



Expanding the future of Opera
through development, mentoring and advancement of volunteer service

Opera Volunteers INTERNATIONAL

www.OperaVolunteers.org



The Opera Volunteer Voice

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newsletter of
**Opera Volunteers
International**

Next issue:
August

What's Inside This Issue:

This issue celebrates the creativity and initiative of our member groups.

The **Matching Grants** and **Projects of Special Merit** awardees on page 2 and 3 may give you some valuable ideas to institute in your opera group. **Partners In Excellence** awardees will be announced in our August issue.



The Conference Issue: Increasing Civic Impact



May 6 - 9 2015 Opera Volunteers International is meeting in Washington D.C. in collaboration with **OPERA America** and **Washington National Opera** to host **Opera Conference 2015: Increasing Civic Impact**. This Conference will emphasize the many ways opera can engage with the larger community. We opera volunteers support these efforts by serving as docents, taking opera into schools, offering opera previews in community organizations, and acting as ushers, greeters and ambassadors for operas in the park or other non-traditional locations.

We are thrilled to be an integral part of this conference, working hand in hand with **OPERA America** to develop a track especially for volunteers. It is concentrated in the weekend and culminates with a performance of Rossini's *Cinderella*. OVI joins the opera world in congratulating Marc A. Scorca on his leadership of **OPERA America** for the past 25 years, and we look forward to many more collaborations at future conferences.

OVI member, **Friends of the Kennedy Center**, has worked closely with **OPERA America** to assist with the many tasks necessary to make the conference run smoothly, and they will participate in panel discussion about volunteers supporting the production side of opera. Also participating will be the **Opera Omaha Craftsman's Guild**, a volunteer group working "behind the curtain." In addition to sharing successful volunteer projects, OVI will honor, at our Awards Dinner, outstanding volunteers and projects that have made an impact in their communities. (See page 3)

We look forward to an outstanding conference experience and will be reporting in our next issue ways of generating new ideas for increasing the impact that our opera companies, volunteers and resources can have within our communities!

Rhonda

Rhonda Sweeney, President

Use Our Facebook Page to Share Your Events, Projects and Ideas

Use OVI's Facebook page to picture OVI volunteer activities and events, including member group events. There are several administrators who can post information to the FB page if you need help posting. Share the human side of volunteer activities and events. Send photos, descriptions, and your contact information to: Barbara Eckel - bmeckel43@aol.com Rick Greenman - rickygreen@comcast.net Mary Sveta - communications@operavolunteers.org In your email, include (at least some of) this information: Photo, and suggested title for post Text of your post-who, what, where, when, why, etc. Short posts engage fans Name of member Support Group or member company Your contact information including your phone number Highlight a success story, share tips and insights, or provide links to relevant articles about opera volunteers

Opera Volunteers International is a nonprofit volunteer organization dedicated to connecting and bringing together volunteers who support opera companies in cities and local communities throughout the United States and Canada.

Visit us on the web at www.OperaVolunteers.org

Grant Recipients 2015

SKAGIT OPERA GUILD (Mt Vernon, Washington) \$1,000 Young Guild Member Development

The grant will help institute an outreach program for young students to attend opera performances and to introduce them to backstage workings and front house activities. Backstage tours and other training will familiarize them with opera. A brochure and discount tickets will encourage students to attend opera performances with friends.

OGDEN OPERA GUILD (Ogden, UT) \$862.50 Student Dress Rehearsal Attendance

The grant will send 120 high school students including 20 from a disadvantaged youth program to the 2015 dress rehearsal of *Così fan Tutti*. Area schools have abandoned the arts, and schoolchildren would not be exposed to opera without this program.

AGAINST THE GRAIN THEATRE (Toronto, Canada) \$2,000 Young Professional Volunteers

The grant will be used to grow and retain volunteer base through: 1 Recruitment/outreach events. 2 Volunteer training with new materials. 3 Volunteer communication through website enhancement. 4 Volunteer recognition

OPERA OMAHA GUILD (Omaha, NE) - \$2,000 . Opera Omaha's Educational Outreach

The grant will be used for participative opera presentations in after school programs and dress rehearsal attendance opportunities for age 5-14 children in areas where little or no opera education is available. This will inspire creativity and foster lifelong learning.

UNDERCROFT OPERA COMPANY (Pittsburgh, PA) - \$2,000 Madame Butterfly

The grant will be used to provide vocal coach, accompanist and rehearsal space for volunteer artists to produce an all-volunteer fully staged and costumed production of *Madame Butterfly*. The singers range from high school students, college students, graduate students to young and emerging artists beginning professional operatic careers. "Everybody DESERVES an Operatunity".

SEATTLE OPERA GUILD (Seattle, WA) - \$2,000 . New Membership & Marketing Materials

The grant will be used for new marketing materials and training to communicate the benefits of Guild membership to widen the pool of potential volunteers for involvement in Guild programs and leadership.

PEACH STATE OPERA (Lawrenceville, GA) - \$1,825 Opera Impact Engaging Students

The grant will be used toward a pianist, director, photography and marketing in a program to involve high school and college students as chorus members in a main stage production of *Don Giovanni*. The goal is to raise awareness of opera and potential opera career opportunities as well as to introduce the art form to the students and parents.

Thank You

We thankfully acknowledge:

Don Dagenais

Miriam Miller

OVI Matching Grants are due to the generosity of our donors.

Catherine Braunstein in memory of husband Jerry Braunstein

John and Mary Tabash in honor of daughter Julie Tabash

Kirk Barker in memory of wife Mona Barker

Barbara and Herbert Dittmar in honor of Phyllis and Ely Driver

Projects of Special Merit 2015

The Projects of Special Merit program gives support groups a way to celebrate a successful project, to share it with the opera volunteer community and receive recognition. Projects were volunteer-created and implemented in support of their opera companies. The following have been chosen to receive Projects of Special Merit awards at the OVI/Opera America conference in Washington D.C. in May 2015.

Opera guild/Univ. of Alabama-*Food & Music Around the World:A Gustatory Gala*

Apparently this one time effort for the fledgling Opera Guild founded in December 2013 will become an annual event. The 18 members planned and executed a lavish gala at the Museum of Natural History on the UA campus. Most food, items and services were contributed. University staff and UA students assisted. A grand buffet was arranged and entertainment was provided by 30 students, alumni and faculty. Raffle and silent auction was held. Capacity audience of 150 guests helped raise \$23,000 (goal was \$10,000). Guild membership has increased 30% and subsequent UA opera performances have all sold out well in advance.

Opera Omaha Guild

Flavors of Midtown

A month long community celebration of food and music events designed to mesh with Opera Omaha and culminating with their *Opera Outdoors* concert in the park. 1 **Taste of Midtown** created ticketed "foodie" events at upscale eateries. 2 **Taste of the Opera** were more intimate parties hosted by supporters at their own expense. Donor/guests received VIP seating for *Opera Outdoors* concert. 3 **Midtown Revelry** was a ticketed event prior to the concert with opera artists in attendance. 4 **A flavorful Affair** was a patron party on concert night featuring a pre-concert restaurant dinner, VIP seating and post concert dessert. \$20,000 was raised and the publicity and community awareness was priceless.

Kansas City Lyric Opera Guild

At Ease With Opera for Silent Night

An educational initiative designed to promote the opera *Silent Night* and teach the significance of this opera in relationship to WWI, in conjunction with the National World War I Museum. The event was conceived by the guild, the museum provided facilities, equipment and coordination. The university provided a lecturer for one of the three different events. The film *Joyeux Noel* was also screened.

Performing Arts League of Chattanooga TN

Sunday Showcase

A performance event planned and executed by PAL to highlight and celebrate school-age talent and the organizations that foster and support that talent. This was a first time project involving the community and promoting youth involvement in the arts while counteracting the cuts and elimination of arts in the schools. The production featured performances by 150 outstanding young student artists representing 40 local schools and organizations. Though not designed as a money maker funds raised exceeded expenses by \$7,000.

Austin Opera Guild

Austin Opera Guild Enrichment Series

Three times per season AOG holds a session in a private home to provide information on an opera and on its production to enhance the experience, deepen knowledge and provide background while engaging opera attendees in lively discussion. The guild often features the opera company's stage director or utilizes experts from the academic community.

Glimmerglass Opera Guild -*Talking Opera: Members Preview/Met Opera's HD Simulcasts*

This is a collaborative outreach by the Guild with the Foothills Performing Arts Center where the Metropolitan Opera's HD simulcasts are screened. Presentations are given before each performance to inform viewers about the opera and sometimes about the performers involved. It has increased attendance to the screenings and attracted new members to the Opera Guild membership.

Save the Dates October 15-18, 2015

Opera Volunteers International

Focus Meeting in Salt Lake City, UT

Stay at the beautiful Hotel Monaco and attend a performance of *Tosca* at the historic Capitol Theatre directly across the street

Only 15 minutes from the airport. Enjoy focus presentations, welcome Reception at a gorgeous SLC residence, dinner at Café Molise. Tour Abravanel Hall, LDS Temple Grounds and other area attractions and attend our OVI board meeting. Be sure to book early.



Opera Volunteers International

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Address Correction Requested

Send your guild news and photos to
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Find us on the internet at
www.OperaVolunteers.org