

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

Opera Volunteers

INTERNATIONAL

www.OperaVolunteers.org



The Opera Volunteer Voice

Looking Forward

Spring 2017
Vol. 41, Number 2

The official
newsletter of
Opera Volunteers
International

Next issue:
June

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Visit our
on-line auction
May 1-31
ovi.afrogs.org

May 4 - 7 our group meets in **Dallas/Fort Worth** along with opera companies from across North America. There we will honor our members and member groups for their many contributions on behalf of opera. Appropriately, this comes on the heels of **National Volunteer Week** April 23 to 29.

In this issue we reveal our 2017 Grant recipients, highlight two outstanding guild projects we are recognizing, and announce our Partners in Excellence honorees.

Remember these dates in the coming year as we look forward to:

October 13 -15	Fall Focus Meeting in Tucson, Arizona
October 27 - Nov 5	National Opera Week
June 2018	Opera America Conference in St. Louis, Missouri

Have You Ever Wanted to Take an Opera Trip?

OVI is partnering with **Kansas City Opera** on the following opera excursions:

New York City Wed. Oct 11 - Sun. Oct 15

Norma, Turandot, Tales of Hoffman, Die Zauberflöte, La Boheme

San Francisco Thurs. Nov. 16 - Sun Nov. 19

Manon, Pinchas Zuckerman concert, Turandot

New York City Wed. Apr 25- Mon Apr 30

Lucia di Lammermoor, Tosca, Romeo et Juliette, Cendrillon, Finals of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

Barcelona and Madrid May 2018 operas and dates to be announced

Complete details of these trips with exact dates, casts, and production information will be posted on the OVI website and we will send out an email when registration opens. Everything will be handled through **Lyric Opera Guild of Kansas City**. Remember that these trips sell out quickly so do not delay!



May 1 - 31 OVI Auction

ovi.afrogs.org

Approaching 50! OVI by the Numbers



"Objects in the mirror may be closer than they appear."

Yes, we are still 4 years away from our 50th anniversary, but there is no time like the present to start planning!

They say "Old age is not for sissies," but the role opera plays in our lives keeps us young at heart! Opera nourishes our souls and touches our hearts and emotions for the better, relieving stress and bringing peace and calm to our busy lives!

In 1965, Dr. Bruce Tuckman introduced his theory about group dynamics. This has much relevance to our own organization as we look back over our 5 decades of existence.

1970s FORMING – OVI was loosely organized by several opera guild Presidents who wanted to connect with each other to share good ideas and have fun together! By 1980, we had held 6 Conferences under 2 Presidents, chosen the name **Opera Guilds International (OGI)**, written a charter, and established ourselves as a tax exempt organization.

1980s STORMING – The organization grew rapidly under 3 Presidents, while holding 8 Conferences and incorporating as a non-profit organization in the State of Michigan. In addition to guilds, leagues, societies, and friends groups, we also had a significant number of individual members who supported our mission. A **BRAVO award** was established to recognize those who had made significant contributions to our own organization, with only 9 awarded to date.

Successful silent auction fundraising at conferences allowed the awarding of **Matching Grants** for volunteer-related projects.

1990s NORMING – With 8 Conferences under 4 Presidents, we were in full swing, adding the Partners in Excellence award for outstanding individual volunteers or groups celebrating significant milestone anniversaries. At the end of the decade, we entered a joint operating agreement with **OPERA America**, our professional colleagues, beginning with a joint conference in Vancouver, and an administrative arrangement for handling office-related activities.

2000s RE-FORMING – After 5 years of joint operation with OPERA America, we decided to once again become an

all volunteer organization. We rewrote By-laws and Policies and Procedures, renamed ourselves **Opera Volunteers International**, while holding 7 Conferences under 3 Presidents. 4 "Focus meetings" were held as another way to stay in touch with our membership across North America. A new Strategic Plan was approved, our website created, and **Projects of Special Merit** were recognized– volunteer projects worth sharing with others.

2010s PERFORMING – Under 2 Presidents, and with Board agreement, a new and different collaboration with **OPERA America** began, with OVI presenting a Volunteer Track at 6 annual OA/OVI Conferences. In addition, 9 OVI-only Focus meetings were held, bringing members together over long weekends for opera, learning, sharing, and fun! We began extensive use of electronic media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, email, teleconferences) to quickly communicate with members and other opera lovers, and our newsletters moved online. By-laws were streamlined, Policies and Procedures strengthened, and a new Strategic Plan adopted. To date, 95 Matching Grants have been awarded totaling over \$115,000, 155 Partners in Excellence awarded, and 36 Conferences held under 14 Presidents!

2020s TRANSFORMING – As we look ahead to our 50th anniversary in 2021, we can only imagine what the future holds! The world is moving faster with electronic communications, but some things still work better face-to-face. Opera can be experienced at the movie theater, online via YouTube or streaming, but there is nothing like the live sound of the unamplified voice. Likewise, our conferences and meetings may be "live streamed" or recapped in newsletters and with photos shared online, but there is energy and power in actual gatherings that is unequalled. Spreading the word about opera, and increasing its relevance and reach is our mission, and we do so by connecting opera volunteers in as many ways as possible. We are the premier resource and advocate for developing and advancing volunteerism in support of opera in every community! OVI is indeed transforming the future of opera through volunteerism! We hope you will remain a vital part of our organization, now and in the future, and help us celebrate **50 in the ROARING 20s!**

Rhonda

Projects of Special Merit 2017



Cincinnati Opera Guild

Guild meet and Greet

Guild Meet and Greet marks its 15th anniversary this year. **Cincinnati Opera** performs three opera productions each season. *Opera Meet and Greet* is a breakfast, lovingly prepared and hosted by the Guild on the first rehearsal of each production. The first goal is to provide a warm inclusive welcome for the artists, production staff and Opera Company staff. The second goal is to showcase the Guild's support of the season's productions. Guild members welcome guests as they arrive, providing name tags and introductions. The event includes mingle-time, introductions, and background material about the upcoming production. The meet and greet ends when the director rings a bell signaling that it is time for guests to leave and serious rehearsal time to begin. These events, which are not open to the general public, are a volunteer opportunity for guild members. A wonderful way to kick off each show, they really set the tone in a special tradition that helps define the character and camaraderie of Cincinnati Opera.

San Francisco Opera Guild

Opera Scouts



Opera Scouts, an innovative program for students age 12 to 18, was launched by San Francisco Opera Guild in 2016. Celebrating individual achievement in a supportive ensemble, *Opera Scouts* provides a social, developmental, career and service home for arts-minded youth. Scouts meet weekly for training, rehearsals, and trips to local performances. An annual membership fee and attendance requirement covers costs and helps assure commitment. Workshops, training, projects and lecture series that advance them to the next level.

Activities include:

- GUEST SPEAKERS AND MASTER CLASSES.
- MERIT BADGES.
- OPERA AND THEATER TRIPS.
- AUDITIONS.
- PERFORMANCE.
- LEADERSHIP.
- CONFLICT RESOLUTION.



Scouts are trained in skills promoting better communication, confidence, integrity and conflict management. As they advance through the program, they become eligible to be student conflict mediators at their schools.

Grant Recipients 2017

OPERA GUILD OF DAYTON (OH)

Website and Social Media Enhancement

Goal is to intensify focus of making information available through internet applications. New website will educate public regarding mission, events and membership. Online donations, payments and vocal contest application will be easier. It will provide a private password-protected area for members. Analytics and messaging will be improved. Grant will be used for website domain renewal, consultation and training of volunteers.

INSPIRATION POINT FINE ARTS COLONY (AR)

Costume Inventory Project

Goal is to utilize volunteers to create a database of over 5000 costume pieces. Out of town designers will be able to access inventory. It will also facilitate costume rentals. Grant will be used for inventory database, costume labels, rack dividers, student laborers and heavy duty hangers.

NASHVILLE OPERA GUILD (TN)

Opera Fast Pass

Purpose is to engage with students at two state Colleges and provide opportunities of access to opera for diverse group with limited means. Grant will be used to under-write 140 tickets and institute informative sessions and back-stage tours utilizing guild members.

OGDEN OPERA GUILD (UT)

Mini Opera at Weber State University

Purpose is to bring members of the Utah Opera Resident Artists of Utah Opera to Ogden in a free performance of *Elixir of Love*. Volunteers help staff and fund these performances and provide educational opportunities to area students. Grant will be used for publicity, brochures and Resident Artists fees.

PENSACOLA OPERA GUILD (FL)

The Ultimate Volunteer Challenge

Purpose is to expand the Fall Artist Residence Program by one week while immersing volunteers to a greater extent. Five young artists will be engaged for eight weeks to present programs in schools, libraries, museums, community centers and assisted living centers. Eighty volunteers will be utilized. Grant will help cover Rights and Royalties, Promotional Materials, Advertising, Scenery and Props, Singers, Director and Pianist.

Opera Maine (ME) (formerly PORTopera)

The Impresarios

Purpose is to expand and build the Impresario group to build audiences and create more public awareness. Impresarios are Opera Maine volunteers including but not limited to the 21-40 age bracket. Grant will be used to help train volunteers, venue rental, materials, artist fees, photography and marketing.

SEATTLE OPERA GUILD (OR)

Seattle Opera Guild Webpage Redesign

Goal is to reach and inform general public, reach young singers looking to further their career, and to keep members up-to-date and connected through a redesigned professional website. Grant will be used towards new graphic artwork, website design and enhancement, and training for volunteers to maintain and update website.

SHREVEPORT OPERA (LA)**The Millennial Project**

Goal is to reverse trend of aging opera attendees and volunteers by hosting after-hours receptions, and a flash mob. Publicity and informational material will be generated. Guild members, local artists, and chorus members will be used. Grant will be used towards marketing materials, ads, singer fees, and pianist.

ST. PETERSBURG OPERA (FL)**Opera for Children**

Goal is to bring opera and music to ten of what have been called the worst schools in the state. The school system has secured a federal grant to retain music teachers. The assistance of volunteers is vital to this program as the opera company staff is small. Guild volunteers will help at prep sessions to train teachers to prepare approximately 600 third grade students to see an upcoming performance. A children's opera will be performed with the help of volunteer ushers and greeters. Grant will be used for prep pamphlet, pianist, narrator training, surveys, notebooks, badges and programs.

TWIN CITIES OPERA GUILD (MN)**Creating a Young Artist Ambassador Program**

Goal is to partner with Fargo-Moorhead Opera to bring their young artists to perform in area schools. The program began last year with 19 performances in 11 schools serving and reaching 2400 students. This year a network of TCOG volunteers will be formed with a designated liaison to each school to coordinate, schedule performances, and act as ambassador. A training and procedures booklet will be designed. Grant will go towards Fargo Opera costs, marketing materials development, website, database, postage and supplies.

Announcing OVI's**2017 Partners in Excellence**

We will tell you more about these outstanding individuals in our June Newsletter:



Dennis N Banks, PhD
Glimmerglass Festival



Mary Robins
Lyric Opera Chicago



Mary Poland
San Francisco Opera



Beverly Plank
Amarillo Bravo



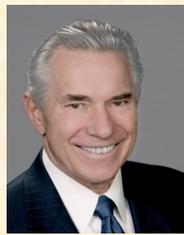
Patricia & Jess Carnes
Houston Grand Opera



Wendy Wustenberg
Twin Cities Opera



Dr Esther Swink
Nashville Opera



Dr Rob Robinson
Shreveport Opera



Children's Traveling Opera Volunteer Team
Dayton Opera

Southwest Region

Forty Five year old *Arizona Opera* has three separate volunteer groups in three cities which help raise money and assist in various ways. They are **Prescott Friends**, **Tucson Opera League** and **Valley friends**. This article focuses on **Valley Friends**. We hope we can meet them at our **Fall Focus Meeting** in Tucson this October.

League of Arizona Opera Valley Friends

**Valley Friends
is a "friend-raiser"
and a fundraiser for
Arizona Opera**



Allen Perriello, Katrina Galka, Marion Roose Pullin, Alyssa Martin, Joseph Latanzi, Cody Martin, Zackary Owen, Mariya Kaganskya, Kimberley Smith.

By **Kim Smith**

The Phoenix-based **League of Arizona Opera, Valley Friends**, was organized in 2011 and has grown to around 150 people who are interested in opera and wish to support or participate in opera events. Our league's volunteer activities include stuffing envelopes, helping with the kids during the dress rehearsals, staffing the lobby jobs/tables at the opera and helping **Arizona Opera** promotions at civic events. Every year **Sharon and Don Jackley** purchase, assemble and deliver welcome bags to every out of town performer of our 5 opera season.

Valley Friends holds a number of parties each year which feature great hors d'oeuvres, wine, and singers from the current opera. Because our Valley Friends Board makes all the food and donates all the wine, 100% of the income is donated to Arizona Opera. Valley Friends also holds several other events, smaller parties such as those featuring the Arizona Opera Studio Singers. "Behind the Scenes at the Opera" has become a popular event with presentations by key production staff.

One of the important features of Valley Friends is that we keep our prices fairly low to encourage those on fixed incomes to come to our events and feel like opera family. We can only do this because of our hard working board members who provide food, beverages and venues for our events. We look at our league as a "friend raiser" AND a "fund raising" group so we have events for all. We are currently trying different things to attract younger people to our opera events.

Stockton Opera Guild Awards Music Scholarships to:

Eva Tamsky, Jorge Torres, Paulina Ramirez, Tanya Harris, Savannah Bailey Eddie Roberts

Since its founding in 1975 the purpose of the Guild was to promote public interest in operatic music along with the **Stockton Opera Association**. For over 30 years, the Guild has sponsored fund-raising events, assisted in the financial support of the Stockton Opera Association, and has a Scholarship program open to all San Joaquin County vocal students.

Guild membership is limited to 35 active members who demonstrate the capacity to actively participate in community work, are sympathetic to the purpose of the Association, and are able to participate fully in the work of the Guild. Guild members serve as hostesses for the Opera Association's annual *Moonlight Melodies* preparing hors d'oeuvres and welcoming attendees, ushering at opera productions, and hosting the artists' reception. The extraordinary and enthusiastic members of the Guild have an Opera Season Kick-off party in the fall, and annual spring Gala.

Southeast Region

Nashville Opera Guild Helping Young Artists by Anne Pennington, President

The **Nashville Opera Guild**'s primary focus and mission is to support opera education and outreach in our geographical area. To this end, we assist in supporting the annually chosen **Mary Ragland Young Artists**, who are involved in taking a children's opera into numerous schools and communities, serving thousands of children in Middle Tennessee every year. These artists often have roles in the last opera of our season as well, which this year is *Carmen*.

The Guild provides hospitality for the Young Artists, as well as the primary artists in each of the season's operas. Hospitality is extended in various ways---through providing housing for some, welcome---bags, and refreshments/cast parties for the artists for each opera of the season.

Finally, for the 2016-2017 Season, the Guild has financially supported Master Classes for the Mary Ragland Young Artists, which are open to Guild members to attend free of charge. These Master Classes will continue into the 2017-2018 Season. This is a wonderful opportunity for the artists to take their skills to the next level through performing and receiving feedback from a noted clinician. The Guild has supported providing other perks for the Young Artists in the past, such as through offering an opportunity for making audition recordings.

The **Nashville Opera Guild** is pleased to be involved in making their time in Nashville a very positive experience for all of our artists. We have been told that many look forward to their time in Nashville.

Opera NOVA Presenting Opera to Arlington School Children by Mike Doan

A cast of **Opera NOVA** singers and dancers held the rapt attention of hundreds of school children Feb. 28-March 4 with singing, dancing and bright costumes for the first-ever 45-minute performance of **Scott Joplin**'s American opera *Treemonisha*. "We felt it was important to expose our students to various kinds of arts and music, including opera," said **Tracey Houston**, a teacher at **Drew Elementary School** in Arlington.

What was the opera about? "There were bad people and they were all punished but in the end everyone was happy," said one small child. That about sums up the story of 18-year-old *Treemonisha*, who is kidnapped by people who practice magic in a community of former slaves. But *Treemonisha*, who has been educated, talks the townspeople into forgiving them. The importance of education is a theme of the opera, written by the ragtime king in 1910, but largely overlooked since then. Artistic Director **Jose Sacin** took the score and shortened it, with hopes that other opera companies will use it as well.

Children loved screaming when the practitioners of magic ran through the aisles carrying huge brightly colored masks to ward off evil spirits. "I liked it when the guy kicked the bad guy with his leg," said one young spectator. Most of the students were told about the story in advance by teachers who received study guides from **Opera NOVA** and its president, **Miriam Miller**.

Pupils, some as young as 4, were brought in yellow school buses from the District of Columbia and Northern Virginia to the production at **Thomas Jefferson Middle School Theater**, complete with orchestra pit and 11 musicians. Sacin opened the show by having the musicians come on stage to demonstrate and play each individual instrument, quizzing the children about which one it was.

An open dance sequence with richly colored lighting pantomimed the story before the actors took stage. The opera, conducted by **Jose Sacin** and directed by choreographer **Roger Riggle**, was put on by professional singers and actors recruited by Riggle, Sacin and others. *Treemonisha* was played by **Jocelyn Hunt**. Other key players were **Sam Keeler**, **Elise Jenkins**, **Matthew Woorman**, **Alex Alburqueque**, **Dwight Smith** and **Angelica Brooks**. Stage manager was **Bryan Boyd**, and a barbershop-style quartet was led by **George Hobart**.

Opera NOVA, previously known as the Opera Guild of Northern Virginia, puts on musical productions to expose children, seniors and minorities to opera and other music that is often neglected.



Online Auction

MAY 1, 2017 - MAY 31, 2017

Members and non-members can bid from anywhere in real-time.

Check out our auction website and share it with friends.

Bidding opens May 1

ovi.afrogs.org

Choose from a mind-boggling array of fabulous items including: Opera merchandise, events, and tickets. Unique travel packages include Rome, Sidney, Costa Rica, and more. Attend the Westminster Dog Show, golf in Scotland, or even become a Nascar Driver for a day.

Auction proceeds support our matching grant program, helping opera volunteer programs and projects throughout North America.

Our First ever OVI on-line auction goes live on May 1



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