

September Between the Rains



Costumes from the Pacific Opera Project's *Elixir of Love*, already dry after an hour or so, despite rain in the air.

by Reg Green

"The sun went out just like a dying ember" says the lovely song, "September in the Rain," recorded in its long lifetime by everybody. Well, *nearly* everybody – though anything performed by both the Beatles and Guy Lombardo, let alone Frank Sinatra, Sarah Vaughan, Rob Stewart and Willie Nelson, can truly be said to have conquered space-time.

At its birth in 1937 the good fairy was obviously in charge. I remember telling my father that it was my favorite song. He nodded his agreement, although having a son of eight with a headful of thoughts of lost love must have made him wonder,

“What kind of a monster am I rearing?”

And, yes, in fact, this week 75 years later the sun did just what lyrics say in the hills overlooking Los Angeles, near the edge of a Pacific hurricane that made its landfall on the coast of Central Mexico hundreds of miles away.

The hoped-for drenching faded, however, into a quarter of an inch of precipitation, just enough to remind us after years of drought what those drops that fall out of the sky feel like. Although the words of every water diviner in Southern California are eagerly sought after, I have to confess that after a day or so of it, I couldn't wait to get back to the blue skies that I signed up for when I came here.

Still, the high-in-the-sky sun was strong enough while peeping through gray clouds for my wife, Maggie, who is the costumer of a small but relentlessly innovative Los Angeles opera company, to use her age-old drying system to make oven-fresh again the clothes of tall guys and short guys, nice girls and iffy girls, soldiers, snake oil salesmen and soda jerks after a performance of Donizetti's *Elixir of Love*. It beats solar panels for energy efficiency by a mile, leaves not a speck of pollution, doesn't require a smidgen of federal subsidy and needs only a dose of good old-fashioned womanpower. And it makes you feel so virtuous.

No, dear, I meant the method was old-fashioned, not you.