

Your Guide To Upcoming Opera League Events

ISSUE 50
WINTER 2018

BRAVO

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE OPERA LEAGUE OF LOS ANGELES

BERNIE'S BENEFICENCE

BERNARD A. GREENBERG
IS THE OPERA LEAGUE
OF LOS ANGELES' 2019
PETER HEMMINGS
HONOREE

By BILL KENNEDY

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Photo by Steve Cohn

 the
opera league
of los angeles

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operaleague.org

From the President

Photo by Gary West



The More Things Change...

Welcome to the 50th issue of BRAVO!

The Opera League's official publication has come a long way since the first issue in the spring of 2005. To celebrate the occasion, BRAVO editor Tom Lady had a sit-down with his predecessor Susan Heard to talk about how BRAVO has evolved over the years.

For starters, you'll definitely want to see how different it looks compared to thirteen years ago. Kudos to current Editor Tom Lady, Assistant Editor Beverly Phillips, past Editor Susan Heard and all of the hard working team of BRAVO volunteers, past and present, for enabling this growth.

While BRAVO has changed, the Opera League's traditions of volunteerism and support and, along with that, camaraderie and warmth, have remained our bedrock since our founding in 1981.

As president, I attend a slew of opera-related functions throughout the year. And everywhere I go, there you are, the hearty Leaguer! Whether simply attending an LA Opera production or event, or volunteering to make a League event happen, our members reach out with a sincere hello and glowing smile, often paired with a warm hug or handshake. I have to say, it's an ineffable feeling to be able to walk into a huge glass hall like the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion and right away feel welcome.

LA Opera President and CEO Christopher Koelsch often talks about the need for people to feel welcome in the opera house, to want to walk in the door. Guess what? That's what you do! And what you do to encourage that through your support and membership in the League is nothing short of amazing.

You enable us to do so much more. We educate the opera neophytes as well as the aficionados. We take you behind the scenes at LA Opera and provide in-depth seminars and gatherings. We fund transportation for thousands of public school kids so they too can experience opera. And we interact with seniors, teachers and students of all ages at LA Opera workshops and other events. We provide sumptuous meals for LA Opera cast and crew during working rehearsals throughout the season. Picking artists up from the airport, chauffeuring them to their appointments, letting them lodge with us... All of these traditions of warmth and hospitality help form the bedrock of the Opera League.

As we immerse ourselves in yet another holiday season and celebrate the New Year, we look forward to spending another year with you. That means celebrating our Hemmings Gala that supports LA Opera's Opera Camp. That means more seminars, more gatherings, more recitals and a preview with LA Opera of yet another season...

I wish you all a Happy 2019!

P.S. Don't forget to "Like" the Opera League on Facebook!

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BERNIE'S BENEFICENCE

CONTINUED FROM COVER

Few people are as aware of just how modest the beginnings of LA Opera were as Bernard A. “Bernie” Greenberg. And perhaps no one has had a greater role in ensuring that those modest beginnings became nothing more than the incidental history of what is now a great California cultural institution and the fourth-largest opera company in the United States.

For his enduring role in leading, promoting and encouraging the growth of LA Opera and opera in Los Angeles, Mr. Greenberg has been selected for this year's Peter Hemmings Award, the primary recognition of the Opera League of Los Angeles.

Bernie's beginnings in opera hark back to his childhood in Los Angeles, when his father and mother attended San Francisco Opera performances at the Shrine Auditorium. Bernie's first live opera experience was *Die Walküre*, which wasn't high on his father's list. In fact, his father only agreed to take him when the teenaged Bernie threatened to drive himself. Faster than you can say “five-hour opera,” this art form blossomed into a lifelong interest.

That interest evolved into a lifetime commitment beginning in the 1950s when Bernie, fresh off a year away, including a Teaching Fellowship at Harvard Law School followed by a trip to Europe which included attending opera productions, was cajoled by UCLA law school classmates into attending a small-scale performance of *The Marriage of Figaro* at the Wilshire Ebell Club.

“(Bernard and Lenore Greenberg) and others have done more than emblazon their names on buildings: they have fostered an atmosphere in which new work can germinate and thrive.”

—Alex Ross, music critic for *The New Yorker* magazine.

Bernie enjoyed that performance more than the same opera he had just seen at the Vienna State Opera, and so he agreed to become involved and was soon treasurer. To reinforce just how modest those beginnings were, Bernie recounted

that his wife Lennie chided him for skipping the first act, so he could count the receipts to determine how much the company could pay the performers.

That company was called the Los Angeles Civic Grand Opera, and it moved to the Music Center in the mid-1960s with the opening of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion.

“Few people have been as responsible for the success of LA Opera as Bernie. Los Angeles enjoys a world-class opera company because of his foresight, stewardship, taste, and generous spirit over the past half century.”

—Christopher Koelsch, Sebastian Paul and Marybelle Musco President and CEO

Bernie has served on the board of Los Angeles Civic Grand Opera and its successors throughout LA Opera's history. This includes serving as president, chairman and now as vice chairman.

A trust and estates lawyer in Beverly Hills, Bernie has been witness to both the lows and the highs of LA Opera. Of course, in opera, those can occur on the same night.

The curtain famously got stuck part way up, albeit only for a moment, as it arose on LA Opera's very first opening night in 1986, with the Greenbergs sitting in the middle of the orchestra. He later reported he thought, “Oh no! This is not happening.” But that performance of *Otello*, which starred Plácido Domingo, was a triumph. Bernie became convinced “we were finally, solidly on our way towards establishing a real producing company.”

“The Opera League has a vision that seeks to further a global community where everyone has the opportunity to experience the depth, beauty, humanity and passion of opera. And this vision really began with Bernie.”

—Gayle Kirschbaum, Opera League President

Since the company's founding, the Greenbergs have provided significant leadership to LA Opera and have been major underwriters for numerous LA Opera productions. Their generous endowment gift, through the Lenore S. and Bernard A. Greenberg Charitable Foundation, that established The Lenore S. and Bernard A. Greenberg Opera Fund, will help support LA Opera productions each season in perpetuity.

In addition to investing their energies and talents in the performing and visual arts (Lennie is on the board of the LA Philharmonic and a life trustee of the Museum of Contemporary Art, and Bernie is a director emeritus of The Music Center), the Greenbergs have been notably generous in supporting new and contemporary works. They spearheaded the effort to bring Philip Glass's *Einstein on the Beach* to LA Opera in 2013, underwrote Glass's *Akhmaten* in 2016, and now, through this year's underwriting of *Satyagraha*, have helped LA Opera complete Glass's “portrait trilogy.”

The Los Angeles opera world extends a hearty congratulations and much gratitude to Bernie, a most deserving honoree at this year's Peter Hemmings Award Dinner. 🌟

A NEW YEAR, A NEW MUSICALE

VERDI,
VETS AND
VEDANTA

By TOM LADY

Ring in the New Year with a spot of culture and some awesome singing.

The Opera League is hosting a Verdi musicale featuring two of the most exciting young singers today: Julia Metzler and Nandani Maria Sinha.

The fun is taking place on Saturday, January 19 at noon.

Let us tell you a little more about the featured singers, as they are kind of amazing.

Nandani Maria Sinha is an internationally acclaimed and multiple award-winning singer of German and Indian descent, known for her passionate performances and great presence. She has already become a SoCal favorite at venues such as LA Opera, Long Beach Opera and

a slew of other local venues. Beyond the Southland, Ms. Sinha has racked up a ton of experience as a recitalist in London, France, Austria and Germany, where she was honored to sing for the Millennium Festival of Music in Bad Arolsen.

Up-and-coming soprano Julia Metzler has already made a name for herself in the role of Lady Billows in *Albert Herring*, in which Laurislist.net described her "powerful voice and passionate persona" as "perfect in the role." Other recent roles include Vitellia in *La Clemenza di Tito*, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, Mrs. P in *The Man Who Mistook his Wife for a Hat*, Micaëla in Bizet's *The*

Tragedy of Carmen, and the title role in Gustav Holst's *Savitri*.

Another Opera League favorite, Victoria Kirsch, will be our incomparable accompanist.

Perhaps best of all, you will have the pleasure of soaking up the notes at a comfortable private residence in Hancock Park. Exact address will be provided upon ordering.

Speaking of ordering, what are you waiting for? An invitation? Well, you just got one! So, head to the Opera League website, operaleague.org, to order your tickets.

We'll see you there! 🌟



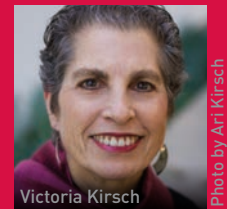
Nandani Maria Sinha

Photo by Shawn Flint Blair



Julia Metzler

Photo by Michael Kelley



Victoria Kirsch

Photo by Ari Kirsch

NOW ROLLOVER

By SEAN MUHLSTEIN

Did you know that you can make a gift to the Opera League of Los Angeles directly from your Traditional IRA? You can satisfy your annual Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) and continue to support opera, this art form we all love.

As you may know, the IRA Rollover Law has been permanently extended. This means you can make a distribution to the Opera League of Los Angeles from your IRA without paying income taxes on the contribution. However, the contribution does not qualify as a charitable gift for tax purposes. There are specific requirements:

- You must be at least 70 ½ years old
- You must decline goods or services
- Your rollover may not exceed \$100,000

To make a gift, please send a letter to your IRA administrator requesting a direct charitable distribution to the Opera League of Los Angeles in the amount you wish to donate. **The letter needs to include the League's Tax ID number: 95-3736299.**

For further assistance, please call 213.972.7220, email treasurer@operaleague.org or visit us online at operaleague.org.

THANK YOU!

Disclaimer: The information contained herein does not constitute legal, tax, or other professional advice and should not be relied upon as such. Always consult your own advisor before making any gift that has tax implications, particularly, as here, where your state's income tax law may differ from the federal law. 🌟

CULTURE UP THE COAST

By TOM LADY

MARK YOUR CALENDARS, FELLOW TRAVELERS: SUNDAY, MARCH 3, 2019.

That is the day the Opera League will be heading up the coast to the postcard-scenic seaside burg of Santa Barbara on an excursion filled with culture and camaraderie.

The highlight of the day will be the matinee performance of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* at the Lobero Theatre. No one wants to watch a young Russian aristocrat fall into ruin on an empty stomach, am I right? That's why we'll get there in plenty of time for a hearty lunch chased down by some of the region's best grape juice (read: wine!).

Appetite sufficiently whetted? The number of tickets is very limited so if you want to be part of a trip that shows fundraising as super fun, don't hesitate to reach out to Brita Millard, our amazing Special Events and Fundraising Chair. You can reach her at bmillard_99@yahoo.com or call 310.877.6285. 🌸

OPERA LEAGUE MEMBERSHIPS

There is an Opera League membership for everyone! Join at 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.

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



'TIS THE SEASON PREVIEW!

By DIANE GRAY and BARBARA SCHELBERT

SUSAN GRAHAM'S WITCH IN HANSEL AND GRETEL HAS BEEN WREAKING SO MUCH MUSICAL MISCHIEF OF LATE, HASN'T SHE? OH PLEASE, THAT IS SO 2018.

We here at your friendly neighborhood Opera League already have a keen eye cast on next season. That is why we are beyond thrilled to mark calendars, ours and yours, for Sunday, January 27, 2019. At 11:00 am that morning we will get the skinny on the amaze-a-second productions that will comprise LA Opera's 2019-20 season. That's right, as part of your membership perks, you will get the chance to find out next season's lineup before anyone else on the planet, and that includes the press.

As a bonus to ensure you leave feeling not only informed, but also cultured, you will get to bask in a recital by LA Opera's Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artists. You'll also get to take backstage tours. Best of all, you will have access to a super exclusive reception in the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion's uber-swanky Founder's Room. **#worththepriceofadmissionalone**

Light refreshments will, of course, be served.

Watch your mailbox for the invitation! 🌸

A Bohemian rhapsody of style! Photo courtesy of LA Opera. L TO R: Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artists from 2016/17—Aurelia Andrews, Brian Michael Moore, Joshua Wheeler, Michelle Siemens, Liv Redpath, Carlos Enrique Santelli, Elizabeth Zharoff, Milena Gligic, Kihun Yoon

SINGER OF CHOICE

ROD GILFRY IS FLYING HIGH IN THE WEST COAST PREMIERE OF *THE LOSER*.

By GARY W. MURPHY



With 12 role premieres under his belt, baritone Rod Gilfry is flying high these days—both literally and figuratively—with a career that spans almost four decades. Even with that longevity, Rod is no old hat. *The New York Times* recently stated that Rod has become “the singer of choice for new American operas.”

After reprising his role as Mr. Potter in Jake Heggie’s new opera adaptation of *It’s A Wonderful Life* at San Francisco Opera in December, Rod returns to Los Angeles for yet another role premiere in *the loser*, an intense tour-de-force and daringly staged one-act opera from Pulitzer Prize-winning

composer David Lang. Based on the novel by Austrian writer Thomas Bernhard, *the loser* tells the tale of a failed piano student who recounts a life lived in the shadows of his famous friend Glenn Gould. This painful meditation on dreams forsaken and hopes unrealized unfolds in an unusually intimate staging that incorporates multiple levels of the spectacular Theatre at Ace Hotel in Downtown L.A., February 22 and 23, 2019.

Rod sat down with the Opera League to talk about the West Coast premiere of *the loser*, an intimate work for baritone, piano and chamber ensemble, plus a few of his LA Opera memories.

BRAVO: DAVID LANG’S *THE LOSER* SEEMS AN INTRIGUING ROLE CHOICE FOR YOU. IS IT REALLY A 65-MINUTE SONG MONOLOGUE PERFORMED ON A PLATFORM BUILT ABOVE THE ORCHESTRA?

ROD GILFRY: That’s exactly what it is. It is just me standing on a 4’ x 4’ platform that’s perched 20 feet in the air with no chairs, no water and no place to sit. I’m simply standing there dressed in a tuxedo. It’s both intense and challenging for me, no doubt. The material doesn’t seem a likely candidate for an opera or a dramatic setting, but composer David Lang finds these odd vehicles and makes great theatre from them. Take *anatomy theater* for example. He saw something in Thomas Bernhard’s novel, of the same name, and thought it would make a good opera piece.

BRAVO: YOU PLAY THE CHARACTER OF THE NARRATOR WHO IS ONE OF TWO PIANO STUDENTS WHO WERE IN SCHOOL AT THE SAME TIME AS GLENN GOULD. IS THAT CORRECT TO SAY?

RG: Yes, there are three characters in the book—Glenn Gould, who has just died, and there is Wertheimer, who has just killed himself. The survivor of the trio is the Narrator who never reveals his name. It’s interesting how the book is written in these massively long paragraphs, each one its own

chapter. That’s a style of Thomas Bernhard, it’s one of his literary idiosyncrasies.

BRAVO: I WOULD IMAGINE THE TENSION MUST BE HIGH FOR THE AUDIENCE AS THEY WATCH YOU STANDING ON A SMALL RAISED PLATFORM ABOVE THE STAGE.


RG: It’s a fascinating piece, and many people have told me how captivated they are in the theatre. You have to understand something else about the way it is envisioned. The platform I stand on is built above the orchestra section of the house which is left empty—no one sits there. Everyone sits in the mezzanine section, and I am eye to eye with the audience while the bare mainstage sits behind me.

It’s only in the last five minutes of my monologue that a light comes up onstage revealing a beautiful grand concert piano and a pianist lightly playing some sort of vague impression of a Bach piece. Maybe it’s Bach, perhaps a bit of the “Goldberg Variations” which is mentioned several times throughout the piece. David has written it as a sort of very loose and lovely, somewhat mysterious interpretation of a Bach composition.

BRAVO: YOU JUST WRAPPED *IT’S A WONDERFUL LIFE* IN SAN FRANCISCO WHERE YOU REPRISÉD THE ROLE OF MR. POTTER THAT YOU ORIGINATED AT HOUSTON GRAND OPERA. YOU SEEM TO ENJOY CREATING NEW ROLES AND RECENTLY DID SO IN *CROSSING HERE* AT LA OPERA. IS IT HARDER TO CREATE NEW ROLES VERSUS FINDING YOUR CHARACTER IN WELL-KNOWN ROLES?

RG: It’s a totally different process. One of the things about doing a new role is that it’s a completely blank slate. You can do what you want and figure out your own way through it, and then you’re the original one that everyone else goes from and you’re the point of departure.

VISIT OPERALEAGUE.ORG TO READ THE REST OF THE INTERVIEW. ☀

A close-up portrait of Joshua Winograde, a man with a full brown beard and mustache, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. He is wearing a dark, collared shirt. The background is a neutral, textured grey.

JOSHUA WINOGRADE, LA OPERA'S SENIOR DIRECTOR OF ARTISTIC PROGRAMS, BOOMERANGS HOME

BRAVO: HAVING JUST MOVED BACK FROM NEW YORK, HOW DOES CALIFORNIA MEET YOUR PERSONAL/FAMILY LIFESTYLE?

JW: When we left for New York City in early 2017, my husband Bradon and I had a nine-month-old son Roberto. Nine months later we had our second son, Leonardo. New York can be an amazing place to raise small children, exposing them to the best museums, parks, culture and food in the world. Even though Bradon and I had very different childhoods—I grew up on Point Dume, and he is from rural Northern New York state—we both had the same kind of experiences with independence, exploration, space and even simple barefootedness! Those are impossible things to provide for children in Manhattan, at least to the extent we wanted them for our kids. Ultimately we felt compelled to come back. It was without a doubt the right decision for us.

BRAVO: DO YOU EVER FEEL A HEALTHY COMPETITION WITH ANOTHER GENRE, ARTIST OR COMPANY THAT PERHAPS IS ALSO A FORM OF INSPIRATION FOR YOUR OWN WORK?

JW: It is an exciting time in all the arts as advancing technologies and changing cultures are inviting us to adapt, advance, mean more to more people, etc. You see it in the visual and performing arts globally. I think we are all serving as inspiration to each other, and personally I know that I am loving what I see happening in opera companies, theaters, orchestras, museums, and other public spaces. The times are vibrant!

BRAVO: CAN YOU DESCRIBE FOR US YOUR PERSONAL ARTISTIC "BEST" OR SOMETHING YOU LOOK BACK UPON WITH GREAT SENTIMENT, PRIDE OR JOY?

JW: LA Opera's production of *The Ghosts of Versailles* will stay with me forever as a major artistic accomplishment on every level. I am so proud of how well we produced that difficult piece. On a personal level, casting that show was enormously gratifying because there were [at least it seemed] hundreds of people on stage at any given moment, and I wanted to make sure that from within those crowds, individual and strong personalities and talents always shined through.

BRAVO: IS THERE AN ART FORM YOU HAVE YET TO FUSE WITH?

JW: I can't think of any art forms that don't resonate with me on a wholesale level, although certainly there are genres within some of them that are harder for me to connect to than others. I feel like a kid in a candy store because opera is a thrilling challenge that I deeply embrace.

BRAVO: WHAT DO YOU DREAM OF TRYING THAT MAY NOT HAVE ANYTHING TO WITH OPERA?

JW: I have always dreamed of being a cook of some kind because I love going to farmers markets and entertaining friends so much. Not a chef at a restaurant, but a caterer or food trucker, or even a farmers market vendor. My friends in that industry say it is TOUGH, so I will stick to opera. 🍷

WELCOME BACK, JOSH!

By RENEE SALICK, ED.D.

BRAVO TO 50!

AS THE OPERA LEAGUE'S PREMIER PUBLICATION REACHES ITS 50TH ISSUE, EDITOR TOM LADY TALKS WITH HIS PREDECESSOR ABOUT BRAVO THEN AND NOW.

By TOM LADY

"I think the most important aspect of the revised BRAVO was the expansion of articles to feature more people of interest to operagoers. We really have wonderful interviews, with Opera League members and LA Opera staff and executives, which makes LAO more compelling and the League more interesting and important...I wanted people to say, 'Oh great! BRAVO's here!' To be excited about it."

(L TO R) Cover images for BRAVO issues #2, #9, #29, #30, #32 (redesign), #34, and #49



Spring 2005. That was when the Opera League, just shy of a quarter century old, launched a newsletter called BRAVO. Born out of membership feedback, BRAVO was "one of a number of new communications we are unveiling this spring," according to then League President Monica Weil in her inaugural spring 2005 President's Message.

I am having lunch at the Villa Gardens in Pasadena with my predecessor, former BRAVO editor Susan Heard. As BRAVO approaches its 50th issue, Susan and I are discussing how far this newsletter has come in a relatively short span. Indeed, these days, folks refer to BRAVO less as a newsletter and more as a full-fledged opera magazine.

Right out of the gate, BRAVO has been a key vehicle to promote Opera League programming, a way to make our members proud to be members while whetting the appetites of those who'd never heard of the League. Originally it arrived in mailboxes as an eight-page glossy on white paper. It may not have looked like much, but that format only belied its ambitions.

"At a board meeting, it was announced they needed someone to take over BRAVO," Susan says. "I was running Cast Dinners, but I was burning out. So I put

my hat in the ring for BRAVO under the condition that I could change it."

When Susan says "change it," she means both in terms of the aesthetics as well as the content.

As for the former: "I thought we needed color," she says. The first person she and her Assistant Editor Bill Green went to was Gary Murphy, then head of LAO's Communications and Public Relations. Gary led them to a Pasadena firm called Studio Fuse, the graphic designers behind LAO's *Performances* magazine. Studio Fuse produced samples of the new non-glossy magazine look, which Susan and Bill showed the board for feedback.

At the same time, Susan was mulling changes to the content. She wanted to dial down the focus on the operas themselves and dial up a dual focus on Opera Leaguers and LAO staff.

"I wanted to focus on the people and the activities so that League members got more interested and would be more interested in volunteering," Susan says. "I also thought we needed to focus on LA Opera musicians, the orchestra. I thought League members would be interested in that. And the opera staff, the people behind the scenes."

"Welcome to your new BRAVO!" then League President Diane Gray said in the President's Message of issue 32 (Winter 2013), the first issue with the new look.

Talk about upgrading BRAVO with a splash, the first LAO staffer Susan interviewed for the revamp? LAO CEO Christopher Koelsch.

On a practical level, the redesign meant moving the calendar of events to the very back of each issue, and including a tear-off reservation form only with certain issues each year.

This new vision also meant a bigger team. Susan needed more volunteers to conduct the interviews and write the articles. "I didn't do much writing," Susan says. "I did more assigning and editing. I like writing. But I like more the proofing and the rewriting, the editing."

Finding new volunteers was never a problem though. After all, that's how yours truly joined the team, in the fall of 2013.

Some things, of course, never change. In that inaugural President's Message in issue number one, spring 2005, Monica Weil stated: "All the things you like about the League are in BRAVO."

More than ever, that's still the goal. 🌟





Photos by Alma Guzman.

FALLING FOR ALANNAH

SOPRANO ALANNAH GARNIER WAS WITHOUT A DOUBT THE STAR OF THIS YEAR'S FALL RECITAL PUT ON BY THE AFRICAN AMERICANS FOR LOS ANGELES OPERA (AALAO). By LISA ROWLEY and TOM LADY

With a theme built around a life observed and the life cycle, and all the immense joys and crippling heartbreaks contained therein, Alannah Garnier, with Brian Farrell as accompanist, performed an absolutely stirring selection of songs, arias and spirituals from composers including Gioachino Rossini and André Previn.

The unforgettable event's hosts included Opera League co-founder Alice Coulombe and Michael Melton AALAO co-president. They welcomed the sold-out room of music lovers, more than half of whom had never experienced the pleasure of live opera but were quickly won over, if not blown over, by Alannah Garnier's knockout performance.

Not surprisingly, at the conclusion of the two-hour event, Ms. Garnier received a standing ovation and was cheered on to not one but two encores. Ms. Garnier then answered questions about opera and singing. A light lunch complimented the lively discussion.

Alannah Garnier performed this fall in LA Opera's production of *Satyagraha* by Philip Glass. She is currently in her third year with the Los Angeles Master Chorale after receiving her master's degree at the University of Missouri, Kansas City. Brian Farrell is Music Director and conductor of Reparatory Opera Company of Los Angeles and a professor at the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music at California State University, Long Beach.

The AALAO Black History Recital will be held on Sunday, February 10, at the home of Beverley Clarkson. For more information, contact Jacque Lyne Wallace at 424.227.7254.



African Americans for Los Angeles Opera (AALAO), a chapter of the Opera League, is dedicated to increasing the awareness of opera throughout the Los Angeles area and to providing a center for African American opera lovers in Los Angeles. 🌟

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.

Go to: www.operaleague.org → My Membership → Discount Tickets Sign Up → Enter your name, email and type in your full name and agree to terms.

Sign up only once. Your benefit is valid as long as your membership is current.

PURCHASE PROCEDURE:

- Occasionally, you will receive an email from LA Opera with a subject line such as **\$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 proverbial 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 laopera.org 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 or membership@operaleague.org. 🌟

QUIZ TIME! THE NEW 50

In honor of the 50th issue of BRAVO, our quiz features questions that all involve the number 50.

Good luck!

1. Countless brides have walked down the aisle to music from what famous opera that premiered in 1850?

- A. *Lohengrin*
- B. *The Marriage of Figaro*
- C. *The Bartered Bride*
- D. *Roméo et Juliette*

2. In 1864, when composer Richard Wagner was 50 years old, he had written *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre* and *Tristan und Isolde*, but these works remained unperformed—he hadn't had an opera premiere over a decade. What event happened that spring that turned his fortunes around?

- A. He became friends with composer Giuseppe Verdi, his supposed rival, who offered him life-changing advice.
- B. He began intense musical studies with his future father-in-law, composer Franz Liszt.
- C. Ludwig II, King of Bavaria, became Wagner's generous and devoted patron.
- D. The birth of his son Wolfgang (named after Mozart) inspired him to take his career more seriously.

3. Giuseppe Verdi's career was soaring during the 1850s. What made that decade special for him?

- A. The premieres of his "Shakespeare trio": *Macbeth*, *Otello* and *Falstaff*.
- B. The premieres of his three "middle-period masterpieces": *Rigoletto*, *Il Trovatore* and *La Traviata*.
- C. The premieres of his "Paris trio": *Jérusalem*, *La force du destin* and *Don Carlos*.
- D. The premieres of his "Revolution Trio": *Un Giorno di Regno*, *Giovanna d'Arco* and *La Battaglia di Legnano*.

4. In 1991, when Plácido Domingo was 50 years old, he made his debut in what Wagner role? (Hint: this character is alive at the end of the opera.)

- A. Tristan
- B. Siegmund
- C. Parsifal
- D. Tannhäuser

5. Around the turn of the 19th century, many European composers were fascinated with "Turkish" music. Which of the following operas showcases Mozart's contribution to that musical trend? (Trivia: It was the 50th opera that James Conlon conducted at LA Opera.)

- A. *The Turk in Italy*
- B. *Tamerlano*
- C. *Nabucco*
- D. *The Abduction from the Seraglio*

6. Giacomo Puccini had a troubled year in 1909, when he was 50 years old. What event caused him great distress?

- A. The catastrophic premiere of *La Bohème* at La Scala.
- B. He was "fired" by his publisher Ricordi.
- C. The suicide of family maid Doria Manfredi, falsely accused of being his mistress.
- D. The death of Giuseppe Verdi shocked him into an early retirement.

Answers for The New Fifty quiz on inside back cover



Judith Hyman and Jose Simerilla Romero



Photo by Nikolai Sayapin

L to R: Natalia Sayapin, Alexey Sayapin and Ann Mosser standing in front of Sputnik 1 launched by Soviet Union in 1957



Photo by Adia Casas

L to R: Beverly Phillips, Summer Hassan-Domingo Colburn-Stein Young Artist 2014-2016, Michael Phillips

YAPS IN OUR OWN BACKYARD

HOSTING YOUNG ARTISTS

By JUDITH HYMAN, PH.D.

Imagine you're a budding opera singer who's just been accepted into LA Opera's Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program. Exciting! Bravo to you, right?

If you're like most Young Artists (YAPs), this probably means you're coming from a faraway city, or even another country, and you're visiting Los Angeles for the very first time. When you land here, where do you go? Where are you supposed to live? Can you imagine trying to find a place that is both affordable and within decent commuting distance to the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion?

Enter the sight-for-sore-eyes warmth and enthusiasm of Opera Leaguers welcoming YAPs into their homes. Now the YAPs not only have a place to stay, but they have a host who's well steeped in L.A.'s opera world, and L.A. in general, someone who can be their tour guide in every way.

It's not only the YAPs who benefit. The benefits are as two-way as they are memorable.

Former Opera League President Diane Gray and her husband Peter hosted Nicholas Brownlee. They became best of friends. In fact, Diane and Peter attended Nicholas's wedding. "When Nick sang in Tel Aviv, my daughter and three granddaughters went to hear him sing," Diane says. "My daughter hosted Nick, [his wife] Jenn and daughter Maddie for dinner in their home."

Then you've got Opera Leaguer Ann Mosser. Ann began hosting young artists before there was such a thing as Young Artists, since the earliest days of LAO before the company had a Young Artist program.

"The opera company asked me to house people during the Hemmings years, and I started hosting in 1992," Ann says. "I did not host young singers at that time—it was assistant directors, directors and singers. When the Young Artist program began in 2000, I was asked to house young singers who were in the program." Ann didn't miss a hosting beat when the YAP program began in full swing in 2006.

Ann hosted tenor Vladimir Dmitruk from Belarus in 2013 and traveled to Moscow to attend his wedding. She hosted Alexey Sayapin from Russia from 2010-2012 and accommodated his mom, aunt, vocal teacher and three friends when they visited. Ann and Alexey have become friends for life, and Ann has "visited Alexey every year since 2012 in Germany, Austria and Russia." Alexey now plans to spend next summer visiting Ann here in L.A.

Diane Henderson, Cast Dinner chair and YAP host extraordinaire, shares, "I hosted Liv Redpath when she came to L.A. Her mother drove with her from Aspen and also stayed for a few nights. Not only have Liv and I become good friends, but I also get to enjoy her whole family when they are in town. Liv's younger brother is in the St. Olaf Choir, and I attended their performance in Pasadena last year with her father when her mom was lending her moral support at the Met Regionals." Currently, Diane is hosting Juan Carlos Heredia.

BRAVO Assistant Editor Beverly Phillips and husband Michael have special memories of the YAPs they have hosted. "Michael and I unexpectedly attended the auditions for Operalia when it was held in L.A. So much fun! Our Young Artists insisted that we come. I said we had not received an invitation and they said we are inviting you, so off we went." The Phillips understand that the young artist lives a difficult life with a "lot of unknowns, so knowing they have someone to count on is valued."

What about me? I am currently hosting Jose Simerilla Romero who, at a family dinner, graced the table with an aria in his beautiful tenor voice which immediately silenced all my noisy, chattering grandchildren as they listened entranced. On another night I had the pleasure of bringing Jose to his very first Hollywood Bowl performance. His excitement was our mutual gift.



L TO R: Diane Henderson, Juan Carlos Heredia with Fisher

SO WHAT DO YOU DO?

By RENEE SALICK, ED.D. and BEVERLY PHILLIPS

FIRST PERSON SPOTLIGHT WITH MICHELLE MAGALDI, PRODUCTION DIRECTOR, LA OPERA

Do you know what a Production Director does? Well, we didn't so we asked.

Michelle Magaldi, Production Director at LA Opera (LAO), is an operatic mastermind orchestrating pieces of a puzzle until an environment is created where artists can do their best work.

There is an administrative side to her job—the planning process with contracts, budgets and all the front work done at least a year out. Then there is the long-term planning of putting all the pieces in place before people are hired and the venue arranged. “The challenge of coordinating the aspects of production are exciting and rewarding. As a stage manager, my role was in the immediate world of rehearsals and performances. As Production Director, I’m highly involved in the long-term planning for our mainstage and Off Grand shows. The production department is the hub of logistics and communication between artists (including creative teams, soloists, chorus, dancers, and orchestra) and technical personnel as we all work together to direct physical production resources.”

In middle school, Michelle was attracted to the performing arts but never as a performer, always working backstage building sets and working with the technical elements of production. “At UCLA’s School of Theater, Film and Television, I focused on stage and production management. After UCLA, I found opportunities in technical theater and stage management at the Geffen Playhouse, CTG [Center Theater Group] and other local theaters.

“Through colleagues, I came to LA Opera to join the stage management team in 2007. Though I hadn’t originally sought out opera, I soon became fascinated with the scale of production and the new languages I needed to learn, both musical and linguistic.

“One of the great things about my job now as Production Director is the variety of projects LAO presents and produces. From grand opera on the mainstage to contemporary chamber opera, films with live accompaniment, our simulcast and community programs, I have a hand in a wide scope of the opera genre. Working in venues from the 3,100+-seat Dorothy Chandler to intimate 200-seat houses like REDCAT offers challenges and different perspectives on the art form. It’s exciting to see audiences discover artists and the stories we create in different ways.”

When we spoke with Michelle, she was in the process of taking Ellen Reid’s *prism* to REDCAT as well as working with Beth Morrison Projects to work out the logistics of it all. She was juggling a few things: getting their contracts together, figuring out how much crew is needed, the schedule, the resources—and that was just for REDCAT. She did the same for Beth Morrison Projects.

So does this operatic mastermind have any free time at all?

“Outside of work, I’m a runner currently training for a half marathon in January. Food is another interest—I love cooking new recipes and enjoy exploring L.A.’s diverse restaurants.” 🌻



Photo by Stephanie Lopez

“I was lucky that fate brought me together with a person like Ann. Not only did Ann provide me accommodations and support, she helped me refine my English and acclimate into a new culture. Ours is a really big friendship which we keep and I value highly.” —Alexey Sayapin

“I was sitting on my bed panicking about something and crying. Beverly came over and sat with me for as long as I needed and listened to me. It was exactly the welcome I needed—a Mom for the moment.” —Summer Hassan

“Pete and Diane Gray didn’t know me from Adam but agreed to host both me and my wife for our first few weeks in Los Angeles. From the very moment we arrived, they showed such generosity and excitement to introduce us to L.A. and made the move across the country as smooth as we could’ve ever hoped. We continue to see the Grays—if you can catch up with those crazy travelers—as much as possible. They truly are family now and it makes my heart sing to think about them. My wife, daughter (she’s new and wonderful!) and I feel incredibly blessed to have met this wonderful, massively generous couple. (P.S. They have a Nespresso and it changed my life.)

—Nicholas Brownlee 🌻

CALENDAR

JANUARY

Musicale

VERDI, VETS & VEDANTA

Sat, Jan 19, 12:00-3:00pm

HOME OF ANNE COMBS

QUESTIONS: ANNE RUSSELL AT ANNERS@AOL.COM

OR 323.697.9733

Cathedral Projects Rehearsal

MOSES

Sun, Jan 27, 12:00-2:00pm

NEED 4 VOLUNTEERS

Annual Season Preview

Sun, Jan 27, 11:00am

DOROTHY CHANDLER PAVILION

Elementary Student Matinee

MAGIC DREAM

Thu, Jan 31, 8:45am-1:00pm

Fri, Feb 1, 8:45am-1:00pm

NEED 20 VOLUNTEERS EACH

FEBRUARY

Saturday Mornings at the Opera

MAGIC DREAM

Sat, Feb 2, 8:30-11:30am

NEED 15 VOLUNTEERS

AALAO Black History Recital

Sun, Feb 10, 3:00-6:00pm

4807 ANGELES VISTA BLVD., VIEW PARK CA 90043

QUESTIONS: JACQUE LYNE WALLACE 424.227.7254

Opera for Educators

LA CLEMENZA DI TITO

Sat, Feb 16, 8:00-12:00 noon

NEED 4 VOLUNTEERS EACH

Seminar

LA CLEMENZA DI TITO and MOZART

Sun, Feb 17, 12:00-3:00pm

(11:30 NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION)

THAYER HALL, COLBURN SCHOOL

Cast Dinner

Sat, Feb 23

LA CLEMENZA DI TITO

Tue, Feb 26

LA CLEMENZA DI TITO

DOROTHY CHANDLER PAVILION

Operawise

LA CLEMENZA DI TITO

Tues, Feb 26, 6:30-10:30pm

NEED 9 VOLUNTEERS

Opera Prep Activities

LA CLEMENZA DI TITO

Thu, Feb 28, 11:15am-4:45pm

NEED 12-15 VOLUNTEERS

Senior Dress Rehearsal

LA CLEMENZA DI TITO

Thu, Feb 28, 12:00-4:45pm

NEED 6 VOLUNTEERS

MARCH

Santa Barbara Opera Trip

EUGENE ONEGIN

Sun, Mar 3

CONTACT: BRITA MILLARD-KOHLFÜRST

310.877.6285 OR BMILLARD_99@YAHOO.COM

Opera League Donor Drive

Costume Shop Tour Event

Sat, Mar 9, 12:00 noon

\$350 PER PERSON

QUESTIONS: ANNE RUSSELL AT ANNERS@AOL.COM

Opera for Educators

ARTS-INTEGRATION

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

NEED 4 VOLUNTEERS EACH

APRIL

Peter Hemmings Award Dinner

Sat, Apr 6, 6:00pm

CALIFORNIA CLUB

Opera for Educators

EL GATO MONTÉS

Sat, Apr 13, 8:00-12:00 noon

NEED 4 VOLUNTEERS

Seminar

EL GATO MONTÉS: THE WILDCAT and ZARZUELA

Sun, Apr 28, 12:00-3:00pm

(11:30 NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION)

4TH FLOOR, REHEARSAL ROOM 1

DOROTHY CHANDLER PAVILION

MAY

Cast Dinner

Wed, May 1

EL GATO MONTÉS

DOROTHY CHANDLER PAVILION

Operawise

EL GATO MONTÉS

Wed, May 1, 6:30-10:30pm

NEED 7 VOLUNTEERS

Opera Prep Activities

EL GATO MONTÉS

Thu, May 2, 5:15pm-10:00pm

NEED 8-10 VOLUNTEERS

Elementary Student Matinee

GERMAN OPERA TALES

Thu, May 9, 8:45am-1:00pm

Fri, May 10, 8:45am-1:00pm

NEED 20 VOLUNTEERS EACH

Saturday Mornings at the Opera

GERMAN OPERA TALES

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

NEED 15 VOLUNTEERS

Opera for Educators

LA TRAVIATA

Sat, May 18, 8:00am-12:00 noon

NEED 4 VOLUNTEERS

Cast Dinner

Wed, May 28

LA TRAVIATA

DOROTHY CHANDLER PAVILION

Operawise

LA TRAVIATA

Wed, May 29, 6:30-10:30pm

NEED 9 VOLUNTEERS

Opera Prep Activities

LA TRAVIATA

Wed, May 30, 11:15am-5:00pm

NEED 12-15 VOLUNTEERS

EDUCATION EVENTS

Cathedral Projects Rehearsal

Volunteers organize the initial meeting, sign up participants, hand out necessary paper work, troubleshoot and greet participants.

Elementary Student Matinees

Volunteers provide welcome, supervision and guidance to elementary school age children who attend opera.

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 Activities

Volunteers will host secondary school students at performance and pre-performance activities, greet bus groups and assist with sign-in or lunch table.

Saturday Mornings at the Opera

Volunteers assist with elementary school 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

Carol Daskal 310.552.2765 *RSVP*
Anne Russell 323.697.9733

La Clemenza di Tito

Sun, Feb 10, 10:00am

10530 Edgeley Place
Los Angeles, CA 90024
Host: Rosalie Kornblau

El Gato Montés

Sun, May 5, 10:00am

335 South Almont Drive
Beverly Hills, CA 90211
Host: Ruth Bachofner

La Traviata

Sun, Jun 2, 10:00am

3331 Bennett Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90068
Host: Anne Russell Sullivan

Hollywood / Hancock Park

Phoebe Heywood 323.733.9091 *RSVP*

La Clemenza di Tito

Sun, Feb 10, 1:00pm

1121 South Gramercy Place
Los Angeles, CA 90019
Host: Judy Reidel

El Gato Montés and *La Traviata*

Sun, Mar 31, 1:00pm

3261 Country Club Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90019
Host: Abbie Ghose

Orange County

Lorna Blancaflor 562.259.7426
Christa Marks 714.871.5525 *RSVP*

La Clemenza di Tito and *El Gato Montés*

Sun, Feb 24, 2:00pm

896 South Walnut Street
Anaheim, CA 92802
Host: Liane Brand

San Fernando Valley

Karen & Steve Kohn 818.726.9779 *RSVP*

La Clemenza di Tito

Sun, Feb 24, 1:00pm

El Gato Montés and *La Traviata*

Sun, Apr 28, 1:00pm

Location TBD

Hosts: Karen and Steve Kohn

VISIT THE WEBSITE CALENDAR FOR CURRENT INFORMATION: OPERALEAGUE.ORG

San Gabriel Valley

Michael Sholer 818.502.1988 *RSVP*

La Clemenza di Tito

Mon, Feb 4, 7:00pm

El Gato Montés

Tue, Apr 2, 7:00pm

La Traviata

Wed, May 15, 7:00pm

5278 La Cañada Boulevard

La Cañada, CA 91011

Hosts: Barbara and Jack Dawson

Santa Clarita

Kimberlyn Jones 661.713.7220 *RSVP*

La Clemenza di Tito

Mon, Feb 25, 6:30pm

El Gato Montés

Mon, Apr 29 6:30pm

La Traviata

Mon, May 27, 5:30pm

24709 Fourl Road

Santa Clarita, CA 91321

Host: Kimberlyn Jones

Westlake Village

Ida Lanza 805.428.5403 *RSVP*

Renee Salick 805.701.1061

La Clemenza di Tito

Sat, Feb 9, 12:00-3:00pm

2239 Knollcrest Place

Westlake Village, CA 91361

Host: Renee Salick

Westside

Chuck Bragg 310.454.9662

Valerie Estes 310.826.0288 *RSVP*

La Clemenza di Tito

Sun, Mar 3, 1:00pm

585 Almar Avenue

Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

Hosts: Alice and Chuck Bragg

El Gato Montés

Sat, Apr 13, 1:00pm

Host: TBD

2019 OPERA LEAGUE SEMINARS

Dedicated to Sherwin Sloan, Founder of the Opera League Seminar

Sun, February 17, 12:00pm – 3:00pm

11:30am: Orientation for new members

LA CLEMENZA DI TITO & MOZART

SPEAKER: **Kristi Brown-Montesano, Ph.D.**

CHAIR OF MUSIC HISTORY FACULTY AT

COLBURN SCHOOL CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC

THE COLBURN SCHOOL

200 S. Grand Avenue

Thayer Hall

Sun, April 28, 12:00pm – 3:00pm

11:30am: Orientation for new members

1:30pm: Complimentary light refreshments

EL GATO MONTÉS: THE WILDCAT & ZARZUELA

SPEAKER: **Melodee Fernandez**

LEAD TEACHING ARTIST OF LA OPERA'S

ZARZUELA PROJECT

DOROTHY CHANDLER PAVILION

135 N. Grand Avenue

4th Floor, Rehearsal Room 1

TICKETS: Advance Orders **\$35** or a Member's Voucher
Guests / Same-day purchase at the door **\$45**

2019 WINTER MUSICALE

Sat, Jan 19, 12:00pm – 3:00pm

1:15pm: Lunch

VERDI, VETS & VEDANTA

SINGERS: **JULIA METZLER** AND

NANDANI MARIA SINHA WITH

ACCOMPANIST **VICTORIA KIRSCH**

ADDRESS PROVIDED TO TICKETHOLDERS

TICKETS: Advance Orders **\$45** or a Member's Voucher
Guests / Same-day purchase at the door **\$50**

Place your ticket orders on the website at operaleague.org

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

OPERA TALKS

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.

Answers for The New Fifty Quiz on page 11: 1(A), 2(C), 3(B), 4(C), 5(D), 6(C)

DON'T MISS THESE UPCOMING EVENTS!

Musicales: *Verdi, Vets & Vedanta*

Sat, Jan 19

Annual Season Preview

Sun, Jan 27

AAAO Black History Month Recital

Sun, Feb 10

Seminar: *La Clemenza di Tito & Mozart*

Sun, Feb 17

Santa Barbara Opera Day Trip: *Eugene Onegin*

Sun, Mar 3

Opera League Donor Drive Costume Shop Tour Event

Sat, Mar 9

Seminar: *El Gato Montés: The Wildcat & Zarzuela*

Sun, Apr 28

Hemmings Award Dinner

Sat, Apr 6

AAAO Father's Day Membership Recital

Sun, Jun 16

Opera League Santa Fe Trip

Aug 4-11

SOME CALL IT THERAPY

Shopping, that is!

There are innumerable fun and fulfilling ways one can volunteer for our Opera League of Los Angeles. One of the most fun by far is to spend an afternoon at Shop at the Opera.

Where else can you meet and greet other passionate operagoers, showing off and whetting their appetites over gorgeous gifts for themselves and others? Located in the lobby of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, the Shop is one of the best ways to make friends with other volunteers while helping the League raise a trove for our beloved resident opera company, LA Opera (LAO).

All proceeds from the Shop fund LAO's most noteworthy programs, including a lot of their educational programming.

Best of all, as a volunteer you score a large discount for merchandise you purchase the same day you volunteer. That's on top of the already reasonable prices for beautiful and fashionable scarves, jackets, jewelry and other items.

So next time you're at the Dorothy Chandler, pop by the Shop and say hi. And feel free to ask any of us for more information on how you can volunteer. ☀



Photo by Alma Guzman