

SPOTLIGHT

Stein leading writers workshop

Author and publisher Sol Stein will lead a one-day workshop for aspiring writers from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday at UC Irvine Extension.

From his experience in advising and editing writers like James Baldwin, Lionel Trilling, Elia Kazan, Christy Brown and David Frost, Stein will explain techniques for achieving reader interest in both fiction and nonfiction.

Students of the one-day course will learn such skills as speeding up story pace, tapping originality, creating credible dialogue, establishing conflict, clarifying point of view, creating characters readers love in fiction, and establishing the authors' voice in nonfiction.

Stein will also cover advanced point of view for today's readers, the right and wrong ways to revise a manuscript, how to maintain authority with readers and additional techniques that have helped many of today's successful writers achieve their goals. Registered students will be able to ask questions in advance.

Stein has edited work for several diverse writers, has authored nine novels and is an award-winning playwright whose work has been produced on Broadway. He was also the recipient of the 1993 UC Irvine Extension Distinguished Instructor Award.

Cost: \$105. Information: (949) 824-5414 or www.extension.uci.edu.

'Irvine 35' exhibition reception Friday

The "Irvine 35" exhibition, which features 35 Irvine artists to commemorate the city's 35th anniversary, will hold a free reception from 5 to 8 p.m. Friday at the Fine Arts Center in Heritage Park between Yale and Walnut avenues.

The mixed-media exhibit will feature drawings, paintings, photography and ceramics.

Mark Leysen will serve as guest curator. Leysen has been an Irvine resident since 1979, and is on the art faculty at Santa Ana College.

Information: (949) 724-6880, www.cityofirvine.org/depts/cs/finearts.

College band members earn honor

Three members of the Irvine Valley Wind Symphony have been selected to the College Band Directors National Association Intercollegiate Band.

Tayrn Bruette (flute, piccolo), Nick Hartmann (B-flat clarinet) and Crystal Holtzendorff, (B-flat and E-flat clarinet) will perform with the ensemble at a March 15-19 regional conference in Reno, Nev. Dr. Jerry Junkin, president of College Band Directors National Association, will serve as guest conductor.

Bruette is a 2004 graduate of Trabuco Hill High School, while Hartmann graduated from Aliso Niguel High in 2005. Holtzendorff is a graduate of Serrano High School in Phelan.

Arts club to meet Saturday

"Learn and Go," Orange County's free monthly classical music, opera and culture club for youth, students and adults, will hold its 61st meeting Saturday at the home of founder Ann Litvin in her Brea home.

Litvin will discuss the life of Italian composer Gioacchino Rossini and his opera being staged by Opera Pacific, "An Italian Girl in Algiers." Litvin will also discuss Pacific Symphony's February concert of "Porgy and Bess," George Gershwin's classic. A guest singer might conclude the meeting with a few Gershwin songs.

On Sunday, Litvin will take 80 students and adults to a live sneak preview of "Italian Girl in Algiers" or the Orange County Performing Arts Center in Costa Mesa.

RSVPs are requested. Information: (714) 671-0707.

Residents perform with ensemble

Two Irvine residents performed as part of the University Wind Ensemble at Friday's dedication of Cal State



PHOTO / UC IRVINE EXTENSION

Author and publisher Sol Stein will lead a workshop at UC Irvine Extension Saturday.

Fullerton's new Performing Arts Center. Both bassoonists, Hsing-Jung Chiang and Elizabeth Low performed under conductor Mitchell Fennell.

Auditions

◆ **Santa Ana College Theatre Arts Department** is inviting local students and members of the community to come audition for the musical "Cabaret," based on the 1998 Broadway revival. The revival is adult-themed.

The role of Fraulein Schneider has been cast. All other roles – eight women and nine men – are open. Three women that can play piano, saxophone or drums are needed for the band.

Please prepare 16 bars of an up-tempo and ballad, and songs from "Cabaret" are encouraged. Dress to dance. If cast, enrollment in at least one unit at the college is required for insurance purposes.

Auditions will be held 7 p.m. Feb. 8 and 9, with performance dates March 23 through

April 2, at Phillips Hall Theatre on Bristol, just south of 17th Street on the campus.

Information: (714) 564-5668, (714) 564-5666.

◆ **Newport Beach Repertory Theatre** is holding auditions for "Till Death Do Us Part – The OC Murder Mystery and Wedding Crashers Play," an interactive murder-mystery play.

Roles are open for teens, adults, and seniors. All participants will have a speaking role. Auditions will be held from 10 a.m. to noon at the Carroll Beek Community Center on 115 Agate Ave. on Balboa Island. Those auditioning are asked to bring a mug shot. Callbacks and rehearsals, which will take place on weekends and weeknights, will also be held at Beek Community Center.

The production will be performed March 24-26 at the Huntington Beach Arts Center.

Information: (949) 633-1580 or www.geocities.com/newportbeachrepertorytheater/index.html.

Tokyo String Quartet here by way of Juilliard

Concert Tuesday at Barclay Theatre.

BY MICHAEL RYDZYNSKI
FOR IRVINE WORLD NEWS

Irvine has professor Hideo Saito and Juilliard to thank for being graced by the Tokyo String Quartet next week. At least, indirectly.

"Professor Saito was pretty much everything at the Toho School of Music (in Japan) – head of the string department, chamber music coach, conductor, teacher," said Kikuei Ikeda, second violinist of the Tokyo, the seven-time Grammy-nominated quartet. The Philharmonic Society of Orange County will present the quartet Tuesday at the Irvine Barclay, along with clarinetist Sabine Meyer.

"Seiji Ozawa was one of professor Saito's early students. I took violin lessons from professor Saito when I was at Toho and had orchestra with him as well.

"All the original members of the Tokyo quartet were students at Toho. All the original members were also there to participate when the Juilliard String Quartet visited Japan in 1967 to give a two-week workshop in the summer ... Robert Mann and the other members of the Juilliard quartet encouraged the students at Toho to form their own quartet. Little by little, we all started to talk to each other about that and, one by one, came over to the U.S. to study at Juilliard and, eventually, form the Tokyo String Quartet at Juilliard."

That was in 1969. Ikeda, the second-longest lasting member of the Tokyo, was not at that Juilliard-led workshop (he was a freshman at Toho and too busy taking classes) but knew about it and was interested in becoming part of this new quartet.

All the quartet members play on instruments built by Antonio Stradivari. Ikeda plays a 1680 violin. First violinist Martin Beaver, with the quartet for 3 1/2 years, plays a

What: Philharmonic Society of Orange County presents the Tokyo String Quartet, with Sabine Meyer, clarinet

When: Tuesday at 8 p.m.
Where: Irvine Barclay Theatre, Campus Drive at West Peltason and Pereira drives, on the UC Irvine campus

Cost: \$35-\$45
Information: (949) 854-4646; (949) 533-2422; www.thebarclay.org ; www.philharmonic-society.org

1727 violin. Kazuhide Isomura, the only remaining charter member of the quartet, plays a 1731 viola. And Clive Greensmith, a member for 6 1/2 years, plays a 1736 cello, "believed to be the last cello Stradivari ever made," according to Ikeda.

"The overall character of our collective sound, therefore, is not just one strong voice supported by the others but that we all come from different angles to find the best common ground in terms of sounds and ideas," Ikeda said. "We each find our own contribution and bring that to the group."

The Tokyo will perform a program full of nicknames. Haydn's Quartet in G Minor, Op. 74, No. 3, the only work on the program the Tokyo has not recorded, is known as the "rider" due to the galloping opening phrase. Dvorak's Quartet in F Major, Op. 96, is the "American" in as much as it was written while Dvorak was in this country teaching and composing and it uses African-American folk tunes he heard. Mozart's Quintet in A Major for Clarinet and Strings, K. 581, which Ikeda called "perfect," is sometimes known as "Stadler's Quintet." Mozart wrote it for his close friend Anton Stadler, who invented the "basset clarinet" that extended the instrument's range downward.

Known for its championing of new works – it has more than 50 commissions to its credit – the Tokyo will be presenting the world premieres of three more works during the 2005-06 season in Spain, Tucson and Australia.

Flight instructor helps bring opera to life

Ron Rapp flies planes by day, sings in Opera Pacific chorus by night.

By MICHAEL RYDZYNSKI
FOR IRVINE WORLD NEWS

Art imitates life. Or is it the other way around?

No matter. Ron Rapp is living proof, either way.

The longtime (17 years and counting) Irvine resident is a flight instructor by day, working for Sunrise Aviation near John Wayne Airport. By night he sings. For three nights and one afternoon next week, to be exact.

That's when he will be part of the chorus in Opera Pacific's upcoming production of Gioacchino Rossini's 1813 comic opera, "The Italian Girl in Algiers," at the Performing Arts Center, beginning Tuesday.

By a strange, Hollywood-like coincidence, this particular production, directed by Edward Hastings, has been updated and reset in the late 1920s – with an aviation theme, no less.

"That's my day job – so maybe I'll look at this and say, 'Oh, this doesn't look real,'" said Rapp, who as a chorus member in this, his 35th or 36th Opera Pacific production, plays a guard and an Italian prisoner/slave. "I think changing the location and time adds panache to the story, a plot twist that, obviously, I like."

Obviously. But once the female lead,



PHOTO/RON RAPP

Ron Rapp was an actor long before he was a flight instructor. He was pretending to be the under-age pilot of a TWA Boeing 727 in St. Louis in 1977.

Isabella, lands her plane and gets out of the cockpit, the aviation theme is downplayed, according to Rapp. (In the original, it's a shipwreck that brings Isabella to Algiers.)

"Only a few words are changed to reflect she's a pilot and not a passenger on a ship," Rapp said.

A tenor and 10-year member of the Opera Pacific Chorus – he had also sung with Pacific Chorale for almost seven years – Rapp auditioned for Opera Pacific at a time when he had never even seen an opera.

"I had been singing for Pacific Chorale for a year or so

when a friend there suggested I audition for Opera Pacific's chorus," Rapp recalled. "I had misconceptions then about what opera was and didn't care for it. But I thought, 'Choral music is choral music, so what the heck?' So I auditioned" and it turned out they needed a huge chorus, as they

Who: Ron Rapp flies by day and sings by night in an opera with an aviation theme.

What: Opera Pacific presents "The Italian Girl in Algiers," a two-act comic opera with music by Gioacchino Rossini and libretto by Angelo Anelli, loosely based on the legend of Roxolana, beautiful slave of King Solomon II; directed by Edward Hastings, conducted by John De Main, company artistic director.

When: Jan. 24, 26 and 28 at 7:30 p.m., with 2 p.m. matinee Jan. 29

Where: Orange County Performing Arts Center, 600 Town Center Drive at Avenue of the Arts, Costa Mesa.

Cost: \$27-\$261.

Information: (714) 556-2787; (714) 546-6000; www.ocpac.org; www.operapacific.org.

were doing (Verdi's) 'Aida,' so I got in. Then the next opera – I think it may have been (Bizet's) 'Carmen' – also required a large chorus. So I kept getting called, opera after opera – and here I am."

Indeed, here he was: poised to come full circle when "Aida" opens as the third and final production of the season later in April.

A relative latecomer to music – he didn't start singing until college – Rapp, whose favorite opera is Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess" and favorite opera composer is Verdi, earned degrees in theater and music from Concordia University Irvine in 1993. He started amassing a huge resume in theater when, in 1998, he became a pilot.

"I grew up in Alaska living with my cousins, one of whom was an air-traffic controller, so I was around that a lot," Rapp said. "My family later moved to Las Vegas, which is an airline Mecca.

"But it wasn't until after

graduation, when I was driving down Campus Drive one day right by John Wayne (Airport) and saw the blue awning of the flight school, that the idea of becoming a pilot entered my mind. It's a long awning, and somewhere between its beginning and its end, I suddenly hit the brakes, made skid marks all over the street, turned around, went into the school and got my pilot's training."

Busy with his flying and singing schedules, Rapp, who once owned his own aircraft and is a member of Angel Flight (which flies emergency supplies such as medicines to people in faraway areas), is very happy to be in the opera world.

"This is a grand art form that takes place on a massive scale," he said. "And the camaraderie can't be beat: The chorus has been pretty consistent over the years, so it's become like family.

"This is a really enjoyable group of people."