

Against the Grain's Vision for Growth

Against the Grain Theatre is in the process of diversifying our donor base and in turn, our audiences. Part of our growth strategy is determining how best to alter the traditional trajectory of audience member to volunteer or donor. Instead, our growth strategy is to target volunteers and donors who typically do not think to attend opera or support Indie arts organizations. Our theory is that once we get individuals to volunteer for one of our productions, we can then maintain that relationship to get them to volunteer again, suggest to their friends to buy tickets and attend and, as they become more invested in our activities, make donations in addition to their time. All this goes to our mandate: introduce new audiences to outside-the-box opera experiences.

We will build awareness of volunteer organizations through various local boards but also by working with our web developers to create a volunteer hub on our website, with an online form for potential volunteers to express their interest. We will use paid advertising on our social media to target and reach interested candidates. This website update will provide us with a platform to collect and maintain volunteer data, offering details provided to conduct proper screening. All volunteer data will then be migrated into a new arm of our patron management software. The OVI award will be specifically targeted at growing our volunteer base.

The Mozart Requiem

The Requiem project will implement the audience development plan created in a volunteer led collaboration between **Central City Opera** and the young professionals of Impact Denver in Denver, CO. The collaboration produced an audience development roadmap, identifying geographic and demographic opportunities for audience expansion, and compelling programming strategies for engaging these audiences.

Building from what was learned from last year's collaboration with Impact Denver, we are expanding on its audience diversity development work that demonstrated the power of community outreach as an engagement tool, especially when lead by community leaders and volunteers.

This year, we are implementing and expanding several components of that plan, including the second Denver-based performance of Mozart's *Requiem* in collaboration with the Denver Philharmonic Orchestra and the Performing Arts Academy's Youth Chorus. We are partnering with local libraries to host a screening of the film *Amadeus*, offering audiences the chance to tap into the mystery behind Mozart's life and his intriguing, unfinished composition.

Annual Rossini Festival International Street Fair

Approximately 300 volunteers are recruited using Volunteer East Tennessee, along with social media, email campaigns, and high priority placement of recruitment links on the event website. These volunteers are recruited by the Board's Festival Committee. Additionally, members of the **Knoxville Opera's Guild** fundraising committee donate their time to recruit, organize and

train volunteers. All volunteers go through small group training sessions and receive one on one help if needed so that they are confident in their roles.

This is Knoxville Opera's largest single day educational and community event, providing 11 hours of performing arts to over 50,000 attendees for free. This project furthers our mission to expand audiences for opera in the region, including under-served and multi-cultural populations and those who are new to opera.

Community Engagement through Volunteer Choruses and Dance Groups

We will be increasing efforts to include local community choruses and dance groups to perform alongside the professional cast of **Peach State Opera's** "Revenge of the Bat". In addition to giving these community groups first-hand experience of being onstage in an opera, the added benefit is that it engages more of the community at large. As part of the training for these performances, the directors of these groups will be given a recording of the music, printed copies of the score, directives regarding costuming, a timeline and a rehearsal schedule.

The project will ensure that each group from each location has the opportunity to experience first-hand the process of preparing for and participating in an opera. Participation of choral and dance ensembles in our performances gives the audience a richly layered experience that helps our company carry out its mission by featuring young local talent. Our mission is to spread a love of opera, ensuring the next generation of audience supporters and donors, and to broaden the reach of opera through on-stage education, and connecting communities through the art of opera.

Girl Scout Workshop

Through a variety of workshops sessions given by the **Young Patronesses of the Opera**, Girl Scouts earn an opera patch while learning the different components of an opera; the event is centered around one of FGO performances in the upcoming season. The girls have an opportunity to learn and sing songs from the opera. There are different learning stations including learning the libretto and score, set design, costumes, make-up, props, dance, and listening to performers. Students are given tickets to the dress rehearsal of the upcoming opera.

Each volunteer is given a role at one of the sessions and are given the materials and information to work with the scouts.

This program fosters a taste, love and understanding of opera. We are also bringing opera to not only the scouts but also their parents and troop leaders of the Scouts.