

Projects of Special Merit 2008 and Earlier

2007-08

Kansas City Lyric Opera Guild - : Fifty Years of the Lyric Opera: A Great First Act

The Kansas City Lyric Opera Guild's excellent project is an exemplary book highlighting the history of the Kansas City Lyric Opera. "Fifty Years of the Lyric Opera: A Great First Act" proudly celebrates the company's 50th anniversary season. OVI is proud to honor this Special Project and acknowledge it at our Conference 2009 in Santa Fe.

2006-07

Indianola Chapter Des Moines Metro Opera Guild - *Peanut Butter And Puccini*

The Indianola Chapter of the Des Moines Opera Guild serves a group that would not ordinarily attend or experience an opera. The event begins in the morning with a performance by Opera Iowa, then pauses for a festive peanut butter sandwich picnic lunch. It resumes in the afternoon: guiding children and adults through all the backstage rooms of the opera house, stopping to explain every area and answer any questions.

Central City Opera House Association Guild - *Ballads, Bugs and Ballet*

The Central City Opera House Association Guild offers young children and families the opportunity to experience what it is like to be a singing performer with Central City Opera. The Butterfly Pavilion has everyone participate in a bug safari with live creepy-crawlers, and Ballet Nouveau Colorado lets budding dancers dip their toes into the world of ballet. As a grand finale to the day, the Central City Opera Ensemble presents a whirlwind of comic opera scenes by Mozart and friends.

Houston Grand Opera Guild - *Neighborhood Ambassadors*

Des Moines Metro Opera Guild Council - Threads & Trills

Des Moines Chapter, Des Moines Metro Opera Guild - *Choose Your Own Fundraiser*

Ames Chapter, Des Moines Metro Opera Guild - *Arias In Ames*

Chattanooga Symphony & Opera Guild Vocal Competition

Opera Illinois League Motor Coach Trips

Central City Opera House Association Guild - *Opera Teasers*

Central City Opera House Assn. Guild - *Historic Properties Committee*

Central City Opera House Association Guild - *Greet-a-Singer*

2004

Houston Grand Opera Guild - Low Cost Approach to Using the Internet to Provide Information about the Guild to Prospective Members and to Facilitate Participation of Current Members

Using volunteer developers, the Guild produced a professional-quality website, including an on-line e-Boutique, which would have cost over \$50,000 if done commercially. The website contains descriptions of Guild activities with contact information, downloadable membership applications and event registration forms, a calendar of event, event photos, a history of the Guild, pages to recognize member service and contributors, and shopping pages with nearly 50 items for sale. There is a private page for Guild Board members containing contact lists, Guild bylaws, and Guild forms. The private page was used as a repository for comments and updates when the board collaborated on its Strategic Plan. The Guild sends out a monthly e-mail newsletter to Guild members and prospective members with information about upcoming events.

Chapters' Executive Board of Lyric Opera of Chicago - OperaShop

This all-volunteer/all-guild project sells merchandise to raise funds for the company before selected performances and during the first intermission. The project has grown to include 61 sales dates: on some dates two sites in the opera house are staffed. A guild member acts as chairman and is aided by a committee of volunteer supervisors who restock the display cases, track inventory and supervise other volunteer salespeople. The 60-plus OperaShop volunteers come from all 21 Chapters (guilds) and receive discounts for parking, refreshments and merchandise. Members attending the opera receive a 10% discount as a benefit of guild membership. A program to take merchandise to outlying guilds for sale to those members was piloted this year. In addition to providing funds for the opera company, an added benefit is the good will generated for the company by the enthusiastic volunteer salespersons.

Michigan Opera Theatre Volunteer Association - Directory of Volunteers Available to Help Visiting Artists

The Artists' Volunteer Committee was created to help visiting artists while they are in the area. The artists meet the opera company staff and the volunteers at a buffet dinner prepared by the Artists' Volunteer Committee. Each artist is greeted at the door by a volunteer and is given a Directory of Volunteers with their pictures, names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses. The artist is told about the Artists' Volunteer Committee and how volunteers can assist the artist with such things as transportation, baby-sitting, grocery-shopping, and recreational opportunities. A committee volunteer is

assigned to each artist. That volunteer then matches the artist's need with a volunteer using the directory. The artists often contact volunteers directly using the Directory, sometimes developing long-standing relationships.

Houston Grand Opera Guild - A Dynamic and Involving Strategic Plan for the Opera Guild

The General Director presented the guild with a set of goals critical for the future of the organization:

1. Increase the membership of the Guild
2. Increase the number of members actively involved the Guild's activities.

The Guild sought to develop a Strategic Plan that would provide a roadmap to ensure its success. The Plan was completed in four months, involved over 50 members of the Guild, and resulted in the adoption of three new programs and a 50% increase in membership. Any member of the Board could volunteer to be on the Steering Committee for the Plan, and any member of the Guild could participate in a half-day idea-generating session for the Plan. In order to facilitate communication among the participants, a secure section of the Guild web site was deployed.

Central City Opera House Association Guild - Young Hands on Opera

In order to expose grade-school age children and their families to opera in an informal and fun environment, an event was held at a local performing arts hall. Mini singing and acting classes followed an informal pizza dinner. "Theatrical" makeup and distribution of souvenir masks to the children preceded the finale, a children's performance of a mini-aria about pasta performed by the children. In honor of Black History Month and to help introduce minority students to opera, mezzo AnnMarie Sandy performed arias from "Gabriel's Daughter," an opera based on a true story of a freed slave. The author of the book on which the opera was based attended and autographed copies of his book. The event was deemed a success: twice as many attended than the committee had expected.

Special Mention

Michigan Opera Theatre Volunteer Association - Artists' Keepsake Booklet

The Artists' Volunteer committee was created to help visiting artists while they are in this area. The artists meet the opera company staff and the volunteers at a buffet dinner prepared by the committee. During this event the artists are photographed, using digital cameras and without flash photography, enjoying this social event. These pictures are edited, cropped then published in an 8 to 12-page Artists' Photo Keepsake Booklet and copies of the booklet are given to the artists. The photography and preparation of the photographs and text for publication are all done by members of the Artists' Volunteer Committee. The Committee has published 17 different booklets each containing 20 to 40 photographs.