not understand what was going on. They did not include supertitles, which made it harder for me to understand. I just thought opera was weird.” She laughs.

The medium won her over soon enough, though. Toward the end of her tenure at Seoul National U., So Young landed her first operatic role, Gilda, in a school production of *Rigoletto*. “This was my first time translating an entire opera, so I knew what I was saying and what everyone else was saying. We had translation books, which allowed me to find a greater appreciation for opera, the characters and my role.”

As a Young Artist, So Young has run through a gamut of trainings to further evolve her ability to portray a character, not just sing it well. This includes improv classes. “Improv was really hard because it’s really fast. It’s the opposite of a lot of operatic training, where we have months in advance to prepare for a performance. Here, we make it all up on the spot. Even the pianist is making it up...it’s thrilling! I never had this type of training until I entered the LA Opera Young Artist Program. It definitely has helped improve my English skills.” And now? Check out the sidebar for So Young’s improv-ing a pedicure.

As for what’s on tap post *Flute*, So Young’s looking forward to portraying Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos* for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. “Zerbinetta has a crazy-long 15-minute aria,” she laughs.

So how do you prepare for a long aria? “I go to the gym regularly,” she says. “It’s all about physical and mental stamina. For singing, your brain has to plan before you sing. To prepare for this, I practice a lot, but I also build up my physical stamina so that my brain and my body could handle anything.”

For more of my interview with So Young Park, including her amazing experience performing with Maestro Domingo in Korea, head to operaleague.org.

WATCH THE YOUNG ARTISTS IMPROV(E)

By TOM LADY

Here’s the situation. Paying attention? Good.

On the stage before you are two LA Opera Young Artists, So Young Park and Vanessa Becerra.

Here is what I need from you, the audience. Tell me what So Young and Vanessa are going to sing about. What’s the conflict? Something big to them, but small to us.

“A pedicure!”

“And they’re sisters!”

Perfect!

Now watch and marvel at the collision of the refined art form that is opera with the wild and hilarious art form that is improv. The pianist starts improvising a tune while So Young improvises a song while giving Vanessa a pedicure. Vanessa improvises her own song about how her sister is completely messing up the pedicure. Sonic fireworks ensue. With talent like this, this improvised sisterly spat sounds positively sublime.

Training for LAO’s Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artists, or YAPs, as they’re fondly known, already runs the gamut with the history of theater, text analysis, movement, and traditional acting. But as Joshua Winograde, LAO’s Senior Director of Artistic Planning, says, “Opera audiences today expect to see singers who are as compelling dramatically as they are vocally – on par with actors in plays, musicals, and even film. We decided to round out their training with this element to give our YAPs access to the same tools available to contemporary actors.”

This ultimately led Josh to the legendary Groundlings Theatre where he met Phyllis Katz, veteran actress of stage and screen. Phyllis had already created a curriculum called Song Improv for her actors at the Groundlings, and she worked with Josh to adapt it to opera.

A couple times a year the YAPs put on performances for the public at the Groundlings venue, although it’s important to note that the Groundlings company itself is not part of this initiative. The performances are like comedy skits with YAPs taking suggestions from the audience.

After surviving that skit with Vanessa, So Young laughs and says, “At first I thought this class was so hard. But I surprised myself because I can do it. Now I’m not afraid of being silly on stage.”

A COUPLE OF GATHERERS

SPOTLIGHT ON NEW OPERA LEAGUE VOLUNTEERS By TOM LADY



Photo by Jessica and David Feldman

Volunteers are the heart and soul of the Opera League. We wouldn't exist without them. Let's meet a couple. No, really, they're a couple.

Jessica and David Feldman, Gathering Hosts

"We recently hosted a South Bay gathering in our home. It was nice to meet new people, see some familiar faces and learn about *Moby-Dick*."

David and Jessica introduced opera to their kids at an early age. One of the boys surprised his preschool teacher by correctly identifying the *Carmen* overture. The children were taken to see a dress rehearsal for *Il Trovatore*, managed to sneak down to third row center during the intermission, whereupon one of them exclaimed, "I want to sit here for every opera!"

WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

DAVID: I was born in New York but transplanted as a teen with my family to Palos Verdes. I've been here ever since.

JESSICA: Except for five years in Israel, I've lived most of my life in Southern California. Dave and I met as undergraduates at UC Irvine.

WHEN DID YOU BECOME INTERESTED IN OPERA?

DAVID: I've always listened to a wide variety of music but did not listen to opera until I first started out as a physician. There was an opera greatest hits CD in the office that I started listening to. One thing led to another. I didn't listen to much other music for several years.

JESSICA: Our first opera was *Rigoletto* with my parents at what was then Opera Pacific in Costa Mesa. We always had a mix of classical music in my home when growing up, which included opera.

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE OPERA LEAGUE?

JESSICA: David and I have been LA Opera subscribers since 1999. The Opera League was always at the periphery of my awareness. I finally signed us up last year after picking up a brochure and realizing what exceptional benefits and opportunities were available. We feel that opera as it exists currently cannot survive without continuous support from motivated members and listeners.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT VOLUNTEERING?

DAVID: It's important to provide your efforts to organizations that cannot function without volunteers. Not everyone is able to volunteer, and those who can, should do so. Besides the League, I volunteer for the local city government and our synagogue.

JESSICA: I've always given my time to wherever my family has been involved, from school, sports and PTA when children were at home, to our synagogue as well.

FAVORITE OPERA? FAVORITE SONG, FROM AN OPERA OR OTHERWISE?

DAVID: My favorite opera is *Don Giovanni*. My favorite song is "Take Me Out To The Ballgame" from *A Night at the Opera* by the Marx Brothers. A close second would be "Vesti la Giubba" from *Pagliacci*.

JESSICA: My favorite opera is *Lucia di Lammermoor*, though I do have strong feelings for *Grendel*. My favorite song is "Voi Che Sapete" from *The Marriage of Figaro*. One of my bucket list items is to sing the "Mad Scene" from *Lucia*.....without scaring the neighbors.

HOBBIES?

DAVID: I play the piano (poorly) and indulge in photography.

JESSICA: Theater, traveling, college counseling, cooking, and the Kings hockey team. 🍷

RUNNER'S HIGH

AN INTERVIEW WITH
HELEN PORTER By TOM LADY

Helen Porter has experienced the phenomenon known as the runner's high only once in her life. It was when she ran her very first half-marathon.

"I was running up the hill. And it dawned on me that I was about to complete my first half-marathon. And I just floated. I was vaguely aware of passing people who were walking, and I thought, 'Why are they walking? It's a race!' And I just glided across the finish. That's still the only time I've had a runner's high."

She hands me a plaque with her name chiseled on it. It's for taking first place in the "Women 80 and Over" category in the 5k race at the 36th Crescentia-Cañada YMCA Fiesta Days Run on May 30, 2011. Just as I start to say how impressed I am, Helen says, "Oh I've got gazillions of those... Yeah, it's fun when you win."

Helen picked up running in the late 1970s after her first husband passed away. "I was young. I thought, 'What am I going to do for the rest of my life?' One thing I wanted to do was get in shape. I'd never been good at anything physical in my life."

Fast-forward to 2015. Helen has logged literally hundreds of races, including innumerable half-marathons.

One day, while Helen was out for a run, she literally ran into this guy named Roger. Naturally that led to dating.

As it turned out, Roger had a case of the opera bug. Helen was no stranger to the Saturday Met broadcasts, but she'd never actually attended an opera. Roger took care of that, giving her his ticket on a night when he had to teach his ceramics class. The opera? *Carmen*. It was love at first tragic aria.

Helen and Roger have been LA Opera regulars from the outset and have yet to miss a single performance. They were also charter members of the Opera League. Helen's volunteerism has included cast dinners and Shop at the Opera. Her forte, however, was hopping on the horn to welcome new members. Helen spent decades on the phone as a travel agent convincing people to visit the South Pacific, which might be the easiest job ever. "Calling people is second nature to me. It

was fun to share my love of opera with these new people."

With all that culture and all that running, you might think she doesn't have time for much else. Guess again. This Omaha native has a very active creative mind that's found expression through such media as painting and drawing and braided rugs. Parked on one of her dining room chairs is a painting of Maestro Domingo. Several versions of Ginger Rogers line her hallway.

"I started taking painting and drawing lessons after I married Roger," she says. "I just loved it. I can't do oils because I'm allergic to the oil. I work in acrylics...and I do drawings." She holds up a drawing of Mahler from multiple perspectives. "Mahler's my favorite composer."

Her husband still teaches ceramics. After he donated 3,000 books on ceramics (who knew there were that many books on ceramics?) to the American Museum of Ceramic Art, the only ceramics museum in California, the museum named their library after them.

As for those braided rugs, Helen's got tons of them, stacked two and three deep all around her living room. "I've braided my way through life."

Her next painting will be of Renée Fleming, whom Helen met at a CD signing in Omaha coinciding with a performance of *Maria Padilla*. "She's a good girl," Helen smiles. "Such a nice person." Helen shows me several photos of Renée Fleming from multiple angles that will help her capture the soprano's likeness. "Such an interesting face. Like Marlene Dietrich."

Helen's son is also an artist. He and one of Helen's daughters live in the area. She has another daughter back in Omaha. Rounding out the clan are a slew of grandkids and, as of February 2014, a great-grandson.

On my way out, I spot a copy of *Lonesome Dove* open on a reading stand. The lifelong bookworm explains she's on a mission to plow through Larry McMurtry's entire oeuvre.



Photo by Roger Porter



Photo by Bill Steinwart

"I can't wait to start running again," Helen says as we reach the front door. She's been fighting a nagging injury that causes her feet to swell. The way I see it, though, with a house that manifests her boundless creative energy in so many ways, Helen Porter has achieved a runner's high many, many times. 🌸

IN THE PIT

STEVEN BECKNELL, 1ST HORN, LA OPERA ORCHESTRA

By DIANE EISENMAN

Photo by Diane Eisenman



GROWING UP WITH MUSIC

The son of a French hornist and a pianist, both music professors at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, Steve began piano at age five. He studied violin briefly in 5th grade, but in order to be with his buddies, he auditioned for the band in 6th grade, wanting to play trumpet or drums. Instead, he was handed a French horn by the director, who knew his mother was available to coach him.

Scholarships kept him in Madison through his B.M. degree. As a junior, while attending the Music Academy of the West, he met hornist Jim Decker, who invited Steve to study at USC with Vince Derosa. The weather was definitely a deciding factor!

A FREELANCE CAREER

While at USC, he joined the Santa Barbara Symphony as 3rd horn, a step toward his dream of becoming 1st horn in a major symphony orchestra. He looked forward to playing the great horn repertoire of Mahler and Strauss – the ‘meat and potatoes’ of horn literature.

In 1987 he joined the LA Chamber Orchestra as 2nd horn and began performing with LA Opera. Soon he discovered that he really enjoyed opera music and welcomed the opportunity to become 1st horn with the new LA Opera Orchestra.

In the 30 years since, Steve has performed in the studio orchestras of over a thousand movies and TV shows, and recorded with famous vocal personalities. Musical theater experience includes this summer’s revival of *The Phantom of the Opera*

at the Pantages. He plays chamber music with Camerata Pacifica, participates in a woodwind quintet, and plays occasionally with the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, the California Philharmonic Orchestra and Muse/ique.

A part-time faculty member at USC, Steve encourages his students to keep their options open, as careers can take unexpected directions. Case in point: himself. Steve says he never dreamed when he was 20 that he would be so happy as a member of an opera orchestra.

PLAYING IN THE ORCHESTRA

French horn players have two big challenges. First is finding accurate pitches on high notes, which depend both on lip position and air support. Secondly, accuracy and strength are more difficult to maintain with age. “I don’t see myself playing horn my whole life. Most hornists stop playing at least by their 70s. Yet I see me playing piano ‘til I drop!”

Steve enjoys the big soaring horn melodies and the overtones that he feels in his body, especially when the whole horn section is playing together in tune. He loves listening to the beautiful music of Puccini, and the challenge and rewards of *Der Rosenkavalier*. Playing Wagner’s *Ring Cycle* for up to five hours a night was exhausting, “with me doing Siegfried’s call again and again.”

Steve loves playing with the LA Opera Orchestra. In addition to finding it less stressful than other performance venues, he enjoys his colleagues, has great respect for James Conlon, and appreciates knowing what music to prepare in advance.

BEYOND THE PIT

Though his two daughters are excellent musicians, neither chose music as their career, despite having professional parents. For a break from music, Steve goes ocean fishing or skiing at Mammoth Mountain. Locally, he attends sporting events as a fun way to clear his mind.

“Of all the things I do, playing with the LA Opera Orchestra is my favorite. I want to keep doing it as long as I can. I wish the opera did more productions because I love being there.” 🌸

SEMINARS FOR THE SEASONS

By KATHY CRANDALL



Our first seminar was held on September 6, featuring Dr. Nicolas Reveles, the Education and Outreach director at LA Opera and a pianist of some renown. Nic introduced us to verismo (realism) opera and convinced us that *Pagliacci* is a true verismo opera whereas *Gianni Schicchi* is not. He provided a fascinating glimpse into an operatic genre that appeared only briefly near the turn of the 20th century. Our wonderful singer was Kihun Yoon.

The New Year will kick off in maestro style. First up is an exciting and informative talk at the Dorothy Chandler on **Sunday, January 31 from 12–2:30pm, featuring James Conlon**, who will give us his unique take on modern productions of classic operas like *The Magic Flute* and modern productions of modern operas such as *Moby-Dick*. **Join us for a complimentary reception beginning at 11:30am.**

We expect to finish off the season with a trip to UCLA's James Bridges Theater for a wonderful look at Puccini and his women on **Saturday, March 19 from 1:00–5:00pm. Dr. Michael Hackett** will address the *Madame Butterfly* that will be playing, as well as the upcoming *La Bohème*, and other Puccini works. Singers from Pacific Opera Project will provide interesting illustrations of the points Dr. Hackett will be making about the Puccini repertoire.

Order your tickets today!

Sign up online or mail in the tear-off on the back page to attend these last two exciting seminars. Bring a friend to experience the wealth of knowledge Maestro Conlon and Dr. Hackett can infuse into any lecture. You will leave well informed and with a song in your heart. ☀

Our second seminar was notable for the participation of the highly knowledgeable Desirée Mays of Santa Fe. In addition to taking us on a tour of Herman Melville's background and the chase after the great white whale, she led us through the key excerpts of *Moby-Dick* that composer Jake Heggie chose to emphasize, as well as the history behind the development of *Moby-Dick* as an opera. Our second speaker was the beloved Nino Sanikidze who walked us through the opera, playing multiple outtakes and thoroughly introducing us to the music. As she always does, because she's so good at it, Nino sprinkled her talk with fascinating trivia about the composer and librettist. We were fortunate to have singer Musa Ngqungwana, a 2013 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions winner, who played Queequeg in the LAO production.

The third and last seminar of the fall season was held on November 15. Dr. Simon Williams and Duff Murphy made sure we thoroughly understood what qualifies as a *bel canto* opera and featured a variety of great singers tackling the major arias. We came away understanding how difficult it is to sing the principal roles, which is why this opera is rarely performed.

Photos by Alma Guzman



By BILL KENNEDY

ANNUAL SEASON PREVIEW

The event will take place on Thursday, January 28, on the fifth floor of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion and is free to Opera League members (*who must make reservations in advance*). Registration begins at 3:30pm and the program starts at 4:00pm.

Featured guests will include LA Opera CEO Christopher Koelsch and Joshua Winograde, Senior Director of Artistic Planning and Director of the Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program.

A highlight of the program will be selections from next season's offerings sung by the young artists, accompanied by Peter Walsh, the pianist in the Young Artist's Program.

Opera League President Marlene Chavez, who will kick off the event, said: "This is OLLA's signature event that brings together all members in the spirit of camaraderie to enjoy a musical presentation of next season's productions."

Following the program, there will be a light supper and a no-host bar.

While the program is free for members (and \$50 each for guests), it isn't free for the League. Over the last several years, the cost has continued to increase, so contributions of *any* size are gratefully accepted and will be used to offset the cost of the event. Your generosity will help us continue this annual event to show our

**Suspense! Great singing!
Surprises! A happy conclusion!**

**No, it's not a *bel canto* comedy
but it's not that far off.**

**It's the Opera League's
Annual Season Preview,
when members of LA Opera's
leadership team will
announce and discuss the
lineup for the 2016-2017
season, the company's 31st.**

membership and their guests how much the Opera League appreciates members' generous work and involvement.

Members will receive an invitation in early December. You may register by mail or online. If you have any questions or wish to know more about underwriting any portion of this important event, please contact:

Beverly Phillips
310.454.5609
bevwhitep@aol.com

Susan Heard
626.344.3040
susan.heard@me.com

We look forward to seeing you there! ✨

ALL ABOARD! WANT TO GO ON AN OPERA LEAGUE TRIP?

San Diego Trip on Sunday, February 21, 2016: *Tosca*

Daytrip to San Diego by private bus for the performance of Puccini's passionate *Tosca* by Greek soprano Alexia Voulgaridou. Included is a three-course lunch at the famous Westgate Hotel.

Santa Barbara Trip on Sunday, March 6, 2016: *L'elisir d'amore*

Daytrip to Santa Barbara by train in business class to enjoy the delightful comedy of *L'elisir d'amore* by Gaetano Donizetti.

Santa Fe Trip Celebrating the 60th Opera Festival Anniversary: July 31 to August 8, 2016

La Fanciulla del West, Giacomo Puccini
Don Giovanni, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Roméo et Juliette, Charles Gounod
Capriccio, Richard Strauss
Vanessa, Samuel Barber with libretto by Gian Carlo Menotti

OPERA LEAGUE TRIPS FOR 2016-2017

Opera trips planned especially for the Opera League by our tireless Special Events and Fundraiser Chair Brita Kohlfürst-Millard.

Join other like-minded opera lovers to experience and share the pleasures of opera. Contact Brita at bmillard_99@yahoo.com for pricing and reservations if you are interested in participating in any of the following excursions. Please note that the trips fill up quickly and space is limited.

14-day European Trip - end of July/beginning of August 2017

An exciting trip to attend opera performances during the Opera Festival of the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich and opera performances in Bayreuth during the Wagner Festival. This trip is now in the planning stages. If you think you may be interested in participating, please contact Brita to hold a place for you.

Danke schoen, Brita! ✨



Frederick Ballentine, Alin Melik-Adamyan, Alice Coulombe, Marlene Chavez, Michael Melton. Photo by Kevin Harrison

FREDERICK BALLENTINE, FEATURED SOLOIST AT AALAO FALL RECITAL

By SHELL AMEGA

Nearly 50 opera enthusiasts were treated to an afternoon of arias, spirituals and art songs by artist Frederick Ballentine at the African-Americans for Los Angeles Opera's (AALAO) Fall Recital at the home of Alice and Joe Coulombe. Pianist Alin Melik-Adamyan accompanied Mr. Ballentine. Among the many engaging pieces sung by the tenor were: "Omra Ma Fu" by George F. Handel, "Non T'amo Piu" by Francesco Tosti and "My Soul is a Witness" by Hall Johnson. An unexpected, delightful surprise came when Ballentine sang "Witches Ride" from *Hansel and Gretel*.

AALAO Board Member Michael Melton served as the MC while Alice Coulombe, a founding member of AALAO, welcomed the audience to her home, which was graced with vibrant paintings by Joe Coulombe. Opera League President Marlene Chavez was on hand to greet guests.

Though just beginning his career, Frederick Ballentine has quickly established himself as one of the most dramatically compelling singers of his generation. His many notable performances include: Lurcanio in *Ariodante*, Cornaccio in John Musto's *Volpone*, and Remendado in *Carmen*. Frederick's upcoming performances include T. Chester Morris in Washington National Opera's new production of Glass's *Appomattox* and Los Angeles Opera's anticipated revival of Barrie Kosky's *Die Zauberflöte*.

AALAO is dedicated to increasing the awareness of opera throughout the Los Angeles community. The next event, the AALAO Annual Black History Month Recital, will be held on February 7, 2016, at the home of Beverley and Clarence Clarkson. The cost is \$25 in advance and \$35 at the door. It is advisable to reserve tickets early as most events fill to capacity. For more information, please contact Jacque Lyne Wallace: 424.245.4659. Make checks payable to The Opera League of Los Angeles/AALAO and mail c/o Ben Kerr at 817 Keniston Ave., LA 90005. 🌟

USING YOUR NEWEST BENEFIT

By BEVERLY PHILLIPS

The Opera League is very excited about the new benefit we have arranged for our *Contributing, Sustaining* and *Premier* level members.

I'd like to explain how easy it is to use this benefit. You will need to fill out the Discounted Ticket Sign-up form that was sent out to qualifying members in August, allowing the Opera League to release your contact information to LA Opera. To request the form, send an email to info@operaleague.org. Next:

- Occasionally, you will receive an email from LA Opera with the title "\$25 Tickets for Opera League..." that contains an invitation to purchase up to two deeply discounted tickets for a current opera or other event for \$25 each (plus handling fee). This email will include a code and a "Buy Now" gold rectangle towards the bottom. There may be a listing of where the seats are located, often in Founders Circle and Orchestra.
- When you click on "Buy Now," you will be taken directly to the LAO website to make your seat selections. Click on the seating level you prefer. Our discounted seats will be in **GREEN**.
- Choose your seats and pay as directed.
- *This is a case of the early bird getting the worm!* When you see these offers, act quickly if you are interested. The offers may arrive a week before the event up to the day of the event. Tickets are *non-transferable* and must be used by you and your guest.
- You also have the option of calling the box office when you receive these offers, but you will be restricted to the box office hours and seats may already be taken. You will need to give the box office the code in your email.

This is a generous and exciting perk for our higher donor members. If you are unfamiliar with ordering tickets online or would like assistance in accessing the tickets, please call me at 310.454.5609 or email bevwhitep@aol.com and I will help you.

This benefit is too good to miss! 🌟

IN LEAGUE WITH NORMA

By MARLENE CHAVEZ



Photo by Sean Muhlstein

The Opera League of Los Angeles is proud to have participated in underwriting *Norma* in celebration of Los Angeles Opera's 30th anniversary. At our

September board meeting, I had the distinct privilege of presenting a check for \$125,000 to John Nuckols, Executive Vice President of LAO.

Thank you to our members whose dues, donations and fundraising efforts have provided the funds which enabled us to contribute to this classic production. Opera lovers from all over the country flew into the City of Angels to take in this tale of Druids and Romans misbehaving. Now they know of our involvement courtesy of the Opera League being recognized in the publications and supertitles. I hope all League members noticed that and shared in the spotlight. You've earned it! 🌟

CALENDAR

JANUARY

Cathedral Project Rehearsal

Sun, Jan 10, 12:00-2:00pm

NEED 4 VOLUNTEERS

VOLUNTEERS WILL ASSIST WITH ROOM SET-UP, SIGN-IN AND PROVIDE DIRECTION TO PARTICIPANTS.

Saturday Mornings at the Opera

Sat, Jan 16, 8:30-11:30am

NEED 12 VOLUNTEERS

Elementary Student Matinees

Tue, Jan 19, 8:30am-1:00pm

Wed, Jan 20, 8:30am-1:00pm

NEED 15 VOLUNTEERS EACH

Opera for Educators

THE MAGIC FLUTE

Sat, Jan 23, 8:00-11:00am

NEED 4 VOLUNTEERS EACH

Annual Season Preview

Thu, Jan 28, 4:00pm-6:00pm

(REGISTRATION BEGINS AT 3:30PM)

DGP, 5TH FLOOR SALON

Seminar

REINVENTING OPERA PRODUCTIONS IN THE 21ST CENTURY / MODERN PRODUCTIONS SUCH AS *THE MAGIC FLUTE* AND *MOBY-DICK* WITH JAMES CONLON

Sun, Jan 31, 12:00-2:30pm

(11:30 COMPLIMENTARY RECEPTION / NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION)

DGP, 5TH FLOOR

FEBRUARY

AAAO Black History Month Seminar

Sun, Feb 7, 3:00-6:00pm

AT THE HOME OF BEVERLEY AND CLARENCE CLARKSON

QUESTIONS: JACQUE LYNE WALLACE 424.245.4659

Cast Dinner (TIME IS WHEN TO DELIVER FOOD)

Tue, Feb 9, 5:00pm THE MAGIC FLUTE

(REHEARSAL ROOMS 1 & 2)

Operawise

THE MAGIC FLUTE

Tue, Feb 9, 2:00-6:00pm

Tue, Feb 9, 6:30-10:30pm

NEED 7 VOLUNTEERS EACH

Opera Prep

THE MAGIC FLUTE

Thu, Feb 11, 11:00am-5:00pm

NEED 20 VOLUNTEERS

Sustainer/Premier Salon

Wed, Feb 17

Opera for Educators

MADAME BUTTERFLY

Sat, Feb 20, 8:00-11:00am

NEED 4 VOLUNTEERS EACH

San Diego Opera Trip

TOSCA

Sun, Feb 21

CONTACT: BRITA KOHLFÜRST-MILLARD,
BMILLARD_99@YAHOO.COM

MARCH

Cathedral Project

THE FESTIVAL PLAY OF DANIEL

Fri, Mar 4

Sat, Mar 5

Santa Barbara Opera Trip

L'ELISIR D'AMORE

Sun, Mar 6

CONTACT: BRITA KOHLFÜRST-MILLARD
BMILLARD_99@YAHOO.COM

Operawise

MADAME BUTTERFLY

Mon, Mar 7, 2:00-6:00pm

Mon, Mar 7, 6:30-10:30pm

NEED 7 VOLUNTEERS EACH

Cast Dinner (TIME IS WHEN TO DELIVER FOOD)

Mon, Mar 7, 5:00pm MADAME BUTTERFLY

(REHEARSAL ROOMS 1 & 2)

Opera Prep

THE MAGIC FLUTE

Thu, Mar 10, 4:30-10:30pm

NEED 12 VOLUNTEERS

Discover Opera

Sat, Mar 12, 9:00-11:00am

NEED 2 VOLUNTEERS

Seminar

PUCCINI AND HIS WORKS

Sat, Mar 19, 1:00-5:00pm

UCLA

APRIL

Peter Hemmings Award Dinner

Sun, Apr 2, 6:00pm

CALIFORNIA CLUB

Opera for Educators

LA BOHÈME

Sat, Apr 16, 8:00-11:00am

NEED 4 VOLUNTEERS EACH

Elementary Student Matinees

Thu, Apr 28, 8:30am-1:00pm

Fri, Apr 29, 8:30am-1:00pm

NEED 15 VOLUNTEERS EACH

Saturday Mornings at the Opera

Sat, Apr 30, 8:30-11:30am

NEED 12 VOLUNTEERS

MAY

Premier Dinner

Sun, May 1

Backstage Magic

Wed, May 4

Operawise

LA BOHÈME

Tue, May 10, 2:00-6:00pm

Tue, May 10, 6:30-10:30pm

NEED 7 VOLUNTEERS EACH

Cast Dinner (TIME IS WHEN TO DELIVER FOOD)

Tue, May 10, 5:00pm LA BOHÈME

(REHEARSAL ROOMS 1 & 2)

Opera Prep

LA BOHÈME

Thu, May 12, 4:30-10:30pm

NEED 12 VOLUNTEERS

Discover Opera

Sat, May 14, 9:00-11:00am

NEED 2 VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer Appreciation

Tue, May 24

JUNE

AAAO Father's Day Membership Recital

Sun, Jun 19, 3:00-6:00pm

AT THE HOME OF DELORES AND BEN KERR

QUESTIONS: JACQUE LYNE WALLACE 424.245.4659

EDUCATION EVENTS

Elementary Student Matinees

Volunteers welcome, supervise and guide elementary age children who attend opera.

Discover Opera (FORMERLY OPERA 101)

Volunteers will host and provide direction to teachers and sign-in participants.

Opera for Educators

Teachers attend sessions to advance their education on the operas of the season and earn salary points. Volunteers check in participants and provide information.

Operawise

College students and teachers attend a working rehearsal and observe the company at work. Volunteers chaperone and provide information.

Opera Prep

High school students attend a dress rehearsal and a special seminar that promotes careers in the arts.

Saturday Mornings at the Opera

Volunteers assist with elementary age children who attend opera and art workshops.

CONTACT INFORMATION

CAST DINNERS: Diane Henderson

HOME: 323.874.8214 / CELL: 323.251.7484

dhenderson3417@sbcglobal.net

EDUCATION: Larry Verdugo

CELL: 626.590.5697

larryverdugo@icloud.com

GATHERINGS

Beverly Hills

Mimi Rotter 310.479.0259 *RSVP*
Anne Russell Sullivan 323.697.9733

Puccini's Tragic Women

Sun, Feb 28, 10:00am
10430 Wilshire Boulevard #504
Los Angeles, CA 90024
Host: Ruth Lavine

Hollywood / Hancock Park

Marlene Chavez 323.934.5777 *RSVP*
Sean Muhlstein 818.825.2228

The Magic Flute

Sun, Jan 24, 2:00pm

Puccini Operas

Sun, Mar 6, 2:00pm

123 South McCadden Place
Los Angeles, CA 90004
Host: Marlene Chavez

Orange County

Lorna Blancaflor 562.259.7426 *RSVP*
Christa Marks 714.871.5525

Madame Butterfly and La Bohème

Sun, Feb 14, 2:00pm
TBA

San Fernando Valley

Regi Merwin 818.400.2578 *RSVP*

TBD

San Gabriel Valley

Michael Sholer 818.502.1988 *RSVP*

The Magic Flute

Mon, Jan 25, 7:00pm

VISIT THE WEBSITE CALENDAR FOR CURRENT INFORMATION: OPERALEAGUE.ORG

Madame Butterfly

Mon, Feb 29, 7:00pm

La Bohème

Mon, Apr 25, 7:00pm

5278 La Cañada Boulevard
La Cañada, CA 91011
Hosts: Barbara and Jack Dawson

Santa Clarita

Ann Anderson and Ron Gordon
661.259.9619 *RSVP*

Operas that Begat Broadway Shows

Mon, Jan 11, 6:30pm

The Magic Flute

Mon, Feb 8, 6:30pm

25506 Longfellow Place
Stevenson Ranch, CA 91381
Hosts: Ann Anderson and Ron Gordon

South Bay

Ifang (lee-fong) Hsieh 310.279.9927 *RSVP*

The Magic Flute

Sat, Jan 23, 2:00pm
28 Aurora Drive
Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90274-4235
Hosts: Lenita and David Witherspoon

Madame Butterfly

TBA

Westside

Monika Whitaker 310.826.4743 *RSVP*
Alice and Chuck Bragg 310.454.9662

The Magic Flute/La Bohème

Mon, Feb 8, 7:00pm
TBA

2016 OPERA LEAGUE SEMINARS

Dedicated to Sherwin Sloan, Founder of the Opera League Seminar

Sun, January 31, 12:00pm – 2:30pm

11:30am: Complimentary Reception / Orientation for new members

Reinventing Opera Productions in the 21st Century / Modern Productions such as *The Magic Flute* and *Moby-Dick*

SPEAKER: **James Conlon**

DOROTHY CHANDLER PAVILION

135 N. Grand Ave.
(Enter through double doors next to Kendall's)

Sat, March 19, 1:00pm – 5:00pm

Puccini and His Works (Women)

SPEAKER: **Dr. Michael Hackett**

UCLA JAMES BRIDGES THEATER

235 Charles E Young Drive N, Los Angeles

TICKETS:

Advance Orders **\$35** or a Member's Voucher

Guests **\$45**

Same-day purchase at the door **\$45**

Place your ticket orders on the website at operaleague.org - OR - Use attached order form.

Our thanks to Helga Kasimoff, Kasimoff-Blüthner Piano Co., for providing their beautiful piano!

Jan 31 / Mar 19 SEMINAR ORDER FORM

Check the number of tickets you want for each seminar. Include your check or voucher(s) for the total amount. Same-day purchase at the door will be \$45. (Vouchers are valid for seminars, master classes, and musicales.)
Sorry, no refunds!

	JAN 31	MAR 19
_____ x Member @\$35	\$ _____	\$ _____
_____ x Member (Voucher)	\$ 0	\$ 0
_____ x Non-member @\$45	\$ _____	\$ _____
_____ x Student member @\$10	\$ _____	\$ _____
TOTAL		\$ _____

NAME(S)

ADDRESS

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EMAIL

Enclose check made payable to **Opera League of Los Angeles** and mail with this form to:

Opera League of Los Angeles
PO Box 49-1057
Los Angeles, CA 90049-9057

OR order tickets on the League website:
operaleague.org/events.

For more information, call 213.972.7220,
or send email to: info@operaleague.org

OPERA TALKS

Opera Talks at Julianne's

Mondays at 7:00pm

JULIENNE'S FINE FOODS

2649 MISSION ST., SAN MARINO

Feb 1, Mar 7, Apr 4, May 2, Jun 6

CONTACT: Carol Sholer, Csholer1@att.net
818.243.1818

TO MAKE A RESERVATION (\$10)

TO ORDER A "LIGHT SUPPER BOX" (\$15)

CONTACT: Julie@julienne.us or call
626.441.2299, ext. 20

Opera Talks at Local Libraries

Informative and exciting Opera Talks are presented monthly at a local library near you.

FOR LOCATIONS, DATES AND TIMES, VISIT THE LA OPERA WEBSITE: laopera.org/community.
CLICK ON **General** AND SELECT THE **Opera Talks** TAB. CHECK BACK MONTHLY AS ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS ARE ADDED.

OPERA LEAGUE MEMBERSHIPS

There is an opera league membership for everyone! Join one of our six levels to enjoy our more than 60 activities per year, have fun and experience opera *Behind the Scenes*. Visit our website: operaleague.org and click on *Membership* to learn about the great benefits. Regular memberships and above are for two people.

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP	\$25
ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP	\$50
REGULAR MEMBERSHIP	\$100
CONTRIBUTING MEMBERSHIP	\$200
SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP	\$350
PREMIER MEMBERSHIP	\$550

OPERA LEAGUE MISSION STATEMENT

The Opera League of Los Angeles, founded in 1981, is dedicated to supporting LA Opera and to stimulating interest and participation in opera in the Southern California community.



135 North Grand Ave. | Los Angeles, CA 90012

DON'T MISS THESE UPCOMING EVENTS!

Annual Season Preview

Thu, Jan 28

Seminar: Modern Productions with James Conlon

Sun, Jan 31

AALAO Black History Month Seminar

Sun, Feb 7

Sustainer/Premier Salon

Wed, Feb 17

San Diego Trip: Tosca

Sun, Feb 21

Santa Barbara Trip: L'elisir d'amore

Sun, Mar 6

Seminar: Puccini and His Works

Sat, Mar 19

Peter Hemmings Award Dinner

Sun, Apr 2

Premier Dinner

Sun, May 1

Backstage Magic

Wed, May 4

Volunteer Appreciation

Tue, May 24

AALAO Father's Day Membership Recital

Sun, Jun 19

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
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Permit #740

SHOP AT THE OPERA

Open two hours before each performance in the lobby of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion

Shop at the Opera is heating up for a blockbuster season. Last year sales hit \$100,000 and shop manager Mimi Rotter (center), along with her many trusted volunteers, are hoping to top it this season.

Come browse updated collections of jackets, scarves, purses, jewelry, records, CDs and books. Continue your New Year's shopping! Rosalie Kornblau (left) and Ellie Wentraub (right) brandish the sharp new bags they donated to Shop at the Opera to carry your treasures.

Shop at the Opera is the major fundraiser for the Opera League and profits go to support LA Opera's Education and Community Engagement programs.



Photo by Paul Derouin