

THE OPERA FIELD AT A GLANCE: 2018

OPERA IS THRIVING

Across the United States and Canada, opera is a vital part of our communities. Opera companies large and small are deeply rooted in their cities, strengthening their communities by creating civic projects that help build bridges across economic, social and cultural divides, developing robust partnerships with local organizations, and creating positive change. Entrepreneurial artists and innovative leaders are expanding the definition of opera, the opera audience and the audience experience.

The creative energy of opera is at an all-time high as more singers, designers, composers and other artists are entering the field than ever before. These artists, from an increasingly wide range of backgrounds, are fueling the creativity of opera today by infusing it with an array of diverse stories and perspectives.

ABOUT OPERA AMERICA

Founded in 1970, OPERA America is the national service organization for opera and the nation's leading champion for American opera. Through its many programs focusing on research, advocacy, new work creation, audience engagement and leadership development, OPERA America is fostering a supportive environment for the future of opera in North America.

OPERA America is based in New York City at its National Opera Center, which opened in 2012.

Membership and Audience. There are 157 Professional Company Members of OPERA America in the United States and Canada. These organizations are found in 41 states, the District of Columbia and seven Canadian provinces. Of the 157 Professional Company Members, 54% have an annual budget of under \$1 million.

In addition to these professional opera companies, OPERA America's organizational membership includes nearly 300 Associate, Business, Educational Producing Affiliate and Career Service/Library Members. The organization also has 1,500 Individual Members, including artists, administrators, patrons and other field stakeholders.

Closely allied with its colleague opera service organizations, Ópera Latinoamérica and Opera Europa, OPERA America provides reciprocal services and benefits to their member opera companies.

OPERA America has more than 18,000 subscribers to its e-newsletter, [24,000 Twitter followers](#) and nearly [18,000 Facebook fans](#).

In FY2016, over 80,000 people visited the National Opera Center for rehearsals, auditions, recordings, performances and meetings.

Grant Initiatives. Since the inception of its granting programs, OPERA America has awarded a total of nearly \$18 million to the opera field to support the work of opera creators, companies and administrators. Currently, OPERA America awards more than \$2 million each year through its range of grant initiatives.

OPERA America's long tradition of supporting and nurturing the creation and development of new works led to the formation of The Opera Fund, a growing endowment that allows OPERA America to make a direct impact on the creation and presentation of new opera and music-theater works.

OPERA America also contributes to the artistic vibrancy of the field through programs such as Opera Grants for Female Composers in support of works created by women, and the Robert L.B. Tobin Director-Designer Showcase, which supports promising experimental projects in all areas of practice at opera companies.

The most recent addition to OPERA America's granting portfolio is the Innovation Grants program, which supports groundbreaking projects in the most important practice areas at opera companies. This grant program, established in 2017, invests \$1.5 million annually in the health of the opera industry.

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Attendance. During the 2015–2016 season, 2.3 million tickets were sold to mainstage performances of OPERA America's Professional Company Members in the United States and Canada.

(Source: OPERA America, *Professional Opera Survey*)

- Overall attendance at live performance events remained stable between 2013 and 2015.
(Source: *National Endowment for the Arts, Annual Arts Basic Survey*)

Number of Productions. During the 2015–2016 season, OPERA America's Professional Company Members in North America presented 1,899 performances of 355 mainstage productions. (Source: OPERA America, *Professional Opera Survey*)

Audience Demographics. Opera audiences are growing more diverse. From 2008 to 2012, the percentage of African-American attendees increased by 59%, Hispanic attendance grew by 8.3%, and those of other non-white groups grew by 19.4%. (Source: *National Endowment for the Arts, Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, 2008, 2012*)

Younger audience segments have also increased between 2008 and 2012. Between those years, attendance in the 18–24 age bracket grew by 43.2%, and that of the 25–34 bracket grew by 33.8%. (Source: *National Endowment for the Arts, Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, 2008, 2012*)

Broadcast and Recorded Media. The percentage of adults viewing or listening to opera via broadcast and recorded media remains higher than live attendance. In 2012, over 10 million adults, or 4.3% of the population, viewed or listened to an opera broadcast or recording. (Source: *National Endowment for the Arts*)

Economic Impact. In FY2016, the expenses of OPERA America’s member organizations in the U.S. and Canada totaled \$1.1 billion, including both personnel and non-personnel expenses. (Source: OPERA America, Professional Opera Survey)

Opera companies in the U.S. and Canada employed a total of 2,551 full-time, 8,119 part-time and 18,698 contract staff in 2017. (Source: OPERA America, Human Resources Survey)

Box Office Income. In the FY2016 Professional Opera Survey, U.S. and Canadian companies posted \$230.5 million in box office receipts, representing 20% of total operating income for these companies. (Source: OPERA America, Professional Opera Survey)

Private Support. Opera companies are 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations that depend on financial support from private philanthropy and governmental sources to serve their communities.

Private support of U.S. companies in the FY2016 Professional Opera Survey totaled \$510 million, representing 47% of total operating income. (Source: OPERA America, Professional Opera Survey)

Government Support. Total city, county, state and federal government support for U.S. companies in the FY2016 Professional Opera Survey consisted of 7% of total operating income. (Source: OPERA America, Professional Opera Survey)

New Opera Works. Since 1900, over 1,000 new operatic works have been produced by professional opera companies in North America. Of that 1,000, more than 600 operas premiered between 1995 and 2017. In the 2016–2017 season, 30 North American operas premiered. (Source: OPERA America)

Most Frequently Performed Works. In the 2017–2018 season, the following works were the most frequently produced:

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| 1. <i>The Barber of Seville</i> (Rossini/Sterbini) | 5. <i>Madama Butterfly</i> (Puccini/Giacosa/Illica) |
| 2. <i>La traviata</i> (Verdi/Piave) | <i>The Marriage of Figaro</i> (Mozart/Da Ponte) |
| 3. <i>Carmen</i> (Bizet/Meilhac/Halévy) | 6. <i>Turandot</i> (Puccini/Giacosa/Illica) |
| <i>Tosca</i> (Puccini/Giacosa/Illica) | 7. <i>As One</i> (Kaminsky/Campbell/Reed) |
| 4. <i>La bohème</i> (Puccini/Giacosa/Illica) | <i>Don Giovanni</i> (Mozart/Da Ponte) |
| <i>Rigoletto</i> (Verdi/Piave) | <i>The Magic Flute</i> (Mozart/Schikaneder) |

The most frequently produced North American operas in the 2017–2018 season were:

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| 1. <i>As One</i> (Kaminsky/Campbell/Reed) | 4. <i>Trouble in Tahiti</i> (Bernstein) |
| 2. <i>Candide</i> (Bernstein/Hellman/Wilbur) | <i>Fellow Travelers</i> (Spears/Pierce) |
| 3. <i>The Consul</i> (Menotti) | <i>Three Decembers</i> (Heggie/Scheer) |