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Preview January 18th

Be There, and Be Aware!

Maestros, divas, arias, quartets, delicious antipasto buffet, companionship of other opera buffs – it's all yours free, as invitations to request two member tickets are included in appreciation for your Opera League membership.

The "Insider's Preview" is the next step after the morning press conference for both LA Opera's Broad General Director Plácido Domingo and Music Director James Conlon. Both international superstar maestros present their upcoming season, artistic teams and casting, accompanied with performances by the Domingo-Thornton Young Artists. Insider tip: Maestro Domingo adores this event, with an audience of devoted aficionados and his new protégées performing.

German Opera and Lunch with Maestro Conlon

You won't want to miss the next seminar on February 3 encompassing LA Opera's new productions of Richard Wagner's glorious *Tannhäuser* and Kurt Weill's masterpiece *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* with four esteemed speakers. Please arrive at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion's 5th floor salon by 9:30 am for coffee and pastries.

Dr. Simon Williams, Professor of Dramatic Arts, UCSB, noted Wagnerian scholar and frequent League seminar presenter, lectures at Bayreuth and has written several books on Wagner. He will present *Tannhäuser*, composed and given its first performance in 1846. Spanning the century, Dr. Stephen Hinton, Professor of Music at Stanford University will expand on *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht's collaboration, first produced in Weimar Germany in 1930.

Look up Dr. Hinton's extensive bio by googling his name on the web to see how he is the perfect choice to cover this opera. And a talented member of the League's Board, Dr. Anne Russell-Sullivan will address an area in which she is well-prepared, German history and literature.

Lunch at noon is your choice to purchase a ticket for \$30 or dine out. Should you wish to stay and we hope you will, you will hear our special guest, Maestro James Conlon, LA Opera's Music Director and conductor of both operas sharing his insights. We offer a full day's program plus morning refreshments for \$25 or one flexible voucher for members. Dr. Allan Edmiston will be the moderator. Please make your reservations for this intellectual discourse on the upcoming operas and the life and times in which they were created. See invitations on page 5.

Dr. Paul Floyd returns as Master of Ceremonies. Another insider tip: he'll play sections from a new opera! The young artists will thrill you with favorite renditions from Puccini, among others. Subscription details of the new season will be available from LA Opera Marketing staff following the program. Insider tip: watch for weekday bargains!

Under direction of event chair Brita Millard, this annual unveiling has truly "moved upstairs" to the gorgeous Crystal Ballroom, directly off the main lobby of the Millennium Biltmore Hotel. Our

sumptuous pre-program reception is held in the elegant Tiffany Room starting at 4:15 pm.

Introduce your friends to opera by purchasing a \$20 guest ticket for each, applicable towards a new League membership. Patron and Sustaining League members may have up to four tickets as part of their membership benefits. Advance tickets are required to plan for adequate food and seating. Invitations were mailed to all members in December and may be requested on our message line at 231.972.7220.

a word from our president



Rebecca Bowne, President

The Opera League is working to improve our interactions with you, our valued members. These efforts should increase your satisfaction and enhance your participation in League activities. Fortunately, a strong team is "behind the scenes" for all of our benefit. In this president's message, I share these recent communications efforts with you.

Our web site has been moved to a new server and updated by Marcia McCormack. Marcia reviews new technology available and adds enhanced attractions on a regular basis to www.operaleague.org so make a web visit and let us know what you think.

The creative and resourceful Bob Bernard truly takes us "behind the scenes" with his inspiring "Inside Opera" articles on personalities associated with LA Opera productions. Some of these are published in *Bravo* (see page 7), while others are communicated electronically to members who give us their e-mail address. All of Bob's recent articles are accessible at our web site.

Since taking over as *Bravo* editor earlier this year, Dorothy Wait has taken great care to bring you timely articles of interest, reaching out to League members in many areas. We also share copies of *Bravo* with the pre-performance opera audience.

Kathleen Leonard and Jackie Johns share the duties in responding to the League message line, either answering your questions directly or relaying the message to someone who can, with a goal of response to you within 24 hours. We welcome your calls to 213.972.7220.

When you come to the opera, take time to visit us at the Opera League Boutique (towards Grand Avenue in the main lobby), where you will always find a League Director willing to listen and answer your questions. Remember, all net proceeds from your purchases at our boutique are donated to LA Opera to bring children to the opera, promote opera education programs, as well as pay for the pre-performance speakers and sound technician.

So, keep in touch by letter, phone, e-mail or in person. Let us know how and what we can do to communicate even better with you. Come say hello at League events or in the lobby. See you soon at the opera!



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Dr. W. Allan Edmiston Seminars
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Visit us at www.operaleague.org

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Send e-mail to: info@operaleague.org

Editor	Dorothy Wait
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Printer	Licher Direct Mail
Newsletter Design	Bacall:Creative

If you want to be eligible for last minute benefits, Inside Opera and League notices, please send your e-mail address to info@operaleague.org. We would love to have all members on our e-mail list! Send your "second member" addresses also!

Mark your calendars:

Sunday, April 29 at 4:30 pm for the Peter Hemmings Annual Award when former LA Opera resident artists Rod Gilfry, Greg Fedderly and Malcolm McKenzie join singers from the Domingo-Thornton Young Artist Program in a concert tribute in the Crystal Ballroom of the Millennium Biltmore Hotel. Reception with the artists will follow the concert and program.

Saturday May 5 10 am to 1 pm Porgy and Bess and Luisa Fernanda Seminar (date change). Will take place at the Wilshire Grand Hotel.

Monday May 7 or Thursday May 10 evening at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion for a **Master Class** when superstar **Susan Graham** works with the Domingo-Thornton Young Artists to enhance their vocal techniques.

Monday May 15 7:30 pm for African American Night at the Opera with a post-performance black tie optional reception, including cast members from *Porgy and Bess*.

Artist Services Honorees

By Bob Bernard

The Artist Services Committee's annual Party was held on October 23 at the La Cabaña restaurant in Venice. The program began with Toni Bird, former OLLA President, interviewing Domingo-Thornton Young Artist Rena Harms and vocal coach and pianist Yulia Levin. Following the interview and dinner, the committee's annual Service Awards were announced.

Beginning with the lower-echelon awards, the winners were:

The Cenerentola Award went to Dale Ross for greeting Duane Schuler in the wee hours of the morning at the Burbank airport.

The Vanessa Award to Peter Lambert for waiting an extra hour to greet Martha Ruskai.

The Electra Award (noting the equivalence between emotional "baggage" and luggage) to Stu Bowne for handling the huge luggage requirements of the Atanelis and Violeta Urmana and husband Alfredo.

The St. Francis of Assisi Award to Jerry Faris for greeting JoJo, the pug dog of Eric Halfvarson.

The Nurse Award (ref: *Frau ohne Schatten*) to Marcia McCormack for patching up Patricia Racette, after Ms. Racette cut her hand while opening an umbrella.

Then, continuing with the Wagnerian citations:

The Erde (or 'Earth Mother') Award to Alma Guzman for baby-sitting Baby (Sam) Ramey so many times.

The Not-Hunding (or Hospitality) Award to Kanya Bugreyev for being home-host to Anya Alkhimova, a Domingo-Thornton Young Artist.

The Forest Bird (or 'Speaking in Tongues') Award to John Welch for providing those fellows serving Anna Netrebko with an accurate transliteration from the Russian of "I love you".

The Mime (or Mentor) Award to John Spear for training new Committee members Marcia McCormack and Ed Lieb.

And concluding with:

The Orfeo Award (for going to hell and back while serving an artist) to Carol and Mike Sholer for greeting two separate artists (traveling independently on different international carriers), transporting them downtown, and then returning to Venice in time for the Committee's Gathering.

The Largo al Factotum Award "Pronto a far tutto, la notte e il giorno" ("Ready for anything, night and day") to Bill Keiser for fulfilling an astonishing large number of assignments at critical time periods.

And, as has become the custom (in order to preserve confidentiality), the Pinkerton Award, granted for preventing a tenor's wife from meeting his girl friend, was bestowed in a separate, private ceremony.



Photo: Ed Leib

Opera League volunteers assisting at the Student Matinees

Wagnerian Portions Needed

Life is short. Opera is long. Wagner is longer. Men are from Wartburg and women are from Venusburg. Wagnerian casts and chorus are HUGE and they eat heartily. We need volunteers for Tannhäuser cast dinners February 11 and 16. Contact monylamony@yahoo.com if you can prepare a dish to feed at least 30!

Tannhäuser and Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny Gathering Schedule

Westside

Monday, Jan. 15, 7:15-9:30 pm
585 Almar Ave., Pacific Palisades
Monica Whitaker 310.826.4743

Claremont

Sunday, Jan. 21, 2-5 pm
150 N. Mountain Ave., Claremont
Patricia O'Donnell 909.447.5038

Orange County

Sunday, Jan. 21, 2-5 pm
410 Angelina Dr., Placentia
Claire Chambless 714.533.4186

Ventura County

Sunday, Jan. 21, 2-5 pm
520 San Clemente Way, Camarillo
Dorothy Wait 805.578.0246

Heart of LA

Saturday, Jan. 27, 2-4:30 pm
362 N. Van Ness Ave., Los Angeles
Sandra Kohn 323.935.9943

San Gabriel Valley Mahagonny

Tuesday, Jan. 30, 7-9:30 pm
660 S. Orange Grove Blvd., Apt. D
Pasadena
Michael Sholer 818.502.1988

Tannhäuser

Thursday, February 15, 7-9:30 pm
5278 La Canada Blvd., La Canada
Michael Sholer 818.502.1988

Santa Clarita

Thursday, Feb. 1, 7-9:30 pm
28201 River Trail Lane, Valencia
Olga Joseau 661.297.3086

San Fernando Valley

Sunday, Feb. 4, 3-5:30 pm
4736 Park Encino Lane #216,
Encino
Jackie Johns 818.980.5743

Antelope Valley

Sunday, Feb. 4, 2-4:30 pm
43422 25th St. W., Lancaster
Harald Krueger 661.728.0671

calendar

january

Opera Talks at Julienne's

January 8 (Monday) 7 pm
2649 Mission, San Marino
\$10 cash-beverages & nibbles
Additional \$10 cash - light "box supper"

Insider's Preview

January 18 (Thursday) 4:15 pm
The Biltmore Hotel
Crystal Ballroom

Cast Dinner**

January 30 (Tuesday) 4:30-7 pm
Mabagonny
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion

february

Education Program*

February 1 (Thursday) 8 am - noon
Younger Students Matinee
The Prospector
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion

Education Program*

February 2 (Friday) 8 am - noon
Younger Students Matinee
The Prospector
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion

Education Program*

February 3 (Saturday) 8 am - 4 pm
Saturday Morning at the Opera
The Prospector
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion

Seminar

February 3 (Saturday) 9:30 am - 3 pm
Mabagonny & Tannhäuser
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion
5th Floor Banquet Hall
\$25 or voucher/members
\$35/non-members or at the door
Optional pre-ordered lunch \$30

february (cont'd.)

Cast Dinner**

February 3 (Saturday) 4:30-7 pm
Mabagonny
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion

Opera Talks at Julienne's

February 5 (Monday) 7 pm
2649 Mission, San Marino
\$10 cash - beverages & nibbles
Additional \$10 cash - light "box supper"

Musicale

February 11 (Sunday) 3-6 pm
"Italian Love Songs"
Heart of LA/ Hancock Park
\$35/voucher members, \$45 guests

Cast Dinner**

February 11 (Sunday) 4:30-7 pm
Tannhäuser
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion

Cast Dinner**

February 16 (Friday) 4:30-7 pm
Tannhäuser
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion

march

Volunteer Opera-Tunities

March 3 (Saturday) 10 - 11:30 am
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion
Contact: Gerald Elijah gelijah@msn.com

Musicale

March 3 (Saturday) 2-4:30 pm
Orange County/ Irvine
\$35/voucher members, \$45 guests

Opera Talks at Julienne's

March 5 (Monday) 7 pm
2649 Mission, San Marino
\$10 cash - beverages & nibbles
Additional \$10 cash - light "box supper"

march (cont'd.)

Education Program*

March 10 (Saturday) 8 am - 4 pm
"Who Wants to be an Opera Singer?"
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion

Education Programs*

Contact: Edward Lieb
edwardlieb@sbcglobal.net

Cast Dinners**

Contact: Monica Gutierrez Roper
monylamony@yahoo.com

24-hour message line
213.972.7220



Photos: Ed Leib

Opera League volunteers assisting at the season matinee.

invitations

Please note that this is the **ONLY** invitation you will receive for these events.

Opera Seminar

Tannhäuser and *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*

Saturday, February 3, 2007 from 9:30 am to 3:00 pm

9:30 am Coffee and Pastries !0 am program

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion 5th floor Banquet Hall

135 North Grand Avenue - Entrance just south of garage on Grand Avenue

See details on page 1

Dr. Allan Edmiston, Moderator

\$25 or 1 flexible voucher for Members, \$35 for Non-members and at door, \$10 Student Members.

No lunch tickets at door.

Optional Lunch \$30.00 Choice of poached salmon salad or roasted chicken salad

Heart of Los Angeles/Hancock Park Musicale

See details on page 6

Sunday, February 11, 2007 3 pm to 6 pm

Tickets: \$35 or 1 voucher for Members, \$45 for Non-members, \$10 for Student Members. Seating is limited to 50

Orange County/Irvine Musicale

See details on page 6

Saturday, March 3, 2007 2 pm to 4:30 pm

Tickets: \$35 or 1 voucher for Members, \$45 for Non-members, \$10 for Student Members. Seating is limited

ORDER FORM

Seminar reservations must be received by January 13,

Heart of LA musicale requests by January 20 and OC musicale requests by February 10

Seminar February 3	_____	x Member or vouchers @ \$25	\$ _____
	_____	x Non-member @ \$35	\$ _____
	_____	x Student members @ \$ 10	\$ _____
Lunch choice	_____	x salmon _____x chicken @ \$30	\$ _____
Heart of LA Musicale	_____	x Member or vouchers @ \$35	\$ _____
February 11	_____	x Non-member tickets @ \$45	\$ _____
	_____	x Student members @ \$10	\$ _____
OC Musicale	_____	x Member or vouchers @ \$35	\$ _____
March 3	_____	x Non-member @ \$45	\$ _____
	_____	x Student members @ \$10	\$ _____
		Total \$	\$ _____

Enclose your check payable to the Opera League of Los Angeles or voucher (s), together with a self-addressed stamped envelope. Seminar tickets and/or Musicale directions will be mailed to you. No refunds. Mail to The Opera League of Los Angeles, P.O. Box 1006, Montrose, CA 91021-1006.

getting together

Escamillo Singing in Orange County

By Marcia McCormack

We have a special Musicale planned for Saturday, March 3, 2 pm to 4:30 pm, in the Irvine home of League member and Opera Pacific Guild Alliance President, Beverly Spring. Mexican baritone Luis Ledesma, who will be in Costa Mesa to sing the role of Escamillo in Opera Pacific's *Carmen* and his wife, Danielle Orlando, an internationally known opera coach and accompanist, will present an exciting program of arias, Mexican and Spanish songs...and they've hinted there may be a surprise or two!

Mr. Ledesma's career has taken him to opera houses throughout the world. He finished the 2005-2006 season by appearing with Andrea Bocelli on Mr. Bocelli's five-city tour, including the Hollywood Bowl. This season began at the Graz Opera with Escamillo in a new production of *Carmen*, followed at Opera Carolina as Tonio in *Pagliacci*. Following the February/March appearance with Opera Pacific, he will go on to the Washington Opera and concerts conducted by Placido Domingo, then on to San Antonio as Scarpia in *Tosca*. His website is: www.luisledesma.com.

Danielle Orlando is the principal opera coach at The Curtis Institute of Music and is master vocal coach on the faculty of The Academy of Vocal Arts. She's collaborated with Luciano Pavarotti as accompanist, judge and artistic coordinator for all of the Luciano Pavarotti International Voice



Stars Danielle and Luis to perform at O.C. Musicale. Photo: Marcia McCormack

Competitions. She spent nine seasons working with Gian Carlo Menotti for the Festival dei due Mondi in Spoleto, as assistant conductor and coach. She's associated with a long list of opera companies, festivals and young artist programs which include the Metropolitan Opera and the Washington Opera. Ms. Orlando accompanies internationally recognized artists on tour, most recently tenor Salvatore Licitra and soprano Eglise Gutierrez. She's been seen on *Good Morning America*, *Live by Request* on A&E and *The Rosie O'Donnell Show*, accompanying celebrities such as Luciano Pavarotti and Andrea Bocelli.

Personal note: Luis and Danielle are dear friends of mine. I know you'll love them as much as I do and I look forward to introducing them to you on March 3...Marcia

February Musicale

Italian Love Songs

By Anne Russell-Sullivan

Our next Musicale will take place on Sunday, February 11 from 3 to 6 pm at the lovely home of Anne Combs in Historic Los Angeles. Our musical artists will all be from the Domingo-Thornton Young Artist Program: tenor, David Lomeli, 25, from Mexico, recent winner of Operalia and soprano Rena Harms, 22, from the U.S., who will make her LA Opera debut in *Mahagonny*. They will be accompanied by Julia Levine, 25, from Canada, formerly with the San Francisco Opera Merola Program. Our singers will perform a program of Italian love duets and songs in honor of Valentine's Day. We will be serving Italian wine & cheese, coffee, tea & desserts. We invite you to bring your favorite love poem and be prepared to recite it for our listening pleasure as we sip Italian wine and savor our Italian delicacies.



Festive winners and attendees at the SFV costumed Musicale.

Photo: Rebecca Bowne

behind the scenes

“May you live in interesting times.”

By Bob Bernard

Whether this saying is proverb or curse, the author must have had in mind directing this thought towards the administrative staff of a modern day opera company, perhaps especially ours, right here in Los Angeles.

When LAO's 2006-2007 season was announced last January 15, it was the culmination of five years of planning, negotiating, and resource allocation. That it, for its ten-opera composition, ultimately manifested a 4-3-3 balance between

Company Premieres,
New Productions, and
Revivals

was remarkable, given the perturbations impacting its development along the way.

In a recent conversation with Christopher Koelsch, Director of Artistic Planning for LAO, we were reminded of the many influences, circumstances, and constraints that impact the final version of any given season's schedule. As one would expect, major inputs to this season's schedule came from Plácido Domingo, General Director, an advocate of zarzuela; Maestro James Conlon, Music Director, a proponent of works suppressed by the Nazis during the Holocaust; and Edgar Baitzel, Chief Operating Officer, one who always keeps in mind the scheduling of some sure-fire productions, as well as the desirability of sharing production costs with other opera companies.

Of course, hovering about the above administrative core has been LAO's Chief Financial Officer and a coterie of artists' agents, each of which represent a particular slice of artist availability. Add to all this LAO's commitment to a future Puccini Cycle and the gradual acceleration of Wagner programming in



Christopher Koelsch, Director of Artistic Planning, reflecting back on the original design drawings of Achim Freyer for *The Damnation of Faust*, even as he looks forward to Mr. Freyer being the Set Designer and Stage Director for LAO's *Ring*.

anticipation of LAO's first full *Ring*, and you have a difficult decision-making process being imposed upon LAO.

So, it should be no surprise that our 2006-2007 season, five years a work-in-progress, remains (at this writing) a work-in-progress: in an approach described by Mr. Koelsch as a "Leap of Faith," this season's *Tannhäuser* was originally listed as being a Company Premiere, with the production listed as TBA. With the passing of the months, the existing Kupfer Stage Design was considered and discarded, and, of recent date, *Tannhäuser* has migrated over to the New Production column, with the Set and Costume Design being done by Gottfried Pilz and the Stage Direction by Ian Judge.

Our faith in this creative team is bolstered by prior experience with these individuals: Mr. Judge, besides heading some of LAO's better-known successes (*Romeo et Juliette* and *Don Carlo*), brought together (in record time) our current

production of *Le Nozze di Figaro* in 2004; Mr. Pilz did the set design and stage direction for *The Queen of Spades*, as well as the set design for *Duke Bluebeard's Castle*. At this writing, LAO is adapting a previous production of sets from Mozart's *Abduction From The Seraglio* and altering them for *Tannhäuser* at the San Diego Opera Scene Shop. Mr. Pilz is shortening the breadth of the Leap to finish this new production by supervising the alternations of this, his earlier design.

In the words of the contemporary social observer, Yogi Berra: "It's never over until it's over," and we see LAO putting the finishing touches to this season, even as we begin looking forward to the coming season.

A matching, bookend quote to the 'interesting times' proverb is often cited to be,

"May you find what you are looking for."

May the coming season be exactly the one we are looking for.

Yea, verily!



The Opera League of Los Angeles Board of Directors

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Row 3: Monica Gutierrez Roper, Kathleen Leonard, John Spear, Margi Mostue, Ernie Prokopovych

Row 4: Judy Lieb, Paula Settle, Stan Stocks, Bob Bernard, Tadea Pylko, Gerald Elijah, Steve Kohn, Fred Dear, Ed Schaff

Not available for photo: Toni Bird, Marcia McCormack and Monica Weil



135 North Grand Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90012

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

INVITATIONS ARE INCLUDED

- ★ Seminar • February 3
- ★ LA Musicale • February 11
- ★ OC Musicale • March 3

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