

OPERA VOLUNTEERS INTERNATIONAL

GOOD IDEAS

Opera Volunteers International was formed as a nonprofit educational and charitable organization of volunteers to promote awareness of opera and encourage its growth in communities through volunteer activities; to stimulate interest and participation in opera for the benefit of the cultural, educational and musical life of a community; and to cooperate with other groups that share these objectives.

As part of its mission to provide support to opera volunteers, OVI has for many years collected interesting, innovative and successful project ideas from its members.

Groups that support companies both small and large, new and established, have contributed to this collection of projects. We have chosen to feature projects and programs that are primarily volunteer-conceived and volunteer-implemented. Many of the challenges faced by any one group of opera volunteers are those faced by every guild: raising funds, educating opera-goers, maintaining and increasing a vibrant membership and building audience.

While every idea may not fit your needs, there are, we hope, enough ideas on which to build your own successful projects.

EDUCATION PROJECTS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Guild Adopts a School

The Guild selected one school, grades K-5, and agreed to finance the production of a commissioned opera, *Jack Pine*. The Guild then invited two teachers from the school to attend a workshop put on by the parent company's education program.

Finally, the Guild set up a program so that the school could create a performance of an opera written by students. The school was given supplies for art work and professional help for their own opera presentation.

The Guild was motivated to do this program for a variety of reasons; primarily they are concerned about the cutback of arts and arts teachers, especially in rural and inner-city schools. While this project began as a way for the Guild to support the 50th anniversary of Vancouver Opera; it was so successful that the Guild now seeks to make this a permanent project. They are pleased with the success of the program and the fact that it made a small amount of money go a long way.

Vancouver Opera Guild

The Opera, *Daisy*

The one-act opera *Daisy* is based on the life of Juliette Gordon Low, founder of the Girl Scouts of America. The audience has a

glimpse into U. S. history through costumes, props and music. The concept of a woman in power in the early 1900's was revolutionary and still inspiring today. Over 600 Girl Scouts and 5,500 junior high students will see this free opera in April 2010. Each child will receive an "Opera Funtime" booklet which gives the storyline and music as well as opera etiquette and learning guides through games and puzzles. Thanks to multiple donations and volunteers, production costs ran under \$8,000.00.

YPO's goal is to foster the appreciation of opera in junior high school children, the target group being 7th and 8th graders.

Young Patronesses of the Opera

Opera Through the Looking Glass

To increase young people's enjoyment of opera, the St. Louis Opera Guild and company created a semester-long course given at two schools: an eighth-grade class at a performing arts magnet school, and a class of gifted fifth-graders. The course covers the history of opera, study of the particular opera, including background of the composer and the librettist and study of the country in which the opera takes place. Students also learn about technical components of opera such as set and costume design. Students then choose a scene from the opera, which they rehearse and subsequently perform for Opera Theatre's artistic director. Students build their own set models, which are then displayed in the lobby of the theatre.

The curriculum emphasizes the process of producing an opera in order to heighten the students' appreciation and awareness. Equal time is given to studying the opera's music and story. Volunteer docents and members of the opera staff teach the course.

The is no charge to the schools. Any costs incurred are covered by the opera's education budget. Docents often donate audio and visual materials to the project.

St. Louis Opera Guild

Opera House at Children's Museum

Colorado Opera Festival Guild worked with college students and the staff and volunteers to construct and install a model opera house at the Children's Museum. The 9-foot tall opera house was designed in separate panels and towers that screw together and can be dismantled for moving. The opera house includes a stage that is slightly raised from the floor, a side dressing area with mirrors, stage lights, sound capabilities, costumes and hats for the children to play with, and a ramped floor to make it wheelchair accessible. It is a place where children can experience on a daily basis many of the elements of opera such as music, costumes and fantasy play.

The opera house was designed by a college student with expertise in set design and construction. Guild members helped with construction, artwork and painting; they collected and constructed hats and costumes for the opera house.

Colorado Opera Festival Guild

Peanut Butter and Puccini

Peanut Butter and Puccini is a family adventure that includes a tour of the opera house, a Guild-made sack lunch, and performance of a one-act opera.

Tickets are sold in advance to individuals and groups from day care centers, summer school classes, and participants in the OPERATION Opera Community Outreach Program. Tickets are provided free of charge through agencies serving individuals who would otherwise be unable to attend a live opera performance. A corporate sponsor underwrites part of the cost.

One hundred people are accommodated each day, and adults must be accompanied by a child. Participants are divided into small groups to visit the main stage, backstage, catwalk, orchestra pit, make-up and wig rooms, and the costume area with explanations about each area from a Guild guide. Staff is available to answer questions and do demonstrations.

After the tour, chorus members join the children for lunch. During the afternoon session, one act of an opera is performed preceded by preparation and a question and answer session.

Des Moines Metro Opera Guild

Opera in the Classroom

A single class receives a series of four visits by specially trained volunteer docents. The content and activities of the first visits (general information about opera, opera singing, terminology and familiar opera music) lead to a class performance of an opera from the standard repertoire with costumes, makeup, props and all the trappings of a real production that are brought to the classroom by the docent. The cast, conductor and orchestra are the students who lip-synch to recorded excerpts with a narrator illuminating the plot and the action.

The docent's preparatory lessons are supplemented by the teacher using materials supplied by the opera Education

Department. Third- through sixth-grade students gain background knowledge of opera that rivals that of most adults.

The third visit is a rehearsal of the pantomimed performance of the actual selected opera. The final session is the performance of the opera, which is usually staged in a room large enough so that other classes and parents may attend.

Lyric Opera of Chicago Lecture Corps

Ready, Set...Opera!

RSO is an interactive, 45-minute, staged and costumed program that introduces children in grades K through 5 to opera. Opera is rarely performed in the public schools, and this program helps cultivate and grow interest through an age-appropriate, in-school program for children. It serves the Chattanooga Symphony and Opera Guild's purpose to support and further the interests of the CSOA through fundraising and bringing about an awareness of and an interest in opera to the community. It allows CSOA to expand its role as an essential and active partner, working with the school systems to provide music education. The objectives of this program include the promotion of children's cognitive, language and social skills and physical development, while building their artistic talents. Objectives are measured through participation of, observation of, and written communication from the students.

Chattanooga Opera Guild

Operatunity

The purpose of Operatunity is to enhance the opera experience and education of high school students. Operatunity features a

pizza and pop dinner for high school students followed by a presentation by a speaker about some aspect of the current production. The students are then bused to the opera house to see a technical dress rehearsal.

Students in vocal and instrumental music, theatre arts, and English departments at area high schools are invited to participate. The Guild locates venues and transportation. Students are charged a nominal fee just to cover food and transportation.

Friends of the Opera (Opera Grand Rapids)

Youth Patch Program

Working with scouting, Camp Fire, and classroom groups, the Guild developed an Opera Patch program that fosters appreciation for opera through organized, supervised activities.

The patch is earned by completing a series of activities chosen from a list of ten options approved by the scout and Camp Fire organizations. The choice of activities is made in conjunction with a group leader; however, one mandatory activity is verified attendance at an opera performance and/or opera dress rehearsal.

The Guild developed and produced the patches and the brochures describing the program and the requirements to earn the patch. They also attended youth program leader meetings to promote the patch and participated in other promotional activities. The opera company handled patch order forms and open rehearsal reservations. The Youth Education Committee of

the Guild distributed the patches to the youths who earned them along with a congratulatory note.

The nominal charge for the dress rehearsals covered the cost of the program.

Opera Omaha Guild

Your Child and Music

Many parents are unsure when, where, or how to begin a musical education for their children. To help answer their questions, the guild developed a full-day program of workshops on topics such as "How, Why, When and Where To Develop A Child's Interest In Music;" "How to Design The Best Listening Environment in the Home;" "What Scientists Are Saying About Music and Cognitive Development;" as well as sessions that explore new areas in the field of music. The best available speakers on each subject are chosen to present a program and provide related take-home materials. Tickets entitle each participant to a get-acquainted breakfast, a keynote address by an opera singer parent, and a morning and afternoon program from among a choice of eight.

Houston Grand Opera Guild

"Opera Ambassadors" Educational Outreach Program

Annually, Central Pennsylvania Youth Opera goes to public and private schools and home-schooler associations to introduce opera to schoolchildren in grades K through 12. CPYO brings young performers from the company, an accompanist, and a

young CPYO docent narrator to perform highlights of an upcoming production.

Schools are sent educational information regarding the opera being performed, including background on the composer, plus a synopsis of the opera. After each program, CPYO members conduct a question- and-answer session. A questionnaire is sent to each participating class for feedback.

All of the volunteers are young members of the CPYO. They are given a series of four or five weekly rehearsals to prepare for the program. The program is managed and funded through annual grants and efforts of the Executive Director and volunteers. The program is offered free of charge to participating schools.

Central Pennsylvania Youth Opera

Young Hands on Opera

Young Hands on Opera tries to expose school-aged children and their families to opera in an informal environment. To do this and to build audiences for summer youth opera performances, the project provides an evening of events that includes an informal pizza dinner, mini singing and acting classes, and makeup and costume demonstrations. The finale of the evening is a performance by the children for their parents of a mini-aria about pasta.

Young Hands on Opera has used Black History Month as a platform for introducing minority students to opera. The evening featured the star of a youth opera performance of a work based on the true story of a freed slave.

Central City Opera House Association Guild

Sunday Showcase

The Sunday Showcase was planned and executed by the Performing Arts League to highlight and celebrate school-age talented and the organizations that foster and support that talent. This was a first-time project involving the community and promoting youth involvement in the arts while counteracting the cuts and elimination of arts in the schools. The production featured performances by 150 outstanding young student artists representing 40 local schools and organizations.

Performing Arts League of Chattanooga

ON! (Opera Now!)

ON! Was a creation of the Junior Opera Guild, and organization of high-school students from 19 Dallas-area schools whose goals are to provide cultural and civic leadership training, to develop future opera audiences, to provide a setting for interaction among students from both public and private high schools, and to raise funds for the student performance program of the Dallas Opera.

Under Guild guidance the students planned and executed a multi-faceted party with six student bands, a professional band, a midway of games, a casino, midway-style foods, a raffle, fortunetellers, a caricaturist and prizes. The project received underwriting, and many gifts, goods and services were donated. Parents acted as advisors and chaperoned the party, games, food service and registration.

The event organization consisted of about 70 student chairs and committee members coordinating acquisitions, underwriting, food and decorations. Each participating school had at least three students on the citywide committee, one of whom served as the director of his/her school's in-school committee made up of representatives from each grade level.

Dallas Opera Guild

Ballads, Bugs and Ballet

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

Central City Opera House Association Guild

EDUCATION PROJECTS FOR ADULTS

Talking Opera: Members Preview/Met Opera's HD Simulcasts

This is a collaborative outreach by the Guild and the Foothills Performing Arts Center where the Metropolitan Opera's HD simulcasts are screened. Presentations are given before each performance to inform viewers about the opera and sometimes about the performers involved. It has increased attendance at the screenings and attracted new members to the Opera Guild.

Glimmerglass Opera Guild

Austin Opera Guild Enrichment Series

Three times per season AOG holds sessions in private homes to provide information on an opera and on its production to enhance the experience, deepen knowledge and provide background while engaging opera attendees in lively discussion. The guild often features the opera company's stage director or utilizes experts from the academic community.

Austin Opera Guild

At Ease with Opera for *Silent Night*

This educational initiative held in conjunction with the National World War I Museum was designed to promote the opera *Silent Night* and teach the significance of this opera in relationship to WWI. The event was conceived by the guild; the museum provided facilities, equipment and coordination. The university

provided a lecturer for one of three different events. The film *Joyeux Noel* was also screened.

Kansas City Opera Guild

Opera Study Group

The Opera Study Group was formed to broaden the operatic education of its members and guests through group discussion based on a scholarly presentation, fellowship of opera enthusiasts and providing a welcoming environment for newcomers and novices.

The group meets six times a year. Members select topics and prepare scholarly presentations that include information, musical excerpts and visual aids. The group meets in homes or appropriately themed locations. One meeting a year is devoted to a guest speaker who volunteers his or her talents and expertise. Several tour meetings have been held.

The volunteer co-chairs recruit hostesses, locations and presenters a year in advance. The intimate nature of the gatherings allows seasoned opera lovers to expand their skills in addressing less sophisticated groups, and new members appreciate a non-threatening yet mind-expanding environment to pursue their opera knowledge.

Opera Omaha Guild

Regional Gatherings

Gatherings are intimate social occasions hosted by League members in their homes throughout the Los Angeles area and Orange County. A volunteer speaker discusses an upcoming opera. Gatherings also serve as opportunities for new member

recruitment. Admission is free and refreshments are provided by a committee of League members who also assist the hosts. A League coordinator helps find hosts, appropriate venues and willing volunteers. The coordinator is assisted by one or two regional coordinators in each of nine geographic areas.

Opera League of Los Angeles

Up on Opera Talk!

A series of educational presentations was designed not only to preview upcoming operas but to present master classes, backstage tours and in-depth interviews with opera stars and producers.

Programs utilize venues such as a museum, performing arts center, and opera rehearsal hall. Some even incorporate a live performance from the season. Every talk has a theme and a sponsor. Hostesses and volunteer servers provide the refreshments at each event themed to the presentation. Guests enjoying Cuban Art were served Cuban coffee and Cuban tapas while enjoying a Young Artist recital; for *Madama Butterfly*, husband and wife stars were interviewed and guests were served Japanese desserts and tea.

An annual feature and highlight of the season is the Cognoscenti Roundtable where opera buffs and opera company administrators are invited to preview the upcoming season and review highlights of the season past. Audience members are invited to try to stump the experts.

Multimedia presentations also have been offered and have developed into polished previews under the direction of one of the committee members.

The Camerata (Florida Grand Opera)

Talking Opera

Glimmerglass opera created a program of four free seminars for adults designed to give insight into the coming season's operas. Each seminar gives a behind-the-scenes look at one of the operas, from details about the opera, such as its background, historical framework and influences, to various aspects of the current production. The seminars are usually an hour long and are scheduled in the evening. The professional presenters volunteer their service. The Guild plans and implements the four programs and provides refreshments. The atmosphere is informal, affording an opportunity to socialize and exchange ideas.

Glimmerglass opera Guild

Speakers Bureau

Originated by the Opera League, the Speakers Bureau is administered by the company using League volunteers. Speakers address schools; civic, social and philanthropic groups; and library audiences throughout Southern California. Training is provided by the Education Division of LA Opera. Speakers can create and schedule their own assignments with civic organizations, as well as respond to requests from schools, senior centers, libraries, etc. The Education Division supervises and provides the necessary materials to ensure professional presentations.

A written and verbal skills assessment of volunteers is in place as well as training done jointly with the company. Meeting with the community to develop venues is an important part of the project.

Opera League of Los Angeles

Community Lectures

Volunteer members of the Lecture Corps have given hundreds of free lectures about the season's opera in locations throughout Chicago and its suburbs. In addition to these lectures for adult audiences, lectures have been given in junior and senior high schools to prepare them for student performances of an opera from the current season. Lecturers attend workshops for each opera and share information about the composer, background of the opera, the libretto and the music. Each volunteer is expected to prepare lectures with music excerpts on at least two operas each season and to give a minimum number of lecture presentations on each of their chosen operas.

Scheduling, training and monitoring is done by volunteer members of the Lecture Corps, which has its own by-laws.

While lectures are given without charge, organizations are encouraged to make a donation to the Education Department to support its programs.

Lyric Opera of Chicago Lecture Corps

College of Opera Knowledge

This project consists of a series of ten lectures given by five Opera Guild volunteers. The series covers the entire history of opera, from its development by the Camerata around the 1600 to contemporary opera. The lectures involve extensive audio and video clips, slides and photographs.

The lectures are given on ten successive Tuesday evenings in a lecture hall at the headquarters of a local nonprofit foundation who donate the use of the room. The only cost of the project is the printing and mailing of a flyer which was sent to season subscribers and single ticket purchasers. Newspaper stories,

radio announcements and articles in the opera company newsletter along with the flyers drew a standing-room only audience. The lecture series is going to be videotaped.

The Kansas City Lyric Opera Guild

Development of the Senior Audience for Opera

The project goal is to expand the senior audience to offer performing arts opportunities at affordable prices. To that end a narrated, slightly condensed version of *Così fan Tutte* was performed to a packed house. Among the attendees were seniors aged from 55 to 95, including 51 from a nursing home. Many of them had never seen an opera.

The following year we performed several Senior Special Concerts throughout the season. Our next performance will be a slightly condensed version of *La Cenerentola* with narration for our senior population. We have learned that the venue must be handicapped accessible and functional for those with mobility issues.

Opera NOVA

YouTube Opera Preview

While the guild has done live opera previews in the opera house prior to each performance, these previews are only accessible to those who can come early and physically are able to attend.

The guild developed the idea of videotaping previews of a much shorter nature that could be accessed through the opera company's web site at any time by anyone interested in attending the opera or just learning about it. Using existing volunteer guild speakers, the previews have received over 1500 hits

Kansas City Lyric Opera Guild

ARTIST SUPPORT

Guild Meet and Greets

The first goal of the Guild Meet and Greets 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 second goal is to showcase the Guild's volunteer support of the season's productions.

The event incorporates an opportunity for artists and staff to introduce themselves, time to socialize and time for remarks by the artistic director. The opera company is known for being hospitable and the Meet and Greet events provide the foundation for that reputation.

The Meet and Greets are promoted within the Guild as a volunteer opportunity and benefit of membership.

Cincinnati Opera Guild

Cast Care

Amarillo Opera brings in guest artists, directors, stage managers, and conductors for both the fall and spring opera productions. Out of town guests are given a casual welcome party on the day of their arrival. Guild members provide food for this dinner that allows the guests to meet one another, the opera sponsors, and members of the Board of Trustees and the Guild in an informal setting.

Cast Care provides evening meals to the whole cast and crew the last four rehearsal nights prior to the performance. The Cast Care coordinator finds sponsors for each of the four meals for between

sixty and one hundred people. These meals help create a family mood and build community while serving the needs of the cast.

The project lasts from three weeks before the beginning of the rehearsals to the last dress rehearsal twice a year. The Guild works as a whole to provide support to the hospitality chair and the *Cast Care* coordinator for this project.

Amarillo Opera BRAVO

Vocal Competition for High School Students

The Vocal Competition project fosters the study of vocal performance and encourages young people to pursue classical singing as a career by providing them with an opportunity to compete with their peers, perform in front of a live audience, be judged and critiqued by a panel of unbiased professionals, and further their education in order to help launch their careers.

One junior or senior student, male or female, from each high school or home school association in the area is eligible for the competition. Each must be recommended by his or her high school music teacher or private vocal instructor. There is one winner and a first and second runner up, each receiving a monetary award. All contestants have opportunity to speak to the judges after the competition, which is open to the public.

Up to 30 volunteers serve on committees ranging from administrative to fundraising.

Performing Arts League of Chattanooga

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 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 can contact volunteers directly using the Directory, sometimes developing long-standing relationships.

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 while enjoying this social event. These pictures are edited 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.

Michigan Opera Theatre Volunteer Association

Artist Support

For over four decades the Guild's Support Group's Hospitality Committee has been offering hospitality to visiting artists – singers, orchestra and chorus members, creative teams and crew members. Team members of the support group meet visiting artists upon arrival, providing them with transportation and a welcome basket, arrange accommodations, introduce them to the city's attractions and provide opportunities for them to meet the entire production team. For locally based artists, orchestra and stage crew the volunteers provide an informal dinner.

These volunteer services have resulted in company loyalty and lasting friendships among the artists and a sense of accomplishment for the volunteers.

Each volunteer commits to about six weeks of service – usually the time for the run of one production, including rehearsals. The project continues to be a win/win program for both visiting artists and the volunteers. Artists like it, the volunteers like it and it also benefits the company – so they like it too.

Houston Grand Opera Guild

FUNDRAISING TOURS AND EXHIBITS

Opera Themes Á La Table

A theatrical exhibition of the art of table setting served as an original fund-raiser that would attract persons other than those who usually support the opera. Personalities from the world of politics, business and the arts (including the wife of the Prime Minister of Canada) revealed a facet of their talents in creating a table for two inspired by operatic themes.

Thirteen tables were designed by personalities based on thirteen different opera titles. The exhibition was held at a reception hall and was organized in collaboration with specialized boutiques and renowned antique dealers.

The Montreal Opera Guild

Annual Homes Tour

A tour of five private homes with a luncheon at a local restaurant was held on two consecutive Saturdays. Builders, architects, and designers were contacted to locate homes suitable for the tour. The committee then selected from among those whose owners were willing to open to the public. *Tucson Lifestyle Magazine* sponsored the tours and gave the event extensive coverage. Local businesses provided underwriting for additional advertising and rental of vans used to take viewers into gated areas. Volunteers acted as docents and cashiers. Door prizes ranged from champagne dinners to restaurant certificates.

Arizona Opera League of Tucson

Opera Goes to Bed

Opera Goes to Bed was an exhibit of the art of creating a bedroom following an operatic theme. A series of artists each created a different bedroom display, each with a theme taken from a different opera. Besides using their own talents, each creator called upon renowned interior designers, florists, antique dealers and fashion designers.

The bedrooms created by the artists included flowers and greenery under canopy of trees for *La Cenerentola*; a flood of white lace for *Manon Lescaut*; bouquets of white roses adorning chartreuse silk to accentuate the ornate bronzework in Directoire style for *Der Rosenkavalier*; and a camellia and a lace handkerchief to evoke the fragility yet passion for *La Traviata*.

Some of the décor contained details that identified the opera, some conveyed the refinement that we associate with opera, and others were more metaphoric, evoking the symbolism of theater sets.

The Montreal Opera Guild

Kansas City Lyric Opera Guild Trip Program

The guild trip committee plans four opera trips per year for guild members and others, one trip is usually out of country. The committee of five meet once a year in the spring after the upcoming opera seasons in other cities have been announced. From the initial 20-25 possibilities, the committee narrows these down to four or five. Each member of the trip committee becomes a trip leader for one of the four trips. The fifth member of the committee serves as treasurer. Each trip leader plans an exact itinerary and maps out the timeline and the expenses that include the cost of the leader's trip. The final cost per traveler always includes a donation to the guild, typically \$300 for a

domestic trip and \$500 for an international trip. The trip leader publishes and distributes a brochure five to six months prior to the trip. The trips typically need 12 or 13 participants to be viable.

The trip leader communicates with the participants regularly prior to the trip and coordinates the trip itself. At the conclusion of the trip the trip leader compiles the financials including guild profits for the trip and then sends the results to the trips treasurer for review and approval. Finally, the trip leader sends out charitable donation acknowledgement letters to the trip participants.

This is the primary fundraiser for the guild and usually garners between \$25,000 and \$30,000 annually for the guild.

Kansas City Lyric Opera Guild

Yule Walk

Top floral designers decorated five or six area residences for a holiday house walk. Each residence was decorated to reflect the expertise and artistic vision of the florist, who received publicity through advertisements and printed programs. Tickets were sold in advance and at the door. A battalion of volunteers sold tickets, served as hostesses, and filled a multitude of other functions.

Opera Illinois

BOUTIQUES AND SALES

Les Boutiques de Noel

For over four decades, the Opera Guild Christmas boutique is a one-stop shopping extravaganza with nearly 150 booths with goods ranging from jewelry to toys to clothes to food. The Guild begins planning next year's boutique as soon as this year's boutique closes. Duties are handled by Guild members and volunteers.

Shreveport-Bossier Opera Guild

Fall Fair and Follies

The multi-faceted fun event was created to celebrate the opening of the opera season and to increase membership and member participation.

Each year the Fall Fair and Follies has been held in a different and interesting venue: a newly constructed luxury estate, the renovated former metropolitan train station and a private club. The first year thirteen chefs provided hors d'oeuvres and desserts based on recipes from the Guild's cookbook. A booklet of recipes created by the chefs was sold along with copies of the cookbook. A 25-minute follies, written and performed by Guild members, provided a spirited look at the many volunteer opportunities of the Guild. In other years, the Follies parodied the operas of the season, or the entertainment featured winners of our young singers' competition.

The guests have played games based on Guild activities with prizes awarded and a volunteer signup sheet at each. The boutique enjoyed successful sales at the event. Even with the admission price set low to encourage new membership the project has been financially successful.

The Dallas Opera Guild

Port to Port: A Wine and Travel Auction

Port to Port was an elegant evening dinner and auction part to raise funds for the Guild to involve more members of the Guild and Association Boards and to bring more sponsors and donors into the opera family. The event was held at a newly opened luxury hotel. Dinner was preceded by a reception and silent auction of about 100 wine and travel-related items. After dinner, a professional auctioneer auctioned off over 40 items, including a personal wine cellar to be constructed at someone's home, a Mediterranean cruise for two, two cases of French wine, and dinner and the opera with the General Director of the opera company. The Guild also published a Wine and Travel Magazine with articles and ads.

San Francisco Opera Guild

Raree Goes International

The Raree, or street fair, is a fundraising event held on a Saturday in May on private grounds overlooking the San Diego Bay and beyond. A boxed luncheon is provided in the admission price, which includes a drawing for one of many door prizes. There are booths manned by guild members selling gourmet foods, castaway treasures, books and records, and exotic and non-exotic

plants. Entertainment includes strolling musicians, jazz instrumentalists and opera folks singing.

Seven to twelve months of preplanning are needed to carry off this exciting annual event to raise funds, exchange opera ideas and tales, and to have fun for the love of opera.

Point Loma Guild of the San Diego Opera

Mask Sale

The Mask Sale and Auction was conceived as a fundraising event that would tie into the upcoming Carnival in Venice-themed opera ball and would, at the same time, showcase local mask-maker artists.

Local land state artists donated thirty masks, a local mask-maker consigned thirty masks and, through the Italian Consul, thirty Venetian masks were consigned. The masks, in a wide range of prices, were offered for sale and at auction at a local jewelry store. The auctioneer donated his services. The evening included complimentary wine, cheese and pâté.

Bravo-Baton Rouge Area Volunteers for Opera

Lyric Operathon

More than 300 volunteers and opera company and radio station staff organized and operated an eighteen-hour fundraiser featuring music, guest interviews, and information to promote donations and sales of merchandise and premiums to the

listening audience. This event, held for several decades, was usually scheduled to coincide with the start of the opera season, though preparations continued throughout the year.

Volunteer committees got donations of gift certificates and refreshments, and distributed catalogues, which were also inserted in opera programs in the weeks preceding the event.

On broadcast day scores of volunteers manned the phones, processed orders and donations, assisted in the broadcast booth and fed the hungry workers and guests. After the event, weeks of volunteer and staff work were required to see that all purchases were mailed.

Lyric Opera of Chicago Chapters

Green Thumb Sale

The Green Thumb Sale is an opera guild project that is part of the Mayfest in Edmonton. The guild members purchase begonia bulbs from a local supplier, plant them and donate the plants to the sale. Members also start cuttings from their own gardens and donate the rooted plants to the sale. A nursery donates other plants. Homemade cookies and beverages also are sold.

Edmonton Opera Guild

GALAS AND DINNERS

Dine Around

The Guild's successful and popular dining events are held in member' homes, and underwritten by the hosts. The dinners have been catered or prepared by the hosts. Some include a musical program. The size of each group is up to the host to decide. About twelve venues are offered each year, with interesting themes and cuisines such as Passage to India, Welcome, Sakura, White Cliffs of Dover, From Russia with Love, Fiesta Mexican, Orient Express, and Direct from the Met.

Opera Pacific Guild Alliance

Flavors of Midtown

Flavors of Midtown, a month-long community celebration of food and music events is designed to mesh with Opera Omaha and culminating with their Opera Outdoors concert in the park. Taste of Midtown created ticketed 'foodie' events at upscale eateries. Taste of the Opera were more intimate parties hosted by supporters at their own expense. Donors and guests received VIP seating for the Opera Outdoors concert. Midtown Revelry was a ticketed event prior to the concert with opera artist s in attendance. A Flavorful Affair was a patron party on concert night featuring a pre-concert restaurant dinner, VIP seating and post-concert dessert.

Opera Omaha Guild

A Child's Spring Fantasy

The goal of this project was to involve 30- to 50-year-olds in opera, encouraging them to become members of the guild in order to develop a younger base to carry on with volunteer commitment and also to create a new fundraising event.

Young children handed out programs for the Young Artists Program which was "The Three Little Pigs", a children's opera. The short opera was followed by the mothers' fashion show. Following this event food was served: cupcakes, pigs in a blanket, etc. The silent auction netted over \$10,000.

Nashville Opera Guild

Dinner Opera

The aim of Dinner Opera is to present a broad spectrum of musical entertainment to a mixed audience of opera patrons and the general public in a relaxed setting of dining and entertainment. A silent auction precedes dinner. Strolling singers then entertain between mainstage presentations of solos, ensembles, choruses and /or one-act operas. A central theme connects the decorations and program.

Anchorage Opera Company

An Evening *Chez Rossini*

An Evening *Chez Rossini* re-created a Saturday evening at the Paris mansion of Gioacchino Rossini in the 1860s. The Opera Theatre Guild of Rochester offered a festive dinner of Rossini specialties followed by a musicale typical of those that might

have been held at Rossini's home during the latter part of his life. The musicale consisted of arias, songs, and a violin and piano duet of *Péchés de Vieillesse* (Sins of Old Age), all by Rossini.

Opera Theatre Guild of Rochester

World of Wines II: Wine Tasting and Silent Auction

This wine tasting and silent auction was devised as a fundraiser and social event as well as a way to introduce opera to wine connoisseurs. Using the theme of a different winemaking region each year, sixteen wines from that region were available for tasting. Regional appetizers were prepared by guild volunteers to complement the wines. Volunteer hosts poured at each of seven tables. In addition, fine and rare wines were consigned or donated for a silent auction. A drawing was held for a round trip airfare.

Two fifteen-minute periods of opera, operetta and show tunes lightened the evening and showcased an opera performer. A wine supplier arranged for donations from producers. Committee members arranged for wine donations from individuals and businesses.

Bravo-Baton Rouge Area Volunteers for Opera

Italian Opera Dinner

The annual lavish spread of antipasto, salad and various pasta dishes is donated each year by the same opera-loving

restaurateur. A brief but informative program given by an opera conductor or a knowledgeable staff member follows dinner.

South Bay Guild of the San Diego Opera Association

Pasta & Puccini Evening

Apprentice singers from Lake George Opera supplied the entertainment for an evening of Italian-themed food and entertainment to raise funds. A local caterer provided the meal, and merrymakers could pose for photos in front of a picture of a gondola for a virtual, if not actual, souvenir of Venice. In a twist to door prizes, the red, green and white balloons – colors of the Italian flag – that decorated the room were sold. Each contained a number corresponding to one of an array of gifts leading to lively trading and noisemaking.

Lake George Opera

Festival of Fine Dining

The Festival of Fine Dining not only raises money for the opera company, but also promotes camaraderie among its member, many of whom become friends for life. Some of the major donors to the opera began their involvement at one of these unique dinners.

Members participate in a variety of culinary events in private homes and restaurants. Each host underwrites all expenses of his/her Festival of Fine Dining event, including any entertainment. The only expenses to the Guild are for printing and postage.

There have been events large and small, from black tie dinners to informal wine samplings. One hostess had an event for only one other couple, while another had over a hundred guests. There have been events on boats and in airplane hangars, a picnic on the back bay, a clam bake on the beach and many other creative events in members' homes.

Another traditional part of the Festival of Fine Dining is the annual Holiday Tea at a private club. Always held the first week in December amidst the holiday splendor of the club, guests sip sherry or champagne and nibble dainty sandwiches and scones and are seated at tables that are uniquely decorated. Informal modeling, musical entertainment and a raffle complete this special afternoon that is always a sell-out.

Gourmet Diners Guild, Opera Pacific Guild Alliance

Special Occasions

Special Occasions was a series of seventeen dinner parties held during a three-month period to renew interest in the Guild and to raise enough money to sponsor three performances of *Hansel & Gretel*. Member hostesses held private dinner parties with tickets purchased on a first come, first served basis at a premium price.

The series began with dinner hosted by the Governor and First Lady at the Governor's Mansion (a 90-mile bus ride) for 50 people. The parties were varied and creative. Three members hosted bridge luncheons in a local bank for 36 guests. A local dance instructor hosted a Tea for Tots and a Champagne Ballroom Party. Guild members hosted dinners including a New York Italian Dinner, an Evening at a Chateau, a Sunday Garden

Party, an Elegant Candlelight Dinner, a *Madama Butterfly* Pre-curtain Dinner, and a Stay-at-Home Dinner.

The final event was the Titanic party for 60 in a local highrise club, a recreation of the eleven-course last dinner served on the fateful ship.

Guild of Tulsa Opera

Food & Music Around the World: A Gustatory Gala

The 18-member fledgling Opera Guild planned and executed a lavish gala at the Museum of Natural History on the university campus. Most food, items and services were contributed. University staff and students assisted. A grand buffet was arranged and entertainment was provided by 30 students, alumni and faculty. A raffle and silent auction were held. The Capacity audience of 150 guests helped raise more than twice the goal, guild membership increased and subsequent university opera performances sold out well in advance.

Opera Guild/University of Alabama

Cinderella Ball

To promote interest in Lyric Opera of Cleveland's production of Rossini's *La Cenerentola* and to raise money for the opera company the Guild planned an entire season around the Cinderella theme. In March there was a Cinderella Shoe Show to kick off the season: a major department store helped underwrite costs. The next event was the Ball, where many women tried on

the glass slipper for prince Charming. Two hundred fifty people attended the ball in a new building in Cleveland.

Lyric Opera Cleveland Guild

***Aida* Dinner Spectacular**

As a prelude to the production of *Aida* and to raise funds for the opera company and a theater trust, support groups from both organizations staged a dinner dance with entertainment and decorations with an *Aida* theme. The menu included items such as hors d'oeuvres á la Verdi, *Aida* salad and Yummy Mummy soup. Entertainment included a triumphal procession with an elephant, belly dancers and a chorus that sang the music from the Act II finale of *Aida*. Raffle tickets were sold in advance.

A military band (whose captain transcribed the music for the opera), trumpeters, a concert band, a chorus and artists who prepared Egyptian-themed panels participated in the ambitious event that took four months to plan.

Friends of State Opera of South Australia

Serenata Wine Dinner and Auction

The Guild created a signature fundraising event to annually bring in significant funds for Austin Opera. This eagerly anticipated event has included a multi-course dinner with wine pairings, live and silent auctions focused on fine wines and other high dollar items, operatic entertainment and the honoring of arts

philanthropists. Dancing to a live band followed the close of the live and silent auctions.

As the event has grown bigger and more successful, the Guild has opted to use more professional services to raise the quality of some aspects of the event, such as catering services, professional auctioneer, professional photographer/videographer, professional entertainment and some marketing assistance. Automation of many aspects of the live and silent auctions made those activities run more smoothly and decreased the need for staff assistance. Company staff provided technical assistance and acted as advisors.

Austin Opera Guild

Outrageous Opera Outings (OOO)

A black-tie, red carpet, musical Saturday evening was designed to feature the lighter side of opera while raising funds. Each year has had a different theme, but each involved young opera singers, dancing, and a buffet supper in the center courtyard of a new mall.

In addition to music, food and door prizes, the event has featured a dessert contest judged by a television news personality. Television news coverage was an added benefit.

La Jolla Guild