

Plácido Domingo
Pomona College Commencement 2014
May 18, 2014

Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Mr. Dean, professors, teachers, family, and of course the graduates of this generation. I really want to say it for you graduates. You are starting your life. You have been four years in these extraordinary surroundings, as it is talking about this school you know, so you are situated in a way then you can go in the morning to ski, perhaps after your work at the breakfast, and yes indeed after school perhaps you can go to Los Angeles Opera to see a performance or to go the Dodgers games, you know, the Lakers, wherever. So it is a fantastic, fantastic place.

I have always missed in my life not to be able, because of my very early start in an artistic career, to be in a college or in a university. I think that this is like an university because it's a graduate college, and for years I dreamed one day of maybe being able to be in a university or in a college like this, but I wonder when is going to be that, working so much.

So this is your day. This is really your day. Start looking for an extraordinary, extraordinary life that you have in front of you. It's not easy. You know? Youth, remember, is just something, it's a little mistake in us that passes with the years, you know. But the youth, it gives you all the possibilities.

This is your time. These are your years, and I wish you all the best, all the best being around California or from whatever states or places of the world you are coming.

Well, I really came to know about Pomona College's academic excellence through my friendship with the late Richard Seaver and his son Carlton. Richard was a great friend and a great opera lover, and he was telling me always about the school. We spent many, many hours, many dinners, many performances with an extraordinary sense of humor, a great personality, and then later I met his son Carlton, which also we became friends and remembering all the times with his father.

But the Seaver family has had a long history with both Pomona College and LA Opera. They are really wonderful, wonderful champions of the arts, and it is moving how Pomona College and Los Angeles Opera are united, the ongoing, remarkable, ambitious leadership of the Seaver family.

To start, I want to share that Carlton's membership on the Pomona Board of Trustees continues a long and warm relationship between the college and the Seaver family. Richard Seaver graduated for the Class of 1943, and all 5 of Carlton's uncles and aunts are Pomona graduates as well. His uncle, Frank Seaver, Class of 1905, was the first president of the Associated Student Body, a president of the Alumni Association, and a member of the College Board of Trustees from 1947 until 1964. Richard Seaver served on the Board from 1970 to 1995 and remains an honorary member.

Pomona has grown to be one of the nation's premier liberal arts colleges, and the Seavers are very, very much some of the builders of this wonderful college, which is 127 years old, and this is I believe the 121st commencement year.

I just want to say something. The participation between Pomona and Los Angeles Opera, we have also a graduate from Pomona in 1986, Stacy Brightman, who has worked for us at Los Angeles Opera since 2000. She is absolutely dedicated to the company, to bring music to all

the schools, thousands and thousands and thousands and thousands of children each week, every month, and every year. They are taught in an amusing way some of our operas, some new works, like at this moment the composer Nathan Wang, also a graduate of the Class of 1979, and librettist Mathew Leavitt, from the Class of 2003, are writing a youth opera entitled "Orpheus" for LA Opera. Nathan was also the composer of "On Gold Mountain" in 2000.

In the last few years, we have had two interns from Pomona College, Ben Yarbrough, Michael Petry, and four from Scripps: Carolyn Angius; Laura Steinroeder; Marissa Butler, Marissa is also working for us now; and Julia Petraglia. The young artists perform here at the Pomona College in 2011.

It has been many, many of you or some of your companions, they have been coming to the rehearsals or performances of the LA Opera, performances of "Don Giovanni," performances of "Two Foscari." Some of you are coming this week for "A Streetcar Named Desire," which is being performed by Renée Fleming today at 5:00 and 3 performances this week. But you are coming for free. You have been to "Le nozze di Figaro," "Lohengrin," "Roméo and Juliette," "Così Fan Tutte," "Albert Herring," and "La Bohème." So you can see that the combination is really extraordinary that we are able to be together.

I am very honored to be at the same time receiving this honorary degree. I am humbly proud to receive it, and together with Father Gregory Boyle and with Michael Starbird coming after and Valerie Jarrett, I am very, very proud to be together with you. I have to tell you that I have heard the chorus that Mrs. Di Grazia has conducted. They sang beautifully, and her beautiful conducting has touched me very, very much artistically and so the brass ensemble at the beginning.

I have to say it also, my God, the senior class, both Emma Wolfarth and Darrell Edward Jones, without any, any doubt they will be . . . I mean, I can see Emma having her own talk show in television, you know, and perhaps, yes perhaps a little more serious, but perhaps he will be a politician, but he will be involved in serious programs with a lot of wit, etc., Darrell. So congratulations for your speeches.

I just want to thank you all. I am very, very, very happy, very proud, and I just want to say have a great, great complete days. And by the way, Emma, there's a horse waiting for you to go for lunch after.

About Plácido Domingo

Plácido Domingo, a world-renowned tenor and conductor, is currently the general director of the Los Angeles Opera. He began his opera career in 1959 with the Mexican National Opera and made his U.S. debut in 1961, in Dallas, as Arturo in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Through his long career, he has sung more than 144 different roles in more than 3,600 career performances. He has made more than 100 recordings and received 12 Grammy Awards. He has also conducted more than 500 opera performances and symphonic concerts. Domingo served as general director of the Washington National Opera from 2003 to 2011 and has served as general director of the Los Angeles Opera since 2003. Among the major awards he has received are the U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Mexican Order of the Aztec Eagle and being made a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire.