



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

Opera Volunteers INTERNATIONAL

www.OperaVolunteers.org



The Opera Volunteer Voice

Winter 2017
Vol. 41, Number 1

The official
newsletter of
Opera Volunteers
International

Next issue April
submission deadline
April 1

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OPERA America/OVI OPERA CONFERENCE May 4-8

Come to **Dallas / Fort Worth, Texas** in May for the 2017 Opera America / OVI Conference. The theme is *Creating Collaborative Change*.

This year's conference presents double the opportunity to see opera. Along with the schedule of get-togethers, Awards

Dinner, board meeting and educational sessions, there will be six different operas and one film presentation. So you will have to choose judiciously between *Norma*, *Carmen*, *Everest* (in concert), *Arjuna's Dilemma*, *Voir Dire*, *The Magic Piano* (film), and a Mariachi Opera called *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*.

In your spare time you will want to explore the city, meet your OVI board members and fellow volunteers, and hob nob with the creative and business leaders from opera companies throughout North America.

Dallas is a city of superlatives — bigger, better, brighter — and all aptly describe the Dallas Arts District, home to **The Dallas Opera** and the site of Opera Conference 2017. The largest contiguous arts district in the United States, this neighborhood is a dynamic destination for visitors powered by the imagination of local and international visual and performing artists. Opera Conference 2017 takes place at the **Sheraton Dallas Hotel**, located in the heart of the city's Arts District. The hotel is just minutes from the Winspear Opera House, Meyerson Symphony Center, Dallas Museum of Art, Nasher Sculpture Center and Klyde Warren Park.

Pricing and schedule details on page 5



Winspear Opera House

Reminder! February 1 Deadline for Grants and Awards

See details on page 6

Find us on the internet at OperaVolunteers.org

OVI President's Message



Rhonda Sweeney

*“Should old acquaintance be forgot, and never brought to mind?
We’ll take a cup of kindness yet, for auld lang syne” – Robert Burns*

HAPPY NEW YEAR! *Auld Lang Syne* is often sung at midnight as a call to remember long-standing friendships, which caused me to look back at my 20 year history with Opera Guilds/Volunteers International and the friendships forged over those years! I joined OGI at the July ‘96 Conference in Cooperstown while President of the **Houston Grand Opera** Guild. I knew that two former HGO Guild Presidents had also been OGI Presidents – **Louise Gaylord** and **Ann Craft** – and never imagined that one day I too would become President of this wonderful organization! My second Conference was our first one jointly held with OPERA America, in Vancouver in May ‘99, which inspired me to also join their organization, a marvelous introduction to the great work they do for professional opera producing organizations and paved the way for our annual jointly held Conferences today.

Due to my full time work, I was unable to attend all Conferences and Meetings. However, in Nov ‘05 Houston hosted a Fall Focus meeting and I began to envision a deeper engagement with OVI, as we were now called. At the March ‘06 Conference in Kansas City, I spoke with incoming President **Fem Grauer** about re-engaging with OVI after my planned retirement later that year. Very soon I was leading a new Strategic Plan for OVI and joined the OVI Board in Oct ‘07.

Since then, I’ve attended every OVI Conference and Focus Meeting – Tampa, Seattle, Santa Fe, Nashville, Chicago, LA, Miami, New York, Philadelphia, New Orleans, Vancouver, Austin, San Francisco, Omaha, Washington DC, Salt Lake City, Montreal, Knoxville, and in 2017, Dallas and Tucson! Twenty gatherings of opera volunteers over the past 10 years, with wonderful old friends, terrific new friends, sharing of experiences, seeing operas in historic and new theaters, and understanding how cities large and small embrace this wonderful art form. Opera volunteers are *amazing* people, and I know you all agree with me! I have been honored and privileged to lead this organization for the last four years, and look forward to staying engaged after my presidency ends in September. We have been a strong organization for the past forty-five years, with outstanding leadership and outstanding members, and we have much to offer individual opera volunteers and groups in the years ahead! Please plan to join us in Dallas in May for “*Creating Collaborative Change*”, because collaboration is one of OVI’s key strengths and an essential element of our mission! Here’s to a great year ahead for everyone!

Do We Have Your Current E-mail Address?

From time to time we send out important email reminders. We have also added two email-only editions to our annual newsletter schedule which will follow our annual spring conference and fall focus meetings.

To receive these mailings please make sure that we have the correct email address for you or for your group contact people and that your spam filter is not flagging them.

newsletter@operavolunteers.org.

National Opera Week 2017 Oct 27 - Nov 5 Will you participate?

Again this year National Opera Week will take place in the ten day period at the end of October and will span two complete weekends. This is a perfect opportunity for us, as volunteers and opera lovers, to help expand the reach of opera. OVI invites our guilds, member groups, and individual members to participate.

What can participating do for you? It will raise the profile of your group. It will help your opera company. It will attract new opera lovers, potential subscribers and members. It will educate. It will motivate. And much more.

How do we do this, you might ask? It will be different for every group. Since October is high season for many opera companies, you may already have activities planned or scheduled. Or you could consider adding something. The beauty is that it could be any activity of any size which will be available to the general public and which you can promote under the title of National Opera Week. Have fun with it! It could be a lecture, recital, opera performance, dinner, gala, or anything, really. On Opera America's website if you click on **National Opera Week 2016** you can see some of the events that other groups have done in the past.

How do we start? Speak to your group or to your opera company if you are affiliated with one and say "we would like to do *something*." Once that commitment is made, the rest will follow easily. Having the title of National Opera Week attached to your activity automatically will help you to market it.

What's next? Let us know through your OVI Regional Director so that we can list it on our website, Facebook page or Newsletter. Between now and October we will be offering tips and suggestions and we welcome all of our groups to communicate with us and with each other as we see where this will go.

See the Opera and See the World with OVI and Kansas City Lyric Opera

OVI is announcing a partnership with the **Kansas City Lyric Opera Guild**, one of OVI's member guilds, in offering opera trips to OVI members. The Kansas City Lyric Opera Guild has run a popular opera trips program for over forty years. Its trips are to such domestic destinations as **New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Toronto and Seattle**, and to such international destinations as **Italy, France and Germany**. The Kansas City Lyric Opera Guild hosts three to five trips a year, usually to several domestic destinations and to one foreign destination. These trips are a bargain compared with the prices charged by commercial travel services, and feature performances at leading opera companies and dinners at fine restaurants. The overseas trips also include extensive touring of museums and historic sights.

Spring trips are already sold out but the 2017-18 opera season trips will be determined in the spring and we will let you know as soon as information is available.

OVI Announces our Online Auction in May

In order to help fund our **OVI Matching Grant program** we will be having an online auction during the month of May.

We don't want to let the cat out of the bag quite yet, but we have already obtained some truly unique and very desirable items. The beauty of the online approach is that we will provide you with the links and descriptive material. Not only can you bid any time and any place, but if you choose to share the site with associates or through social media, others outside of your group may participate as well.

Donations of performance tickets, gift certificates and other items are needed and will be greatly appreciated. Contact Madeline Madden with questions, items, or suggestions. Expect complete information on bidding procedure in April.

Madeline Madden: bellevuemmm@gmail.com

or call or text (402)-718-3857

OVI Focus Meeting in Knoxville

by Judy Vander Heide, president Ogden Opera Guild

We traveled across middle Tennessee from Oregon, Minnesota, New York Texas and states in-between to attend the opera in **Knoxville** hosted by the local guild. The scenery was magnificent—rolling hills, hay fields and small villages along route 40 refreshes ones view of the vastness of our country and its diversity. Knoxville is an old river town and home to the University of Tennessee as well as the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame.

We were entertained at a welcome cocktail party at the stunning home of **Mr. and Mrs. Caesar Stair**. From the stone patio one could see only forest and far below the silver ribbon of the Tennessee River running through it. The following day the OVI Board Meeting concentrated on the use of social media as well as conducting the business of the organization. Dinner that evening was in the **Tennessee Historical Society** where we met local supporters of opera and heard entertaining stories of the history of the area. It seems that during the Civil War recruiters for soldiers for both sides of the conflict established themselves across the street from one another. Indeed, only Virginia saw more Civil War battles.

The opera was **Pirates of Penzance**, a rousing production of an old favorite. Saturday saw OVI members joining in the crowds at the open air market sampling some local fare. More music was scheduled for the final evening at the **Museum of Appalachia** where the group was treated to some local bluegrass music and barbeque.

OVI focus meetings are a congenial way to meet like-minded opera lovers. Last year the Ogden Opera Guild hosted the fall meeting in Salt Lake City and the 2017 meeting will be in October in Tucson. Mark your calendars!

To see more pictures see our fall newsletter on the OVI website or visit our Facebook page.



Send us your News -

We would love to hear about your volunteer related activities including special events, educational outreach programs, or significant happenings. Looking forward our regional directors will be contacting select guilds and groups to be featured. If you would like to be a featured group let your OVI regional director know, and feel free to submit volunteer related news items with pictures any time. You can find your regional director information on our website.

Cincinnati Opera Guild visits Chicago's Lyric Opera

Rick Greenman, newsletter editor

Recently as I was leaving the Civic Opera House on a very chilly evening I heard someone call my name. "Hi Rick, it's **Ginny Cover** from Cincinnati, we met last month in Knoxville. I'm here with the **Cincinnati Opera Guild**. Why don't you join our group for dinner." So what I thought was the end of a perfect evening turned out to be just the beginning. The only thing nicer than traveling for opera is making new long distance opera friends away and at home. I hope to see them again when they return for another opera this spring.



An invitation from Opera America and Dallas Opera



Dear OVI Member,

We are pleased to announce that Advance Registration for Opera Conference 2017 is now open! Our wonderful hosts at **The Dallas Opera** are eager to give you a Texas-sized welcome and share their city with you. The conference takes place in the heart of Dallas' Arts District — the largest contiguous arts district in the United States — which includes some of the newest and most beautiful cultural facilities in the country.

ENERGIZING IDEAS

The OPERA America staff have been hard at work designing a robust agenda filled with timely content, insightful speakers and lively special events.

Together we'll address several themes that are vitally important to the future health of our art form: leadership by experimentation and learning; diversity, equity and inclusion; effective partnerships and collaborations; and connecting traditional works and new operas to today's audiences.

OPERA VOLUNTEERS INTERNATIONAL

OVI members are an important part of **OPERA America's** annual conference and the opera industry.

At this year's conference, **OVI activities are concentrated on Friday, May 5 and Saturday, May 6.** The OVI Pass reduced-rate registration option (\$295 pp) allows OVI members to attend all of the OVI activities unless otherwise noted. OVI Pass holders are also welcome to attend select conference events taking place on May 5 and 6, including general and open sessions, the Host Company Reception and the Exhibitor Happy Hour. Those who wish to extend their stay in Dallas and participate in the many other conference sessions and activities are encouraged to select the Individual package (starting at \$450). Thursday night there will be a reception for Members of OVI at the grantor level.

REGISTERING

Visit **conference.operaamerica.org** to view the array of exciting events and sessions that await you at Opera Conference 2017. At the OVI registration page of the conference registration website you can purchase your OVI pass, as well as add the following options:

OVI Awards Dinner (\$100) Saturday night at the Pyramid Bar, the longest-running AAA / Four Diamond establishment in the city. Those attending the Friday morning OVI board meeting may purchase lunch (\$20). Purchase specific opera tickets using links on the registration website. Use promo code OA20 to receive a 20% discount on tickets for *Norma*, *Carmen* and *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*. There is also a hotel link on the registration website. Special conference rate of \$179 per night is good thru April 10.

Sincerely,

OPERA America President, Marc A. Scorca

Money is the lifeblood of opera—*Do you need a transfusion?*

There are just days left but you could still get that much needed matching grant or honor that deserving volunteer if you act quickly.

Grants and Awards Deadlines February 1

You're a proud member of Opera Volunteers International. You know how important volunteers have been and will be in maintaining and enhancing this multifaceted art form. Now is the time to recognize those volunteers who've played an important role, those amazing volunteer-driven projects, those special accomplishments of your group

February 1 is our new deadline for **Matching Grants**, **Projects of Special Merit**, and for your **Partners in Excellence** nominations. Criteria and application information can be found on the OVI website.

Matching Grants - 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.

Projects of Special Merit - Help other OVI group members by letting us know about especially novel or successful projects that your volunteer group has initiated. This could be something entirely new or an annual event.

Partners in Excellence - What better way to honor and recognize your most valued volunteers or to recognize your group for a significant achievement or anniversary.

Find application material on the OVI website.

Applications and nominations must be received by February 1.

NEW OVI APPLICATION DEADLINE IS FEBRUARY 1 OF EACH YEAR

Follow-up Report

Muskoka Opera Festival Ontario, Canada

2016 Grant Recipient and Project of Special Merit Awardee

In 2016 **Muskoka Opera Festival** presented a performance of *Eugene Onegin* in Russian, an ambitious project compared to previous efforts. The additional funds provided by an OVI grant enabled them as volunteers to produce their own opera using young local students of opera.

The grant provided a financial cushion for the festival in a time of severe government cutbacks. It also provided the funds needed for the volunteer committee to train and utilize other volunteers and to gain the invaluable knowledge and experience themselves of producing an opera from start to finish.

The **Project of Special Merit Award** raised the stature of the **Muskoka Opera Festival** within the community, which will help them give performance experience and professional music training to more students as they expand the program.

OVI's Grant Critical to Success of Capitol City's Opera

Outreach for Children Initial Performance of *The Billy Goats Gruff*

Sandy Springs, Ga. - Saturday, October 1, 2016

The day seemed to start slowly for the 1 p.m. performance. Lighting and sound people arrived shortly before noon. A couple of **Capitol City Opera Company** board members/volunteers were already on hand as cast members starting arriving. The box office opened at 12:15 p.m., but by 12:40 p.m. only a small trickle of youngsters with parents had arrived for the 1 p.m. show.

What was happening? Would CCO's premiere performance of *The Billy Goats Gruff* fall prey to the allure of a beautiful October Saturday afternoon? Just how thin were the ranks of the audience going to be?

Then suddenly the flood gates opened. Children ranging in age from 2 to 82 came pouring into the performance hall. One could almost hear audible sighs of relief from the box office. **Capitol City Opera's** Outreach for Children show that afternoon was going to be a success, thanks in no small part to a grant from Opera Volunteers International to help produce and market the show.

Most of the "real" children in the audience that afternoon took advantage of "front row seats" (on the floor) in front of the foot-high platform stage, while a few chose, instead, to sit on the laps of parents, grandparents, aunts or uncles. And a few of the "adult children" also took advantage of the first row floor seats. But whether they were in real seats, or floor seats, all were introduced to Composer **John Davies'** operatic adaptation of the classic *Billy Goats Gruff* fairy tale which is set to some of the greatest music ever written by Mozart, Rossini, and Donizetti.

Ideal for children in Pre-K through 5th grade, the 40-minute production of *The Billy Goats Gruff* takes the familiar fable of three billy goats and the troll and adds a strong anti-bullying message to the story to promote the power of kindness.

"We could not have pulled it all together without the support of OVI," said **Sallie Van Houten**, president of the Capitol City Opera Board of Directors. "Without that grant the launch of *The Billy Goats Gruff* would not have been possible. We are grateful for the wonderful work that OVI does and are proud to be associated with this outstanding organization," she said.

'Billy Goat' cast members included **Ericka Kristin Moye** (Lucy), **Katherine Oates Small** (Ernesto), **Damien Rasheed** (Dandini) and **Stephen McCool** (Osmin) with pianist **Michael Fauss**, who was also music director for the show.

Working behind the scenes were Artistic Director **Michael Nutter**, Artistic Director Emeritus **Donna Angel**, an OVI member and the June 2014 recipient of OVI's lifetime achievement award; Assistant Director **Courtney Loner**, who also heads the Opera Outreach for Children program; **Robert Drake**, lighting and sound; and **Pam Cole**, costumes.



front row: Katherine Oates Small, Kristin Moye;
back row: Damien Rasheed, Stephen McCool

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have pulled it
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Save the Dates

- ♪ **Opera Volunteers International Focus Meeting
in Tucson, Arizona October 13-15, 2017**
- ♪ **The 2018 Spring Conference will be in St. Louis, MO**
- ♪ **More Travel Opportunities for 2017-2018 Opera Season
as OVI joins with Kansas City Lyric Opera Guild**

Details and dates to be announced later this year

- ♪ **Online Auction this May.** *Updates will be sent soon*

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