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# BRAVO

THE MAGAZINE OF THE OPERA LEAGUE OF LOS ANGELES

## WHAT WE LEAVE BEHIND

By GARY W. MURPHY

OPERA LOVERS ARE OFTEN OPERA COLLECTORS,  
AND THE MEMORABILIA THEY LEAVE BEHIND  
CAN TELL POWERFUL TALES.

Recently I was contacted by Winslow "Winnie" Reitnouer, a friend of the Opera League who was preparing her San Marino home for sale. While packing, Winnie discovered several boxes of her father's opera memorabilia: old photos, reel-to-reel audio tapes, yellowed typewritten notes and more. Digging into the dusty wooden crates, she was overwhelmed by the memory of her father, his love of opera and his passion for sharing that love with others.

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Spotlight on Volunteer Extraordinaire Peggy Knight

Soprano Melody Moore Is the Best Wine You've Never Had



# From the President

Photo by Stephanie Girard



## Volunteers Make the League Go Round

It's hard to believe that spring is already here.

It has been an exciting opera season thus far, and it is thrilling to be back in the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion once again where I can reconnect with all of you, my Opera League colleagues.

The month of May brings the return of grand opera at its best: Verdi's brilliant *Aida* with a top-notch cast. Check out

Tom Lady's interview with soprano Melody Moore (Amneris) in this issue. Meantime, the Opera League seminar on *Aida*, with UCSB Professor Emeritus Simon Williams, took place on Sunday, May 15 at the Colburn School. Professor Williams once again enlarged our brains with opera knowledge, this time on the intersection of religion and politics in Verdi's operas. It was wonderful to see many of you there.

Our virtual gatherings have proved so popular that we will continue producing them indefinitely. They serve our membership well as they keep us connected as we engage with our Community Educators.

We are so proud of our new BRAVO Live! series. The third and newest episode, released in March, features the League's Education team leader Larry Verdugo speaking with Andrea Fuentes, the new head of LA Opera Connects, LAO's education and community engagement department. Among other things, Andrea tells Larry about the oodles of upcoming volunteer opportunities. Hear that, eager Leaguers? Check out this episode, and so much else, at [operaleague.org](http://operaleague.org).

On Sunday, June 5, we are delighted to celebrate and honor former League president Diane Gray and her husband Peter for their longstanding dedication to the opera community with our Peter Hemmings Award Dinner. Join us at the incomparable California Club for a fun and festive evening of entertainment and comradery. Net proceeds support LA Opera's educational programs.

Summer brings us back to the Hollywood Bowl for the first time in three years. On Sunday, July 17, we will gather for a picnic dinner followed by a performance of Wagner's *Die Walküre*, Act Three, conducted by the LA Phil's Maestro Gustavo Dudamel and directed by Yuval Sharon with a terrific international cast. The following month, League board member Brita Millard will lead yet another exceptional excursion to two major Austrian summer music festivals in Salzburg and Bregenz.

As I am sure you have heard by now, LA Opera announced an amazing 2022-23 season of six mainstage operas, recitals by some incredible artists and other exciting programming. Be sure to subscribe early as it is important that Leaguers be as eager to support our resident company as they are about volunteering their time and passion.

Speaking of, volunteerism is a key and critical part of the Opera League's mission. As the world continues opening up in fits and starts, we need volunteers for all kinds of programming. Got Zoom? We could always use more folks who know their way around Zoom to help us produce our virtual gatherings. Our Shop at the Opera is always in need of people power as well, as it is open for every LAO production. What a fun, active way to spend a day at the opera, as Shop volunteers are also eligible for \$25 performance tickets. We are also in need of volunteers who are adept at digital content management, storytelling, social media and marketing in the digital space. Please get in touch with me ([info@operaleague.org](mailto:info@operaleague.org)) or our Vice President Gary Murphy ([gmurphy@operaleague.org](mailto:gmurphy@operaleague.org)) if you would like to lend a hand.

Information about all upcoming events can be found at [operaleague.org](http://operaleague.org).

See you at the opera!

Todd Calvin  
PRESIDENT



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# WHAT WE LEAVE BEHIND

CONTINUED FROM COVER

With Winnie moving, these mementos from her family's past now needed a new home. As luck would have it, Winnie is longtime friends with League co-founder Alice Coulombe. Alice suggested a perfect home for the newly rediscovered treasures. Yes, the Opera League.

Intrigued by the generous offer, I drove out to San Marino to meet Winnie and retrieve the collection of her father: Colonel Frederick E. Coyne, Jr. (1889-1978). Upon retiring in the 1960s after a long career in the Army, Colonel Coyne became a bit of an opera buff and put together one-hour talks that he would give at libraries and clubs around Pasadena and San Marino.

In the boxes I found nearly a dozen fully loaded Kodak Carousel slide trays, each one labeled with a different opera title: *La Traviata*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La Boheme* and more. Tucked underneath the photos were scripted opera presentations. The slide shows were intricately timed to the audiotapes, which supplied the musical component and allowed the lecture attendees to follow the narrative. Colonel Coyne was a member of the Metropolitan Opera Guild, and his membership provided him with slides from Met productions. His scripts are proudly labeled, "Filmstrip presented by The Metropolitan Opera Guild in cooperation with The Bureau of Audio-Visual Instruction, The New York City Board of Education."

The Colonel's military precision was obvious. I could almost hear his voice delivering his *Madama Butterfly* lecture with a clipped cadence: "Act One: (music cue #5; slide #1) On a flowering terrace above Nagasaki Harbor..."

Winnie recollected that her father was equally enthusiastic about the family Christmas cards. "He always prepared an opera-themed Christmas card," she said. "It would sit beside his elaborate cardboard opera house with a functioning stage including a curtain created by his nephew. He ordered cast photos from the Met and created paper figures that he could position on the stage, working them after he opened the curtain as he stood behind the table. He recorded the music and condensed it and moved the figures in sequence with their singing. It was a marvelous Christmas treat! He once sent a card to [famous opera soprano] Beverly Sills, who responded that she thoroughly enjoyed it."

It became clear that these boxes of memorabilia were operatic roadmaps—created with love, care and exactitude—that could be used by future generations of opera community educators to share with budding opera lovers.

Indeed, Colonel Coyne's artifacts made me consider my own assortment of opera memorabilia, and what I would leave behind as a roadmap. Many of my treasured items evoke rich memories of the live opera experience.

Among my collection of signed CDs, books and photographs sits a small, hand-painted Styrofoam eyeball that I snagged from Achim Freyer's 2010 LA Opera production of the *Ring Cycle*. I like to think that Wotan had only one eye because I had the other. An *Einstein on the Beach* monograph signed by Philip Glass, Robert Wilson and Lucinda Childs is a personal treasure, as I saw all five LA Opera performances, plus one in Berkeley. My Luciano Pavarotti hand fan signals the moment I met the maestro prior to a rare L.A. performance.

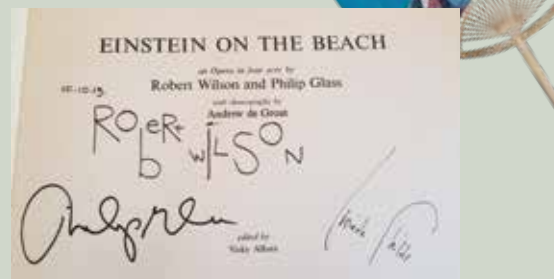
To me, these items mean a great deal, but to someone who does not have that connection, will they mean anything? It's a bit of a conundrum, but it is one I have confronted before.

On the front porch of my grandparents' house in Queens hung a framed jigsaw puzzle created from a 19th century poster. My great-grandfather, John "Jock" Combe, was an immigrant glass maker and carpenter from Edinburgh, Scotland who used his tools to hand-cut the poster into a puzzle of intricate, recognizable shapes: a cat, a wishbone, a wooden shoe... Even Abe Lincoln's profile would reveal itself upon careful scrutiny. The people in the poster—an angry clown, his nervous friend, a frightened actress onstage—were left whole, their faces, feet and hands untouched so as not to leave noticeable scars. During our lengthy Scotch-Irish family farewells, I would wander the cool porch to examine the puzzle again and again, looking for new pieces while trying to decipher what was going on in the scene.

"I remember searching for those recognizable shapes, too," my sister Ellen Claire Porter says. "The cat was my favorite because I always knew where it was, but I could never understand why that clown and everyone else looked sad and angry."



Opera items from Gary Murphy



Well, my dear sister, that's opera in a picture.

The poster's image was from Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*. The figures stand on a makeshift stage under a sign that reads: "Questa Sera Grande Spettacolo Pagliacci." The painting captures the dramatic moment when Canio confronts his wife Nedda about her secret lover, Silvio, who stands just offstage. Canio's rage is palpable, as he jabs his finger at the guilty couple, and Nedda seems to hide a knife behind her back.


Although my great-grandfather and I never met, the *Pagliacci* puzzle connects me to him. His collection of 78 RPM records of Irish tenor John McCormack is further evidence of our shared love of opera. I imagine him working on the puzzle as he basked in McCormack's clear-toned voice belting out bits of the classical repertoire. Of all my memorabilia, perhaps it is this piece—that hung on the wall of my LA Opera office for many years and now graces the wall of my home—that means the most to me.

In many ways, the work left behind by Colonel Coyne and Jock Combe were puzzles for us to solve. And in solving them, we create legacies that are roadmaps for Winnie, for me and for all of us who share the Opera League's vision to create opportunities to experience the depth, beauty, humanity and passion of opera, thereby fostering a shared love for this art form. 🌸

# A RECURRING MELODY

AN INTERVIEW WITH  
SOPRANO MELODY MOORE

By TOM LADY

A close-up portrait of soprano Melody Moore. She has short, dark brown hair styled upwards, blue eyes, and is wearing a dark, textured jacket. She is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression.

As she prepares to sing the role of Amneris for LA Opera's production of *Aida*, soprano Melody Moore, a Tennessee native now based in Los Angeles, sat down for a spell to talk about her LA Opera career to date, her ambitious Renata Tebaldi recording project, why she thinks volunteerism is vital to the arts world and what a Melody Moore vino would taste like.

**BRAVO: THIS IS YOUR SECOND TIME PLAYING AMNERIS IN *AIDA*, AFTER YOUR DEBUT IN THIS ROLE FOR HOUSTON GRAND OPERA IN JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2020. WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM YOUR FIRST TIME PORTRAYING HER THAT YOU PLAN TO INCORPORATE INTO THE LA OPERA PRODUCTION?**

**MELODY MOORE:** I had to learn Amneris for Houston in nine days, so what I hope to do at LA Opera this spring is digest further and have more time to play with the Princess. Amneris is complicated, and I'll be excited to delve more deeply into her intentions and motivations.

**BRAVO: *AIDA* MARKS YOUR FOURTH TRIP TO LA OPERA, AFTER TWO RECOVERED VOICES OPERAS WITH MAESTRO JAMES CONLON—*THE DWARF* AND *THE BROKEN JUG*—AND SINGING THE ROLE OF THE MOTHER IN *HANSEL AND GRETEL*. WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT BEING AT LA OPERA?**

**MM:** I actually have also sung Tosca at LA Opera and have covered the role of Lady Macbeth—going on for the final dress with Plácido Domingo. This is not a "trip" to L.A. for me because I live in Woodland Hills [L.A. neighborhood in the San Fernando Valley]. I love being at home and singing because I get to be in the comfort of my apartment with my puppy and wife.

**BRAVO: OFFICIALLY, YOU ARE A SOPRANO, AND YET SEVERAL OF YOUR ROLES HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN SUNG BY MEZZO-SOPRANOS, YOUR AIDA ROLE OF AMNERIS BEING A PRIME EXAMPLE. HOW DOES THIS AFFECT YOUR INTERPRETATION AND CHARACTERIZATION OF THESE ROLES?**

**MM:** The fact of a role has no bearing on my interpretation or characterization, as I do not use register as a determining factor when finding and living a character. The music is there to provide some blueprint upon which the text and source material rest. The text and source material are the avenues into character. The music tells you which turns to take along that avenue.

**BRAVO: TO MARK THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF LEGENDARY ITALIAN SOPRANO RENATA TEBALDI, YOU ARE RECORDING SELECTIONS FROM THE REPERTOIRE FOR WHICH SHE WAS MOST FAMOUS. HOW DID YOU CHOOSE WHICH SONGS TO INCLUDE? AND WHAT DID YOU NOT KNOW AND/OR PERHAPS NOT APPRECIATE ABOUT RENATA TEBALDI THAT YOU NOW APPRECIATE MORE?**

**MM:** We are still hopeful this recording will happen this year. We are to record in Cluj, Romania, which lies directly to the west of Ukraine. So, there are obstacles. The album would be released next year. I made decisions of repertoire based on the literal trajectory of Tebaldi's career. The album will start with the pieces she did while close to her home of Pesaro, Laghirano and, later, Parma. We then follow her into the Toscanini period including choral pieces for which she was recognized and praised. The recording takes us further into New York and her Met relationship, ending with her last concert at Carnegie Hall. We have attempted to include her most performed roles, unless I have already recorded arias from those operas on other albums, such as *Otello*, *Tosca*, *Butterfly*. After learning and singing this repertoire and reading every account of Tebaldi that I could find, I have learned that she was a gentle woman toward her fans, her followers and her music. She believed in technique above all things. Her musicality is the result of solid technique, which provides her the freedom to express. She was a very measured and careful steward of her talent, and I appreciate that focus.

**BRAVO: HOW DO YOU SEE VOLUNTEER NONPROFITS LIKE THE OPERA LEAGUE CONTINUING TO SUPPORT OPERA AND THE ARTS IN GENERAL, BOTH NOW AND IN THE FUTURE?**

**MM:** For me, the times I've felt the most cared for and pampered revolve around volunteer relationships. Little gift bags, personal pick-ups from the airport, a number to call if in need—these make a huge difference to traveling artists far from home. I believe volunteerism is essential. We need our community. We literally do not make it in the arts without an audience, and that audience is made of people who want to give back. I am eternally appreciative for and have deep, lasting relationships with multiple volunteers I've known throughout my career. I will continue that onward.

**BRAVO: IN A PREVIOUS INTERVIEW FOR WASHINGTON NATIONAL OPERA, YOU SAID THAT IF YOU WERE NOT AN OPERA SINGER, YOU WOULD BE A WINE MAKER. SO THE QUESTION BEGS: IF YOU WERE A WINE, WHAT SORT OF WINE WOULD YOU BE?**

**MM:** I have actually enrolled in winemaking courses through UC Davis and have completed my certificate program degree. So my dream came true! If I were a wine, I would likely be Nebbiolo. My vocal expression lies at home in Italy, as does this grape. The grape does best in conditions of cool fog, and its skin is even clouded at times. It does not reveal itself or its color immediately. However, when fermented, it becomes strongly fragrant and powerfully tannic. It shocks the senses. Nebbiolo ripens late. Starting to see some similarities? ☀

# LAO 22/23 LINEUP

**Heads-up, Opera League volunteers: More productions mean more opportunities to support and spread the love of opera to our local communities.**

***Lucia di Lammermoor***  
SEP 17–OCT 9, 2022

***Omar***  
OCT 22–NOV 13, 2022

***Frankenstein***  
with LIVE Orchestra  
OCT 28–29, 2022

***Tosca***  
NOV 19–DEC 10, 2022

**Isabel Leonard & Pablo Sáinz-Villegas**  
at the Colburn  
DEC 3, 2022

**Juan Diego Flórez in Recital**  
JAN 23, 2023

***The Marriage of Figaro***  
FEB 4–26, 2023

**Russell Thomas at the Colburn**  
FEB 25, 2023

**The English Concert: *Solomon***  
MAR 10, 2023

***Pelléas & Mélisande***  
MAR 25–APR 16, 2023

***Mary Motorhead / TRADE***  
APR 27–30, 2023

***Otello***  
MAY 13–JUN 4, 2023

**An Evening with Renée Fleming**  
JUN 10, 2023

# GEORGIA ON HIS MIND

COMPOSER KEVIN PUTS TAKES A BREAK TO TALK TO BRAVO ABOUT HOW THE LETTERS TO AND FROM ICONIC ARTIST GEORGIA O'KEEFFE AND HER MENTOR-TURNED-HUSBAND ALFRED STIEGLITZ BECAME LA OPERA'S *THE BRIGHTNESS OF LIGHT*. By BILL KENNEDY

*The Brightness of Light* began with just a small glimmer.

It was 2016. The Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York was sending its orchestra to perform at Alice Tully Hall in New York's Lincoln Center.

The school's leadership thought it would be appropriate to commission one of its distinguished alums, Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Kevin Puts, to prepare a new piece for the event. And they thought it would be even better if the piece was performed by another alum. Soprano Renée Fleming agreed.

From that glimmer of a beginning, Puts and Fleming would enter into a partnership that Puts today describes as "one of the most treasured collaborations of my career," one

that would lead not only to *The Brightness of Light*, the orchestral song cycle that will have its West Coast premiere on the stage of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in June, but also to a major new opera, *The Hours*, composed by Puts and starring Fleming, Joyce DiDonato and Kelli O'Hara. *The Hours* will premiere at the Metropolitan Opera in November, one of the highlights of the Met's 2022-23 season.

Puts spoke with BRAVO this spring about the birth and growth of what would become *The Brightness of Light*.

He and Fleming agreed that the composition might focus on a female American historical figure. Soon after, Puts came across a quote online from the great American artist Georgia O'Keeffe: "My first memory is of the brightness of light, light all around."

Digging deeper, Puts found that O'Keeffe had written thousands of letters over her lifetime, so he crafted a piece, *Letters from Georgia*, that would draw upon both Fleming's operatic instincts and his own musical preferences as a storyteller, fostered by his experience growing up in Michigan. As a boy, the young Kevin Puts would come home from the movies and—from memory—transpose the music he had heard in the soundtrack to his piano, entirely by ear.

*Letters from Georgia* duly premiered in New York with the Eastman Philharmonia and was later performed in O'Keeffe's beloved New Mexico at Santa Fe Opera.

But Puts and Fleming weren't finished yet.

Many of O'Keeffe's letters were addressed to Alfred Stieglitz, the renowned photographer and promoter of modern art, who would later become her husband.

Inspired by that, Fleming suggested enlarging the work to make it more of an expanded duet of letters,

written in music and thus providing a greater dramatic arc. Said Puts: "It's hard to say no to Renée Fleming."

She suggested the Stieglitz portion for baritone voice and sought out Rod Gilfry, who Puts now describes as "a great friend." Fleming also suggested adding something visual—a kind of backdrop—to the piece, so the team brought in revered theatrical production designer Wendall K. Harrington, head of production design at the Yale School of Drama.

Puts says the projections include some of the actual letters and of course some of the art works of O'Keeffe and Stieglitz, giving the work a visual complement to its musical language.

Puts was determined the piece be as authentic as the medium allows, using only the words of the two protagonists, with some editing but with no insertions of his own.

The narrative arc explores the evolution of the complicated relationship between the older Stieglitz and O'Keeffe. Puts describes Stieglitz as sometimes "gushing with melodrama" while O'Keeffe as occasionally stoic and prickly and sometimes passionate. But Puts says her letters—including those written after Stieglitz' death in 1946—reveal an artist growing in confidence and strength, enveloped in her love for the American Southwest. She becomes, as Puts says, "a true force of nature."

It is a tribute to Puts and his collaborators that *The Brightness of Light* emerges as an artistic fusion: commanding visual artists communicating in poetic writing and now immersed in music.

**LA Opera presents *The Brightness of Light* with Renee Fleming and Rod Gilfry at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion at 7:30 PM Saturday, June 18. The LA Opera Orchestra will be conducted by New Zealand-born Gemma New in her house debut.** 🌟



# IN THE GARDEN, IT TAKES A VILLAGE

By DIANE EISENMAN

Jennifer Chang first heard of *On Gold Mountain* when LA Opera Connects, LA Opera's education and community engagement team, reached out to her. She knew the opera's composer, Nathan Wang, with whom she had collaborated on a 2008 production of *The Joy Luck Club*, based on the Amy Tan novel. And being interested in the struggles of Asian-American males such as her own father, husband, friends and young sons, Jennifer was long familiar with the writings of Lisa See, the bestselling author whose memoir about her great-great-grandfather, Fong See, is the basis for the LAO production. Entitled *On Gold Mountain: The One-Hundred-Year Odyssey of My Chinese-American Family*, it was Lisa See's first book, published in 1995.

While her parents were Filipino immigrants with Chinese ancestry, Jennifer was born in California. She was brought up in the Asian-American community of Daly City, in the Bay Area county of San Mateo. Growing up, she was always aware of her parents' Asian background, and their struggle to be accepted as fully American because of their appearance. She relates her father as having said that "even if I lost my accent, I would never be treated like an American." And so Jennifer always wondered what it meant "for me to be born here and yet be treated as if I was not American."

"A few years ago, I dyed several strands of my hair red," she says. "I found that people treat me nicer. I get better service. I am 'accepted' more as an American." On the other hand, Jennifer has observed that Asian-American men, as dramatized through the protagonist of *On Gold Mountain*, struggle more to be seen by other Americans as successful members of society. "I'm very interested in the character of Fong See," Jennifer says. "I personally have a passion for the need to lift Asian men to new respect."

Jennifer's experience as a director of musical theater is a natural outgrowth of her background and training as a dancer, singer, actor and pianist. "I am looking for the best

way to support the story that the music itself is telling," she says. "The composer illuminates the emotions. The action on the stage then tells the story of those emotions."

As part of LAO's Off Grand series, *On Gold Mountain* was performed in the Chinese Garden of the Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens. And while this presents a marvelous opportunity to experience opera in a unique and aesthetically pleasing outdoor space, the production posed challenges to Jennifer and her team.

Obstacle number one is what Jennifer calls the "raw" space of the Chinese Garden itself. She points out that everything must be brought in, from the risers, the truss for lights, places for 28 orchestra musicians, 20 chorus members and 27 performers. Due to pandemic requirements, space must be allotted between the audience and the performers, and masks will be worn by the orchestra (except for wind instruments) and chorus. "We have to bring in additional generators for lights and projectors, as we are using screens as background with backlit projection," she explains. "It was necessary for us to do a sunset test one evening. We observed how long it takes

## AN INTERVIEW WITH JENNIFER CHANG, DIRECTOR OF LA OPERA'S OFF GRAND PRODUCTION OF *ON GOLD MOUNTAIN*

from sunset to dark, and contemplated the visibility of the lighting and projections.

"We also have to create a holding area, a backstage space and find access to bathrooms for both the performers and audience," Jennifer continues. "The lighting equipment needs to be qualified as outdoor lighting, resistant to wind speeds, temperature and rain. We have to create a structure for supertitles, which will be in both English and Chinese. Though a building will be behind the stage, we cannot attach anything to the building itself, including supertitles. Everything must be free standing."

With a tight budget and union regulations to contend with, rehearsals proved daunting as well. "In theatre, standard rehearsal is for eight hours a day for six weeks," Jennifer explains. "For this opera process, we were limited to no more than six hours a day for any single performer for two weeks. The irony is that there are so many more people to manage in opera than in theater. There are four extra community rehearsals on Sundays for volunteer students who fill in as orchestra members and performers. The full professional orchestra only arrives the last week before performance for four days."

With most of the opera taking place in an antique store, some of the props were purchased at F Suie One, an antique store in Pasadena that just happens to be the original shop founded in L.A.'s original Chinatown by none other than Fong See himself. His descendants still own the shop. Suffice it to say the family is very excited to participate in this project.

That is one reason why all the challenges have been worth it for Jennifer. That, and telling a very Chinese-American story in the Huntington's new Chinese Garden.

"Stories cannot be bound by borders or pandemics," Jennifer says. "They are needed to soothe spirits, teach lessons and carry us forward in our humanity... I believe that the complex history and the conflicted present of the United States is part of my storytelling lineage." 🌸



# A KNIGHT'S TALE

## AN INTERVIEW WITH OPERA LEAGUE VOLUNTEER

PEGGY KNIGHT By TOM LADY

### Peggy Knight's entrée into opera was the same as that of yours truly: she was curious.

"Opera was just different," she says. "And I was curious to try it out. When I was growing up in Detroit, my parents would sometimes play opera on the radio, but I had never been to one."

After taking in her first LA Opera mainstage production at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Peggy related the wonder and fun of the new experience to one of her fellow docents at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). Peggy became a LACMA docent not long after her two sons moved out and her husband passed away. Indeed, to fill the time, Peggy volunteers for a veritable smorgasbord of nonprofits and cultural institutions.

As it happens, that fellow docent was Opera League member Mary Lewis. "Mary invited me to a League gathering at her house," Peggy explains. "And that was my introduction to the Opera League."

While they are still virtual for the time being, pre-pandemic gatherings were cozy affairs held at the private residences of eager Leaguers, organized by regional chapters (e.g. downtown L.A., Westside L.A., San Fernando Valley, San Gabriel Valley, etc.). It was the perfect opportunity for League members and their guests to get together to munch on homemade goodies and cultural goodness. Community Educators, Opera League volunteers who had taken LA Opera's rigorous speakers training program, would

give presentations to supplement LA Opera productions. Attending the gathering at Mary's house allowed Peggy to meet more Opera League members and learn more about the League itself. She ate it, and the food, right up.

Soon after, Peggy joined the Opera League as well as African Americans for LA Opera (AALAO), a League chapter. And she started attending more operas. To date, her favorites include *Hansel and Gretel*, *Akhnaten* and *Aida*.

Just as importantly, and critically, Peggy threw herself into volunteering for the League. In no time flat she made herself indispensable. Peggy raised her hand to join our Education team for those enriching Saturday matinees. She has helped shepherd the hundreds of children who show up at the Dorothy Chandler to take in performances and programming from LA Opera Connects, LAO's education and community engagement department. And she has lent her hard-working hands to the League's Shop at the Opera during LAO performances. And when she was asked if she would be game to help staff the new member table during recitals and seminars... well, you can guess her answer.

Indeed, Peggy racked up so many volunteer hours that within a couple years of joining, she was invited to join the Opera League board of directors as well as the AALAO chapter's board. This positions her as a vital connection between AALAO and the League at large.

One of five kids raised in a religious family, Peggy has been both a member and volunteer at the Grace United Methodist Church in the Windsor Hills neighborhood of Los Angeles for 50 years. Over the decades she has been a volunteer Sunday School teacher and superintendent. And she has sat on various church committees.

She volunteered at the 1984 Summer Olympics, one of the perks of which was that her late husband, Bill, and sons, Billy and Eric, could attend the rehearsals for both the opening and closing ceremonies.

By this point in her life, Peggy had kicked off what would be a 40-year career as an interior designer. The first ten of those years were at Bullock's, the department store chain that started on Broadway in downtown L.A. in the early 1900s.

The bulk of her career took place at the Veterans Affairs (VA)

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***"Volunteering enriches my life... Since I started volunteering for the League, I have made new friends and learned about opera. The League is a great example of why I enjoy volunteering so much."***

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Sister Linda, Peggy, sister-in-law Diane and brother Vincent enjoy dinner on a cruise. Fun fact: Linda and Vincent are twins; Peggy and her son Eric; Peggy volunteering at Disney Hall with a couple pals.

Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System's campus in L.A.'s Westwood neighborhood. As the interior designer for all of VA Healthcare System's L.A.-area clinics and facilities, Peggy was a blur of perpetual motion. Laughing about it today, she says, "It was a massive job that I enjoyed mostly in hindsight."

Of course, shouldering such a big and complex purview with humor and aplomb equipped her with the skillset and confidence to juggle so much volunteering spanning many organizations over so many decades. In addition to the aforementioned church, LACMA and Olympics volunteering, Peggy has also volunteered for the Los Angeles Times Festival of Books for over 20 years, going back to the Festival's nascent years in the late 1990s (the first Fest was held in 1996). A voracious reader who devours four or five books at a time, surrounded by a home library numbering north of a thousand tomes, Peggy was born for the

Book Fest. "I started collecting books when I heard that physical books were endangered," she says. "Browsing book stores is still one of my favorite things to do. I always walk out with a book or two."

But wait, there's more volunteering. After retiring in 2010, Peggy joined the all-volunteer Culver City Garden Club. She also volunteers for Southwest Heights, an LA Philharmonic affiliate that supports Youth Orchestra Los Angeles (YOLA).

That same year Peggy's friend and fellow church member Gloria Bias invited her to join the peripatetic ranks of Patsy's Autumn Brunch. Every year, usually in the fall (hence the group's name), they travel together to a particular city to soak up its culture and cuisine. Past destinations have included Savannah, Charleston, New Orleans, San Antonio... And this year? Chicago.

This dovetails into yet another passionate pastime of Peggy's. "I want to be sure BRAVO readers know how much I love to travel,"

she says. "My husband Bill woke that bug in me when he took me to South America for our honeymoon. We visited Rio, Machu Picchu, Buenos Aires..."

Peggy has traveled to destinations such as Paris, Egypt, South Africa, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Havana, Beijing, Israel, Greece and Italy, including the Vatican.

When her older son Billy played in a professional basketball league in Cyprus, Peggy and her husband Bill flew there to visit him. While there, they also took a day trip to Egypt.

Even with all that globetrotting, though, Peggy will always have room for volunteering.

"Volunteering enriches my life," she says. "I learn new things, I meet new people. Take the Opera League. Since I started volunteering for the League, I have made new friends and learned about opera. The League is a great example of why I enjoy volunteering so much." 🌟

## IN THE PIT

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# FRANCES LIU-WU, BASS

SALT AND PEPPER POWER-WALKER By DIANE EISENMAN

"The bass is a cool instrument," says Frances Liu-Wu, bassist for the LA Opera (LAO) Orchestra. "It is like salt and pepper—it gives flavor to the music. The bass section anchors the orchestra's rhythm and provides much of the musical foundation. The music would be so boring without the staple seasoning."

When she was 13 and had already been playing piano for six years, Frances's father came home from visiting a family friend and neighbor who was a bass teacher. "Do you want to learn the bass?" he asked. To which the youngest of his five children, and the only one to study music, exclaimed, "Sure, why not?"

Today, Frances explains, "Curiosity is my driver."

Originally from Taipei, Frances Liu immigrated with her parents to Los Angeles when she was 21. She had already launched a thriving career, having graduated from Taiwan Culture University the year before, where she majored in bass, before spending the subsequent year as the principal bassist with the Taipei Symphony Orchestra.

Immigrating to Los Angeles meant leaving behind the instrument she had grown up playing and studying. The U.S., as it does to so many immigrants every year, represented a fresh start in a new—as in, unknown—life.

A childhood friend studying at the Philadelphia College of Performing Arts invited the newly arrived Frances to visit her at school where she suggested Frances play for an "incredible bass teacher" there.

That teacher, Neil Courtney, assistant principal of the Philadelphia Orchestra, changed the way Frances thought about and played the bass. "I remember feeling very lucky," Frances said. "He gave me a full scholarship to attend the program and study with him." Courtney changed Frances' technique. He changed how she thought musically through phrases and subtle note changes, one sound leading to the next.

Her first job after completing the program was with the Pasadena Symphony. Indeed, she still plays with them to this day. Then in 1989, Frances joined the orchestra that was the precursor to the LAO Orchestra. As one of the longest-tenured LAO musicians, Frances says she feels honored to play with such wonderful musicians. "Many of us have become friends over the years, we play together in various groups and know each other's families well. We have bonded in mutual trust. And it is from this trust in each other and our conductor, James Conlon, that we create beautiful music."



Opera orchestra performance is a distinctly different experience from that of symphonic performance, as Frances tells it. In opera, there are not two but three points of focus: listening to each other in the orchestra pit, following the conductor's cues and being aware of what is happening onstage. "We must closely watch the conductor as he aligns the music between the orchestra and the singers."

When the pandemic arrived, as happened to so many musicians, Frances saw her income take a hit, as she did her sense of purpose. Seeking a way to manage her anxiety led her to tap into the same strengths she developed as a musician: discipline and dedication. She channeled those strengths into setting up a daily routine of bass practice. She also started power-walking every day at sunset, then complimented that regimen by learning how to cook healthier food, a daily task that has now evolved into one of her passions.

Maintaining such an athletic regimen has paid off as the world gets back to in-person performances. Frances cannot help but point out that LAO's 2022-23 season includes three of her favorite operas: *Otello*, *Tosca* and *The Marriage of Figaro*. And when she's not in the pit, Frances is in recording studios, lending her salt and pepper to movie and television soundtracks as well as advertising jingles.

Given the sheer physicality of playing bass, Frances says that when she retires, she looks forward to returning full circle to her childhood roots of playing the piano. With maternal pride she notes that her daughter has traveled on a musical journey of sorts. Growing up, her daughter played cello and also sang with the Los Angeles Children's Chorus for almost a decade. As a chorister, she sang onstage while Mom played in the pit for *La Bohème* and *The Queen of Spades*. Today she enjoys a career in human resources management.

Before we wrap up, Frances would like to express her deep gratitude to dedicated operagoers, and in particular to the Opera League. "I so appreciate you in the audience as we share the joy of opera," she says. "I get so excited when I see the opera house filling up with music lovers. And I want to thank you, the Opera League, for doing so much behind the scenes. We orchestra members especially enjoy the delicious dinners you so generously provide during rehearsals." 🌻

# VENI, VIDI, VICI VERDI QUIZ

"I came, I saw, I conquered the Verdi quiz."

Is that something you could say with all honesty?

Let's find out!

As this issue of BRAVO drops, LA Opera is closing its mainstage season as it began in September—with another great opera of Giuseppe Verdi.

*Il Trovatore* welcomed us back to live opera last fall, while *Aida* will close the season this spring. But fret not, Verdi-philes. The master's penultimate opera, *Otello*, will storm our stage next spring with its tortured heart of darkness so sublime.

Before all that treachery, though, Mark Lyons, LA Opera's Associate Director of Communications and Publications, challenges you to combat of a brainier kind.

**1. At the age of 80, Verdi triumphantly capped his operatic career with *Falstaff*, which was only the second comedy he ever wrote. Which was his (not very successful) first comedy?**

- A: *Alzira*
- B: *Il corsaro*
- C: *Un giorno di regno*
- D: *Oberto*

**2. Not including rewrites or revisions, how many operas did Verdi complete during his lifetime?**

- A: 16
- B: 26
- C: 36
- D: 46

**3. Five of Verdi's operas premiered outside Italy (including *Aida*, first performed in Cairo). Where did *La forza del destino* have its world premiere?**

- A: Madrid, Spain
- B: Brussels, Belgium
- C: Lisbon, Portugal
- D: Saint Petersburg, Russia

**4. *Don Carlos* was another of Verdi's operas that premiered outside Italy. It was first performed in Paris. Which other Verdi opera had its world premiere in Paris? (No hints: the answers are all given in their Italian titles instead of French.)**

- A: *La battaglia di Legnano*
- B: *Un ballo in maschera*
- C: *Giovanna d'Arco*
- D: *I vesperi siciliani*

**5. After Verdi made his fortune, he had time to devote to activities other than composing. Which part-time career did he take up in 1859 (he was in his mid-forties)?**

- A: Director of the music conservatory in Milan
- B: Director of the Teatro La Fenice in Venice
- C: Politician
- D: Postmaster of Busseto

**6. George Bernard Shaw summed up a lot of operas when he wrote that "a tenor and soprano want to make love but are prevented from doing so by a baritone." This is true of virtually all of Verdi's operas. Why is it inaccurate for *Nabucco*?**

- A: There is no romantic subplot in the opera.
- B: The female love interest is a mezzo-soprano.
- C: The tenor is the one objecting to the love affair.
- D: The baritone actively wants to unite the lovers.

**7. A big Bard fan, Verdi composed three operas based on Shakespeare plays: *Macbeth*, *Otello* and *Falstaff*. Which other Shakespeare play nearly became a Verdi opera? (He thought about it for decades and got as far as collaborating with two different librettists, but didn't write any music.)**

- A: *Richard III*
- B: *King Lear*
- C: *Romeo and Juliet*
- D: *Hamlet*

# MY FIRST OPERA: VIRGINIA FAWCETT

By GARY W. MURPHY



**BRAVO: HOW DID YOU BECOME INVOLVED WITH THE OPERA LEAGUE OF LOS ANGELES? VIRGINIA FAWCETT:**

My introduction to the Opera League happened in 2010 when my

husband Mike and I got a Christmas gift membership. My youngest son's work colleague belonged to the Opera League, and he suggested a gift membership would be a perfect holiday treat for us.

**BRAVO: I WOULD IMAGINE YOU ATTENDED LA OPERA PERFORMANCES AT THAT POINT.**

**VF:** Actually, not at all. My first real introduction to grand opera performance was back in the late eighties and nineties, as my husband and I were big fans of the Bel Canto Opera Company, a small Westside [L.A.] group run by Bill Di Donato. I believe there was another small opera company that presented *Tosca* in English at Cal State Northridge. One of our church choir members performed in it, so the entire choir went to support him. *Tosca* sung in English was odd, but the music was wonderful. Those were my first grand opera experiences for sure, and *Tosca* remains one of my favorite operas. It's the perfect introduction to the world of opera—every moment in the opera is beautiful, it's not terribly long, and you can't beat the drama. It's an absolute masterpiece, and I'm looking forward to seeing it [at LA Opera] next season.

**BRAVO: YOU WERE RAISED IN BALDWIN, JUST OUTSIDE NEW YORK CITY ON LONG ISLAND. WHEN YOU WERE A CHILD, DID YOU EVER HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE A METROPOLITAN OPERA PERFORMANCE?**

**VF:** My mother always listened to the Saturday Met Opera broadcasts on the radio, but I didn't pay much attention. She also had a few LP recordings, mostly Puccini, that she would allow me to listen to. When I was in high school, I really got into listening to

*Madame Butterfly* which became my favorite at the time. My mom didn't really care about what was going on in the story, but I did. I would read the English libretto along with Puccini's music, and cry once I understood what was going on in the story. I would say that my first opera would have to be *Madame Butterfly*. I played it a lot. It was the rock 'n roll and folk music era so I didn't tell any of my friends, but when I finally did, some of them admitted that they liked it as well and even knew some of the big opera stars that I was unaware of at the time.

**BRAVO: AS YOU ENJOY LISTENING TO RECORDINGS, I WOULD THINK THE PROLIFERATION OF OPERA HD AND THEATER BROADCASTS WOULD BE ENJOYABLE.**

**VF:** That's true. I still have not been to the Met, but I still listen to the radio broadcasts and occasionally go to the HD broadcasts. At the start of the pandemic, the Met began to broadcast many of its productions on PBS, and for several months we would watch opera six nights a week. It was such a wonderful experience because we got to see operas we would normally not go to see. Perhaps that was an upside of the pandemic. We even sent them some money as a thank-you.

**BRAVO: TELL ME HOW YOU FIRST STARTED ATTENDING LA OPERA.**

**VF:** Becoming members of the Opera League gave us the introduction we needed to LA Opera. The year we joined the League, 2010, LA Opera presented the Ring Cycle, but we were intimidated by Wagner. Diane Gray [then vice president of the League] kindly said to me at one of the League gatherings, "Well, you've got to at least try it." After having watched two HD broadcasts of the Ring, we were pleasantly surprised at how much we liked it. We're even thinking of going to this year's Hollywood Bowl picnic and performance of *Die Walkure* Act 3 on July 17. It may be the Wagner opera we need to get back into the swing of it.

**BRAVO: YOU MENTION ATTENDING A GATHERING, AN OPERA LEAGUE**

For this issue of BRAVO, we sat down with Virginia Fawcett, a longtime Opera League member who has attended all of the League's virtual gatherings since the pandemic began two years ago.

Originally from Baldwin, New York, Virginia has lived in Los Angeles longer than anywhere else and now considers herself an Angelino. She is happily retired after an extensive career in elementary and early childhood education, culminating with her position as a Post-Partum Doula and Lactation Counselor in the Maternity Education Program at Santa Monica UCLA Medical Center.

**PROGRAM THAT MANIFESTS OUR MISSION TO BRING LIKE-MINDED OPERAGOERS TOGETHER IN COMMUNITIES AROUND SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA. HAVE YOU BEEN TO OTHER GATHERINGS?**

**VF:** We would go to the gatherings in the Pacific Palisades and have attended all the virtual gatherings these past two years. Gatherings were the first events we attended as new League members, as we wanted to learn about opera and meet the people who attend opera. The speakers are amazing. I really appreciate the time and effort they put into their presentations. It's their passion, and you can feel it. And it's so wonderful to learn new things.

**BRAVO: I BELIEVE YOU ALSO WELCOMED AN LA OPERA GUEST SINGER IN YOUR HOME WHILE HE WAS HERE IN L.A. FOR RIGOLETTO A FEW YEARS AGO. CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THAT?**

**VF:** Nelson Martinez, a Cuban American baritone, stayed with us for over a month a few years ago when he was covering the title role in *Rigoletto*. It was lovely having him in our home, listening to him practice his singing every day. How many people get to do that?

**BRAVO: AS THE OPERA LEAGUE IS A VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION, WHAT ARE THE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES THAT YOU AND YOUR HUSBAND ENJOY?**

**VF:** My husband and I enjoy food—shopping, cooking and eating—so we volunteered for the cast dinners served during the final rehearsal week. We have worked quite a few over the years, and it's become a real highlight for us as we interact with the singers and musicians, and if lucky, we get to watch the rehearsals from our Founders' seats.

**BRAVO: I THINK ALL OF US AT BRAVO WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOUR SON FOR LIGHTING THE SPARK WITH HIS HOLIDAY GIFT.**

**VF:** Since joining the Opera League twelve year ago, we've met so many good people, fun and interesting people. My husband and I do this as a team, and opera is still growing on him. My son is very proud of his terrific Christmas gift! 🌟

# YAPPING WITH A YAP: ANTHONY CIARAMITARO, TENOR

## OLD-SCHOOL CLASSICAL

By JUDITH HYMAN

When I was reviewing the LA Opera lineup for the 2022-23 season, I noticed that our very own LA Opera Young Artist (YAP), tenor Anthony Ciaramitaro, will be appearing as Arturo in the season-opening *Lucia di Lammermoor* in September, in what will be his first post-YAP contract with our resident opera company. Then toward the end of the season, in May 2023, he will be singing the role of Cassio in *Otello*.

Before we even get to next season, though, Anthony will be Il Messaggero in this spring's production of *Aida*.

Suffice it to say that I knew I had to nab him for a BRAVO interview before his schedule gets too busy.

Listening to his recital from LAO's virtual series, *Living Room Recitals at Home*, introduced me to his melodious, sweet-sounding tenor, with rich lower sounds resonating throughout the music. Not coincidentally, Anthony began training as a baritone, and through the careful tutelage of his undergraduate

voice teacher, baritone Richard Owens, he was encouraged to switch to tenor. "Which meant my mother was always right," Anthony adds. I recognized that those richer lower tones of his past baritone

training added an equally rich sonorous quality to his tenor.

For as long as he can remember, Anthony's mother loved singing, and she influenced his passion for music. She herself had been the lead singer of Livingston Fury, an eighties rock band with top 40 hits, for nearly ten years, after attending the Berkeley School of Music.

Anthony began expressing his own musical talents early on when he joined his middle school choir. As he grew older, he considered being a school choir conductor as a future career. But his voice teacher Richard Owens had a higher plan: "You have an old-school classical voice," Anthony recalls Owens saying. He then suggested Anthony consider opera. Anthony wasn't told how much work it would take, but his hard toil, tireless dedication and honed talent has paved the way on this arduous but fulfilling journey.

Originally from Coral Springs, Florida, Anthony was discovered by LAO's discerning YAP staff at the Palm Beach Opera Young Artist Program. Having produced two other recent LAO YAPs, tenor Rob Stahley and soprano Sylvia D'Eramo, the Palm Beach Opera Young Artist Program continues to be a deep reservoir of raw operatic talent.

Before Palm Beach Opera, Anthony apprenticed with Santa Fe Opera, where he sang the role of Toke in the world premiere of *The Thirteenth Child*. The same year he became an LAO YAP, he was one of a very select few to advance to the national semifinal round of the Metropolitan Opera Council auditions.

As he gets set to graduate as a YAP, Anthony gushes his gratitude for the thoroughness of the program. Even during the COVID-19 lockdown, when he moved back to Florida, he was able, as he says, "to marinate, develop and work on my voice. I doubled down, took extra lessons and as much coaching as I could."

Clearly the work has paid off. In addition to the LAO roles mentioned above, Anthony will also be performing

his first Verdi's *Requiem*. Also this past year, he understudied tenor Tony Stevenson for the role of Spoletta in the Met production of *Tosca*. "Being at the Met, I had more than one 'pinch me' moment during the rehearsal process of *Tosca*," he says. "I knew I had next to zero possibility of going on for the performances. I knew his [Tony Stevenson's] reputation. He does not cancel." Nonetheless, Anthony says he was thrilled to watch one of his idols, tenor Roberto Alagna, sing one of his favorite arias, "E lucevan le stelle," in many rehearsals and for all four performances.

Perhaps even more impressively, Anthony nabbed the role of the narrator, Giorgio, for the world premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon's *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* for New York City Opera. Singing Giorgio required Anthony to remain on the stage for the entire production as he shared a heartbreaking love story. One of the reviews called Anthony's performance "emotionally expressive." After NYC Opera, the production moved on to the Yiddish Theater in Battery Park, where it opened on Holocaust Remembrance Day.

In the meantime, after LAO's *Aida* closes in June, Anthony is hoping to raise enough funds to enroll this summer in an intensive voice program on the island of Ischia, just off the coast of Naples. The class is taught by his current voice teacher, tenor Michael Paul. With his family's roots in Italy, the trip would take on added resonance for him personally, in addition to professionally.

When I asked him what his dream role would be, he didn't hesitate. "Dick Johnson [from Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West*]."

As for what he enjoys outside the opera world, once again he did not miss a beat. "Cooking! Everything from limoncello to fresh pasta." When I made an off-the-cuff lament about how difficult it was to find a decent lemon meringue pie, apparently he was paying attention. Sometime later when he and fellow YAP Rob Stahley came over for dinner, guess what Anthony made for dessert?

I am just glad I held back from making him sing for his supper. 🍷



# EVENT SPACE

By TOM LADY

NOT ONLY IS YOUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD OPERA LEAGUE BACK TO IN-PERSON EVENTS, WE ARE BACK IN GRAND, PROSECCO STYLE.

## Need more proof than prosecco? Check out this gallery of photos from our first Premier Member Dinner and concert since June 2019.

On Sunday, May 1, the League's Premier-level members got together at the Brentwood Country Club in West L.A. for dinner, drinks and gorgeous singing. The event was free to the League's Premier-level members and their plus ones.

The event kicked off with a wine and cocktail reception on the sun-dappled outdoor terrace overlooking the pool, golf course and no shortage of palm fronds. Then we adjourned just inside to the dining room where we supped on a buffet-style spread at tables appointed with festive springtime centerpieces of hydrangeas, roses, chrysanthemums, asters, tulips, stock and tuberose along with mixed greenery.

Just as we were marveling over a dessert of chocolate mousse cups, cheesecake, apple crumble and the softest chocolate chip cookies this side of Soft Batch, LA Opera Young Artist (YAP) Jake Ingbar, a countertenor whom loyal BRAVO readers may recall as the subject of our "YAPing with the YAPs" series in the Fall 2021 issue, regaled the well-fed audience with an eclectic soundtrack that paired perfectly with the balmy evening. Jake sang "Si pietata il tuo rigore" from Handel's *Giulio Cesare* and Henry Purcell's "Music for a While," "Strike the Viol" and "Sweeter than Roses" before concluding the evening with selections from Vivaldi's *Stabat Mater*. Accompanying him on the

ivories was fellow YAP Nicholas Roehrer, who also played a piano solo by Bach halfway through the lineup.

Not a Premier member? Why not upgrade? Not sure of your membership level? And to that point, are you sure your membership is current? We get it, the pandemic threw us all off our game. To get the skinny on your membership status, renew or upgrade, just head to [operaleague.org](http://operaleague.org) and log in.

And if you forgot your login credentials? No sweat, just email [membership@operaleague.org](mailto:membership@operaleague.org) or call our message center at (213) 972-7220.

If you are feeling ready to get back to more in-person events, look no further than the below all-star lineup of upcoming programming, beginning with the big kahuna on June 5.

You can find more details at [operaleague.org](http://operaleague.org).

### PETER HEMMINGS AWARD GALA

Sunday, June 5 | 5pm  
California Club

The Hemmings Gala is the League's equivalent of a lifetime achievement award. This year's honorees, originally 2020's honorees, are long-time Leaguers Diane and Pete Gray. Diane is a past president of the Opera League, has sat on multiple League committees and has volunteered in every single volunteer-able role the League has to offer. Believe us when we say: that's a lot of volunteering. Currently, Diane sits on the LA Opera board of directors, filling the board seat previously occupied by her other half, Pete. Together, Diane and Pete have spent a lifetime supporting opera in general as well as opera in Southern California.

### FATHER'S DAY RECITAL

Presented by African Americans  
for LA Opera (AALAO)

Sunday, June 19 (Father's Day) at Noon  
The Ebell of Los Angeles, President's  
Tea Room, Third Floor

After the smashing success of their Black History Month recital, AALAO, a chapter of the Opera League, will return to the Ebell on Father's Day for some music and song to help us elevate our celebration of dads. We will be joined by Mexican-American mezzo-soprano Jessica Gonzalez-Rodriguez. LA Opera Young Artist Nicholas Roehrer, our accompanist from the Premier Member Dinner, will return to accompany Ms. Gonzalez-Rodriguez.

### HOLLYWOOD BOWL PICNIC AND CONCERT

Sunday, July 17 | 5pm Picnic, 7:30pm  
Performance of *Die Walküre* Act III  
Hollywood Bowl

First, we'll congregate in our very own reserved picnic area at the foot of the Bowl along Highland Avenue. Then, bellies full and belts loosened, we'll trek up to the Bowl to watch Maestro Gustavo Dudamel and director Yuval Sharon and an all-star cast provide an evening that starts with "Ride of the Valkyries" and ends with "Magic Fire Music."

Need we say more?

Okay, enough drooling. Head over to [operaleague.org](http://operaleague.org) and get those tickets. 🌟



1. Brentwood Country Club Golf Course 2. (LEFT TO RIGHT): Beth Bleavins, Mary Lewis, Hally Harrie, Ruth Bachoffner  
 3. Brentwood Country Club Dining Room 4. (LEFT TO RIGHT): Danny Galanter, Judith Hyman, Gail Galanter  
 5. (LEFT TO RIGHT): Mary Lewis, Tom Lady, Alma Guzman 6. Countertenor Jake Ingbar 7. Doris Shimabukuro and Wilma Freeman  
 8. Strawberry Cheesecake 9. Mirjana Mahnovski and Holly Harrie 10. Marlene Chavez and Mimi Rotter  
 11. (LEFT TO RIGHT): Gayle Kirschbaum, Mary Riggs, Larry Verdugo 12. Robert Ronus and Marlene Chavez  
 13. Julia Haas 14. Cathy Foldvary 15. Todd Calvin and Brita Kohlfuerst-Millard



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# OPERA LEAGUE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## SPRING AND SUMMER 2022

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*Event details will be broadcast via [operaleague.org](http://operaleague.org) with supporting eBlasts.*

### MAY

#### GATHERING

***Aida: A Tribute to the Glories of Ancient Egypt***

**Tuesday, May 17 at 7pm**

LOCATION: Virtual (Zoom)

SPEAKER: Mary Johnston

#### SEMINAR

***Aida: Politics and Religion in Verdi's Operas***

**Sunday, May 15 at 12pm**

LOCATION: Thayer Hall at the Colburn School

SPEAKERS: Simon Williams, Professor Emeritus,  
UC Santa Barbara

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### JUNE

#### GATHERINGS

***The Opera Detective***

**Saturday, June 11 at 1:30pm**

LOCATION: Virtual (Zoom)

SPEAKER: Steve Moore

***Encore: Lusters, Lovers and Other  
Forms of Love in Opera***

**Sunday, June 26 at 1:30pm**

LOCATION: Virtual (Zoom)

SPEAKER: Steve Kohn

#### RECITAL

***African Americans for LA Opera  
(AALAO) Presents: Father's Day Recital***

**Sunday, June 19 at 12pm**

LOCATION: Ebell of Los Angeles,  
President's Tea Room, 3rd Floor

VOCALIST: Jessica Gonzalez-Rodriguez

#### SPECIAL EVENTS

***Volunteer Appreciation Event***

**Friday, June 3 at 1pm**

LOCATION: Noé Restaurant and Bar at the  
Omni Los Angeles

***Peter Hemmings Award Dinner  
Honoring Diane and Peter Gray***

**Sunday, June 5 at 5pm**

LOCATION: California Club

### JULY

#### GATHERING

***Tentative: Verismo and the Alternative***

**Sunday, July 10 at 11am**

LOCATION: Los Angeles Athletic Club

SPEAKER: Larry Verdugo

#### SPECIAL EVENT

***Hollywood Bowl Picnic and Concert***

**Sunday, July 17 at 5pm**

LOCATION: Hollywood Bowl

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### AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

#### SPECIAL EVENT

***Season Kickoff Launch Party***

**When: TBD**

LOCATION: Ebell Club of Los Angeles (Tentative)

VOCALIST: Anthony León, Tenor (Tentative)