

# THE OPERA VOLUNTEER VOICE

May 2021  
Vol. 45, Number 1

The official newsletter of  
*Opera Volunteers  
International*

Grant deadline  
extended to May 31.  
Don't miss this  
opportunity.  
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## *How do we begin again?*

### Planning for the Future

Uncertainty is the climate.  
Adaptation is the process.  
Resiliency will be the key



For over a year opera companies and performance venues the world over have been devastated leaving volunteers nowhere to go and nothing to do.

Now, as spring arrives and we are finally seeing an end to what seemed like a very bad dream, you might be wondering, "What do we do now?"

Opera companies are finally starting to anticipate in-person events, and it is likely that they will need volunteers more than ever. But in this changed environment performances, attendance, educational programs, and fundraisers will be different. Our companies may find themselves so busy figuring out what they are doing that they forget the valuable resource they have in their guilds and volunteer groups. It is up to us to remind them. Do not wait for them to ask. Figure out what they need and where we can be of service and then let them know!

Then share your successes with other volunteers through OVI.

In this issue you will find three examples of fellow volunteer groups that found ways to overcome circumstances to make a difference by facing difficulties and finding opportunities. We would like to hear and to tell your stories. You have through May 31 to request a financial **Grant**, nominate a **Partner in Excellence**, or submit a **Project of Special Merit**.

This month OPERA America and OVI will be holding parallel conferences to let us know what is going on in the industry and to teach us new skills and concepts.

The struggles and challenges of 2020 will fade as we undertake new tests and trials of a post-pandemic world. It will be slow,.....but slow is good.

**To the dedicated volunteers who support opera  
and opera companies around the world.**

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**Opera Conference  
2021 begins  
May 10**

See pages 2 and 3

## From the President: *Susan Malott*

Dear OVI members and friends,



May is the month of transition. We say goodbye to winter and welcome spring, warmer weather and beautiful flowers. After more than a year, we are also transitioning out of our COVID lockdown to a greater normalcy of life.

That includes many opera companies finding ways to get back to live performance. I recently attended a live performance of *The Barber of Seville* – a 90-minute adaptation in a drive-in setting, here at **San Francisco Opera**. The level of creativity and technical ingenuity that went into this exciting performance was nothing short of breathtaking.

May is also the month of the **Opera America conference** and **Opera Volunteers International conference sessions** which are coming up very soon! I encourage you to join us for these conference sessions.

**On this page you will see information on how to join both the OA and OVI sessions.**

OVI will host two educational sessions that will be of value to our group members: *Running Effective Meetings in a New Online World*, and *Messaging Made Simple: Digital media tips to supercharge promotions and gain more supporters*. We will also have the opportunity to hear from two of our Matching Grant recipients from this past year. Our third session will be a purely fun social gathering to connect with each other.

All the OVI sessions are free, so I hope you'll take advantage of this opportunity.

I look forward to seeing you very soon!

*Susan Malott*

## Opera Conference 2021 OVI Sessions

May 11, 18, and 25

Registration to the OVI sessions is required and is free for anyone. Join through this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0ucemtpjosGdEF917nPtcfNgTThqhm2uHw>

## Opera Conference 2021

### OPERA America Sessions Registration

**Register**

**May 10–27, 2021**

Opera Conference 2021 will take place online over the course of three weeks. Conference registration will be required to access the OPERA America sessions.

If you are a member of OVI or one of our member groups (e.g. guilds) you may register at the OPERA America member rate of \$48 for the full conference through this link:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/opera-conference-2021-hosted-by-opera-america-tickets-148925226361?discount=OVI21>

## OVI Sessions Registration

**Register**

**Week 1 Tuesday, May 11, 2:00pm-3:00pm ET**

### **-Running Effective Meetings and Presentations Online – by Julie Todaro**

Learn tips and techniques to make your online meetings more effective, efficient and fun. Julie Todaro will describe the increase in participation in her YPO opera group meetings by going online.

### **-Karen Ritz with Central City opera will present their program produced with their OVI grant.**

**Week 2 Tuesday, May 18, 2:00pm-3:00pm ET**

### **-Messaging Made Simple: Digital media tips to supercharge promotions and gain more supporters – by Jani Spede**

Hear tips and techniques from a marketing and social media professional. Questions will be welcomed at the end of the session.

### **-Maggie Brener with YPO will present their program produced with their OVI grant.**

**Week 3 Tuesday, May 25, 7:00pm-8:00pm ET**

### **-OVI Happy Hour and Gathering**

Get together to chat and bond with other OVI members.

# Opera Conference 2021

May 10–27, 2021

Opera Conference 2021 brings the opera field together virtually this spring to address key opportunities as we rebuild the industry.

Topics and dates are listed below. Opera administrators, artists, educators, volunteers, trustees, and other stakeholders are invited to register for Opera Conference 2021 in order to access live sessions at member rates.



OVI members get member rates by registering at this link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/opera-conference-2021-hosted-by-opera-america-tickets-148925226361?discount=OVI21>

<b>Week 1: Artists at the Center</b>	5/10 Lawrence Brownlee	2:00 pm EDT
	5/12 Panel Discussion	2:00 pm EDT
<b>Week 2: The Politics of Art</b>	5/17 lead presentation	2:00 pm EDT
	5/19 Panel Discussion	2:00 pm EDT
<b>Week 3: Achieving a New Normal</b>	5/24 Julian Chender	2:00 pm EDT
	5/26 Panel Discussion	2:00 pm EDT
	5/27 Closing Session	2:00 pm EDT

Visit the [OPERA America registration page](#) for full descriptions.

## CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

**Lawrence Brownlee** *Tenor; Artistic Advisor, Opera Philadelphia*

**Julian Chender**—*Manager, Accenture; Fellow, Kates Kesler Organization Consulting*

### Panelists

- **Torrie Allen**, president and CEO, Arts Midwest
- **Elizabeth Cline**, executive director, The Industry
- **Dr. Antonio Cuyler**, dir. of the MA program and assoc. prof. of arts admin., FLA State University
- **Sue Dixon**, general director, Portland Opera
- **Cerise Jacobs**, executive producer, White Snake Projects
- **Yuval Sharon**, artistic director, The Industry and Michigan Opera Theatre
- **Karen Slack**, soprano; artistic advisor, Portland Opera
- **Reed Smith**, general director, Anchorage Opera
- **Tazewell Thompson**, dir., playwright, librettist; dir. of opera studies, Manhattan School of Music
- **Ed Yim**, senior vice president and chief content officer, WQXR



Chender



Brownlee



Jacobs



Sharon



Slack



Yim

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Members of the **Nashville Opera Guild** were not going to let a little quarantine stop them from celebrating Nashville Opera's 40th Anniversary in perfect 2021 style. From the virtual red carpet to the prerecorded concert, historic video performance selections, and speeches of thanks and admiration. This just shows the diligence and effectiveness that comes from an organized and dedicated volunteer workforce in partnership with a caring, creative, and technically adept arts institution.



## La Bella Notte 2021 Hitting the High C's

**Nashville Opera Guild** created its sparkling annual fundraiser virtually this year on February 6. Chaired by **Barbara Warren** and **Emily Weiss**, *La Bella Notte 2021* hit the high C's of Courage, Collaboration and Congratulations, celebrating Nashville Opera's 40th Anniversary and **John Hoomes' 25th Anniversary as Artistic Director**. An accompanying online auction was curated by chairs **Irina Trenary**, **Stephanie Hart**, and **Bryan Stone**.

The entire event was pre-recorded at the Opera's headquarters observing COVID safety protocols. A constellation of mirror balls, an 80-foot wall of twinkle lights, and dramatic washes of color set the stage and showcased the modern architecture of the Noah Liff Opera Center. Tiered reservation levels included exclusive perks such as catered appetizers, prosecco, and a Celebration Box of commemorative gifts that guests could enjoy while viewing the gala. All attendees were invited to submit photos for inclusion in the pre-gala Virtual Red Carpet.

Rousing performances by talented Nashville artists were punctuated by guest stars who highlighted company milestones and the exciting expansion of the Opera's education and outreach programs during the pandemic. Audiences got the first peek at *Opera ON WHEELS*, the new mobile stage which will bring opera to area neighborhoods beginning this summer. Guild President **Stacy Wideltz** presented the annual **Francis Robinson and Marion Couch Award** to **Ann Marie and Martin McNamara** and a fast, fun photographic timeline of Nashville Opera's first 40 years was shown. The elegant evening concluded with an operatic toast by John Hoomes to "Libiamo" from the Opera's 2018 production of *La Traviata*.

Thanks to the overwhelming support of patrons and community and the hard work of the Nashville Opera staff and Guild volunteers, this year's virtual La Bella Notte was a big success, reaching over 2,000 viewers and raising more than \$100,000 for the Opera and its educational programs!

La Bella Notte video can still be viewed at:

[nashvilleopera.org/labellanotte](https://nashvilleopera.org/labellanotte)



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# Regional News: Southeast Region Nashville Opera Guild



**NASHVILLE OPERA GALA  
La Bella Notte 2021**

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### 2020 Report on COVID-19 Activities for Opera Volunteers International

The goal of **Central City Opera’s** (CCO) Audience Development for New and Underserved Communities, funded by Opera Volunteers International, is to identify and develop ways to market opera to a younger and more diverse audience in Colorado.

In response to the public health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, CCO made the difficult decision to postpone its 2020 Summer Opera Festival, and all in-person performances and education activities. These decisions were made with the goal of protecting the health of CCO’s audiences, artists, volunteers, and staff.

Instead of going dormant during this time, CCO committed to developing new and innovative ways to stay connected with its artists, patrons, donors and the Central City community.

**Innovative new programs, experiences, and initiatives launched during the pandemic include the following:**

**The CCO COVID-19 Relief Fund:**

To support its community of artists and performers, who have been particularly impacted by the pandemic, CCO established the CCO COVID-19 Relief Fund, raising over \$350,000 to pay each of the artists involved in the postponed 2020 Summer Opera Festival a portion of their 2020 contracts. These payments have been a lifeline to the Company’s artists, and thankfully, all but one will be able to return to participate in the 2021 Summer Opera Festival.



**Virtual and Socially-Distanced Performances:**

During the immediate quarantine of the Spring of 2020, CCO released a series of performance recordings, artist interviews, virtual tours of the Company’s historic buildings, and podcasts free to the public to provide entertainment, connection, and inspiration to a community facing unprecedented social isolation. These digital materials received over 14,000 views. During the summer of 2020, CCO launched a new series of *Al Fresco* Concerts, hosted from the balcony of CCO’s historic opera house in Central City. These socially-distanced performances enabled audience members to spread

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## Regional News: Southwest Region

out across the lawn on picnic baskets to enjoy the balcony performances, and were recorded and streamed live to audiences across Colorado and the nation. Over 550 audience members attended CCO's socially-distanced in-person outdoor performances during the summer of 2020. CCO also transitioned its Annual Plein Air Arts Festival to an all-outdoor, socially distant festival, and hosted several "Opera Movie Nights", screening socially distanced performances in the backyards of volunteers to small groups of donors and providing a brief discussion and behind-the-scenes commentary by Pat Pearce, CCO's General and Artistic Director.



### Adapted Education and Community Engagement Programming:

As schools tentatively returned to the classroom in the Fall of 2020, CCO launched an adapted series of arts education and performance programs. These include A virtual "Music Words Opera!" workshop, Yoga and the Voice video classes, Digital Concerts paired with live Q&As with the performers, virtual masterclasses, and a blended in-person/virtual "Music, Words, Opera!" residency program for middle school students.



CCO is deeply grateful for its community of donors, volunteers, artists, staff, and audience members who have made this adapted programming possible this year, and the Company thanks Opera Volunteers International for its ongoing support of its Audience Development and Engagement Initiatives, even as they have taken unexpected forms in response to the pandemic.

If you have any additional questions, or would like to attend a virtual event, please contact Katherine Nicholson at [knicholson@centralcityopera.org](mailto:knicholson@centralcityopera.org), or (303) 292-6500.

## Regional News: Great Lakes Region

### Lyric Opera of Chicago Chapters Virtually Adjust to Quarantine

By Rick Greenman

The Lyric Opera Chapters Executive Board volunteers oversee nine community chapter groups. Each the same but each unique. When faced with no opera season or public gatherings we reached out to our members to keep them engaged and keep our groups intact.

We came up with the following strategies:

Calling by phone or writing notes to see how our members were doing and whether we could help them in any way.

Creating an array of virtual activities where members from all nine groups could engage with one another such as: Opera Bingo, an opera book club discussion moderated by the author, a virtual 5k run/walk with a Lyric logo face mask upon registration, and Zoom get-togethers following each Lyric Opera virtual performance.

We started a weekly email newsletter to maintain a connection to Lyric Opera which included upcoming Lyric events, member news, chapter news, and national opera resources and performances.

We also set up a private Chapters Facebook Group to post events and keep in daily contact.

## Opera Volunteers International

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**\*Address Correction Requested\***

Send your guild news and photos to  
Newsletter Editor and Publisher:

**Rick Greenman**

newsletter@operavolunteers.org

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



## You still have a little time! ....*but not much*

**Due to the pandemic deadlines are extended to May 31, 2021**

### *Matching Grants*

<https://www.operavolunteers.org/matching-grants-and-awards/guidelines-for-ovi-grant-applications/>

**There is still an opportunity to apply for our program.**

Now is the time to think about the kinds of projects that can benefit your opera volunteer group or support your Opera Company and reach out to your community. OVI can help.

Details and applications are available on OVI's website.

### *Partner in Excellence*

<https://www.operavolunteers.org/matching-grants-and-awards/partners-in-excellence/>

**Is there an individual your group would like to honor or a special anniversary to celebrate.**

Nominate an individual or a group for an OVI award.

### *Project of Special Merit*

<https://www.operavolunteers.org/matching-grants-and-awards/projects-special-merit/>

**Did your group create a unique project either before or during the current quarantine shut-down?**

Let us know about it so we can recognize you and share your great idea with our other opera volunteer groups.