

## **2017 Projects of Special Merit**

### **Cincinnati Opera Guild- GUILD MEET AND GREETINGS**

This project has been repeated for fifteen years; 2017 marks the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The 1st goal of the Guild Meet and Greetings is to provide a warm, inclusive welcome breakfast for the artists, production staff and Opera company staff before the first rehearsal of each opera production of the season. The 2nd goal is to showcase the Guild's volunteer support of the season's productions.

Our Opera company presents four operas each season within the two months of June and July. As part of the Guild's support of the season the Meet and Greetings were developed to provide a personal welcome event for each production during this very busy time for the opera company. The Meet and Greet Co-Chairs are part of the Opera Guild's Executive Committee and head a committee of 35 volunteer Guild members.

The full committee is invited to a Meet and Greet Committee Kick-Off Luncheon planned by the co-chairs in early May each year. At the luncheon Meet and Greet dates are shared and members then sign up for dates they will attend. Each Guild committee member brings either a sweet or savory to serve at the breakfast. Opera interns are at a drop off point to help bring the generous platters of all kinds of breakfast foods to the set-up buffet tables. The opera company provides coffee and juice for each event.

The event begins with Guild members welcoming the guests as they arrive, providing name tags and introductions. The Meet and Greetings bring together the vocal artists and production staff from all over the country and world with opera staff for their first opportunity to meet each other. It also provides the visiting artists an opportunity to meet Guild members, who will be supporting them as part of the audiences. After 20 minutes of mingling and eating, the Opera Artistic Director rings a bell and asks everyone to gather in one large circle. He asks of each person to introduce themselves and say where they were born. That provides both a great ice breaker and a sense of the world community of opera. The Director follows with background about the upcoming opera production. The circle time ends and is followed by more time to mingle and enjoy the breakfast buffet. The event ends when the director rings the bell again as a signal that the first rehearsal will begin and all other guests may leave. The opera is known for being hospitable and the Meet and Greet events provide the foundation for that reputation.

The Guild supports the Outbound Education Program of the Opera; its budget contributes about \$500. Food and decor are provided by volunteers. The Meet and Greetings are promoted within the Guild as a volunteer opportunity and benefit of membership.

### **San Francisco Opera Guild- Opera Scouts**

Opera Scouts, a program of Guild education, is a performing and cultural arts organization for youth aged 12-18. Focused on ensemble-based support for individual achievement in

arts related projects. This organization provides a social, developmental, career and service for arts-minded youth.

The disciplined practice of the group is dedicated to honing skills, and knowledge of opera, musical theater and their component arts (drama, music, dance, design, language, composition, culture.) A project-based structure allows Scouts to achieve proficiency in their chosen area of concentration and earn merit badges for each successful project, allowing them to move to the next tier in the program. There are five tiers: Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic and Modern. Along with arts training and concentration, Scouts are trained in life skills to promote better communication, confidence, integrity and conflict management. As they advance through the program, they become eligible to become student conflict mediators at their schools and community organizations.

Young artists aged 12-18 must complete an application and interview in order to join Opera Scouts. There is a \$50 annual membership fee. Scouts must attend at least two meetings per month in order to retain Scout in Good Standing (SIGS) status. Scouts meet once a week from 4:30 to 6:30. They participate in workshops, training, projects and lecture series that advance them to the next level in their arts training and appreciation.

Planning began in January 2016 and involved 40 volunteers. We regularly schedule special guest artist (directors, coaches, teachers, designers, pianists) and local opera companies, theaters, concert halls provide free/very low-priced tickets for participating Scouts. The Guild allocated a \$500 budget to cover other expenses this first year.

Most of our first-year participants were recruited from our teen summer conservatory training program. We currently advertise the program on our website, at special events, and through word of mouth, but we have planned a recruitment day where Scouts are invited to bring a guest to a special meeting.