

THE OPERA VOLUNTEER VOICE

Global Volunteer Month



April was **Global Volunteer Month**, a time to celebrate and recognize the contributions of volunteers worldwide. The 2025 theme, *Volunteers Make Waves*, highlights the significant impact volunteers have on communities throughout the world. This theme encourages individuals to take action and make a difference through volunteering. For OVI and its member groups, every month is volunteer month. We recognize and thank volunteers who lend their time, talent, voice and support to opera. Your stories serve to inspire others to take action, to realize their power to make a difference, and to be a force that transforms the world.

In this issue, OVI, in its role of representing and fostering opera volunteerism throughout North America is proud to recognize our groups and the individual members who make them effective.

We hope that Opera companies and volunteer groups took last month to acknowledge their own volunteers, because it is their commitment, energy and skill that will help opera to flourish. In May, OVI members will meet with Opera Company leaders, staff, and creative artists, at the Opera Conference in Memphis, to convene, commune and commemorate the successes, opportunities and challenges that abound.

In the following pages, we share and applaud your ideas and initiative. We thank our guilds and opera support groups. But most of all we thank you, the individuals who devote your time and talent to opera.



April 2025
Vol. 4, Number 2

The official newsletter of
*Opera Volunteers
International*

**Recognizing
Partners in Excellence
Grant Awardees
Projects of Special
Merit**

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**Inside:
Information for
Opera Conference
2025 Memphis
May 20-24, 2025**

From OVI President *Mary Sveta*



Acknowledging Volunteers

In March, we began our volunteer webinar series, “*Harnessing Volunteer Power: Building and Sustaining Resilient Organizations.*” with a conversation moderated by **Dr. James Catanzaro**. Read more about the session and the series on the next page.

OVI recently chose our 2025 recipients for our **Matching Grants** and **Projects of Special Merit** awards. Read more about our dedicated **Partners in Excellence** award winners and be inspired by the impact their dedicated service has made to their opera organizations. Our awardees provide us with insight into the creativity to spread the word about opera to their communities.

This year, OVI provided Matching Grants for six member organizations. We will follow these projects as they bring opera experiences to so many new to opera.

We would like to hear how you honored opera volunteers during National Volunteer month and beyond. Your ideas can help other groups craft a strategy for **Global Volunteer Month 2026**.

Please send your best ideas to us. We love sharing your successes.

Mary Sveta, President

Benefits of Volunteering

- Reduces stress
- Combats depression
- Feel more connected
- Increases confidence
- Gives a sense of purpose
- Ignites passion
- Makes you happy



OPERA VOLUNTEERS
INTERNATIONAL

**VOLUNTEERS ARE THE
CORNERSTONE OF
OPERA AND THE ARTS**

Over 50 years of supporting
and advocating opera
volunteerism throughout
North America

We offer:

- Matching Grants for
Opera-Related Projects
- Awards and Recognition
of Volunteer Excellence
- Year-round Education
with Industry Experts
thoughtfully crafted
to explore the current
landscape of volunteer
engagement
- Hundreds of Successful
Strategies available for
fundraising, building
audience bases,
and growing impact

Exciting new initiatives aimed
at helping arts organizations
grow their bottom line
in the works

Join Us!



— Like us on Facebook to join the conversation! —

OVI Launches Volunteer Advocacy Webinar Series

On March 31 Opera Volunteers International took a bold step forward, launching its first-ever webinar series:

We are planning to make video of the sessions available in the near future.

1. Harnessing Volunteer Power: Strategies for Building and Sustaining Resilient Organizations.

This highly successful webinar session marked the beginning of a three-part series, focused on the vital role volunteers play in the life and longevity of opera companies, especially in the wake of pandemic-era challenges.

Welcoming attendees was **Dr. Jim Catanzaro**, former college president and passionate advocate for the arts. The March 31st webinar featured a panel of three dynamic leaders deeply engaged in volunteer recruitment and retention: **Tyler McKenzie**, Manager of Volunteer Engagement at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, **Danielle Di Stefano**, Artistic Director and Outreach Coordinator of the Erwin H. Johnson Memorial Fund for Opera, and **Pedro Carreras**, Executive Director of Peach State Opera.

Live opera cannot thrive without the heart, energy, and commitment of volunteers

Dr. Jim Catanzaro



Tyler emphasized the importance of motivation and consistent recognition in building long-term commitment among volunteers.

Danielle shared how digital tools like social media can expand outreach and connect with younger audiences. Her “Opera-tober” initiative was highlighted as an innovative way to celebrate and spread opera across communities.

Pedro spoke from experience as both a performer and CEO. He offered insight into fostering mutual respect between volunteers and professionals, and how shared purpose can energize productions of any size.

Looking Ahead: What’s Next in the Series

2. Volunteers Reach a Wider Audience, the next event in the series, will take place in-person on May 22 at the Opera America Conference in Memphis, where OVI will host a conversation on how volunteers can extend their organization’s reach into the community. Panelists will include **Jason Hardy**, Executive Director of Knoxville Opera and Opera America board member, and **Paul Powers**, Development Director for the Chattanooga Symphony and Opera.

3. The Volunteer Multiplier: Elevate Your Input by Leveraging Skills, the third and final installment, will be held online, July 14, featuring **Rhonda Sweeney**, a retired Exxon executive and longtime opera volunteer. In her session, Rhonda will show how strategic volunteering can make a measurable impact on both organizations and individual growth.

A Community of Shared Passion

As this new webinar series gains momentum, one thing is clear: Opera Volunteers International is committed to creating spaces where volunteers can learn, connect, and lead. This new initiative brings seasoned voices and fresh energy together to shape the future of volunteerism in the opera world.

To find out more, or register for the July 14 session go to:

www.operavolunteers.org/webinar-series/



Thank you to all who are helping to harness the power of volunteers in new and meaningful ways.

OVI Sessions at Opera Conference 2025 in Memphis

Information table co-sponsored by OVI and Opera Memphis Guild – Wednesday & Thursday 5/21 5/22

Opera Volunteers International and Opera Memphis Guild are both all-volunteer organization dedicated to recognizing and supporting volunteers in opera. Stop by to learn more about opera volunteerism and volunteer recognition and support. Learn more at operavolunteers.org and operamemphis.org

Wednesday, 5/21

OVI Board of Directors Meeting

8:00 - 9:00 am

Opera Volunteers International is an all-volunteer service organization dedicated to advancing volunteerism in support of opera. OVI celebrates the hard work of volunteers and offers ways to help make more volunteer involvement possible by recognizing achievement and creativity, supporting volunteer projects, and advocating for continued involvement of volunteers in opera. The meeting is open to all OVI members.

Innovative Volunteer Management Strategies

10:30 – 11:30 am

**Speakers -Tyler McKenzie, Manager of Volunteer Engagement
Janice Seele, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis Guild President**

A company's perceived value of volunteerism can vary as widely as its artistic identity, which is why collaboration and openness within volunteer management is so crucial to the success of a program. Explore innovative volunteer management strategies that allow open communication, bring your community together, and support your staff in an effective manner.

Successful Volunteer Initiatives to Educate and Involve our Communities

3:00 - 4:00 pm

Speaker - Carol Steigelman, OVI Liaison for the Guild of Glimmerglass Festival

Volunteers are vital for the success of arts organizations, providing crucial support. Carol Steigelman, OVI Liaison for the Guild of Glimmerglass Festival, will discuss the Guild's successful initiatives to educate and involve both their own company and Sarasota Opera in outreach to connecting communities. Carol will share special projects the Guild has initiated to promote opera education in schools, create innovative fundraising initiatives, and provide assistance to performers.

OVI Networking with Memphis Opera Volunteers OVI/Opera Memphis table - Sponsor Reception 5:00 – 6:00 pm

OVI and Memphis Opera Volunteers share an Information Table in the Sponsor Reception area and will meet during the sponsor reception.

Thursday, 5/22

Memphis downtown Walking Tour – 8:30 am for 30 minute walk) **meet in the Peabody Hotel Lobby**

Memphis is a city steeped in American history, from the Civil War and Prohibition, to the birth of blues, soul, and rock 'n' roll. View sights near the hotel led by Shelbi Sellers, Director of Partnerships at Opera Memphis. All conference attendees welcome to participate. Register to save your place.



Like us on Facebook to join the conversation!

OVI Sessions at Opera Conference 2025

Thursday, 5/22

Volunteers Reach a Wider Audience 10:30 -11:30 am

Speakers:

Jason Hardy – General Director and CEO, Knoxville Opera
Paul Powers – Director of Development, Chattanooga Symphony & Opera

Moderator:

Dr. James Catanzaro - Executive Director, Higher Education Research and Development Institute

Volunteers in the arts significantly contribute to the success of arts organizations by providing essential support in operations, marketing, fundraising, audience engagement, and artistic production. They often fill gaps where paid staff may be limited, allowing the organization to reach a wider audience and achieve its artistic goals with greater efficiency and impact. We will address such questions as, “How can opera volunteers help expand the audience beyond traditional opera-goers?” and “Describe the practical strategies, such as training and resources you use in your company to empower volunteers.”

OVI Grantors and Awards Luncheon Noon-1:45 pm

Majestic Grille, 145 S Main St, Memphis, TN 38103

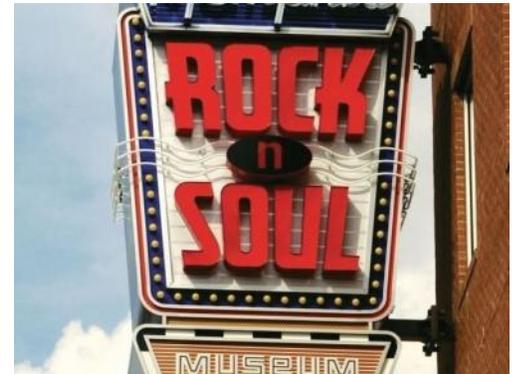
Open to OVI members and honored awardees. Enjoy the intimacy of the Innovator’s Room at this event, close to the Peabody Hotel. (Pre-registration required.) Be inspired by those members and groups who have been designated as *Partners in Excellence*, *Projects of Special Merit* and our *Matching Grant* recipients for 2025. Those accepting Grants and Awards will be our guests and make brief presentations. Grantor members will also be honored at the event.

The Force Multiplier of Volunteers in Opera 3:00 - 4:15 pm

Speakers: Shelbi Sellers, Director of Partnerships at Opera Memphis
Young Patronesses of the Opera, Miami

This panel discussion features ways in which organizations maximize the effective use of volunteer time and talent. Opera Memphis’ Shelbi Sellers, Director of Partnerships at Opera Memphis, will share insights and ideas about their strong volunteer program. ‘Volunteers are one of our greatest assets, and a vital part of the work to put on our productions, make *30 Days of Opera* possible, and provide the kind of help that keeps the office running.’ Gain practical tips for volunteer program success.

Young Patronesses of the Opera will share information about their innovative educational programs by highlighting their many educational initiatives. Additional discussion will include conference wrap-up evaluations and a brief preview of our upcoming summer webinar.



2025 Partners in Excellence

The prestigious Opera Volunteers International **Partners in Excellence Award** program recognizes individuals who have given extraordinary volunteer service to opera in their communities or groups observing special anniversaries. The awardees of this once-in-a-lifetime honor will be acknowledged at the OVI Awards Luncheon held this May at Opera Conference 2025 in Memphis.

Lucille F. Gorski (Deceased)



Luci Gorski was a member of the Toledo Opera Guild since its inception over 60 years ago. She served many years on the Guild Board of Directors and served as the General Chairperson of the 25th Anniversary Sapphire Ball. Luci's innovative leadership of the Sapphire Ball led to it raising significantly more funds than it had before by pioneering the use of corporate sponsorships (used frequently today, but new to Toledo in 1985). That raised the bar for all fundraisers since. In 1992, Luci and Ted established an endowment for the Toledo Opera with a \$1 million challenge grant, which the community met, resulting in a \$2 million endowment. Luci served on the Toledo Opera Endowment Board since that time. Luci served on the Toledo Opera Board from 2007 through 2011. As a member of the finance committee, she provided fiscal expertise and championed prudence. She gave another challenge grant of \$1 million to the Opera's Crescendo Campaign in 2010. The Opera Endowment became the Lucille F. Gorski Endowment at that time, in recognition of her generosity and leadership.

Toledo Opera Guild

Sara Fabick



Sara Fabick, of the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis (OTSL) Guild, exemplifies to the highest level the qualities of service and leadership that are characteristic of Guild members. She became a Guild member some twenty years ago, first working at the Guild Boutique, which offers jewelry, clothing and other items for sale to pay for Guild projects and events. She, then, became a Greeter, a person who assists opera-goers with questions regarding operatic productions, food service, special seating or other concerns. She soon became the Greeter Committee Chair, and as such, a board member. In the fall of 2019, she was elected Guild President for a 2-year term, which was extended to 3 years because of the COVID pandemic. She now chairs the Guild Recruitment and the Office Support Committees. Under Sara's leadership, the Guild began holding job fairs to recruit new members. Guild members also

Opera Theater of St. Louis

began to staff a table during operatic events to reach new recruits. The Office Support Committee has once again become an integral part of OTSL operations, assisting with mailings and with set up and take-down duties for special events. Starting this spring, under Sara's leadership, committee members will assist staff at the reception desk.

The Guild of Glimmerglass Festival 50th Anniversary



The Glimmerglass Opera, Cooperstown NY, was born in July 1975 initiated by a group of community members, local musicians, and a musical conductor who offered the first opera, *La Bohème*, in the local high school where it hosted the summer events. Twelve years later, 1987, a 900-seat opera house was built on land donated by a community member and a campaign to fund the building began.

Glimmerglass will celebrate their 50th anniversary this year with the theme THE ART OF MAKING ART and offering many Festival and guild related events including a barn sale, wine tasting, 50th Gala, a memorial cookbook, along with lunches and brunches. A historian and founders presentation kicked off with a carnival at our Appreciation Concert, to begin the season. They are bringing opera events to more local schools and libraries and offering their 'Talking Opera' series for the community to support the season performances. Stephanie Peters will be a guest performer to celebrate the anniversary. The opera festival is a prestigious part of the culture of upstate New York, draws support from NYC, and offers opportunity for young artists from all over the world to participate in performing and partnering with the Glimmerglass apprenticeship program.

Like us on Facebook to join the conversation!

2025 Partners in Excellence *continued*

John Young



In 1985 Opera Omaha began a Cotillion program for youth. John and his wife, Sara Young, were on the Charter Committee. John's daughter was in the first class. He has been lead instructor since 1987. Cotillion is both a fundraiser and educational tool for culture and etiquette for the community. In addition to teaching dancing and etiquette, it introduced students and their families to Opera and highlighted the importance of arts and culture.

John's dedication and hard work helped the program grow tremendously! At the time of his retirement, Cotillion classes were totaling over 300 students. He is delighted the program has continued and loves when people in the community recognize him as their former Cotillion instructor. Many of them speak to him about how wonderful their Cotillion experience was and how it has helped them in their life skills. John still recruits students for Cotillion every year. He and his wife attend and support Opera events, the Victorian Tea being among one of their favorites.

Opera Omaha Guild

John continues to carry Opera Omaha Guild materials in his glove box and hands out information at any opportunity!

2025 Projects of Special Merit

This prestigious honor is presented to groups who submit outstanding new and long-standing projects in support of opera. Eligible projects feature volunteers, and are designed to educate, build audience, and support the many facets of a company's work.

40th Anniversary Cotillion Class



The goal of this continual project is to raise funds for Opera Omaha and for the engagement with middle school youth through dance and social skill learning opportunities. Beginning in 1985, for 40 years student have been learning ballroom dance, the art of dining, how to write a thank you note and the skills of being a guest or host in social settings. The classes end with a Graduation Event, where students share what they have learned with a dinner, a short opera performance and dancing.

Currently 120 to 150 students attend, many of whom are second generation participants. Each year more than 25 volunteers, parents and Guild members come together to plan, help with classes and attend the final Graduation Event. Cotillion remains Opera Omaha's largest fundraiser. The students pay a fee to attend the classes and the Graduation Event, which is attended by about 300. The Guild is proud to continue the legacy of this special and successful tradition.



2025 Projects of Special Merit

Children's Choir in La Bohème Project

Knoxville Opera

Goal: to offer a high-quality live-performance experience for children from various neighborhoods in Knoxville.

Our volunteers coordinated check-in, costuming, hydration, guidance supervision, and safety. Knoxville Opera staff organized all volunteers, hired all personnel, taught and prepared all music and staging, communicated with parents, prepared costumes, and assumed all costs. This 256-hour project would not have been practical or possible without the joint efforts of Knoxville Opera staff and the help of volunteers.

A few children's comments:

- "I loved the feeling of community that the opera brings. It's so lively and fun."
- "I loved all of it, but my favorite part is the performing and rehearsals."
- "I learned that I can be a confident singer."

Boheme Children's Chorus by the Numbers



- 12 Children from 12 schools**
- 13 Musical rehearsal**
- 15 Week preparation period**
- 2 Weeks Staging and technical rehearsals**
- 2 Nearly sold out performances**
- 2 Parent volunteers per rehearsal**
- 3 Staff members per rehearsal**
- 7 Core volunteer members**
- 108 hours volunteer 148 hours staff**

100% of parents were pleased with their child's experience and would like their child to be involved in future productions involving children's chorus. We asked how their children benefited, and one responded: [It has been] so important to [my child's] development and her confidence. Because she has some academic struggles and it's never easy for her, I also think the constant repetition of practice and the emphasis on preparation is key for her to understand how to be successful through preparation and persistence." Another said: "[My child] loved every minute. The challenge of learning the music boosted her self confidence, the bond she formed with the cast was priceless, and the experience of being in a major production was a huge learning experience for her."

Viva Voce: New Look

Opera Guild of Rochester

Opera Guild Rochester exists to foster an interest in and appreciation of opera within the Greater Rochester area rather than an affiliation with a single opera company. The *Viva Voce* publication began seventeen years ago as part of the mission to provide support for diverse opera experiences to a broader community audience.



In order to build engagement and readership they undertook a 2024 six week project to analyze the current publication and how well it met the needs of their readers. Recommendations were made in consideration of their older readership needs for readable font size, limited use of different type styles, and engaging photography. *Viva Voce* is written, edited and managed by volunteers. The new design was launched with the the February 2025 issue and had a 41 percent e-mail open rate, already a slight increase. The goal is to increase readership by 10 percent this year.



Viva Voce is an ongoing publication, *Viva Voce: New Look* was a one time focused project to successfully update the style and substance of the publication. See the latest issue here: <https://www.operaguildofrochester.org/recent>

Find us on the internet at www.OperaVolunteers.org

2025 OVI Matching Grants

The purpose of Opera Volunteer International's Matching Grants program is to encourage the expansion and development of programs that recruit, develop, and train volunteers for service in their communities and for participation in all phases of opera company support.

Central City Opera Guild

Historic Properties Volunteer Opportunities



Central City Opera Guild's annual Historic Properties preparation and maintenance project includes three core volunteer opportunities – Planting Day, Housewarming, and Inventory Days/Season Closing. The match for this grant will be raised through a combination of the Guild's annual Spring Membership Drive and individual solicitations. The Summer Opera Festival simply could not happen without the volunteers crucial work, preparing the environment and artist homes in Central City each year. During the Summer Festival, the gardens function as a core gathering spot for patrons before and

after performances. In 2025 festive outdoor offerings, the gardens will include local musicians, circus performers, etc. The volunteers' work in maintaining and beautifying the Opera Gardens also benefits the City itself as tourists visit the garden throughout the year.

Planting Day volunteers will be rewarded with a backstage tour of the Opera House and Teller House, the historic former hotel owned by CCO that serves as administrative HQ during the summer festival. Additionally, volunteers will get to sit in on a class during the Young Artist Training Program. Through these initiatives, volunteers will gain behind-the-scenes views of what it takes to be an opera singer and will also be educated in the history of this 92-year-old organization. In doing so, they will become better-informed representatives of CCO within the wider public. Approximately 60-70 volunteers take part in the Planting Day activities.

Knoxville Opera Camerata

Open Mainstage Final Dress Rehearsals for K-12



In the 2025-2026 season, Knoxville Opera will offer free access to the transformative power of opera to K-12 students and their families through open final dress rehearsals of our mainstage productions. We will welcome students and families to Bizet's *Carmen* in October, Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* in February 2026, and Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* in May 2026.

These dress rehearsals offer an extraordinary opportunity for young people to engage with world-class opera in a live and comfortable setting. With significant interest already generated, we aim to expand our capacity to host even more students and their families, especially those who might not otherwise have the chance to experience the magic of opera.

To accommodate the growing number of attendees, Knoxville will rely on volunteers to help greet and check in guests, answer questions about the performances and Knoxville Opera's programming, and assist attendees in finding their seats at the theatre. Volunteers will play a key role in ensuring a smooth experience for all.

By supporting this initiative, this grant will enable them to expose more students to the arts and build community among the volunteers who will make this effort possible.

Knoxville Opera Camerata will enlist their own members, the Knoxville Opera Board of Directors, and the Akima Club, as well as individuals who have expressed interest in volunteering through an online form on our website. By engaging these diverse groups, we hope to bring together a wide range of volunteers, each excited to contribute to the mission of Knoxville Opera and its commitment to providing arts education.

Opera Maine

Visitor Engagement Education

Support for *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, Opera Maine's First Mainstage Contemporary American Opera



Opera Maine is dedicated to providing creative and inspiring opera productions and other performances of artistic excellence, and ensuring that they are accessible to, and representative of, our community. We foster young operatic talent, provide educational opportunities related to opera, and engage our audiences in ways that excite enthusiasm for the art form. This project ensures that our production is accessible to and representative of our community, helps us engage our audiences, and helps us excite enthusiasm for opera.

The funding requested will support the activities of three Board Volunteers on our Visitor Engagement Committee, 10 Multigenerational Volunteer Ambassadors, one Volunteer Educational Dramaturg, one Volunteer Technician, and technical software needed for our educational dramaturg's presentations. Opera Maine's goal is to welcome and inspire people at every step of the opera experience. Our Visitor Engagement Committee and Ambassadors provide the next important layer of welcoming, inclusion, and accessibility. Our free dramaturgical presentations in public libraries are very well attended, but with more than 3,000 people expected to attend *Sweeney Todd*, we know that many audience members' first point of contact with Opera Maine will be as they walk through the doors of Merrill Auditorium. Our Visitor Engagement Committee will plan the step-by-step experience for attendees, and recruit and work with our multigenerational Ambassadors to ensure an unforgettable experience for everyone.

Our volunteers represent both Opera Maine and our greater Portland community. They know, love, and understand the transformative power of opera, and they are among our greatest and most enthusiastic advocates for the continuation of the art form and our company.

Peach State Opera

Production of Hansel and Gretel



Peach State Opera includes local and community choruses and dance groups in as many performances as possible for Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, while expanding on the volunteer experience and education. We tour the communities throughout the southeast that do not have direct access to opera. *Hansel and Gretel* offers the opportunity to work with choruses (of around 12-25 volunteers) and with approx. 14 volunteer dancers. As part of the training, the directors of the community chorus/dance groups will be given a recording of the music (provided by our pianist), copies of the music/score, directives regarding costuming, a timeline, and a rehearsal schedule. Final rehearsals are scheduled with PSO's pianist, conductor, and stage director a few days prior to the performance. Depending on the size of the theater, each group will vary from 12 to 24 volunteer choristers and 5-14 volunteer dancers per performance.

An opera presentation will be given to the students prior to rehearsing with the company. In these presentations, they will learn about the business of opera, the training and discipline it takes to be an opera singer, general stagecraft and terminology, and be provided examples of different styles of opera. Some of the directors, staff, and volunteer board members will accomplish this by traveling at least one day early to venues where we have these volunteer choristers and dancers to provide these educational opportunities for them.

Peach State Opera recruits volunteers from University students, high school students, and dance groups, and their 70-90 volunteers will also come from the **Panama City Music Association, Golden Isles Arts & Humanities, Clayton State University Department of Film, Communication, and Performing Arts**, and Newnan Cultural Arts Commission, Averitt Center for the Arts, Forsyth Central High School. The project gives the local communities a chance to be part of opera, as well as educate and inspire young artists to pursue a career in the arts.

Like us on Facebook to join the conversation!

Glimmerglass Festival Guild

The Art of Making Art

The Guild of Glimmerglass FESTIVAL

During the 2025 summer season, the Glimmerglass Festival will present two stories recently transformed into operas: the world premiere of *The House on Mango Street*, with music by **Derek Bermel** and libretto by the story's author, **Sandra Cisneros**, and the youth opera *Odyssey*, with music by **Ben Moore** and libretto by **Kelley Rourke**. The Guild introduce area school children to the stories during the school year to increase attendance at our summer student events. This will also give them insight into the creativity that turns these stories into operas. Our projects fit well with the theme of the 2025 Festival: *The Art of Making Art*. Volunteers will be drawn from Guild members who are available to assist with our programs during the school semester. Additional volunteers can be recruited in the summer. For '*The House on Mango Street Alive!*' a Committee member has been coordinating with middle school teachers in several semi-rural communities. Students in their classrooms are reading Cisneros' book this winter. We will use project funds for an online author visit the schools. The conversation with Sandra Cisneros will be moderated by the Festival's Dramaturg and Librettist Kelley Rourke and will be recorded to share on our website. The Festival will set aside some tickets for students to attend a selected performance of this new work. They will also assist us in pre-performance programming and activities at *A Day at the Festival for Students*. Introducing the community and local students and their families to the art form of opera has been part of the mission of the Guild and its Education/Community Engagement Committee since its inception.

Portland Opera Guild

Young Voices Northwest Competition



Young Voices Northwest Competition seeks to nurture the next generation of professional opera singers. The competition is an opportunity to identify new operatic talent and provide a springboard for additional career investment.

Volunteers will be drawn from **Portland Opera Guild** in collaboration with **Monday Musical Club**, **Opera in the Park** and **Portland State University**, and other musical educator groups and local educational institutions. In addition to a core committee of volunteers, over 50 volunteers will be used for front-of-house and back-of house production. The local-based vocal competition will take place in October 2025, and judges will celebrate local talent.

In the past, the MONC/Laffont brought competitors and judges from other areas of the country. This event will focus on local competitors. The event will bring greater awareness of young talent to the attention of a substantial base of potential donors and supporters in the area.

Volunteers will be essential to the success of the project. The competition dovetails with the mission of Portland Opera Guild, "*To stimulate interest and participation in opera for the benefit of cultural, educational, and musical life in all of Oregon.*"

OVI Group members in good standing are eligible to apply for matching grants which are awarded annually each February. Visit our website for information about grants.

Opera Volunteers International

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Address Correction Requested

Send your guild news and photos to
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newsletter@operavolunteers.org

**Find us on the internet at
www.OperaVolunteers.org**

***What sort of conference attendee are you?**

The Note Taker You came to conference prepared, armed with your favorite pens and an external battery for your phone. You delight when you're asked to share your notes. In between workshops, you'll likely be found planning your next session on the conference app

The Invigoration Seeker You're looking for ways to reinvigorate yourself and your work. Even though you're excited for all that you're about to learn, you equally can't wait to sleep in a comfy hotel bed. You'll find the inspiration you're looking for at the Opening and Closing Plenaries and workshops

The Networker Maybe you're looking to meet peers in your niche cause area or maybe you just have an extraordinarily high social meter. Your motto going into conference is "Every interaction is a possible connection." You will likely to be found at the Welcome Reception, Breakfast Table Talks or taking photos with new friends in the exhibit hall.

The Swag Collector As much as you love learning, you also love free goodies and networking with exhibitors. You are the conference goer who knows where all the best swag can be found. You'll eventually have to consider if everything you've collected will even fit in your carry on. When the conference day is done, you'll probably be enjoying the city of Memphis, looking for a cool memento to bring home.

The Foodie You came to Memphis with your list of restaurants to try and you probably even have a reservation or two. You'll excitedly tell all your new connections which local spots are must-tries. During conference, you can be found asking locals for recommendations for restaurants off the beaten path.

The First Timer You're not quite sure what to expect because it's your first conference. You've downloaded the app, you have your agenda for each day. Now you just need to figure out what you're going to eat for dinner each night.

**(from the Points of Light Foundation)*