



## Ernest Fleischmann

IRASCIBLE, UNCOMPROMISING, but passionately dedicated to good music, Ernest Fleischmann turned Los Angeles into a center of excellence for classical music and acted as talent scout and kingmaker for many of the great musicians of the previous half century.

Head of the L.A. Philharmonic from 1969 to 1998,

Fleischmann, who died on June 13 at 85, put the orchestra at the center of the city's cultural life by reviving the Hollywood Bowl, championing the construction of the Frank Gehry-designed Walt Disney Concert Hall and making the city a launching pad for new music.

Trained as a conductor, Fleischmann never lost the

conductor's ability to recognize and nurture talent. James Levine, Simon Rattle, Peter Sellars, Itzhak Perlman and my father, the cellist Lynn Harrell, are just a few of those who benefitted early on from his backing.

In 1992 he hired the young Finnish conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen to lead the orchestra; the pair turned L.A. into a premier venue for contemporary music. At a small conducting competition in 2004, in what was his last great gift to Los Angeles, Fleischmann spotted Salonen's successor: the lightning-bolt Venezuelan Gustavo Dudamel.

Gravel-voiced, formidably educated and at times tyrannical, Fleischmann was a giant figure from a bygone era. The classical-music world is now one of smaller people.

—BY EBEN HARRELL