

Your Guide To Upcoming Opera League Events

ISSUE 45
SPRING 2017

BRAVO

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE OPERA LEAGUE OF LOS ANGELES



By PAULA CORREIA and TOM LADY

FEAST YOUR EYES!

CAST DINNERS NURTURE THE BODY AS WELL AS CULTURAL CAMARADERIE.

“Put your platters right here!” the petite woman calls out. Anne Prokopovych, veteran Opera League volunteer, oversees the setup and arrangement of food, lots and lots of home-cooked, amazing-looking food, across three long tables.

My friend and fellow volunteer Sue Correnti and I are on the 4th floor of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. No, we are not here to see an opera, but to feed all those who go into making an opera possible. As we stroll into the rehearsal room, we are greeted by fellow volunteers as well as a plethora of scents, each redolent of something prepared with tender loving care.

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2017 Peter Hemmings
Dinner Recap

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Harriet Farmer

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William May

Photos by Paula Correia. L to R: Anne Prokopovych, Mike Fawcett, Sue Correnti, Marlene Chavez, Nancy Bohde, Phil Gage, Fong Liu & Lois Tandy

From the President



It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as President of the Opera League for the past two years.

Due to the efforts of our dedicated Board of Directors and our passionate volunteers, I am proud of the accomplishments of our administration. We have fulfilled our stated mission to support LA Opera through volunteerism, education and fundraising.

That said, just because my term is winding down doesn't mean the League's programming pace has slackened. Indeed, I'd posit the opposite is true. Spring has sprung, and so has the League.

Let's start with the Peter Hemmings Award Gala, which brought a very lively and festive Saturday night to the California Club on March 4. This year we honored LA Opera President and CEO Christopher Koelsch. Maybe you were there. If so, no doubt you were among the smartly dressed Leaguers hobnobbing with LAO board members, leaders and friends. In his gracious acceptance of the award, Christopher acknowledged the generosity, partnership and friendship of the Opera League. Net proceeds from the generous donations in Christopher's honor will support Opera Camp for the fifth consecutive year. Bravissima to League board member Brita Millard for her efforts in chairing the Hemmings event.

In January board member Beverly Phillips once again staged our annual Preview event, co-hosted with LA Opera in the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion's Grand Hall. Have you seen next season's lineup? One word sums it up for me: WOW!

This spring the League put on two very interesting seminars, on *Salome* and *The Tales of Hoffmann*. The latter marked an innovative break from our usual seminar format in that we co-produced it down the street at MOCA in conjunction with the Opera Buffs. And bonus! Right after the seminar, eager Leaguers got to stay and attend the Opera Buffs Spring Showcase. THANK YOU to board member and immediate past president Kathy Crandall and her team of volunteers for their tireless work in bringing these seminars to you and me.

As you read this, we have just completed a first-of-its-kind event called Richard Wagner: A Ring for All Seasons. Held at UCLA's James Bridges Theater over the first two weekends in April, this Ring film festival featured filmed productions of all four Ring Cycle operas, each from a different production. UCLA Professor Michael Hackett was our erudite host, prefacing each film with a brief talk. Once again we have Brita Millard, our special events chair, to thank for this Ring.

No, we didn't stop there. The League has been working with LA Opera's Education and Community Engagement department (EduCom) to put on all sorts of education events for students of all ages, from elementary school to college. It is no exaggeration to say that these events simply could not happen without the League's veritable army of intrepid Education volunteers, working in perfect tandem under the steady leadership of the League's Education chair, Larry Verdugo. Hats off to you, Larry!

Our cast dinners also didn't slow down. I've said it before: A diva's gotta eat, right? So a hearty, scrumptious (and sometimes even organic!) THANK YOU to board member and Cast Dinner chair Diane Henderson for continuing to take this on.

By the time the next BRAVO goes to press in August, a new Opera League administration will have kicked off its inaugural term on July 1. I know you will join me in supporting the new and continuing board members to drive membership through innovative programming.

Thank you so much for letting me lead this awesome group these past two years. It has been an honor, a privilege and, yes, a challenge at times. I am very grateful to have had the opportunity.

See you at the opera!


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Newsletter Design: Studio Fuse, Inc.
Printer: Licher Direct Mail

FEAST YOUR EYES!

CONTINUED FROM COVER

After Sue and I deposit our contributions, we stroll along the tables to peruse the multi-ethnic salads, the veggies, entrées and the dessert which, of course, gets its own table. Even more amazing than the sheer volume and variety of YUM! is the fact that each and every one of these dishes is homemade by the same volunteers who are now here tonight to give even more of their time.



Alice Coulombe



STANDING L TO R: Lisa Rowley, Diane Henderson, James Conlon, Virginia Fawcett. SEATED: Scott Baskin, Marlene Chavez, Sook & Dwight Heikkila

Welcome to the Opera League cast dinner, perhaps the most nutritious tradition this side of the velvet curtain. Cast dinners typically take place during the last week of rehearsals, what they in the biz call tech

week, when the performers are putting in grueling hours in full makeup and costume.

"The League dinner is one of my favorite parts of tech week," says Aurelia Andrews, one of LA Opera's Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artists. "It feels like a family reunion, with all the casserole, and the cornbread is seriously amazing! It really feels like a fun family dinner amid all the focus and stress of production tech."

"It's a continual labor of love for our opera performers and support personnel," is the oft-repeated volunteer refrain.

"My wife Anne and I have been joyfully volunteering, practically from the beginning when LA Opera was founded, because it gives us so much satisfaction," says Anne Prokopovych's husband, Ernie.

"I just like to be of service," adds Japan-born Satchiko Higuchi, who sits on practically every Opera League committee.

So just who is the trailblazer who baked this delectable innovation?

That would be Alice Coulombe, the very same grande dame who, with Lorraine Saunders, co-founded the Opera League over thirty years ago. Alice recalls: "Our inspiration was English opera administrator Peter Hemmings, who became LA Opera's first general manager in 1986 and strongly supported any type of hospitality and social activities... We had many small activities then. Cast dinners began with sandwiches in the basement and eventually evolved into the full dinners offered now."

"The cast dinners are a wonderful way to get to know the Opera League community," says Young Artist Liv Redpath. "I am always so honored by their dedication, interest and support of what we are working towards here at the company, and for the art of opera in a broader sense."

At your typical cast dinner, the performers and support personnel can number anywhere between 80 and 160 very hungry people. On this night, those numbers are definitely bearing out to the higher end of that scale.

It's half past five when the first of the famished show up. Opera League President Marlene Chavez says it best: "A diva's gotta eat." And how! In no time the room is packed with—sorry, I just have to say this—starving artists! Sue and I and the other volunteers can't help smiling in gratitude as the LAOers pile on those plates. Starving no more!

One such newly fed LAOer is Young Artist Michelle Siemens. "The Opera League's cast dinners are a wonderful opportunity to relax during the heightened anticipation of an approaching opening night," she says. "The friendly faces and delicious food make for fond memories."

"It's a wonderful way to learn a lot about opera," says Mike Fawcett, who volunteers with his wife Virginia.

Virginia adds: "I wanted to find something meaningful to do related to my enthusiasm for opera."

The thick, warm gravy on top of all this epic feasting is that none other than Maestro James Conlon shows up toward the end of the dinner to give thanks to the League volunteers. "The League is an integral part of LA Opera and a meaningful partner in all that we do," he says. "Those of us who are devoted to the preservation and advancement of the form, each in his or her own way, work toward these goals because we believe that our society is richer and the world more humane as a result. With its various programs, the Opera League truly makes a difference."

After LA Opera is fed, there is always plenty of food left for the volunteers to have their own dinner. By the time those volunteer bellies are full, it's after seven o'clock. You know what that means, don't you? Time for the dress rehearsal!

Sue and I and the other volunteers head downstairs to be among the first to watch the forthcoming production. And there we all are, the Leaguers in the audience and the LAOers singing their hearts out on stage, all of us united in nourishment, both culinary as well as cultural. 🌸

WHEN HOLLYWOOD ABDUCTED *THE ABDUCTION*

By BOB BERNARD

Early in the 1970 film *Patton*, George C. Scott—while reviewing troops in the Kingdom of Morocco—admiringly described the country: “It’s a combination of the Bible ... and Hollywood!”



1. Belmonte in the opera



2. Jeff and Orville in the film



3. Jeff and Orville in the film



4. Kurt Rydl's Osmin and Rainer Trost's Belmonte



5. Anthony Quinn and Bob Hope



6. Mehrzad Montazeri, Patrizia Ciofi, Eva Mei and Rainer Trost



7. Rainer Trost and Eva Mei



8. Moonlight becomes Dorothy Lamour and Bing Crosby



9. Crosby, Lamour, Drake and Hope

Enticed by the Mozartian combination of adventure, comedy, romance and music (all in an exotic environ) in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (*The Abduction from the Seraglio*), Paramount Pictures produced the 1942 film *The Road to Morocco*, cheerfully “abducting” the core of the opera’s narrative into the third of what was to eventually become a series of seven comedic “Road Pictures.”

Each of the principal operatic characters has their respective analogue in the movie:

Belmonte = Bing Crosby as Jeff Peters

Konstanze = Dorothy Lamour as Princess Shalmar

Blonde = Dona Drake as Mihirmah

Pedrillo = Bob Hope as Orville Jackson

Osmin = Anthony Quinn as Mulla Kasim

The opening of both opera and film involve an approach by sea. (1, 2)

In the film, Jeff and Orville transfer from their shipwreck to a “ship of the desert.”

However, experts in the field of vertebrate habitat correlation have taken issue with photo image. (3) They maintain that this is the wrong kind of camel. What Jeff and Orville are riding is a Bactrian camel or dromedary, with brown tufts of hair and two humps. The Moroccan and Middle Eastern camel has a single hump and no tufts of darker hair.

In the opera, Pedrillo adapts to life in the seraglio by working as a servant in Pasha Selim’s palace. In the film, Orville adapts to life in the harem by means of intense study.

Osmin, the overseer for the opera’s Pasha Selim, has a temperament composed of roughly equal parts Homer Simpson and Archie Bunker. In the opera, Kurt Rydl’s Osmin threatens Belmonte. In the film, Anthony Quinn – still in his ‘salad days’ as an actor, but certainly menacing as Mulla Kasim – ominously browbeats Orville. (4, 5)

Squabbles aside, love manifests itself in both the opera and film – Belmonte and Konstanze; Princess Shalmar and Jeff. (7, 8)

Egress from both the seraglio and harem are finally accomplished joyfully while shipboard. (6, 9)

Note: Photo images from the opera were all excerpted from a film of the 2002 performance at the Teatro della Pergola in Florence. 🌸

USING YOUR DISCOUNTED TICKET BENEFIT

By BEVERLY PHILLIPS

The Opera League is thrilled about the \$25 tickets for our *Contributing, Sustaining* and *Premier* level members. Even more thrilling is how easy it is to use this benefit. Simply fill out the digital Discounted Ticket Sign-up form on the website allowing the Opera League to release your contact information to LA Opera:

- www.operaleague.org
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NEXT:

- Occasionally you will receive an email from LA Opera with the subject line **\$25 Tickets for Opera League**. This email contains an invitation to purchase up to two deeply discounted tickets for a current opera or other event for \$25 each (plus handling fee). The 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 **Buy Now**, you will be taken 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. These offers may arrive anywhere from a week before the event up to the day of the event. Tickets are **non-transferrable** 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 (check LAO’s website for the hours). Seats may already be taken by the time you reach them. ***If you choose this option, you will need to give the box office the code in your email.***

If you are unfamiliar with ordering tickets online, or would like help in accessing these tickets, please call me at 310.454.5609 or email me at bevwhitep@aol.com. I’m always happy to help. After all, this benefit is too good to miss!

If you have already signed up but have not received any offers, email me at bevwhitep@aol.com. 🌸

EVERYBODY LOVES CHRISTOPHER

Our annual Peter Hemmings Award dinner brought a festive Saturday night to downtown L.A. on March 4.

As the Opera League President, I was there to welcome the many guests, all dressed to the nines, who attended to honor Christopher Koelsch, President and CEO of LA Opera.

Christopher oversees all aspects of artistic planning, including repertoire development, music administration, casting of artists and selection of guest conductors. He has developed programs that not only address the experienced opera goer, but also encourage and entice a younger generation. Opera attendance throughout the country is declining, but under Christopher, LA Opera is thriving.

Carol Henry, Chair of LA Opera's Executive Committee and a founding member of the Opera League, delivered remarks from LA Opera Board Chairman Marc Stern.

I then read a warm letter from Maestro Plácido Domingo recognizing Christopher's accomplishments in service of LA Opera.

Zev Yaroslavsky, last year's Hemmings recipient, presented the coveted award to Christopher. Graciously and humbly, Christopher thanked the League and spoke of his relationship with the late great Peter Hemmings.

The Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artists took the stage and treated us to a thrilling performance. The singers included Liv Redpath, Brian Michael Moore and Nicholas Brownlee. Their coach Nino Sanikidze provided the accompaniment.

In my closing remarks, I thanked the generous donors who made donations to the League in honor of Christopher. Net proceeds go to LA Opera to support Opera Camp, one of their educational initiatives.

The Opera League established the Peter Hemmings Award to recognize individuals who have made significant contributions to the development of opera in the greater Los Angeles area. 🌟

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1. Christopher Koelsch & Marlene Chavez 2. Nicholas Brownlee, Nino Sanikidze, Liv Redpath, Brian Michael Moore 3. Zev Yaroslavsky 4. Mike & Virginia Fawcett 5. Firdaus Ladou, Marlinda Menashe, Rosetta Landou, Libby Short, Nancy Baxter 6. Kathy Crandall, Alyce Williamson, Mirjana Mahnovski 7. Liv Redpath 8. Faith Raiquel, Beverly Phillips 9. Holly & John Nuckols, Christopher Koelsch, Stacy Brightman, Todd Bentjen, Nino Sanikidze, Monica Gutierrez Roper 11. Paul & Shell Derouin, Judith Hyman 12. Charles Stern, Sean Muhlstein, Laurel Howat, Brita Kohlfürst-Millard, Editte Alsen, Anne Prokopovych 13. Christopher Koelsch, Diane & Peter Gray 14. Mirjana Mahnovski, Janet Ciriello, Allan W. Edmiston, Patrick Harrigan, Kathy Crandall. Photos by Alma Guzman.

IN THE PIT

WILLIAM MAY: BASSOONER, THE BETTER

By DIANE EISENMAN

Photo by Diane Eisenman.

“I’m looking for volunteers to play the bassoon!” a middle school band director in Frankfort, Kentucky exclaimed to his clarinet section.

William May, who hails from a family of drummers, raised his hand. He liked how the bassoon looked so different. Plus, the large size and low sounds fascinated him. Having enjoyed jazz with his dad and brothers as he grew up, he later expanded his classical training by adding saxophone and jazz to his musical repertoire.

After receiving a Bachelor of Music from Indiana University in 2007, he moved to Los Angeles and earned the Professional Study Certificate from the Colburn School in 2009. While still at Colburn, he auditioned for Principal Bassoonist with the Los Angeles Opera Orchestra. When he nailed it, William became the orchestra’s youngest member for a time.

Playing in an opera orchestra is something he would never want to give up. “The element of the story gives more meaning to the music, something to be inspired by.” William says that in opera, he plays the bassoon with more vocal expression, as his instrument often doubles with the singer. “I become one with the singer. Being surrounded by singing inspires that part of my musicality.”

William’s favorite opera experience so far is this season’s *Salome*. Last June he purchased a heckelphone, one of only a hundred in existence. It could be described as a giant oboe with a bassoon-type reed. Its round soft sounds are similar to an oboe, but it is really loud and carries through a large orchestra. It was used mostly by Strauss after its invention in 1904, and is featured in *Salome* and other Strauss works. William hopes to use it more often in his orchestra career.

Some of the most challenging opera parts for bassoon were composed by Mozart and Rossini. Their music requires continued technical acrobatics, especially *The Barber of Seville* and *Così fan Tutte*. Though William loves the beautiful music of Puccini, *Albert Herring* and *Bluebeard’s Castle* top his list of

favorite operas for “the switch between tonal and dissonant sounds, evoking moments of beauty and moments of terror.” *Bluebeard’s Castle* displays so many subtle colors within the sounds of its large orchestra.

The bassoon comes with a unique set of requirements. The left thumb gets a special workout, as it must be used for no less 11 different keys, while the right thumb “only” five. Making reeds can be a tedious, never-ending job, so William uses rainbow-colored strings to wrap each one in order to “make it more interesting.” He says the reed is actually more important than the instrument itself, and more personal. A good reed, he enthuses, feels expressive and uninhibited, and is saved for performances.

“I become one with the singer. Being surrounded by singing inspires that part of my musicality.”

Outside of LAO, he substitutes regularly with the LA Philharmonic, the San Diego Symphony, and the Santa Barbara Symphony. He also performs with Pittance, a chamber group of LAO orchestra members. This being L.A., William also lands the odd TV or film gig, which can be demanding. Or not! Recently he was contracted for a certain high-profile production that required him to play one long note for six hours.

During his free time, William loves to travel and explore the great outdoors. He can be found doing yoga, swimming, cross-country skiing, or embarking on a new culinary adventure. He’s been to 18 European countries, finding Italy most fascinating. Though travel gives him plenty of joy, not to speak of memories, he can’t imagine living anywhere other than right here in Los Angeles.

William has a deep respect for James Conlon and Plácido Domingo. He says that as musicians, they are both constantly serving the music, and as leaders, are easily approachable. Indeed, the LAO orchestra is such a fine-tuned instrument, he thinks it would be fun to hold an annual concert featuring this great orchestra along with our company singers. It could be called “Out of the Pit and onto the Stage.”

To Opera League members, he says, “Thank you for supporting the arts. We count on you to keep this art form alive. It is important that you give us input about the operas you would like to see, and offer suggestions for future direction and improvements. We want to hear from you.” 🌟

SHOP TIL YOU HOP (BACK TO YOUR SEAT)

By EDITTE ALSEN

The Shop at the Opera—the first, last and in-between meeting place at the opera.

Necessity and curiosity lure opera friends of all ages to the Shop to soak up the spectacle, ask about the production, and often walk away with a memento of their glorious LA Opera experience.

This season, more than ever, opera goers of all ages showed their support for productions by dressing the part and continuing the opera’s theme beyond the curtain.

For *Akhmaten*, many wore Egyptian-themed jewelry, makeup and dress. For *The Abduction at the Seraglio*, attendees sported their Roaring Twenties best, outfits and accessories that transported the corridors of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion to the bustling platforms of *Gare de l’Est*.

The thematic experience was highlighted at the Shop thanks to the procurement talents of Shop Chair Mimi Rotter, Kathy Crandall and Mary Riggs. The Egyptian-inspired jackets and necklaces as well as the Art Deco bracelets and purses were hot items at the Shop.

As the season draws to an end, we already look forward to seeing what Mimi, Kathy and Mary will surprise us with next season. With *Carmen* kicking things off in September, might it be Spanish Flamenco shawls and red silk flowers?

Shop at the Opera opens two hours before each performance in the lobby of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion.

Shop at the Opera is the major fundraiser for the Opera League. Profits go to support LA Opera’s Education and Community Engagement (EduCom) programs. 🌟

ROAD SCHOLAR

AN INTERVIEW
WITH LAUREL HOWAT,
ARTIST SERVICES CHAIR

By
RENEE SALICK, ED.D.

Some describe Laurel Howat as someone who approaches all responsibilities with 100% vigor when she decides to take on something. Others, affectionately, notice that she sustains her enthusiasm, reacts with a level head to chaos and manages to meet deadlines.



Photo by James Howat

As for Laurel herself? She expresses her gratefulness for any good her volunteer activities accomplish. With her long-lived passion for opera performance and the knowledge that her volunteer activities will make things at least minutely better, she regards herself as immensely fortunate. She knows she is storing her Opera League memories for sharing precious experiences with friends and family for a more distant time in life. She also has an inkling that the young artists she meets today are bound to end up as opera headliners.

When volunteering for the League, there is a plethora of activities to choose from. Why Artist Services? Laurel explains she really loves how unique and personal it is: meet, greet and transport singers, directors and other artistic or production staff to and from the airport, customize goodie bags, maybe even babysit or walk a dog on occasion. "These are all wonderful ways to give back to the artists of the opera company, as well as serve the community."

In addition to serving on the League as the Artist Services Chair, Laurel is also a previous chair of Cast Dinners (see our cover story on that), a role she relished. "It was and still is a wonderful chaos of crowded

rooms, groaning tables of food and happy opera folk." She shares a funny anecdote: "During my tenure as Cast Dinner Czarina, one evening we had more cast members than expected, and we needed to serve the cast to ration out the food. That was the night that Maestro Domingo got one meatball. Being the gentleman that he is, he graciously accepted the meatball as though it were a fine filet mignon."

Laurel can recommend all new volunteers to the arenas for which she has served. She states that seasoned members have always been nearby to help, encourage and instruct. They've always felt like a family to her. She loves to be with new volunteers while sharing new ideas and experiences with the veterans.

Indeed, Laurel is so passionate about this, she's developed a seven-step guide for encouraging volunteers to try their hand at Artist Services. As she puts it: "1) If you are like me and love to 'be one' with the lively, teeming madness of airports, this is for you. 2) The artists you drop off and pick up are grateful and happy to have us there for them. 3) You can practice your foreign language skills if you are meeting a singer or director from abroad. 4) You can indulge your urge to create a custom goodie bag. 5) You can make a new friend. 6) You will learn more about the intricacies of our city streets and freeways. 7) You can handily rack up volunteer hours that go toward a big party at the end of the year and other perks, like discounted dress rehearsal tickets."

Suffice it to say Laurel is supremely suited as coordinator of Artist Services. After getting her bachelor's degree in French and master's in Humanities, she worked at the Getty Villa and USC Medical Center. She currently works at Road Scholar, a not-for-profit educational travel organization. Her special interests are art and architecture. So you can imagine what a perfect fit she is at picking up artists from the airport, even and especially if they are not English speaking, warmly greeting them with her globally sensitive manner and rattling off the top cultural sites in the Los Angeles area.

Laurel's grandest achievements? That would be a long and blissful marriage and a newlywed son.

"Thank you to all who use my services and all who serve the Opera League." 🌸

SMILE!

YOU CAN SUPPORT THE OPERA LEAGUE ON AMAZON.

By GARY MURPHY

Did you know that every time you make a purchase on Amazon.com, you could be supporting the Opera League of Los Angeles?

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That's that! So remember to check in to AmazonSmile before you check out so you can support the League. 🌸

ONE RING TO STUMP THEM ALL!

Many Opera League members had the privilege of joining our Wagner impresario Brita Millard in early April at her Ring for All Seasons, watching filmed stagings of each Ring opera, each from a different production. As a thank-you to Brita, a test for those who attended and a teaser for those who didn't, BRAVO offers the following special version of our regular quiz, prepared for us by Mark Lyons, LA Opera's Associate Director of Communications and Publications.

Question 1: Which of the following characters is still living at the end of the Ring cycle?

- A. Wotan
- B. Hagen
- C. Flosshilde
- D. Brünnhilde

Question 2: Which one of the following characters never aspires to possess the ring?

- A. Mime
- B. Siegmund
- C. Wotan
- D. Fricka

Question 3: Which of the following is not one of the powers attributed to the ring?

- A. It can make its bearer invisible.
- B. It can make a spouse faithful.
- C. It conveys the power to rule the world.
- D. It gives its owner unimaginable wealth.

Question 4: The ring isn't seen at all during which one of the four Ring operas?

- A. *Die Walküre*
- B. *Das Rheingold*
- C. *Siegfried*
- D. *Götterdämmerung*

Question 5: Which of the following pairs of characters are not related by blood?

- A. Siegfried and Brünnhilde
- B. Gutrune and Hagen
- C. Erda and Waltraute
- D. Sieglinde and Hunding

Question 6: Wagner famously stopped work partway through his composition of the four Ring operas. What did he do during that 12-year break time?

- A. He composed *Parsifal*.
- B. He had an affair with celebrated French actress Sarah Bernhardt.
- C. He composed *Tristan und Isolde* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*.
- D. He served as an officer for King Ludwig II during the Austro-Prussian War.

Question 7: Wagner named his three children after characters from his operas. Which of the following names was not used?

- A. Eva
- B. Tristan
- C. Isolde
- D. Siegfried

Question 8: Wagner's Nibelung ring isn't the only ring that's featured in an important operatic plot point. Which of the following loses her wedding ring in a well?

HINT: IT'S AN OPERA THAT'S ONLY BEEN PERFORMED ONCE BY LA OPERA (MORE THAN TWO DECADES AGO) ALTHOUGH IT HAS BEEN PERFORMED IN LOS ANGELES QUITE RECENTLY.

- A. The title role in *Katya Kabanova*
- B. Pat Nixon in *Nixon in China*
- C. The Old Baroness in *Vanessa*
- D. Mélisande in *Pelléas et Mélisande*

Question 9: Another non-Wagnerian ring plays a prominent role in a very popular opera. Which of the following characters kills herself by swallowing poison concealed in her ring?

- A. The title role in *Suor Angelica*
- B. Dalila in *Samson et Dalila*
- C. Leonora in *Il Trovatore*
- D. Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette*

Answers: 1: C. Flosshilde; 2: B. Siegmund; 3: A. It can make its bearer invisible; 4: A. *Die Walküre*; 5: D. Sieglinde and Hunding; 6: C. He composed *Tristan und Isolde* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*; 7: B. Tristan; 8: D. Mélisande in *Pelléas et Mélisande*; 9: C. Leonora in *Il Trovatore*

GOING WILDE FOR SEMINARS

LA Opera Music Director James Conlon held 150 Opera Leaguers speechless for two solid hours with tales of Oscar Wilde and Richard Strauss.

By KATHY CRANDALL

At our late January seminar, Maestro Conlon told of Wilde's chaotic background and his ultimate jailing for two years for homosexuality and his death shortly thereafter. Wilde wrote the play *Salome* in 1891 in French but was unable to produce it until 1896, while he was in prison. While many assume Salome was a primary character in the Bible, in fact, both she and her role with John the Baptist are not mentioned.

Wilde's play was banned in its English translation due to the overt sexuality it portrayed. Fascinated by the play, Richard Strauss took his libretto almost verbatim from the play's German translation and unveiled his opera in Dresden in 1905. *Salome* the opera played in 50 opera houses during the next two years, while it was banned in England until 1907. It was banned after its first performance at the Metropolitan Opera in 1907 and was not seen there again until the 1930s.

Maestro Conlon led us so skillfully through the leitmotifs used in *Salome* that we were able to pick out the leading motifs throughout the opera. Maestro also put the opera in the context of Strauss's canon, in which Strauss initially appeared to be leaning towards avant-garde and atonal work. While this style followed him through the opera *Elektra*, it never predominated in any of his future work.

In March, about 75 Leaguers attended the seminar on *The Tales of Hoffmann*. For this seminar we shook up our usual format and headed down the street to the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA).

Kristi Brown-Montesano took us through the three women who comprised the illusions of the ideal woman whom Hoffmann pursues. She did a deep-dive of sorts into who the women represented, as well as the era represented in *The Tales of Hoffmann* and also what sort of person Hoffmann represented at that time. Her talk included compelling videos and outtakes as well as art from the era.

Following the seminar, some members chose to cruise around MOCA while others attended a wonderful and very fun program presented by the Opera Buffs at the Colburn School's Zipper Hall. Scenes from each act of *The Tales of Hoffmann* were performed by very talented young singers.

Hungry for more seminars? Great news on that front. Our first two seminars of the 2017-18 season are nearly finalized. First, on September 10 we'll be talking all things Bizet in relation to his *The Pearl Fishers*. Exactly one month later on October 10 we'll be discussing Verdi's earlier period, with a focus on *Nabucco* and *Rigoletto*. Please note those dates are still tentative.

See you at the seminars! 🌟

IN A LEAGUE OF HER OWN

A TRIBUTE TO NINA HARO By REBECCA BOWNE

Many Opera League members joined friends and family to celebrate the life of outstanding Opera League volunteer Nina Louise Haro, who passed away at the close of 2016 at the age of 80.

In addition to running a successful business, Nina served for many years as a key volunteer with the Opera League of Los Angeles, the Wagner Society of Southern California and Opera Volunteers International (OVI).

Nina devised and built a computer system to track volunteer hours by individual, group and function that was later adopted internationally by opera guilds through OVI. She also developed the methodology to credit volunteer hours into labor saved, transportation costs for artists, cast dinners served and light walking services into tangible dollars saved by LA Opera, increasing the credited contributions from the League to LA Opera by hundreds of thousands of dollars annually. This methodology was also adopted by OVI for use by other opera support guilds.



Nina tracked all League volunteer hours for Community Educators (speakers to community groups), artist transportation and light walkers. For the last three years of her life, she was the League's liaison to LA Opera for identifying and coordinating all transportation needs for arriving and departing out-of-town artists.

While serving a five-year League board term, Nina was Secretary for two years as well as Nominating Chair, recruiting 10 new board

members. She was an active volunteer with Artist Services, Cast Dinners, Light Walking, Boutique and special events, routinely clocking among the highest hours. At cast dinners, she was well-known and beloved for her desserts and quinoa salads, which were routinely devoured by our chorus, backstage employees and visiting singers.

In 1963 Nina founded the restaurant La Cabaña in Venice. She managed it with her family for the next 53 years, to the end of her life. For the last 15 years, she hosted the annual Artist Services celebration at La Cabaña. Her family will continue the business.

Nina leaves behind a simply superlative track record of volunteer services. We honor her, and her family honors her, with donations made in her name to the Opera League of Los Angeles. 🌸

TIME TO VOLUN-CHEER!

By BILL KENNEDY

In the eyes of Mary H. Lewis, the annual Volunteer Appreciation Celebration is in many ways the one event that ties together all of the many programs the Opera League provides during the course of the season.

As the League's Social Chair, Mary oversees the Celebration (and yes, it truly is a Celebration with a capital C) and gushes: "None of the other events would be possible without the volunteers. No cast dinners, no store, no gatherings, no seminars, no trips, no artist services, no education programs, no light walkers... no anything."

And while *thank-yous* abound throughout the season from the League board, LA Opera staff and artists, community members who attend events and other volunteers, Mary notes this is the one event where all volunteers (who have clocked 20 or more hours during the season) are given one big collective

acknowledgment, not just for any single good deed, but for the whole of their contribution to the League and to opera.

This year's event promises to be special in many ways. In addition to the wine-and-hors-d'oeuvres reception and the special (secret) gift for all in attendance, the celebration features a conversation between Opera League board member Anne Russell Sullivan, a former opera singer herself, and Matthew Aucoin, LA Opera's Artist-in-Residence, familiar to those who were fortunate enough to catch LA Opera's production of Philip Glass' *Akhmaten*, which Matthew conducted.

The event will be held in Rehearsal Room 3 (Artists Entrance) at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, beginning at 6 pm on Thursday, May 25. To RSVP, click on the Calendar tab at the top of the Opera League's home page and then click on the event for May 25.

If you don't have the required number of hours or if you haven't volunteered, there are lots of opportunities. Have a look at the Volunteer tab right next to the Calendar tab. It's fun, you meet great people, you support an art form you love... and if you work for 20 hours or more, you get invited to a terrific party every year! 🌸

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.



A PERFECT 10

JAMES CONLON 10TH ANNIVERSARY INITIATIVE

By GARY MURPHY

This season, LA Opera celebrates Maestro James Conlon's tenth year as the company's Richard Seaver Music Director.

Through his exemplary leadership, Maestro Conlon has helped transform the company while elevating the LA Opera Orchestra to a superlative level of excellence. He brought a lost generation of artists' musical works to life through the acclaimed Recovered Voices project and, working side-by-side with Maestro Plácido Domingo, continues to stoke the passion for opera in Los Angeles.

From the city-wide Ring, Britten and Figaro Festivals to his enormously popular pre-performance talks supported by the Flora L. Thornton Foundation and the Opera League, Maestro Conlon continues to be one of the most visible and passionate advocates for classical music in our community.

To honor this achievement, LA Opera has launched the James Conlon 10th Anniversary Initiative. This initiative will provide critical funds to support new programming and further enhance the brilliance of the LA Opera Orchestra.

For more information on how you can participate, please go to laopera.org/conlon.

CALENDAR

APRIL

Operawise 🌟

TOSCA

Mon, Apr 17, 6:30-10:30pm
NEED 7 VOLUNTEERS EACH

Opera Prep 🌟

TOSCA

Thu, Apr 20, 8:30am-3:30pm
NEED 30 VOLUNTEERS

Premier Dinner

Sun, Apr 23

BROOKSIDE GOLF CLUB

Discover Opera 🌟

Sat, Apr 29, 8:00-11:00am

NEED 2 VOLUNTEERS

San Diego Opera Trip

LA TRAVIATA

Sun, Apr 30

CONTACT: BRITA KOHLFÜRST-MILLARD AT
310.877.6285 OR EMAIL BMILLARD_99@YAHOO.COM

MAY

Backstage Magic

Wed, May 3, 6:00pm

Getting Ready: Street Clothes to Full Costume

DOROTHY CHANDLER PAVILION

ENTER THROUGH GOLD DOORS 5TH FLOOR

QUESTIONS: MARY LEWIS 310.836.0830

Operawise 🌟

NOAH'S FLOOD

Sun, May 6, 4:30-6:00pm

Sun, May 6, 7:30-9:00pm

Master Class with Melody Moore

Tues, May 9, 7:00pm

DOROTHY CHANDLER PAVILION
ARTIST'S ENTRANCE 4TH FLOOR
REHEARSAL ROOM 1

QUESTIONS: MARLENE CHAVEZ 323.333.7610

Volunteer Appreciation

Thu, May 25, 6:00-9:00pm

Anne Sullivan Interviews Artist-in Residence

Matthew Aucoin

DOROTHY CHANDLER PAVILION
ARTIST'S ENTRANCE 4TH FLOOR
REHEARSAL ROOM 3

JUNE

AAAO Father's Day Membership Recital

Sun, Jun 18

QUESTIONS: JACQUE LYNE WALLACE 424.245.4659

AUGUST

Santa Fe Opera Trip

Mon, Aug 14 thru Sat, Aug, 19

CONTACT: BRITA KOHLFÜRST-MILLARD AT

310.877.6285 OR EMAIL BMILLARD_99@YAHOO.COM

🌟 EDUCATION EVENTS

🌟 Discover Opera (FORMERLY OPERA 101)

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

🌟 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.

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

Anne Russell Sullivan 323.697.9733 RSVP
Carol Daskal 310.552.2765

Hollywood / Hancock Park

Marlene Chavez 323.934.5777 RSVP
Sean Muhlstein 818.825.2228

Orange County

Lorna Blancaflor 562.259.7426 RSVP
Christa Marks 714.871.5525

San Fernando Valley

Regi Merwin 818.400.2578 RSVP

San Gabriel Valley

Michael Sholer 818.502.1988 RSVP

Tosca

Mon, Apr 17, 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

Tosca

Mon, Apr 17, 5:30 pm "Potluck"

25506 Longfellow Place

Stevenson Ranch, CA 91381

Hosts: Ann Anderson and Ron Gordon

Southeast

Ifang (ee-fong) Hsieh 310.279.9927 RSVP

South Bay

Taylor McCallum 214.478.0609 RSVP

Ifang (ee-fong) Hsieh 310.279.9927

Westside

Valerie Estes 310.826.0288 RSVP

Alice and Chuck Bragg 310.454.9662

585 Almar Avenue

Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

Hosts: Alice and Chuck Bragg

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OPERA WEBSITE: laopera.org/community.

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DON'T MISS THESE UPCOMING EVENTS!

Premier Dinner

Sun, Apr 23

San Diego Opera Trip: *La traviata*

Sun, Apr 30

Backstage Magic

Wed, May 3

Cathedral Projects: *Noah's Flood*

Sat, May 6

Master Class with Melody Moore

Tue, May 9

Volunteer Appreciation

Thu, May 25

AALAO Father's Day Recital

Sun, Jun 18

AALAO FATHER'S DAY RECITAL

MARK THOSE CALENDARS!

By SHELL AMEGA

African Americans for LA Opera (AALAO) is holding their Annual Membership Father's Day Recital on, well, Father's Day: Sunday, June 18. It will take place at the gorgeous home of Ben and Delores Kerr in Hancock Park.

Tickets are \$25 in advance and \$35 at the door. This event tends to sell out so it's a good idea to scoop up your tickets as soon as you finish reading this.

For more information, please contact Jacque Lyne Wallace at 424.245.4659.

African Americans for LA Opera (AALAO) is dedicated to increasing the awareness of opera throughout the Los Angeles community.