



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

# Opera Volunteers INTERNATIONAL

[www.OperaVolunteers.org](http://www.OperaVolunteers.org)



## The Opera Volunteer Voice

Summer 2017  
Vol. 41, Number 3

The official  
newsletter of  
Opera Volunteers  
International  
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### Autumn in Sunny Tucson Oct 13-15

**Opera Volunteers International invites you to the Fall Focus Meeting!!**

Discover Tucson's unique attractions and explore the operatic, cultural and gastronomic scene that makes this city so unique and comfortable. Our days will be full but our evenings are free for you to explore Tucson and what it has to offer.



Beautiful Westin Hotel **La Paloma Resort and Spa** Located in the Catalina foothills this magnificent property provides amazing views and service as well as a spa and golf. Room rate is \$189.00 plus resort fee and tax and this rate applies 3 days before and 3 days after the meeting. The cutoff date for this rate is September 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Friday Evening-Cocktail Party** Internationally known artist **Barbara Rogers** will host us in her home. **Joe Specter**, General Director of Arizona Opera and members of the Opera League-Tucson will welcome you. Meet and mingle with members of the **Valley Friends of Phoenix** and **Prescott Friends of AZ Opera** as well as other OVI members from across the country.

**Saturday Morning-OVI Boarding Meeting** Informative speaker is scheduled.

**Saturday Afternoon-Sonora Desert Museum** A guided tour of this museum which is regularly listed as one of the top 10 zoological parks in the country. Enjoy a box lunch before the tour at this amazing place.

**Sunday Morning-San Xavier Mission** A National Historic Landmark, San Xavier Mission was founded in 1692. The oldest intact European structure in Arizona, the church interior is filled with marvelous original statuary and mural paintings. The museum features an informative video and gift shop.

**Sunday Afternoon-Hercules vs Vampires** Commissioned by the **Opera Theater Oregon**, the work had its world premiere in Portland in March 2010. In April 2015 the work was staged by the **Los Angeles Opera**. The work is written as a companion piece to the 1961 film *Hercules in the Haunted World*. The work integrates the 1961 film by projecting the film in its entirety behind the action on stage.

**Sunday /After Opera-El Charro Café for dinner** Established in 1922, this Tucson restaurant is famous for Carne Seca, which is an air dried beef. Margaritas and beverages are included.

Find us on the internet at [www.OperaVolunteers.org](http://www.OperaVolunteers.org)

# OPERA VOLUNTEERS INTERNATIONAL

## FOCUS MEETING IN TUCSON

October 13-15 2017

### Early Bird Registration

**Full meeting:** includes cocktail reception, board meeting, Sonora Desert Museum tour and lunch, San Xavier Mission tour, opera preview, post opera dinner at El Charro Café, and all transportation \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$180.00 = \_\_\_\_\_

After September 13 \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$200.00

### A La Carte Guest Fees:

Sonora Desert Museum Tour and Box Lunch \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$38.00 = \_\_\_\_\_

San Xavier Mission Tour No Charge

Transportation to and from San Xavier Mission \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$18.50 = \_\_\_\_\_

Fox Theatre for Opera snack \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$20.00 = \_\_\_\_\_

Dinner at El Charro Café \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$45.00  
= \_\_\_\_\_

Return transportation to Westin La Paloma Resort \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$7.00 = \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL REGISTRATION AND GUEST FEES = \_\_\_\_\_**

Registration does not include hotel or opera tickets. Call the **Westin La Paloma Resort** (520-742-6000) for *Opera Volunteers International October 2017*. Call **Arizona Opera** for tickets and mention OVI for a discount (602-266-7464).

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OVI Member's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse/Guest's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Please fill out and mail with your check to:

Opera Volunteers International

65344 E Rocky Mesa Dr., Tucson, AZ 85739

If you have any questions contact Vikie Hariton [vikie@vkhariton.com](mailto:vikie@vkhariton.com) 520-818-3832



*Oil! Oil! Oil! Cattle! Cattle! Cattle!  
My, oh Dallas, Dallas, Dallas, Dallas!  
Big D! Little A double L-A-S!*

*From The Most Happy Fella, Book, Music  
and Lyrics by Frank Loesser, 1956*

## President's Message

What a wonderful time we had in Dallas at Opera Conference 2017, **Creating Collaborative Change!** Indeed, opera itself is a truly collaborative art, as we heard at the two opening sessions: artists who collaborate to bring opera to life – composers, librettists, singers, set and costume designers, as well as representatives from organizations in the Dallas Arts District, who often collaborate – opera, ballet, theater, museums, and schools. We also heard from the National Endowment for the Arts and the key role they play in enabling arts groups to produce great work in their communities. Opera volunteers also collaborate, working with opera companies, schools and universities, and other local organizations to bring opera to every corner of our communities. OVI is proud to partner with our member organizations to recognize outstanding volunteers and volunteer projects each year, and to award matching grants to support volunteer-driven opera projects. As always, it was humbling to attend our annual Awards dinner and recognize those who have given so much to their local opera communities over the years – volunteer time, talent and financial support – so that opera can continue to thrive.

Musicals such as *Carousel* and *The Most Happy Fella* find their way into opera houses with increased orchestra sizes and larger operatic voices because they have complex scores, dramatic character development, and strong emotional content -- just as operas do, with rousing ensembles, exciting dance numbers, and dialogue and music interweaving seamlessly. Some contend that these American musicals are indeed our unique contribution to opera – telling our American stories for today's audiences much as verismo operas from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that moved away from stories about gods or royalty, and turned to the average contemporary men and women and their problems, romantic or otherwise. Verismo composers ensured that the underlying drama was well integrated with the

music, much as Rodgers and Hammerstein and Loesser did with these two wonderful musicals. Today's composers follow these same principles, whether Ricky Ian Gordon's *The Grapes of Wrath* (Michael Korie libretto), or Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* (Terrence McNally libretto). Dramatic story telling and beautiful music remain at the heart of this art form through its 400 year history!

Enjoy your summer adventures, whether musical or adventure travels, and mark your calendar for an operatic adventure – Arizona Opera's production of Patrick Morganelli's 2010 opera *Hercules vs. Vampires*, itself a collaboration between the 1961 Italian film *Hercules in the Haunted World*, and live singers and orchestra performing with the film as background! It is sure to be the highlight of our **Fall Focus meeting in Tucson, October 13-15!** Join us in the beautiful Southwest desert, with our Arizona Opera League of Tucson hosts!

*Rhonda*

Rhonda Sweeney, President

## ***OVI thanks the following individuals for donating to our Annual Fund:***

Heidi Huetel Bohn

Don Dagenais

Sarah Duvall

Mary Earl

Sarajane King

Daune Neidig

### ***Donor***

Fred Dear  
Joanne Kolenda  
Susan Malott  
Rhonda Sweeney

### ***In honor of***

Rebecca & Stuart Bowne  
Rhonda Sweeney  
Rhonda Sweeney  
Mary Earl

### ***Donor***

Phyllis Driver  
Shelley Page

### ***In memory of***

Sheila McNeill's mother  
Grace Helen Brown



## In Memoriam

Loss is a part of life and especially in the world of opera volunteerism we must deal every year with the loss of valuable and dear friends who have made significant impact and contribution both to opera and to our OVI circle.

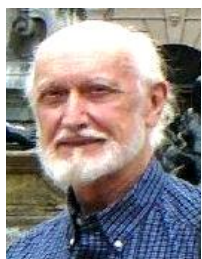


**Grace Helen Brown** died Wednesday, March 29, 2017.

As an administrator of Nashville Public Schools Helen believed that the Arts are basic in education, Helen became an advocate for opera in the schools. This was the beginning of a long commitment to the **Nashville Opera**. After retiring in 2000, Helen was an active volunteer for the **Nashville Opera Guild** including three years as President. In 2010, Helen received the highly prized Partner's in Excellence Award from Opera Volunteers International and in 2015 the Francis Robinson Award for outstanding service to the Nashville Opera.

Helen served on the Board of Directors for the March of Dimes, Metropolitan Nashville Community Services Agency, Institutional Review Board (Saint Thomas Hospital), Harding Academy, Calvary Young Children's School, WDCN-ITV, Nashville Children's Theatre, Nashville Institute for the Arts, Junior League Advisory Board, the Centennial Club, a member of the Community Foundation Scholarship Committee, and was an alumna of Leadership Nashville.

Helen is especially remembered for her loving and generous spirit and for her smile that brightened every room. Her perseverance and effective service as a lifelong teacher touched so many lives.



**Roy Fisher**, a long time OVI board member, received the **United States President's Volunteer Service Award** in 2013. He was a member of **Lyric Opera of Chicago's Chapters Executive Board** since 1978. He assisted in Marketing and development. His areas of volunteer activities have included community lectures (23 yrs), Opera in the Classroom, guiding Student Backstage Tours, and the ticket department. Roy's tall stature and distinguished appearance have made him much in demand as a

supernumerary for Chicago Opera Theater, American Ballet Theater and Lyric Opera of Chicago where he performed in 22 productions including *Macbeth* as the ill-fated King Duncan. He also planned, organized and conducted opera tours to Europe, South Africa, Canada, and the U.S..



The Opera Guild of Rochester is sad, that **Joe Heintzman** passed away on January 2.

He will be missed and remembered both by the Rochester and the Buffalo Opera friends.

He was a beloved teacher and one of the longest supporters, donors and volunteers of the Opera Guild, He was also a member of the Opera Buffs in Buffalo. Joe was a faithful volunteer, helping the Guild with mailings and other activities. He is pictured with OVI Regional Director Anastasia Johnson in May 2015 receiving the **Partner in Excellence** award.

### Dates to Remember:

September 13	Early Bird registration and hotel reservation deadline for Fall Focus Meeting in Tucson, AZ
October 1	2017/2018 OVI membership renewal
October 13 -	Fall Focus Meeting in Tucson, AZ
October 27 - Nov 5	National Opera Week
February 1, 2018	Deadline for Matching Grants, Projects of Special Merit, Partners in Excellence applications
June 20 - 23, 2018	2018 Annual OPERA America conference in St louis, MO

*Details can be found on the OVI website*

## Opera Conference 2017

Thoughts on the Dallas conference and the state of opera by first time OVI attendee, **Santosh Venkataraman**.



**Santosh Venkataraman is a member of Lyric Opera of Chicago's Young Professional volunteer board. His love of opera has taken him to significant performances and houses around the globe.**

Through my group's OVI membership I had the pleasure of attending the annual OPERA America Conference for the first time. This year's edition was held in Dallas in May, as industry leaders gathered for a conference themed as "*Creating Change: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion*." The event coincided with performances at The Dallas Opera and Fort Worth Opera.

OVI President **Rhonda Sweeney** was among the speakers at the opening session. I believe there were about 20 people present through OVI in addition to professionals representing nearly every opera company in the country and many in Canada as well.

My experience in opera has been as a volunteer for **Lyric Opera of Chicago's Young Professionals** group for the last five years and I have attended opera all over the world for the last eight. And although I have been to many of the most important houses in the world such as Sydney, Glyndebourne, Vienna, Zurich and La Scala, I have also been privileged to see many opera companies domestically with Dallas becoming the 15<sup>th</sup> company in the United States to which I have witnessed a performance.

It is this latter reason why I was heartened by the innovative and important work being done by many less heralded opera companies in the United States. It answered the question posed by **David McIntosh** during his brilliant presentation in a panel titled "Innovation and Ideas: Becoming a Learning Organization." His question was "*Are you a museum or a movie theater?*"

What McIntosh meant was not a slight towards either entity since each serves a purpose. While a museum provides a window to the past, the movie theater is in the business of providing what is current. Too often opera has been accused of being a museum and justifiably so. At the same time, there are many companies in the United States clearly vested in the future.

Perhaps the best example is the host of next year's conference, **Opera Theatre of St. Louis**. The company, under the guidance of the excellent general director **Timothy O'Leary** who also doubles as Chairman of the Board at

**OPERA America**, has presented numerous noteworthy new American works in recent years such as *Champion*, 27 and *Shalimar the Clown* while at the same time paying tribute to opera's role as a museum with the North American premiere of Handel's *Richard Coeur-de-Lion*. Such innovation makes St. Louis an opera destination like no other and I look forward to marking six straight years at OTSL for myself in June.

Many companies are coming up with ideas to draw diverse audiences. I had the pleasure of learning about one of the more unique ideas from **Texas Hill Country Opera**. Donors sponsored a program in which homeless people attended while sitting next to the well-heeled; a mixture of classes you rarely see in society, much less in the opera house. The **Dallas Opera** opens its doors for the semifinal stage of singer auditions free of charge with only a nominal fee for parking. Even better is that those who attend will witness these performers being backed by a full orchestra.

*It is up to opera to make itself relevant and speak to contemporary audiences.*

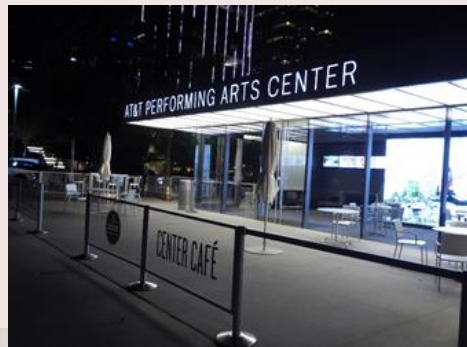
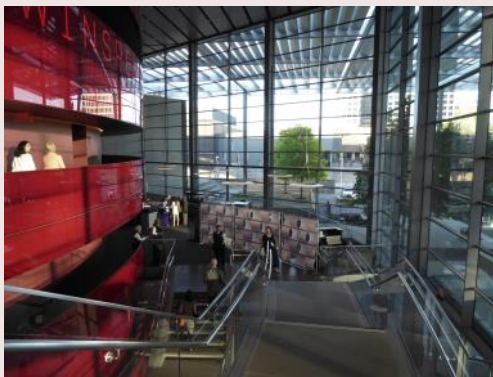
It was similarly uplifting to see winners of **Discovery Grants** from OPERA America's **Opera Grants for Female Composers** present some of their ideas. **Frances Pollock's** *Stinney*, about the 1944 execution of a South Carolina teenager, has already been reviewed favorably in a staging in Baltimore and surely has a bright future. The biennial **Robert L.B. Tobin Director-Designer Showcase** featured collaborative efforts of a production of **Tom Cipullo's** *Glory Denied* and two of **Wagner's** *Der Flegiende Hollander*. I look forward to seeing where they go from here.

Seeing Americans flourish in the creative process is an important step for opera in the United States. It is sad that in many ways American composers and directors receive little respect within their own country. I recently saw **Philip Glass's** *The Perfect American* at **Chicago Opera Theater** and saw his work *The Trial* in St. Louis. It is noteworthy that the majority of his world premieres have taken place in Europe rather than in his native land. That's why it is always impressive when American companies take on the challenge of world premieres such as the presentation last year of *The Scarlet Letter* at **Opera Colorado**, which I had the pleasure of attending. I enjoyed meeting both composer **Lori Laitman** and director **Beth Greenberg** in Dallas.

In my view, whether opera is relevant or not in today's cultural landscape is beside the point. It is up to opera to make itself relevant and speak to contemporary audiences. This is happening in many places; the question is whether it is occurring enough?



## Doings in Dallas



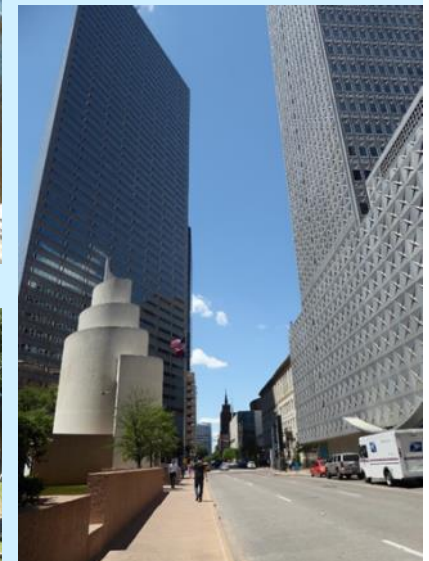
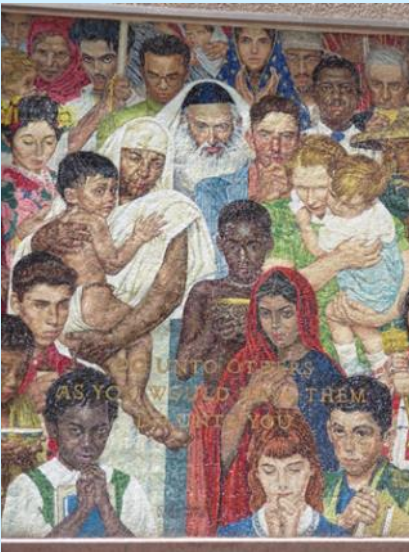
Audiences are overstimulated,  
hyper-connected,  
overcommitted,  
cynical  
and self-focused.



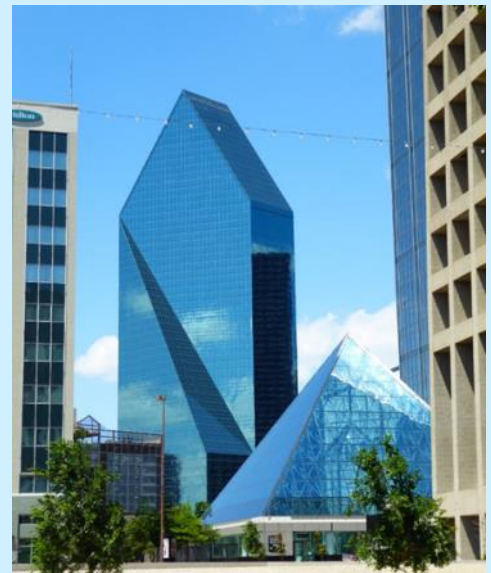
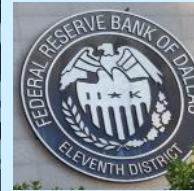












## Volunteers Help Capitol City Opera 'Keep On Keeping On'

A 21st century model for volunteerism

ATLANTA - For three nights recently Atlanta's **Capitol City Opera Company** "dreamt the impossible dream" with artistic director Michael Nutter's take on the Tony Award-winning musical, *Man of La Mancha*. That same weekend the Company's **Opera Outreach for Children** team performed composer **John Davies'** operatic adaptation of *The Billy Goats Gruff* for more than 40 delighted young people and their families (an OVI Grant supported endeavor).

Helping to bring all this activity to fruition were a group of people who, while just as visible at all the performances as those on stage, went mostly unnoticed in the larger scheme of the weekend activities.

They were the volunteers, that core group of people at Capitol City Opera who demonstrate by their actions the success of what the OVI mission seeks to achieve: to "advocate for the development and advancement of volunteerism in support of opera."

Even though many of Capitol City Opera's volunteers are not millennials they do fit perfectly into the new millennial-focused philosophy of 'micro-volunteering' (see the "Mission Driven Volunteer" white paper on the OVI web site under Resources for Volunteers).

Capitol City's current core of 25-30 volunteers was pulled together by OVI member **Donna Angel**, Capitol City's founder, artistic director emeritus, and Board Vice President. Working closely with **Michael Lindsay**, chairman of the group, she is charged with making sure volunteer support needs are filled at all the Company's functions.

About four years ago then Board volunteer chair **Derrick Hinmon** began informally recruiting volunteers to fill short duration, hands on assignments rather than asking them to make longer term commitments that involved being on a committee for a period of time, and attend planning meetings and other associated activities.

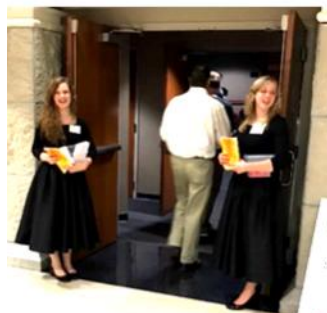
"We realized our volunteers were looking for something that was quick and easy to do, required a small commitment of their time, was convenient in terms of fitting into their every-day lifestyle, and provided them a sense of *giving* satisfaction," Angel said.

"For us, as a volunteer-driven organization, it was a successful way to meet the critical people need we have to cover 'front-of-the-house' duties at our various functions. We didn't realize that Derrick's approach perfectly fit the new micro-volunteer needs and expectation concept," she added.

So in the larger scheme of things at Capitol City Opera, how is the value of this loosely knit group measured?

Perhaps Ireland's RTE Lyric FM announcer Aedin Gormley said it best in an on air comment she made recently about volunteerism in her country:

*"Volunteers are only noticed when they don't happen."*

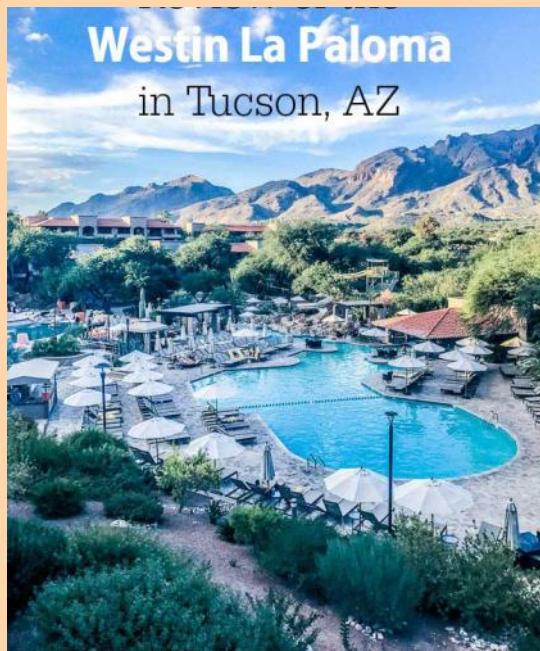




***Make your Plans now:***

**Fall Focus meeting  
in Tucson, Arizona**

**October 13-15, 2017**



*....also*

**Save the date for the OVI/Opera America Spring  
Conference June 20 - 23, 2018 in St Louis, MO**

