

# THE NATIONAL OPERA CENTER AMERICA

## OPERA AND CREATIVE AGING

### INTRODUCTION

As population demographics shift, older adults (ages 60+) account for an increasing part of the U.S. population. According to the Administration on Aging, by 2030, there will be about 72.1 million older adults, more than twice their number in 2000.<sup>1</sup> By engaging older adults through targeted programming, opera companies can cultivate an authentic relationship with this expanding demographic. While many audience development initiatives target young adults and minority groups, opera companies have the opportunity to engage older adults who account for a sizable portion of opera audiences, volunteer hours and donations.

The purpose of this resource is to provide information to opera companies wishing to develop creative aging programs and provide a brief overview of what OPERA America learned in implementing its own creative aging program.

### CREATIVE AGING

Shifting population demographics are accompanied by a shift in arts education philosophy, with an emphasis on activities that require more than passive participation. The National Center for Creative Aging reports, “Studies have shown that challenging, participatory programs [for older adults] promote better health and disease prevention, resulting in higher levels of independence and less need for long-term care.”<sup>2</sup>

In response, arts educators are providing creative aging programs which focus on the potential of older adults to live productive, healthy lives and contribute to their communities as a result of participation in the arts.

Susan Perlstein, founder emeritus of the National Center for Creative Aging, identified three areas of focus for organizations or residences with programs dedicated to older adult learning. These areas include health and wellness, life-long learning and community.<sup>3</sup> Organizations or residences dedicated to health and wellness focus on improving an older adult’s quality of life; those that emphasize life-long learning focus on skill-building and acquisition of new skills; and those working in community-centered organizations are focused on building social connections and often offer intergenerational programming.

Across the various emphases of creative aging programs, Grantmakers in Aging reports the following benefits of arts participation<sup>4</sup>:

- Decreased anxiety, depression and perception of loneliness
- Increased levels of hGH (low hGH is implicated in osteoporosis, energy levels, etc.)
- Decrease in harmful behaviors and reduced agitation
- Greater sense of communal identity and social bonding
- Increased quality-of-life for up to six weeks after seeing a live performance

Susan Perlstein additionally cites learning new skills, meeting new people and having a new life experience as key reasons older adults join a creative aging program.<sup>5</sup> OPERA America believes opera is specifically suited to serve these motivations.

## WHY OPERA?

Opera is the ideal art form for creative aging programs as it matches the needs of older adults. A dynamic art form, opera engages participants through multiple artistic disciplines including vocal music, instrumental music, theater, dance and visual art/design. Opera also offers cognitive challenge and intellectual stimulation to create a rich experience for older adults. Christine Dell'Amore of *National Geographic* reported "Exposure to foreign language engages the brain and may delay onset of Alzheimer's."<sup>6</sup> Finally, opera provides older adults exposure to diverse and complicated subject matter, including various time periods/historical eras, settings that are frequently outside the United States or in a different culture and plots and themes that allow for meaningful discussion such as current events, relationships, social/personal values, life choices and political/religious beliefs.

## STORIES AND SONG: PROGRAM PROFILE

OPERA America's *Stories and Song* program offered a comprehensive opera learning and performance experience for older adults. This program was generously supported by New York City Department of Cultural Affairs funding and Councilmember Gale Brewer, and produced in partnership with Hamilton Senior Center on Manhattan's Upper West Side. The participants met weekly with a teaching artist and OPERA America staff for 90 minutes to study opera through vocal instruction, creative projects and discussion. Throughout the 10-week program, *Stories and Song* welcomed visits from guest artists, including a librettist, costume designer, artistic director and singers. Additionally, *Stories and Song* collaborated with the Life Maps program at Hamilton Senior Center, where participants created drawings of Giuseppe Verdi. The program also included optional activities such as a screening of an opera film at Hamilton Senior Center and a field trip to a local live performance. The program culminated in a performance and exhibition.

OPERA America partnered with Hamilton Senior Center, which is operated by Project FIND. Project FIND is a New York City-based organization that operates senior centers and supportive housing residences serving over 3,600 older adults. Project FIND's mission is to serve low- to moderate-income and homeless seniors by acting as a critical resource for housing, meals and programs. Hamilton Senior Center was selected based on a previous relationship OPERA America had established with the center. Hamilton Senior Center serves approximately 170 older adults per day, primarily women in their 70s with highly varied ethnic backgrounds.

Based on the demographics of Hamilton Senior Center and the educational philosophy of creative aging, OPERA America's *Stories and Song* program sought to offer opera programming to singers and non-singers. OPERA America also sought to create a learning environment for older adults to share their personal stories related to opera and the themes of selected repertoire. A programmatic emphasis was placed on storytelling, life review and reminiscence. Additionally, OPERA America employed strength-based learning strategies as part of the *Stories and Song* curriculum. Strength-based learning utilizes the talents of an individual to assist them in enhancing their educational experience and achieving their personal best. Due to various challenges older adults face when learning, it is important to access their full potential by motivating participants through their abilities and focusing on what they are able to do as opposed to what may be difficult or no longer possible.

The desired outcomes for the *Stories and Song* program included acquisition of musical and performance skills, increased knowledge of opera history and production, reflection on one's own life as it connects to music and repertoire themes, a greater sense of community, connection among participants and use of OPERA America as a resource for continued opera learning.

In order to measure whether these goals and outcomes were achieved, indicators of success in the *Stories and Song* program included:

- Improved musical ability, including overall vocal ability, music literacy, pitch matching, harmony and diction
- Improved performance skills, including acting, staging an opera chorus, storytelling, confidence, projection and stage presence
- Ability to apply experience and skills gained from guest visits in the rehearsal process and during the final performance
- Reinforced connections to music, specifically opera, in one's everyday life
- OPERA America documented the program throughout to track participant learning, review progress towards its goals and report what we learned to funders and the field.

OPERA America's documentation strategy included:

- Audio recording of introductory sessions
- Videotaping and photographing all sessions
- Weekly attendance sheets
- Weekly teaching reflections (oral or written)
- Collecting and archiving all written classroom activities
- Interview sessions with partner site staff members, participants and teaching artist
- Vocal evaluation of participants during beginning, middle and end of program
- Survey about opera learning and community building

OPERA America's evaluation tools are available in the appendix beginning on page 10.

At the conclusion of the *Stories and Song* program, participants were eager to continue their relationship with OPERA America. Participant Connie Bartusis stated, "I never dreamed I would have a chance to sing some of the most beloved songs in all of opera. It was a rare, deep and joyful experience."

Participants now have an increased interest in other OPERA America programs. They have requested subscriptions to *Opera America Magazine*, are interested in performing at future OPERA America and community events, and are eager to attend or volunteer at OPERA America events at the National Opera Center.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on creative aging research and the *Stories and Song* program, OPERA America makes the following recommendations regarding creative aging programs in opera:

- Take time to gain a deep knowledge of the population the program serves
- Plan events for morning or afternoon
- Make accommodations for limited mobility or cognitive capacity
- Keep prices low or free as many older adults are on fixed budgets
- Teaching artists and/or program administrators must have a high level of positive energy and flexibility
- Facilitate activities that focus on building authentic relationships amongst the community of older adults
- Be prepared to build ongoing relationships with that community

## **PROGRAM PLANNING**

Opera-learning programs can be designed to partner with an organization (center or residence) that serves older adults or opera companies may wish to offer a program independently. If

you are partnering with another organization, OPERA America recommends meeting with the staff at the partner site prior to the program to share activity ideas, ask for feedback and involve them in curriculum planning. Once the location of the creative aging program has been determined, gaining a deep knowledge of the population that a program will serve and your organization's goals for this group is essential. Each population will be slightly different with diverse life experiences, musical skill levels and interests.

OPERA America recommends speaking directly with potential participants to gauge their skill levels and understand their interest in opera. By asking participants what they hope to gain from participation and tailoring program design to meet these goals, the dedication of participants will increase.

While gathering information about the population, bear in mind the potential challenges when working with older adult populations. Challenges for creative aging projects are especially prevalent in the areas of health/physical well-being, participation and learning opera-based content. Health and physical well-being challenges may range from memory loss and dementia to physical limitations, including trouble with movement and loss of vision or hearing.

Active participation is also a frequent challenge for older adults. Barriers to attending creative aging programs include time of day, transportation and cost. Activities are usually well-attended directly before or after lunchtime. Generally, events on weekends and evenings are not as well attended because transportation and safety are concerns. In anticipation of these challenges, leave substantial travel time bearing in mind the proximity of program activities to where participants live. If an event is off-site from where the usual program occurs, provide transportation or accompany program members when transporting them to the event. Additionally, as many older adults are on a fixed budget, keep programs and events free or low-cost.

During program sessions, disruptions in the classroom and irregular attendance are barriers to active participation. Seniors are often very busy with friends, children, grandchildren and appointments. Additionally, some older adults may have a resistance to formal learning environments. Due to a lack of familiarity with opera, some older adults may have negative stereotypes of opera or a resistance to learning operatic repertoire in a foreign language. Despite these potential challenges, effective opera learning programs can be designed for groups with mixed experience and exposure, including those who do not read music or are not familiar with opera/Western musical traditions. Instill the attitude that opera can be fun and accessible by accommodating the special needs of older adult populations (see: program design-session management) and creating a strong sense of community (see: community building) on page 6.

## **MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT**

When marketing the program to potential participants, it is essential to bear in mind not only the potential challenges of creative aging programs but also the benefits of participation in these programs and how older adults communicate.

Recommended recruitment and marketing activities include:

- Visiting the program site prior the commencement of the program to generate ideas and recruit participants (visit during lunch hour or another communal gathering)
- Hosting a separate introductory session allowing participants to share the content and repertoire they are most interested in learning
- Calling individual participants to personally invite them (Susan Perlstein noted a

- personal invitation is often a deciding factor for older adults)
- Publicizing all sessions and events with posters and in your partner site's calendar (if applicable)
  - Creating a calendar for the creative aging program
  - E-mailing participants with updates and reminders
  - Posting on social media platforms with event calendars specifically targeted to older adults
  - Placing posters at other community locations frequented by older adults

## **PROGRAM DESIGN**

A creative aging program in opera may focus primarily on one aspect of opera learning (composition, performance or music history/appreciation) to provide an in-depth experience, or you may wish to incorporate various aspects of opera (especially if it links to existing programs the opera world is currently producing) as people learn in different ways.

Regardless of programmatic emphasis, experience-based learning proved to resonate with older adults as it taps into a key reason older adults join creative aging programs — *to have a new life experience*. Examples of experience-based learning include inviting guests from different aspects of the opera industry; involving older adults in a performance; taking a backstage tour at an opera company; and attending an HD broadcast, dress rehearsal or live performance of an opera. Additionally, as the program develops, you may wish to engage participants through a combination of on-site and off-site events. In the event there is not the time for experience-based learning activities, offering various options for participants to explore on their own time can help provide a wide range of activities for those interested in learning more.

## **DOCUMENTATION AND LEARNING STRATEGY**

It is important to design a documentation strategy in order to assist you in learning about the ongoing development and progress of the program. Documentation will address key questions regarding participant learning, program goals, reporting to funders and organizational goals. Through this process, you can adjust program activities to better match the needs of the group and gain greater insight into the group's learning. Additionally, documentation benefits participants by serving as a self-assessment of skill level and progress, as well as a reinforcement and review of topics studied.

Be prepared to assess participants in a variety of ways to accommodate different learning styles and possible barriers. For example, some participants may need to be evaluated through an individual verbal discussion rather than written form so as to be sensitive to those who may have difficulty writing.

Additionally, OPERA America recommends incorporating both self and external assessments when designing a documentation strategy. For example, evaluate participant learning by combining the use of both a participant survey and an ongoing evaluation completed by the teaching artist.

When gathering data or recordings, one must explain the purpose and usage to participants. Be sure to obtain consent forms from all participants. A signed media release from participants will grant you access to use the videos, pictures and recordings to inform your organization's learning process, report to funders and produce marketing materials utilizing this media. Contact OPERA America if you have questions regarding media releases.

### **SELECTING REPERTOIRE**

If you are designing a vocal program, you may wish to improve the understanding and accessibility of operatic repertoire. This can be accomplished by utilizing crossover repertoire, repertoire in English or English translations of operatic repertoire. However, OPERA America found that participants were eager to perform the selections in the original languages and that foreign language repertoire should not be considered a barrier. You may wish to begin the study of foreign language repertoire by utilizing lyric sheets that break the language down phonetically, as well as abridged or arranged operatic repertoire.

### **SUGGESTED REPERTOIRE**

When selecting repertoire for an opera-based learning program, you may wish to consider arrangements of the following as they are familiar and widely available for use:

- Habañera from *Carmen*
- Humming Chorus from *Madama Butterfly*
- Libiamo ne' lieti calici from *La traviata*
- Toréador Song from *Carmen*
- Una furtiva lagrima from *L'elisir d'amore*
- Va, pensiero from *Nabucco*

### **COPYRIGHT LAW**

If a program involves the study of operatic repertoire, pay particular attention to copyright law. It is imperative to understand copyright when photocopying music. Bear in mind that new arrangements and contemporary works usually do not fall under public domain. See [copyright.gov](http://copyright.gov) for more information.

### **STAFFING CREATIVE AGING PROGRAMS**

In planning program activities, opera companies should also consider the amount of resources and staff time they are able to devote to the project. Programming may take substantial work off-site or outside of traditional work hours. Bear in mind that when working with staff at the partner site, many individuals work at multiple sites or on a non-standard schedule (weekend, evenings, etc.) to accommodate the needs of older adults. Volunteers may be helpful in offering additional programming and support.

Teaching artists are an excellent resource as they typically come from a diverse arts background and may have special skills you wish to highlight in your program. Depending on the type of program, key qualities of a successful teaching artist in creative aging include:

- Previous experience or strong desire to work with older adults
- Strong listening skills
- Patience, humor and flexibility
- Energy to engage participants
- Familiarity and experience with opera
- Familiarity with the aging voice and singing

To provide a more in-depth experience, you may wish to explore the option of co-teaching artists. See the appendix on page 13 for a sample job description and contract OPERA America used in its teaching artist search.

### **SESSION MANAGEMENT**

During the sessions, flexibility is essential to accommodate the special needs of older adults. Speak slowly, loudly and clearly, and be prepared to repeat exercises or offer extra assistance as needed. It is imperative to adjust to physical limitations by using large print scores and

offering alternatives to physical exercises to accommodate mobility limitations of older adults. Furthermore, review material regularly in the event members are absent or forgetful, and keep all rehearsals open. Individuals will often join a program after watching for a few sessions.

For special events, provide handouts listing the time and date of the event to help prevent confusion. Be sure to follow up with multiple phone call reminders a few days prior to and then the day before an event. If the special event uses multimedia equipment, ensure that the volume is loud enough to project throughout the space, and utilize supertitles for translations and the hearing impaired. A short summary or introduction also enhances comprehension of program activities.

### **COMMUNITY BUILDING**

Building authentic relationships and community is essential as it will increase the level of ownership of the program and investment of older adults, funders and staff at the partner site. In order to create a positive learning environment for older adults, emphasize the importance of experience over perfection. Instill a sense of ownership and membership by providing participants with a choice in programming, reminding members of their personal goals for the program, and minimizing deadlines and requirements.

When interacting with participants, learn the names of everyone as soon as possible and take personal interest in conversations and events at the partner site outside of the opera-learning program.

### **PARTNERSHIPS**

A partnership with another program that serves older adults can greatly enhance the scope, visibility and impact of your program by providing individuals who might not otherwise do so the opportunity to engage with opera. By involving participants that are already invested in another program, you can build upon their loyalty to participate in future opera programming.

Typically, a partner site that serves older adults will offer other community programs (poetry, visual art, gardening, theater, etc.). In pursuing partnerships, first review programming at the partner site and identify potential collaborators. One may also ask staff at the partner site for recommendations on who might be interested in collaborating. As you define the parameters of a partnership, use clear and reciprocal terms. Remember that it is best to get commitments to fund portions of a project and more substantial agreements in writing.

### **CONTINUING THE RELATIONSHIP**

Whether or not the program is ongoing, older adults will have an increased interest in your organization upon program completion. Before the culmination of a program, gather participant contact information and survey how participants might wish to be involved with your organization in the future. Be prepared to invite participants to engage with your organization at upcoming performances or a specific event planned to continue this relationship.

## CONCLUSION

Working with older adults through creative aging programs affords opera companies a tremendous opportunity to further cultivate audiences and interest for opera in their local communities. Resources are available below for further information about creative aging programs.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> United States. Administration on Aging. "Aging Statistics." Aging Statistics. 08 May 2013. Web. 1 July 2013. [http://www.aoa.gov/Aging\\_Statistics/](http://www.aoa.gov/Aging_Statistics/)

<sup>2</sup> Clifton, Daniel. "Research Shows Participation in the Arts Promotes Better Health for Seniors." The River Cities Daily Tribune Online. The River Cities Daily Tribune Online, 04 April 2013. Web. 01 July 2013. <http://www.dailytrib.com/2013/04/04/research-shows-participation-in-the-arts-promotes-better-health-for-elderly/>

<sup>3</sup> Cole, Ken and Susan Perlstein. "Creative Aging: Recruiting Older Adults." National Guild for Community Arts Education, New York, NY. 16 May 2013. Webinar.

<sup>4</sup> Grantmakers in Aging. "Arts & Culture... And Aging: Explore the Benefits." For All Ages Guide. 2013. Web. 1 July 2013. <http://www.giaging.org/resources/gia-toolkit/arts-culture-and-aging/explore-the-benefits-of-funding-these-programs/>

<sup>5</sup> Cole, Ken and Susan Perlstein. "Creative Aging: Recruiting Older Adults." National Guild for Community Arts Education, New York, NY. 16 May 2013. Webinar.

<sup>6</sup> Dell'Amore, Christine. "To Stave Off Alzheimer's, Learn a Language?" National Geographic News. National Geographic, 18 Feb. 2011. Web. 03 July 2013. <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2011/02/100218-bilingual-brains-alzheimers-dementia-science-aging/>

## RESOURCES

Callahan, Suzanne, and Diane Mataraza. *Thought Leader Forum on Arts & Aging*. 6 April 2011, Arena Stage Mead Center for American Theatre. Washington, D.C.: Thought Leader Forum on Arts & Aging, Sept. 2011. Web. 10 May 2013.

<http://www.giarts.org/sites/default/files/Thought-Leader-Forum-on-Arts-Aging.pdf>

Herman, Jonathan, Susan Perlstein, and Lawrence P. Goldman. *Creativity Matters: The Arts and Aging Toolkit*. National Guild for Community Schools of the Arts, 2007. Web. 10 May 2013.

<http://www.artsandaging.org/>

Jeffri, Joan, Martin Y. Iguchi, and William Penrose. *Still Kicking: Aging Performing Artists in NYC and LA Metro Areas*. Teachers College Columbia University and Research for the Arts and Culture. New York: Grantmakers in the Arts, 2011. Web. 10 May 2013.

<http://www.giarts.org/article/still-kicking-aging-performing-artists-nyc-and-la-metro-areas>

United States. National Endowment for the Arts. *Creativity and Aging: Best Practices*. By Jessica E. Thomas and Katie Lyles. Jan. 2007. *NEA Accessibility: Resources: Arts in Aging*. Web. 10 May 2013.

<http://www.arts.gov/resources/accessibility/BestPractices.pdf>

### **OPERA America**

330 7<sup>th</sup> Ave, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor

New York, NY 10001

P 212.796.8620

<http://www.operaamerica.org>

### **Encore Creativity for Older Adults**

6208 West Shore Drive

Tracys Landing, MD 20779

Phone: 301-261-5747

<http://www.encorecreativity.org>

### **ARTS FOR THE AGING**

12320 Parklawn Drive

Rockville, MD 20852

P 301.255.0103

<http://www.aftaarts.org>

### **Grantmakers in the Arts**

4055 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue West, Suite 100

Seattle, WA 98199-1247

P 206.624.2312

<http://www.giarts.org/arts-and-aging>

### **National Center for Creative Aging**

4125 Albemarle Street, NW

Washington, D.C. 20016-2105

P 202.895.9456

<http://www.creativeaging.org>

### **National Guild for Community Arts Education**

520 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 302

New York, NY 10018

P 212.268.3337

<http://www.nationalguild.org>

### **Elders Share the Arts**

138 S Oxford St.

Brooklyn, NY 11217

P 718.398.3870

<http://www.estanyc.org>

Jackie Schiffer, Audience Development Project Coordinator  
Leah D. Wilson, Director of Learning and Engagement

## APPENDICES

### DOCUMENTATION TOOLS

Vocal Evaluation (For evaluator use)

*Rate each participant's skill-level in each area on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being not proficient and 5 being highly proficient at the beginning, middle and end of program.*

<b>NAME</b>	<b>BENCHMARK</b>		<b>FINAL</b>	
<b>PARTICIPANT NAME</b>	Vocal Ability		Vocal Ability	
	Reads Music		Reads Music	
	Matches Pitch		Matches Pitch	
	Harmony		Harmony	
	Diction		Diction	

Program Survey (For participant use)

Have participants take a survey during the middle and at the end of the program to monitor progress and behavioral attitudes.

### STORIES AND SONG SURVEY

#### MUSIC/PERFORMANCE

1. I learned about vocal technique and how to sing well.

<b>1</b> No	<b>2</b> Not often	<b>3</b> Somewhat	<b>4</b> Yes, most of the time	<b>5</b> Yes, definitely
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2. I became a better singer because of this program.

<b>1</b> No	<b>2</b> Not often	<b>3</b> Somewhat	<b>4</b> Yes, most of the time	<b>5</b> Yes, definitely
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3. I learned more about performing and acting.

<b>1</b> No	<b>2</b> Not often	<b>3</b> Somewhat	<b>4</b> Yes, most of the time	<b>5</b> Yes, definitely
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4. The program was friendly to non-singers.

<b>1</b> No	<b>2</b> Not often	<b>3</b> Somewhat	<b>4</b> Yes, most of the time	<b>5</b> Yes, definitely
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#### OPERA LEARNING

5. I learned more about opera in general.

<b>1</b> No	<b>2</b> Not often	<b>3</b> Somewhat	<b>4</b> Yes, most of the time	<b>5</b> Yes, definitely
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6. I learned more about specific operas during class.

<b>1</b> No	<b>2</b> Not often	<b>3</b> Somewhat	<b>4</b> Yes, most of the time	<b>5</b> Yes, definitely
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7. I learned about new aspects of opera outside performance.

<b>1</b> No	<b>2</b> Not often	<b>3</b> Somewhat	<b>4</b> Yes, most of the time	<b>5</b> Yes, definitely
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8. I found the articles and program guide helpful.

<b>1</b> No	<b>2</b> Not often	<b>3</b> Somewhat	<b>4</b> Yes, most of the time	<b>5</b> Yes, definitely
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## **TEACHING ARTIST JOB DESCRIPTION**

### **STORIES AND SONG**

#### **2013 TEACHING ARTIST**

Seasonal part-time employment beginning March 2013

OPERA America seeks a part-time professional teaching artist to lead a chorus for senior citizens.

#### **JOB DESCRIPTION**

- Collaborating with OPERA America staff on curriculum design (supplies, sheet music, and other resources will be provided)
- Creating lesson plans/teaching strategy
- Leading chorus rehearsals and a final performance
- Teaching about opera

#### **ABOUT STORIES AND SONG**

*Stories and Song* is a 10-week pilot program to serve local seniors beginning in March 2013. Participants will rehearse opera choruses every Tuesday afternoon in preparation for a final concert. The program will provide a comprehensive storytelling and opera learning experience. An emphasis will be placed on encouraging seniors to share their personal experiences with music and connect opera to their everyday lives. Rehearsals will take place on-site at Hamilton Senior Center (141 West 73<sup>rd</sup> Street) on Manhattan's Upper West Side. As a part of the program, participating seniors will also be invited to attend educational events at the National Opera Center.

#### **QUALIFICATIONS**

Candidates should be an experienced teaching artist with a background in choral conducting. Ideal applicants will possess:

- Experience with choral and vocal instruction
- Familiarity and experience with opera repertoire
- Previous experience or interest in working with seniors (professional development available)
- Piano and accompaniment skills for rehearsal (accompanist provided for performance)
- Patience and flexibility

Storytelling and/or theatrical training a plus.

#### **APPLICATION PROCESS**

Please send a resume and cover letter to [JSchiffer@operaamerica.org](mailto:JSchiffer@operaamerica.org) by February 22, 2013.

#### **COMPENSATION**

The teaching artist will receive a fee of \$\_\_\_\_\_. Time commitment is no more than four hours/week inclusive of planning and a rehearsal of approximately 1.5 hours/week. Two planning meetings of two hours each will be scheduled with the teaching artist and OPERA America staff prior to the program. Candidates must commit to a full 10 week program, dress rehearsal and concert date (TBD in conjunction with selected teaching artist).

**SAMPLE TEACHING ARTIST CONTRACT**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

*ORGANIZATION* is very pleased to engage you for the *DATE/YEAR* opera engagement and partnership program with *PARTNER SITE*. This will serve as a letter of agreement between you and *ORGANIZATION*, and will govern all activities related to the program.

**TIME AND PLACE**

A planning meeting is scheduled on *DATE* from *TIME* at *PLACE*.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

Your responsibilities include repertoire selection, music and performance instruction, concert preparation and execution, and other responsibilities as necessary to achieve the goals of the program. Each week you will need to arrive no later than \_\_\_\_\_ to set-up and prepare for the 90-minute session. Please allow 15 minutes for clean-up and check-in after each session with *CONTACT*. This check-in is meant to serve as a reflection on that week’s session and to determine what will need to be independently planned and prepared for the following week.

It is understood that this honorarium includes program preparation and delivery, as well as assessment and weekly progress reports to *ORGANIZATION*. You will be responsible for your own transportation to and from the *PARTNER SITE*, as well as to and from any planning meetings, dress rehearsals and performances at the *ORGANIZATION* offices or another mutually agreeable location.

**MATERIALS PROVIDED BY ORGANIZATION**

*ORGANIZATION* will provide you with the materials necessary to conduct this partnership program, including program books, music and other materials as determined at planning meetings. *ORGANIZATION* will make reasonable attempts to secure additional supplies as needed, and will print or duplicate materials in our offices for use in the partnership program. It is expected that you will use your own computer(s) as needed.

**EXCEPTIONS**

If you find you are unable to attend a program session due to illness or injury please let *CONTACT (E-MAIL)* know as soon as possible. A substitute will be provided and the final stipend will be adjusted accordingly. If *PARTNER SITE* must close due to severe or inclement weather, every attempt will be made to notify you.

**BINDING AGREEMENT**

This agreement constitutes the complete understanding of the parties and supersedes all prior written and oral understandings. No amendment or waiver of any provision of this Agreement shall be valid unless in writing signed by both parties.

If the above terms accurately reflect your understanding, please sign both copies where indicated below and return one copy to *CONTACT*. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,

*SIGNATURE*

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