REINVENTING THE EVENT

11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
What We Value in a Good Event

1. Productive working relationships between staff and event committees
2. Effective engagement of event chairs
3. Innovative event models
4. Events with high financial and/or social ROI
5. Timely RSVPs from guests
6. Auctions with items that people want and that make money
7. Innovative approaches to bringing in more money
8. Appealing value propositions to corporate sponsors
9. Effective engagement of the board
10. Fulfilling involvement of young professionals
11. Balancing an appeal to high-net-worth with an openness to the community
12. Events that don’t break the bank in expenses
13. Avoiding gala-fatigue in the community
14. Streamlined check-in and check-out processes
15. Productive events that aren’t “galas”
16. Effective engagement of guests of paying attendees
17. Effective use of events for recruitment and stewardship

#OperaConf
Effective engagement of the board.

Value 9
• Your board members don’t know everybody at your parties. #awkward
• Your artists don’t know everybody at your parties. #awkward
• But when you pair a board member with an artist... #dynamicduo
  o BM: “Hi, I’m Dan. I’m on the Board of the company and want to introduce you to our artist.”
  o Artist: “Hi, I’m Beverly. Thank you for supporting our work.”
  o Donor/Prospect: 😊
• #purpose
Productive working relationships between staff and event committees.

Value 1
Productive Working Relationships between Staff and Event Committees

- Clearly defined, shared goals
- Well-articulated expectations
  - Job descriptions and timelines
- Strong leadership and event committee structure
- Line item budget
  - Defined decision making process
- Frequent communication
- Team spirit and a culture of respect among participants

Tickets: $1,500 - $10,000 | Tables (of 10): $15,000 - $100,000
Effective engagement of event chairs.

Value 2
Effective Engagement of Event Chairs

Serenata Wine Dinner & Auction: hosted by the Austin Opera Guild

• Chairs are given an appropriate amount of responsibility for successful execution of the event
  • Pick the theme, choose their committee, and manage the calendar of meetings and deadlines

• Staff serve as liaison between the Guild and the company
  • Ensure company goals and objectives are met and oversee the budget

Tickets: $350 - $1,000
Tables: $5,000 - $25,000

VALUE 2
Austin Opera
j dubin@austinopera.org

Event Type: Gala
Attendance: 300
Net Raised: $200,000

#OperaConf
Innovative event models.

Value 3
2018-19 SEASON REVEAL, April 17th 6—8 pm, at RareBird on the rooftop of Noelle. Exclusively for subscribers.

Tickets: Free to subscribers and multiple ticket buyers

VALUE 3
Nashville Opera
llevine@nashvilleopera.org
cmccauley@nashvilleopera.org

Event Type: Cultivation
Attendance: 107
Net Raised: $47,000

#OperaConf
Events with high financial and/or social ROI.

Value 4

#OperaConf
A recent Hawaii Opera Theatre fundraising event with high financial and social ROI:

Value 4
Hawaii Opera Theatre
K_Takamori@hawaiiopera.org

Event Type: Fundraising Dinner and Recital
Attendance: 50
Net Raised: $10,000

Tickets: $250 per person

#OperaConf
55th Anniversary Season Gala

- Achieved by a high financial and social ROI.
- Seeded Fund-a-Dream, with 20% of donors committing to 80% of goal.
- Experience heavy live auction and other opportunities to give including a silent auction and a raffle.
- After Party featuring Jujubee from Ru Paul’s Drag Race. Television personality drew in new community members and younger audiences. (After Party Tickets: $25-$55)

VALUE 4
Minnesota Opera
adiaz@mnopera.org

Event Type: Gala
Attendance:
Dinner and Benefit: 244
Opening Night Show: 1,712
After Party: 321
Net Raised: $375,804

Tickets: $400 | Tables: $7,500 - $25,000 (Half-Table: $4,000 - $5,000)

#OperaConf
Auctions with items that people want and that make money.

Value 6
**VALUE 6**

Fargo Moorhead Opera
Shirley Leiphon
manager@fmopera.org

Event Type: Gala
Attendance: 200
Net Raised: $25,000

KNOW YOUR CROWD

ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

BASKETS, BASKETS, BASKETS!!
Innovative approaches to bringing in more money.

Value 7
Be guided by innovation in the market...

VALUE 7
San Diego Opera
patrick.ms@sdopera.org

Event Type: Gala
Attendance: 400
Net Raised: $350,000

Tickets: $350-1,000 | Tables (of 10): $5,000 and up

#OperaConf
Appealing value propositions to corporate sponsors.

Value 8
Appealing value propositions to corporate sponsors

- Talk is cheap
- Strategic seating
- Offer introductions and follow up
- Appeal to guests that may not like opera
- Spend money to make money

VALUE 8
Houston Grand Opera
grobertson@hgo.org
dkrohn@hgo.org
Event Type: Opera Ball
Attendance: 450-500
Net Raised: $1.1M

Tickets: $1,500 - $10,000 | Tables (of 10): $15,000 - $100,000
Effective engagement of the board.

Value 9
Wine Auction – April 14, 2018

Specific Asks vs. General Requests

Tickets: $1,500 | 1 Table (of 10): $30,000 | 2 Tables (of 10): $60,000

Value 9
Lyric Opera of Chicago
Leah Bobbey
lbobbey@lyricopera.org

Event Type: Gala
Attendance: 430
Net Raised: $2.2 Million

Lyric

#OperaConf
Fulfilling involvement of young professionals.

Value 10
YP Engagement in Events

• CO has held Opera Ball After Parties for more than 10 years
• Average attendance and income of 140 YPs and $10,000
• YP Co-Chairs engage in Event Branding/Planning/Selection of H&H/Entertainment
• YP Engagement at CO is bigger than one annual Ball After Party.
• Annually, we hold 11 events and reach close to 2,000 YP
• Increased engagement through appealing entry points for YPs
• Trend: Increase in corporate sponsorships and YP diversity

After Party Tickets: $30/$35 advance/at door | Sponsors: $5,000
Opera Ball Tickets: $500 + Tables

VALUE 10
Cincinnati Opera
stomassian@cincinnatiopera.org

Event Type: Annual Opera Ball After Party + YP event series
Attendance:
Opera Ball Dinner : 450
After Party: 140 YPs + dinner guests
Net Raised: $270,000 main event; $10,000 YP event

#OperaConf
Balancing an appeal to high-net-worth with an openness to the community.

Value 11
That’s a R.A.P.! Weekend

• Weekend long event with 3 days of activities.

• Friday welcome party for participants, a formal Saturday event for sponsors, and a public pay-what-you-want Sunday concert.

• Variety of events allowed MN Opera to solicit sponsorships while also offering an accessible program open to the community.

VALUE 11
Minnesota Opera
mroberts@mnopera.org

Event Type: Fundraising & Community Event
Attendance:
- Friday Complimentary Invite Only Cocktail Party: 100
- Saturday Sponsor Dinner and Performance: 88
- Sunday “Pay what you want” Concert: 687

Net Raised: $152,263
Events that don’t break the bank in expenses.

Value 12
Gala and End of Season Celebration

• Tied to a performance
• Option to utilize existing space
• Less need for a large performance
• Creative in-kind sponsorships
• Additional fundraising/attendance benefits
Ways to save:
1. Use what you already have
2. Wine Sponsor
3. Find an event host
Avoiding gala-fatigue in the community.

Value 13

#OperaConf
Avoiding Gala-Fatigue in the Community

Palm Beach, Florida is known for hosting many gala events during the 5-month winter season. Palm Beach Opera has successfully utilized the following tactics to ensure that their Gala stands out and is both appealing and satisfying to community audiences:

• Bringing in international artists that are not easily accessible elsewhere
• Making the event a social, entertaining celebration of the operatic art form, rather than an awards ceremony with an abundance of speaking
• Ensuring that there is no focus on fundraising during the event
• Consistently changing venues on a yearly basis to keep things fresh and exciting
• Utilizing newly involved patrons to chair the Gala in order to reach newer audiences

VALUE #13
Palm Beach Opera
dwalker@pbopera.org
arichter@pbopera.org

Event Type: Gala
Attendance: 300
Net Raised: $285,000

Palm Beach Opera

#OperaConf
Productive events that aren’t “galas”.

Value 15
MASTERSIGNERS MEET & GREET EVENTS

- **Who?** All Mastersigner level donors ($4k+), all principal artists for a production, and donor prospects are invited to each M&G.

- **What?** M&Gs are WELCOME get-togethers for donors, Board Members, and donor prospects to meet and mingle with principal guest artists once the principals arrive for rehearsals.

- **When?** Usually scheduled on the 1st day of staging rehearsals, so that the principals artists can attend, and so that donors can meet and socialize with them.

- **Where?** M&Gs are usually held at a donor’s home. They volunteer to host and plan the event at their home.

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**VALUE 15**

**New Orleans Opera**
development@neworleansopera.org

- **Event Type:** Meet & Greet the Artists
- **Attendance:** 50+
- **Net Raised:** Donor Benefit

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*new orleans opera*
Effective engagement of guests of paying attendees.

Value 16
**Before the Event:** Educating table hosts, collecting as much personal information as possible, securing production event sponsors to support gala experience.

**During the Event:** Fundraising participation price points at all levels, creating shareable moments to capture feeling of the event, assigning welcoming tasks to board members and company ambassadors.

**After the Event:** Invitations to attend operas and other donor cultivation events, treating event attendees like opera contributors with donor levels and recognition benefits.

Tickets: $500+ | Tables (of 10): $5,000 - $50,000
Effective use of events for recruitment and stewardship.

Value 17
thank you > please
Effective use of events for recruitment and stewardship

2018 Wine & Beer Tasting

Goal
- To turn OTSL’s annual Wine & Beer Tasting into a community-building catalyst as well as a successful fundraiser.

Why?
- Guests are already an ideal target demographic; highest percentage of non-audience guests; lowest event price; most active event committee; least mission-oriented event.

Tactics
- Turn committee meetings and communications into cultivation & stewardship tools.
- Capture email addresses for as many people as possible via event registration form.
- Ensure all guests have a database account.
  - Create cultivation messaging strategy around event guests & a separate strategy for all new-to-file attendees.
  - Use the auction to drive engagement with OTSL by hosting a series of opera-related sign-up parties at various prices throughout the spring.

VALUE 17
Opera Theatre of Saint Louis
cjames@opera-stl.org

Event Type: Fundraising
Attendance: 320
Net Raised: $60,000
San Francisco Opera Medallion Society Luncheon

- Benefit event for Medallion Society ($3,000+) patrons
- Medallion Committee members and Giving Officers captain tables
- Brief bios for each table sent ahead
- Prospects invited and seated strategically
- Program is very mission-driven

Suggested Donation: $50 per person
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