

Opera singer helps others find their 'voice'

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By **DEBBIE SKLAR / THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER**



Retired opera singer Dubravka Zubovic recently opened a voice studio in Laguna Niguel. COURTESY PHOTO

Dubravka Zubovic

Born and raised: Zagreb, a capital of Croatia.

Family: Married for 35 years, three children, Lana, Iva and Marko.

Favorite opera: "Carmen."

Hobbies/spare time: Snow skiing, books, theater, concerts, a good conversation; anything that provokes the mind.

Education: Master's degree in music from Belgrade University, and one year in La Scala di Milano opera house.

Dream: To fly her own plane.

LAGUNA NIGUEL – Retired opera singer Dubravka Zubovic teaches others how to sing opera in her recently opened studio in Laguna Niguel.

Q: What is your full-time job?

A: I am a retired opera singer. Recently, I opened the Dubravka Zubovic Voice Studio in Laguna Niguel (dubravkazubovicvoicestudio.com) and pretty soon, I hope to be able to say that it is my full-time job. I also work

as an adjunct voice professor at the Saddleback College Music Department.

Q: What were your career dreams as a kid?

A: While growing up, I was and still am interested in so many things. First, I wanted to become a ballerina; then I liked chemistry class so much that my next wish was to become a chemical engineer. Music happened by chance.

Q: When did you know you could sing?

A: One day I encountered my two schoolmates (10 year olds) on the street. They were on the way to audition for the children chorus. After allowing me to join them, I quietly waited in an auditioning hall for them to sing. Maestro Dinko Fio was not very happy with the candidates, and after seeing me sitting at the corner, he asked if I was willing to try. Since I was never a shy kid, I said yes. And the rest is a history. I became the member of the choir and stayed there for a couple of years.

Q: He was an inspiration then?

A: Yes, he is now 85 years old and is still talking about his experience in teaching me. He is the one who actually started my career.

Q: What was your first performance?

A: In a kindergarten class when I was 3 or 4 years old. I sang and danced.

Q: Tell us more about what you are teaching today at the college? What brought you to the United States (from Croatia)?

A: My husband's job for a company TeslaCo in Irvine brought us to the United States and Orange County. At Saddleback College, I work with Scott Farthing in a voice division. We try to give the students everything we know and have experienced through my 25 years long career. I try to work with our students on vocal technique and diction in foreign languages.

Q: Do you do any community volunteering or philanthropic work?

A: Mainly in working with the young singers, whenever I can.

Q: How has opera benefited or enhanced your life?

A: There is a book I am reading right now from the author and a physician Oliver Sacks: Musicophilia (Tales of Music and the Brain). Instead of responding to how the music enriched my life, I would highly recommend everyone to read this book, and see what music can do for us.

Q: What is the best part of what you do?

A: Teaching is such an enriching process, which I was not sure I was capable of. After seeing the happiness in those young eyes becoming aware of their accomplishments, nothing is for me the same any more.

Q: How about the most challenging?

A: Studying and learning singing is such a long process. What you need the most is patience, meaning for both student and teacher. On that path, you will encounter so many obstacles and challenges, but happiness is not measurable when you hear good results. And, again, I mean for both.