

Opera Volunteers International

Volume 30, Number 4

www.operavol.org

Winter 2006

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JULY 19-22

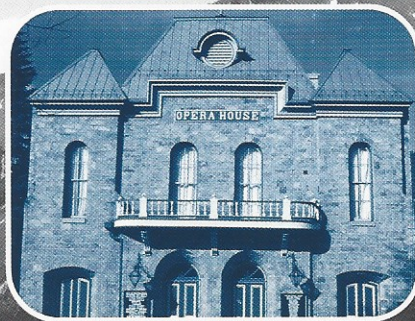
The Central City Opera House Association Guild of Denver, Colorado is pleased to host the 2007 Opera Volunteers International Conference. Conference Site Chair, **Nancy Parker**, and her committee are preparing an educational, entertaining and interesting four days in the Colorado Rockies and all for us.

The conference opera will be *The Saint of Bleeker Street* by Gian Carlo Menotti plus there will be opportunities to see Central City's other productions as well.

More information will be forthcoming in the next OVI Newsletter and from the Conference 2007 Registration Committee.

INSIDE

Resource Showcase	
Biography	2
President's Letter	
Gerald Elijah Report	3
News From The Regions	4
Made In China	7



Resource Showcase

In early December, each guild and support group president will receive a letter with information on the Resource Showcase. An entry form will be enclosed. This important undertaking of OVI affords an opportunity for guilds and groups to demonstrate their resourcefulness and ingenuity.

Among the entries which were successful in previous years are Artists Services, Advocacy, Audience Development,

Education, Fund Raising, Support Group Organization, Membership Development, Publications, and Volunteerism and Services.

An award of \$250 will be given to each winning group. At the OVI Conference in Denver/Central City next July 19-22, winners will have a chance to present their entries.

Your entry must be received by March 25, 2007 to qualify. Watch for my letter and the entry form. I hope to hear from you!

Eunice M. Ganteaume

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BIOGRAPHY

WILMA WILCOX, *Regional Coordinator, Central Region*

Dr. Wilma B. Wilcox is past president of the Lyric Opera Guild in Kansas City and former Regional Director for North Central when it was called OGI. She first learned about opera as her grandfather listened to the Texaco broadcasts every week. Then in the early 70's she ushered at the San Francisco Opera for a few seasons, while teaching in the area. She was a supernumerary in a few KC operas including Carmen when OGI was there previously for a Conference

She travels extensively and visits opera in many cities around the world. She has been to 46 countries and has been to opera in several of them. She lived for ten years in Saudi Arabia, and five years in Japan. In Japan she joined a community group that sang opera choruses for fun. She will

add five countries this year: Paraguay, Argentina, Brazil, Australia and New Zealand. She will go to the opera for the first time in Sydney, Melbourne, Wellington and Auckland in September.

Her PhD is in linguistics curriculum and instruction from the University of Kansas and she has just retired from teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages. She dabbles in languages and enjoys opera in the original language.



SHIRLEY LITCHFIELD-BIRD, *Regional Coordinator, Mountain Region*

My name is Shirley Litchfield-Bird: I am the new Mountain Regional Coordinator. I have chosen for my theme this year "Getting to know you" (and that is exactly what I want to do).

I was raised in a musical family, sang professionally at an early age, and earned a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Voice. I was President of Barrington Chapter, Lyric Opera of Chicago for 5 years, and President of Arizona Opera League-Phoenix. I have held many positions as Chairman of various

events on both boards, and also served on the Chapters Executive Board Lyric Opera of Chicago.

I have not quite conquered the computer yet. We had a virus (computer) but am now operative.

I have been busy recruiting new members for OVI and would like to see our membership grow throughout our region. **Membership, Fund Raisers and Education** are the three most important activities in any support organization. I am here to help you in the Mountain Region attain these goals.

Salut!

New members and renewing members, individual members and support group members, music lovers and opera lovers all we are so pleased to welcome you in or welcome you back to OVI.

As memberships roll in, I marvel at our diversity. Here in the U.S. we are represented in 32 states from one coast to the other, from Alaska down to our southern tip. We stretch beyond our borders up to Canada and across to Australia!

The capacities of our opera houses range from 300 to 3500 seats; the number of performances our companies present varies from 2 to 40 each year. The dates of our "seasons" cover the calendar.

The number of volunteers in our support group organizations vary from 24 to 2000 members; the hours they generously contribute total all the way from 3000 to 8000 a year, and the dollar amounts that their efforts produce for their companies reached from \$14,000 to \$300,000 last year!

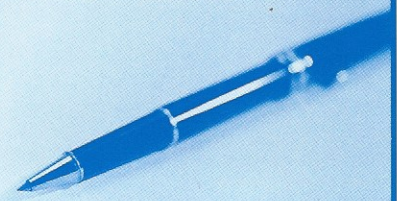
If our variety is amazing, our similarities are remarkable too. We are arts, music, OPERA lovers; we reach out to educate and encourage opera in our communities; we are staunch supporters of our respective companies and we generously give our time and talent and our dollars. We reach out to avail ourselves of the best, most current, interesting ways of accomplishing our objectives and providing these services.

Opera Volunteers International is here to help you with services to accomplish your missions, objectives and goals no matter what the size of your organization. It is what we are here for.

Please call on us soon!

Fern Grauer

President



In the previous Newsletter it was reported that Opera Theatre of St. Louis held its annual Artist in Training Spring Recital and that over 25 attended. It should read that over 250 attended.

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

By *Gerald Elijah*, Vice-President, Outreach

With most of our support groups and volunteers reinvigorated and well underway for a new season of operas (and the remainder who have summer festival seasons busily preparing to start all over again), I and your Regional Coordinators are standing by ready to help with advice, or to make those connections to resources that you need.

As membership renewals are now progressing, we will also be contacting you if we don't hear from you to remind you how much you would miss us if your membership lapses. Surely you don't want to miss out on the dynamite Conference taking place next summer (2007) in the beautiful state of Colorado! Meeting your peers, and participating in these exciting educational and cultural experiences is one of the major benefits of OVI membership-and such fun. You can help make it even more

productive by keeping your Regional Coordinator informed about your questions, worries and operational concerns-it will help us frame the exciting and educational workshops and presentations being planned. This is YOUR conference, and we want it to meet YOUR real needs.

Be sure if you have new officers in your group that you inform us when you renew, so that we can properly communicate. Let the office know, but please, also inform me and your Regional Coordinator. After your renewal has been completed you will be receiving a Support Group Profile (which is to be returned to me). Please complete it as completely as possible. It provides important demographic information for our international organization in addition to the necessary contact data.

Good Wishes for success in your volunteering, and I look forward to hearing from you as the season progresses.



off the 2007 season's activities will be a new undertaking, an orchestra and company picnic, sure to be another success and part of the **Friends** expanding support.

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- | | | |
|----------------|----------------------|----------------|
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| Maryland | Mississippi | North Carolina |
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- | | | |
|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| Connecticut | Delaware | Maine |
| Massachusetts | New Hampshire | New Jersey |
| New York | Pennsylvania | Rhode Island |
| Vermont | | |

NEW YORK

Glimmerglass Opera honored its volunteers at a reception following the Sunday matinee of *Pirates* on August 27. General Director, Michael MacLeod, expressed his thanks to all of **Glimmerglass Opera Guild's** volunteers. He presented the Volunteer of the Year Award to Abbie Kreh Gibson, Chair of the Guild's Education Committee, in recognition of the programs she has directed, including the "Talking Opera" series.

Building upon the success of the 2006 summer season, **Friends of Lake George Opera** are busily planning for this year's new season of events supporting a year round adult education series as well as in-school performance schedules. A very successful MEET and GREET activity initiated last year to honor the summer season artists as they begin rehearsals will continue. Marie Erkes, assumes the post of General Chair for March's Pasta and Puccini event. Topping

FLORIDA

Young Patronesses of the Opera (YPO) support group of Florida Grand Opera helped celebrate the opening of The Carnival Center for the Performing Arts on October 28. The Center is the home of the Sanford and Delores Ziff Ballet Opera House.

YPO also celebrated their 51st annual fundraiser on October 21. Proceeds from this event go to support their educational programs throughout the year. In cooperation with the Florida Grand Opera and Miami-Dade County Public Schools' Division of Life Skills and Special Projects, YPO will hold its annual Opera Funtime Teacher's Workshop for over 100 Miami-Dade County music teachers using their *Aida* Funtime activity book.

Following a series of three successful Summer Salons, **Sarasota Opera Guild** plans for the 2007 season are well under way. The September General Meeting featured performances by tenor Eduardo Calcano and pianist Kristen M. Conn. Opera seminars presented by Ed Riggan, well attended and successful since 1994, resumed in October. Guild members attending the Annual Meeting on October 15th heard from General Director, Sheryl Shreckengost. She stressed how important the Guild's continuing efforts of support are to the company's rebuilding process. Everyone is looking forward to the re-opening of the opera house scheduled for March 2008. A Gala Celebration was scheduled in November to honor Helen Rogers 100th birthday and the contribution she has made to Sarasota Opera.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Last summer the Summer Opera Guild was able to support The Summer Theater Opera Company with an appreciated contribution of \$10,000. Ever busy and involved, Guild members will be traveling to Florida next March for Sarasota Opera's performances of *Halka* and *Attila*.

Central Region**Wilma Wilcox***wilmawilcox@yahoo.com*

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Arkansas	Iowa	Kansas
Minnesota	Missouri	Nebraska
North Dakota	Oklahoma	South Dakota

MISSOURI

The Opera Theatre of St. Louis Guild has in its membership 350 really active persons who participate in a large number of activities. They are called upon to house our artists, provide transportation, help dress the artists for their performances, be receptionists in the office, and handle the many mailings throughout the year. That's to name only a few of the volunteer activities. Altogether they have amassed a total of over 14,000 hours in 2006 alone. Included in these hours is the Docent Committee which presents talks, on opera, to audiences ranging from grade school children to senior groups. They never turn down a request.



Bob Paley of Mansanto Fund, Soprano Shirley Verret and Curtis Finch Jr. at the annual Artists in Training Spring Recital sponsored by Opera Theatre of St. Louis.

Great Lakes Region**Mary Ellen Clancy***meclancy@sbcglobal.net*

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Michigan	Ohio	Wisconsin

OHIO

At this year's Opera Guild of Dayton's Annual Meeting, Lovetta Blanke – long time associate of both Dayton Opera and Guild – was named the Guild's Friend of the Year. She and her late husband were among the founding members of the Impresario Circle and she continues to this day as a vital, enthusiastic participant in all things related to opera.

In the early '80's our honoree was recruited for the Guild board. During her tenure she assisted in the development of the hospitality and transportation committees. She attends every Guild travel activity and gives generously financially and time wise to the Guild. Yes, Lovetta Blanke is an opera lover and Guild member extraordinaire, and truly deserves to be the Opera Guild's 2006 Friend of the Year.

Old West/Mountain/Desert Region**Shirley Litchfield-Bird***shirleyabird@cox.net*

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Montana	New Mexico	Texas
Utah	Wyoming	

TEXAS

The mission of the Opera Guild of San Antonio differs from that of many other Guilds since our Guild is not affiliated with an opera company and follows a mission of opera education. Our educational program reaches both adults and students in our community.

The Guild is proud of its touring program, co-sponsored by the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) which

(Continued on page 6)



(Continued from page 5)

brings opera annually to elementary schools throughout the city. Productions always include a choir of elementary students on stage with the UTSA singers. Everyone is costumed and there is scenery, too! This year's tours include the operas Brundibar and Hansel and Gretel. More than 8000 children in 20 schools will be exposed to the art form with these performances.

For our adult members we also have an Opera Study course utilizing the videos of Dr. Robert Greenberg, Chair of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. In our third year of presenting the course, we expect every session to be full.

As you can see, the Guild is busy and productive and pleased to be part of OVI.

Pacific Rim Region

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Alaska	Australia	Baja California
California	Hawaii	Oregon
Washington State	Western Canada	

CALIFORNIA

Opera Pacific Guild Alliance will again sponsor "Dine Around". It is one of the guild's most popular and financially successful events. The dinners are held in member's homes, and underwritten by the hosts and, in some cases, co-hosts. The dinners can be catered or prepared by the hosts. Some will include a musical program. The size of the group is left up to the host. About twelve venues are offered each year, all with interesting themes and cuisines.

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Roger Bessey—Texas

Made in China

By *Julie Anne Benson,*

Recently I attended Szechwan Opera in Chendu and visited Peiking Opera School in Beijing where it was apparent to me that Chinese opera is very different from the western opera that we are used to although I did find some similarities.

Chinese opera began about 250 years ago but it wasn't until the late 19th and early 20th century that is now referred to as the "golden age." All roles were originally played by men until the Cultural Revolution in the 1970's and then women were able to sing women's roles. There are about 1,000 scripts but very few are performed on a regular basis. Most stories deal with injustice, futile values, suppression of authority and the role of women in that society. Typically there is an elderly, soprano woman in the story who has one bad son and one good son who



makes a sacrifice. There will be a tenor role for an old man who is the most respected character and a falsetto voice playing a princess. Fixed roles also include a baritone playing famous military officers but the character is not too bright and not respected. There are incredible acrobatic feats being performed on stage, as well.

As for the production itself, the operas used to be done more frequently in the countryside but even now operas are performed occasionally and the gong is still rung in the center of the village to call people together for a performance. The young are not interested but the old revolutionaries are very fond of the art form. At one the time the performances lasted up to three days but that is no longer common. The staging is sparse and more attention is paid to the make up and costumes as you can see in the attached photos. Also voice is very important but so is speaking and exaggerated facial and body movements. For example, to illustrate moving from one room to the next on a nearly empty stage, one might step up or down to indicate the crossing of a

threshold or one might be holding a stick with a tassel to indicate arriving on a horse.

The Peiking Opera School was organized over 50 years ago and the curriculum includes 50% non-opera related courses. There are three campuses and 148 faculty serving 1,300 students between the ages of 10-17. The six-year program annually costs approximately \$1,000 per student and is government funded. In addition to voice, the students study stage craft, make up, costumes, wigs, movement, etc.

My opera experience in China was an education. I enjoyed all performances visually and have learned to appreciate the vocal abilities of the performers and central Asian orchestra music of OPERA: Made in China.



MATCHING GRANTS

If YOUR guild could use \$1000 for a special project, applications can still be submitted, and grants will be awarded on a continuing basis. All it takes is a really good idea, and an application to get the process underway!

The requirements are that the Grant Project be devoted to:

- A. Formation or expansion of programs for recruitment, development and training of volunteers with special consideration for programs which involve the multi-cultural community, or
- B. Creation of programs for recruitment, development and training of volunteers for opera for disadvantaged or underserved groups, or
- C. Development of programs for recruitment, development and training of volunteers which are educational, audience development or recruitment programs of support group members that include special consideration for programs involving the multi-cultural community.

Grants are up to \$1,000 and must be matched dollar for dollar. We hope to have groups develop programs that would encourage participation from those who have traditionally not been associated with opera and to encourage the participation of volunteers in all phases of supporting the opera company.

Information can be obtained from:

MARY EARL,
7115 PIPER GLEN DRIVE
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62711.
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Prices are for camera ready copy or copy on computer disk (pdf, tif or jpeg formats).

**Deadline for the Spring 2007
edition is January 31, 2007.**

Opera Volunteers International Newsletter

Official Quarterly Publication
Editor, Warren & Melody Schubert

Printed by VersaColor, (818) 772-9555

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