



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

Opera Volunteers INTERNATIONAL

www.OperaVolunteers.org



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International

OPERA America/OVI MONTREAL OPERA CONFERENCE



OPERA CONFERENCE 2016
MAY 18-21
MONTREAL

Hosted By
OPERA
DE MONTREAL

The conference will be at the luxurious **Le Westin Montreal** in the historic old city near many restaurants, boutiques and galleries. We have the option of attending two world premier operas; **LILIES** and **THE TRIALS OF PATRICIA ISASA**

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If you're planning to attend the entire conference May 18-21, don't miss this discount offer! Only until January 13 can you register for \$425. After that date, a full conference registration will be \$495. A full conference includes all general and open sessions, the New Works Sampler, host company reception and the exhibitor happy hour. As a member of Opera Volunteers International, you are eligible for this discount and the chance to be in the company of opera's movers and shakers, attend OVI meetings and sessions, and spend extra time in the historic and beautiful city of Montreal. There is also a special OVI two-day pass available for May 20-21 at \$295. For full information go to the conference website. Conference.operaamerica.org and click on OVI at the top of the page.

In addition to Opera America conference sessions, OVI will be hosting our annual Awards Dinner at L'Auberge Saint-Gabriel (\$100). A Grantor's cocktail reception will be at the Museum of Fine Arts and includes access to the museum exhibits. It is open to OVI members at the Grantor Level. We plan a joint session looking at the role guilds and volunteers play in ensuring the sustainability of opera companies.

Timing is Everything:

Big Discount on Full Conference Available
...but only until January 13



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MONTREAL

Montréal is the largest city in Québec. Predominantly French-speaking, it's set on an island in the Saint Lawrence River and named after Mt. Royal, the triple-peaked hill at its heart. Its 19 boroughs, many of which were once independent cities, include neighborhoods from cobblestoned, French colonial Vieux-Montréal – with imposing Notre-Dame Basilica at its center – to industrial Sud-Ouest and artist-friendly Plateau.



Place des Arts 15 by Jeangagnon

Find us on the internet at OperaVolunteers.org

OVI President's Message



Rhonda Sweeney

The “holiday season” between Thanksgiving and New Year’s Day is not only a time of transition as we prepare to end one year and begin another, but one where we often take a break from our normal routine. There is a greater focus on family, feasting and fun, with a vow to tackle tough projects “in the new year”. In addition, most opera companies are quiet this time of year, yielding the stage to *The Nutcracker!* In some cities, however, including my home company of **Houston Grand Opera**, a “holiday opera” tradition has begun, with new commissions mixed with smaller, family oriented operas which is very exciting! This means that opera volunteer activities are still required, making for an even busier “holiday season” than usual, whether hosting artists, staffing the opera boutique, or holding holiday fundraising events.

As 2015 comes to a close, Opera Volunteers International extends a hearty THANK YOU to our members for a very successful year. We awarded nearly \$12,000 in matching grants to seven member organizations, recognized four outstanding Partners in Excellence, and six Projects of Special Merit. We enjoyed the camaraderie of fellow opera lovers in May at **Conference 2015** in Washington, D.C., focusing on Increasing Civic Impact, and in October in **Salt Lake City**. Friendships were renewed, new members were welcomed, and awardees were celebrated!

2016 promises to be an equally exciting year, with a focus on the “International” in our name! **Conference 2016, Global Strategies, Local Actions**, will be this May in beautiful **Montreal, Quebec**, and in the fall, we will gather in **Knoxville, Tennessee** surrounded by the Great Smoky Mountains! I’ve never been to either and am looking forward to the sightseeing as well as the learning opportunities. I hope many of you will plan to join us at one or both events, sharing success stories and networking with your opera “family”, and having fun at the many social events planned in conjunction with each. Come to think of it, maybe these conferences and meetings have more in common with the “holiday season” than I previously thought!

During this season of thanks and celebration, our entire OVI Board THANKS and CELEBRATES YOU for all you do for opera in your community, and wishes you and yours a joyous holiday season and our best for an outstanding year ahead.

Sincerely,

Rhonda

OVI Welcomes New Board Members



Sarah Duvall is a member of the **Portland Opera Guild**, the **Jussi Bjorling Society USA**, and Friends of **Vancouver Symphony**. She holds a degree in English from the University of California, Santa Barbara and a Masters Degree in Orientation and Mobility for the Visually Handicapped from California State University. She has a background in the UC Education Abroad Program and Medicaid health insurance.



Vikie Hariton has over thirty years of volunteering in the world of art and music in Los Angeles and in Tucson Arizona. She has worked with the Los Angeles County Museum, the Los Angeles Music Center’s Club 100, **Arizona Opera League** and **Arizona Opera** where she has been officer, board member and assisted in fundraising, outreach and training. She has managed group medical and dental practices and was on the faculty of UCLA’s Dental School. For ten years she ran her own company, Museum Presentations Associates, creating and handling traveling exhibits for museums.

Jo Pennington is a Registered Nurse and holds Life Membership in **Shreveport Bossier Opera Guild**. She is a member of the **Symphony Guild**, **Little Theater Guild**, and Woman's Department Club. She received the 2015 award from the Opera Guild for member who has shown continuous dedication and devotion in promoting Opera and the Guild through years of hard work and service.

New board members Kathy Newman, and Gloria Matyszyk will be featured in our next issue.

2016 OVI Board of Directors

Board members may be reached by email at memberservices@operavolunteers.org.

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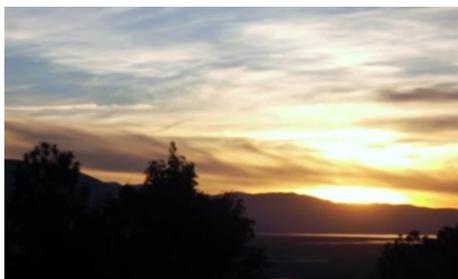
How to Contact Our Membership Vice-President:

Changed your address? Moving soon? Make sure you let Vikie Hariton know at:

membership@operavolunteers.org

OVI Focus Meeting in Salt Lake City

by Judy and Ralph Vander Heide



The autumn Utah weather was glorious. With a view out to the Great Salt Lake, the splendid Winder home, perched high above the city, was festive and inviting. At the Monaco Hotel downtown, **Michael and Sandra Pelfrey** arrived at six and made it to the 6:15 transport. Other guests had negotiated *Trax*, the train from the airport to downtown, and were in best dress for the party.



Ogden Opera Guild members were on hand to greet the visitors, the wine was flowing, the appetizers and dinner created by Ogden Opera guild member **Dyrk Farr** were delicious. And there was glamour: former movie star **Marilyn Hanold Nielson** looked gorgeous as did new OVI member, **Susie Bonnett**. **Christopher McBeth**, Artistic Director of Utah Opera, was there with his wife **Julie**, as was **Dr. Carol Anderson**, principal vocal coach for UO, sisters **Leslie Peterson (Development)** and **Michelle Peterson (Manager of the Opera)**, and Educational Director, **Paula Fowler**.

The following morning **President Rhonda Sweeney** conducted the OVI Board meeting. Christopher McBeth addressed the group with a focus on the educational outreach programs of Utah Opera. The Resident Artists performed and then we were off for a tour of the UO Production Studio.

In the evening, we walked to Caffe Molise; **Ron and Mary Earl** were waiting after having driven up to Park City that afternoon. Caffe has fabulous Italian food -worth a trip to SLC for the cheese cake. And then a walk back to the Capitol Theater to locate our seats for *Tosca*. **Sheila McNeill** and **Susan Malott** looked regal in the first tier, and **Barb Eckel** and I were seated together and chatted through the second intermission, too tired--and replete--to venture back to the Capitol Room.

Saturday morning found the group rested and ready to tour Temple Square. The Mormon Tabernacle had just opened up so we were able to peek inside. We crossed the street to take the elevator to the top of the gigantic Church of Latter Day Saints Convention Hall; who would have thought a garden with full grown trees was up there? After this tour, **Anne Pennington** and **Judy Williams** were off to hear an organ concert in the Tabernacle and the rest of us walked to the Brigham Young House where we had lunch in the "pantry". I forgot to tell the group about Utah's signature dish, green Jello, but I didn't see any on the menu.

In the afternoon, Rhonda and Susan ventured out to the museum on the University of Utah Campus while others wandered through City Creek Mall. **Joan Bitar** said she never has a chance to shop in Houston. I ran into **Gerald Elijah** (how lovely of him to come from CA) and **Harold and Mary Scott** in the book store near the hotel.

Wilma Wilcox was holding down the fort in the hotel as people trickled in for the gratis wine/or beer. We enjoyed authentic German food at Siegfried's Delicatessen, then assembled in the Capitol Room again to hear a talk by **Walter Rudolph**, Former President of the International Jussi Bjorling Society, and current president of the American branch. No one is more informed or a more entertaining story teller about opera than Wally.

By Sunday morning most were headed for home while a few had stayed to hear the live Mormon Tabernacle Choir broadcast. What a very nice, cooperative, fun group of people. I hope they enjoyed being in Salt Lake City as much as I enjoyed having them there.



OVI Matching Grants at Work - *How do you get kids to love opera?*

The recipe is simple. A good idea, maybe some freebies, a lot of creativity, dedicated and energetic volunteers and a little cash from OVI. This year, the **Skagit Opera Guild** in Washington State was awarded a Matching Grant to institute an outreach program enabling young students to attend opera performances and introducing them to backstage and front-of-house activities. Here's what it helped them do:

The first part of the project simply provided free tickets to an opera performance and a scholarship for one or two students for music education; but the rest of the plan was unique. A four session "Summer Music Boot Camp" offered once a week hands-on introduction to music and opera production. Sessions included:

- 1) Music telling a story with computer work on Hansel and Gretel
- 2) Music vs. noise
- 3) A conducting session - how to get musicians and voices to come together
- 4) A tech and costume session with a DVD from the Met and making costumes with simple materials.

At the last session, students kept the masks they made and got a voucher to the fall opera if they attended three of four meetings. There were approximately 23 consistent students at each session. The grant money helped buy resources and books.

Inviting young students to a Skagit Guild meeting, a flyer emblazoned with the words, "*WOTAN WANTED*" was distributed in the community. Two moms and eight students (and one dog) came to the spring meeting. Three of these eight students helped at the summer fundraiser, and all eight came to the backstage workshop. These "junior Guild members" and their moms will be helping in the lobby at the Guild table, answering questions, and representing the Guild at the opera. This project is a good opportunity to not only learn about opera but about volunteering in general, including meeting people and talking in public. ...And *they get to see the opera*. The students and moms are enthusiastic and promise to tell their friends.



WOTAN WANTED

Find out what it means
to be a Wotan.

Join the enthusiastic group of
youth that helps to bring Skagit
Opera performances to the stage.
Discover the inner workings and
theatrical traditions of opera.

You haven't heard opera,
until you have lived it!

It's not too late to apply for an OVI Matching Grant!

While it would be a superhuman feat to make the January 1 deadline, this is the perfect time to plan for March. Group members of Opera Volunteers International can apply for a matching grant of up to \$2,000. Projects that incorporate volunteerism to stimulate interest in opera and its growth in their community may be candidates for such a grant.

If your member opera support group has a great project ready to go, but needs additional funds to make it happen, OVI might be able to help. For more information go to the OVI website or contact Mary Earl at 423-842-3340.

OVI GRANT APPLICATION DEADLINES ARE JANUARY 1 and March 15 OF EACH YEAR

OVI Remembers Nancy Hibbard

Nancy Hibbard, who was the second president of OVI (OGI) 1977 to 1980, passed away last April 19. Her involvement in the formation of our group was important to our success. In addition to her work with **The Guild of the Opera Company of Boston**, she was active with many other groups including Girl Scouts, Wellesley Friendly Aid, and Junior Service League, and she served on several boards. She was an avid reader, traveler, life student and music lover and an inspiration to those who knew her.



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

The Opera Volunteer Voice

Happy Holidays

May the New Year bring you Happiness, Success and Beautiful Music



Mark your calendar for 2016:

- Renew individual and group OVI memberships
- Dec 31 2015 Donations to OVI supports matching grants program
- Jan 13 Advance registration deadline for spring conference
- Mar 15 OVI challenge grant application deadline
- Mar 15 Partners in Excellence nominations
- Mar 15 Projects of Special Merit deadline
- May 7-15 Metropolitan Opera Cruise Lisbon to Dublin
- May 18-21 Spring Conference in Montreal
- date TBA Fall Focus Meeting in Knoxville Tennessee in mid October