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The magazine of OPERA America — the national service organization for opera, which leads and serves the entire opera community, supporting the creation, presentation and enjoyment of opera.

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ON THE COVER: Opera Theatre of Saint Louis's 2010 world premiere production of Ash's *The Golden Ticket*, which was commissioned by American Lyric Theater and Felicity Dahl. The production was directed by James Robinson and designed by Bruno Schwengl. Photo by Ken Howard.

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The recent conference in Los Angeles in June was a great success thanks to the wonderful hospitality of our colleagues at Los Angeles Opera and the collective energy of so many members who made *Opera Conference 2010* the most attended in our history.

Back in June, we were weighing economic indicators to see if the recession was coming to a decisive end. Uncertainty has continued to reign since then, leading me to re-emphasize the need to focus on discovery rather than recovery. To recover means “to restore or return to a former state or condition.” As I said in my opening remarks, I don’t believe we’ll see a revival of arts coverage in local newspapers, a reintroduction of music classes to schools that focus on the fundamentals of European classical traditions, or resumed interest among the general public in purchasing tickets months or years in advance of performances. We can’t be limited in our thinking about the future by hopes to recover past practices.

I encouraged members to look forward to discovery rather than to recovery. Discovery means “to get knowledge of, to find out or to see for the first time.” This issue of *Opera America* magazine celebrates the energy of discovery in opera. From paperless programs in Austin, to dynamic partnerships with churches in Los Angeles and Cincinnati, to the inventiveness of more than a dozen opera ensembles in Boston performing everything from Baroque masterpieces to new works in a variety of venues, evidence mounts of opera’s ability to expand the definition of the art form and reach a new public in ways that respond to the interests and needs of contemporary audiences.

At *Opera Conference 2010*, members voted unanimously to approve a new strategic plan for OPERA America entitled, *New Challenges, New Opportunities, New Capacities: 2010-2015*. The recommended actions articulated in the plan (excerpts of which can be found beginning on page 40) renew OPERA America’s mandate as the national service organization for the field to forge a unity of purpose among a diverse membership and to engage all members in a process of discovery. Changing and challenging times require increased capacity for creative thinking and problem solving. We need to work together to generate resources — ideas, services and tools — that are beyond the ability of any one person or organization to develop alone.

As we raise the curtain on the 2010-2011 season, let’s derive inspiration in our search for discovery from the leadership demonstrated by this year’s NEA Opera Honorees. Through the establishment of an opera company and entire school of American composition, and by sharing their artistic gifts as a singer, conductor, coach and mentor, Martina Arroyo, David DiChiera, Philip Glass and Eve Queler blazed trails of discovery that have enriched all our lives. We will celebrate their achievements in the course of National Opera Week 2010. Let’s honor them even further by embracing their spirit of discovery in our effort to increase creativity, excellence, effectiveness and relevance across the field.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc A. Scorca". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Marc A. Scorca
President/CEO



“MORE INFORMATION THAN TRADITIONAL PAPER PROGRAMS.”

Austin Lyric Opera, housed in one of the most-tech savvy cities in the country, recently introduced a digital program for patrons. This new publication not only provides more illuminating, interactive content about the operas; it also serves as a marketing and fundraising tool.

“We’re now able to build a program that provides way more information than traditional paper and includes flash video and audio files,” says General Director Kevin Patterson, “It’s also made us more accessible to the visually impaired. In addition, we’re offering sections in Spanish, so people can listen to my note and the director’s note in Spanish.”

The costs associated with producing the digital program are covered by advertisements. Since there are no printing costs, the company distributes it widely via e-mail, not only to those who have already bought tickets for the performance. “We hope it will make people want to buy a ticket,” says Director of Marketing Susan Mobley, who reports that the digital program has a strong click rate — about 30 percent.

The program also carries news of upcoming productions, with the opportunity to click through to pages that allow readers to buy tickets or donate. Mobley reports that people have taken advantage of the “buy tickets” buttons, but “we haven’t yet had anyone donate.” The same capabilities make the program more attractive to advertisers — restaurants, for example, might embed a link that allows patrons to make a reservation.

While the digital programs are currently offered as a supplement to the regular print programs, Patterson intends to monitor reception with the hopes that the print piece might eventually be reduced to a simple cast listing and synopsis. 📄

“THINGS OF QUALITY FOR CHILDREN TO SING AND ACT.”

The Canadian Children's Opera Company (CCOC) is the only permanent children's opera company in Canada that commissions and produces operas for children on a regular basis. Founded in 1968 by Ruby Mercer and Music Director Lloyd Bradshaw to provide a source of child singers for productions of the Canadian Opera Company, the organization's mandate quickly grew to include the creation of new operas for children.

“There isn't enough quality original opera repertoire for children to perform,” says Ann Cooper Gay, artistic director of the CCOC. “Arrangements of Gilbert and Sullivan are a great way to teach diction, and delicious for children to sing, but they're arrangements.”

Having commissioned and premiered half a dozen children's operas in the first 25 years of its existence, the CCOC has redoubled its determination to create a viable canon of children's opera in recent years. Three fully-staged premieres and a workshop in the past five seasons complement plans for another new opera in spring 2012. Composer/librettist Dean Burry's *The Secret World of Og*, based on Pierre Berton's beloved novel for children, premiered in May 2010. This December, the company will reprise its popular adaptation of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* — *A Dickens of a Christmas* by Errol Gay and Michael Patrick Albano.

From 32 original members, the CCOC has now grown to over 230 participants, ages 3 to 19, in ensembles including four age-appropriate junior choruses (Butterfly, Ruby, Apprentice, Intermediate), the Principal Chorus and a Youth Chorus which provides further training for boys with changed voices and girls ages 16 to young adult. Members of each chorus attend weekly sessions that include both vocal and dramatic training. CCOC productions usually include all choristers, even the youngest. “I like them to sing for audiences early on,” says Cooper Gay. “All you need to say is ‘Let's pretend’ and they're off and running.”

Early participation in the chorus often inspires a lifelong love of opera. “I even now have children of kids I used to teach. Opera is for everybody. It's simply storytelling set to music. I want children to experience *A Dickens of a Christmas* and say, ‘When I get bigger, I want to be Tiny Tim.’” 🎭



Mark Pedrotti as Scrooge and Ryan Harper as Marley's Ghost in The Canadian Children's Opera Company's 2008 production of Gay's *A Dickens of a Christmas*. Photo by Ben Mark Holzberg.



The student chorus performs in Opera for the Young's production of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. Photo by Glenn Trudel.

"A FRESH VOICE."

Opera for the Young (Madison, WI), recently welcomed as a Professional Company Member of OPERA America, is devoted to producing fully-staged, professional opera for young audiences — and performers.

"Student participation is our hallmark," says General Director Dan Plummer. Opera for the Young (OFY) tours about 20 weeks out of the year, doing 10 shows per week in about 180 schools across the upper Midwest. In addition to in-school performances, the group offers free nighttime community performances.

At each school, music teachers receive materials to prepare students in advance of the arrival of the traveling troupe. In addition to a handful of student cameo roles, 16 children are selected for onstage chorus slots; these featured students rehearse with a company of four professional singers and a coach/accompanist for an hour immediately preceding the performance. The entire school learns the music for three or four numbers, singing from their seats as a massive offstage chorus.

"We try to make it as easy for schools as possible," says Plummer. Participating schools receive teaching materials that include a full libretto, a student preparation handbook, a teachers' guide, a tutorial compact disc and evaluation forms. Opera for the Young also includes suggestions for cross-curricular activities; for example, a unit on marine ecology complements *Rusalka*.

The company's productions begin with original scores of master composers, which are adapted by Artistic Director Diane Garton Edie. OFY's *Barber of Seville* is updated to the 1950s; *The Magic Flute* is set in space; *The Elixir of Love* takes place in the Old West. When selecting repertoire, says Plummer, OFY looks for "a well crafted story that has humor and poignancy and can teach lessons."

The company sought professional company membership in OPERA America because, according to Plummer, "It was just time. We're celebrating our 40th anniversary. Certainly we're looking to others who can share their expertise with us. But I also think we can add a fresh voice to the mix, especially with all the conversations now about how opera companies need to demonstrate their public worth." 🎭



Richard Paul Fink as Wotan and Valentina Osinski as Fricka in Berkeley West Edge Opera's 2010 production of *Legend of the Ring* (a one-evening condensation of Wagner's *Ring* cycle). Photo by Ching Chang.

“WE HAVE THE ABILITY TO GET TO KNOW OUR AUDIENCE.”

Berkeley West Edge Opera has long had a reputation for presenting new works and new twists on classic works. Founded as Berkeley Opera in 1979, the company was recently welcomed as a Professional Company Member of OPERA America. “We recognize that we are in a stage of high growth, and in order to really learn what we need to be successful, it is going to be helpful to have some examples so we don’t have to reinvent the wheel,” says Executive Director Elizabeth Wells.

The company recently moved to a 450-seat, state-of-the-art theater on the campus of El Cerrito High School. The theater was created by a bond measure and, according to Wells, “the school district didn’t really know what to do with it, so we said we’d love to help them out.”

Productions frequently mix multimedia with some modern furniture or other simple set pieces. The company has a long-standing relationship with videographer Jeremy Knight, whose work was a key component of a recent production of *The Legend of the Ring*, a condensed version of Wagner’s epic.

While Wells and Artistic Director Mark Streshinsky look forward to learning from their colleagues at larger companies, Wells notes that smaller companies can make an important contribution to the conversation because of their ability to test new ideas. “We have incredible flexibility, so we are not dealing with the same kind of risk as a larger company. Sure, it’s a big loss proportionally if something doesn’t go well, but it’s not a \$5 million loss. We also have the ability to get to know our audience on a one-to-one basis, as opposed to looking at trends. We do not find our audience members shying away from new works. I think, after a certain point, you need to ask yourself if your audience is getting tired of the same thing over and over again.” 🍷

“WHAT A PIECE SAYS TO US TODAY.”

Opéra Français de New York (OFNY), founded by Music Director Yves Abel, occupies a particular niche in the city’s rich cultural offerings. OFNY, recently welcomed as a Professional Company Member of OPERA America, has produced 29 rarely-seen works, ranging from Bizet’s *Djamileh* to Kurt Weill’s *Marie Galante*. While rediscovery of neglected French operas is a pillar of OFNY’s mission, the company also makes a specialty of original musical programs that combine important French repertory with other art forms. At PS122, an alternative performance space, the company produced *The Mephisto Project*, which presented the legend of Mephistopheles in scenes from various French operas with the counterpoint of dance, video and spoken word. Next season, the company will present a semi-staged concert with video, featuring music from Rameau’s French cantatas and text by Diderot, combined to create a philosophical dialogue.

Co-Artistic Director Jean-Philippe Clarac notes that there are advantages and disadvantages to working on less familiar repertory. “I have noticed that the opera audience can have strong expectations about how things should be done. For these works, there are no expectations, which gives us great freedom.” On the other hand, he says, it can be difficult to assemble performing materials for rare works.

When it comes to production style, the company has avoided specialization — whether in the direction of “period” or “avant-garde.” Says Clarac: “For me, it is not about traditional or not traditional. We always start by asking ourselves what a piece says to us today. Then we choose an aesthetic based on the answer. Sometimes the message is stronger if you keep it in a traditional aesthetic, sometimes not. I’m very pleased with what Peter Gelb is doing. Before that, everything was simple in people’s minds: You go to the Met for traditional productions, to a smaller company for avant-garde. But things are getting way more complex.” 🍷



Phillip Addis and Ariadne Greiff in Opéra Français de New York’s 2009 production of Debussy’s *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Photo by Jacqueline Chambord.



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2010/11 Season

Giacomo Puccini
MADAME BUTTERFLY
Oct 22–Nov 5, 2010
Cast includes Martínez, Calleja, Hernandez and Schauer.
Directed by Michael Grandage. Conducted by Patrick Summers.

Benjamin Britten
PETER GRIMES
Oct 29–Nov 12, 2010
Cast includes Griffley, Van Kooles, Purves and Wyn-Rogers.
Directed by Neil Armfield. Conducted by Patrick Summers.

DEAD MAN WALKING
Music by Jake Heggie / Libretto by Terrence McNally
Scenarist created by Sister Helen Prejean
Jan 22–Feb 6, 2011
Cast includes DiDonato, Cutler, Van Stade and Bruggengraben.
Directed by Leonard Foglia. Conducted by Patrick Summers.
Adult content: contains strong language, nudity, and depictions of sexual activity and violence.

Gaetano Donizetti
LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR
Jan 28–Feb 11, 2011
Cast includes Shaginratova, Piltas, Hendricks and Rose.
Directed by John Doyle. Conducted by Antonino Fogliani.

W.A. Mozart
THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO
Apr 15–30, 2011
Cast includes Carlitz, Kuberov, Pisaroni and Dehn.
Originally directed by Götz von Dönhoff.
Directed by Harry Silverstein.
Conducted by James Gaffigan.

Richard Strauss
ARIADNE AUF NAXOS
Apr 29–May 10, 2011
Cast includes Goerke, Grabare, Claycomb and Dolgos.
Directed by John Cox.
Conducted by Patrick Summers.

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Arizona Opera recently added two new members to the staff: **Peter Somogyi** as director of artistic administration and **Jamie Dove** as director of development. Most recently, Somogyi was director of artistic administration for Florida Grand Opera. Prior to this appointment, he held administration positions with Los Angeles Opera, New West Symphony, Opera Pacific and San Francisco Opera. Somogyi received his M.A. in musicology from University of Southern California and B.A. in music from University of California at Berkeley. Dove worked as director of development for the Arizona Kidney Foundation from 1996 to 2010. In that role, Dove was responsible for the cultivation and building of funding support from individual, foundation and government entities through greater community awareness and engagement and all fundraising events. Dove received her B.S. in finance and marketing from Arizona State University.

The Atlanta Opera's Zurich General Director Dennis Hanthorn announced the promotion of **Paul Melroy** to the newly created position of managing director. Melroy currently serves as the company's senior director of finance and administration, a position he has held since 2004 and previously from 1993 to 2000. In his new position, Melroy will be responsible for supervising all administrative and revenue functions of the company including marketing, development, finance, human resources and facilities. **Cristina Vásconez Herrera** has been promoted to the position of director of marketing and communications.

Herrera, who most recently served as director of communications since 2008 and interim director of marketing from 2007 to 2008, was the company's director of marketing and public relations from 1995 to 2000. Additionally, **Arthur Fagen** will become The Atlanta Opera's music director, effective September 2010. He has appeared on the podiums of the Munich State Opera, Semper Opera Dresden, Hamburg State Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Staatsoper Berlin, Teatro Regio Torino, Opera Capitole de Toulouse, New York City Opera, the Metropolitan Opera and the Vienna State Opera. Maestro Fagen studied at Wesleyan University and the Curtis Institute; his teachers were Max Rudolf, Hans Swarowsky and Laszlo Halasz. He is Professor of Orchestral Conducting at Indiana University.

Boston Lyric Opera (BLO) announced that **David Angus** will become the company's new music director effective September 2010, a position that has been vacant for two years. Maestro Angus received critical acclaim for conducting BLO's April 2010 production of *Idomeneo, re di Creta*. Angus's professional career began as a répétiteur with Opera North (U.K.) before becoming chorus master and staff conductor for Glyndebourne Festival Opera. He has also conducted at several Italian opera houses, the Canadian Opera Company, Danish National Opera and the Brighton and Aldeburgh Festivals. He is the music director of Glimmerglass Opera, the honorary conductor of the Symphony Orchestra of Flanders and has recently appeared as guest conductor at Utah Symphony, San Antonio Symphony and Opera

Cleveland. Angus will work closely with guest conductors and the orchestra to ensure a consistent voice throughout the season, and will conduct *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in April 2011. He will then conduct a minimum of two productions in future seasons.

Delaware Valley Opera (Narrowsburg, NY) is engaging in a bootstrap effort to enter the ranks of regional resident opera companies following a successful quarter-century as a seasonal entity. Spearheading the drive is the formal appointment of **Mark Shulgasser** as general manager and artistic co-director; and that of conductor **Kenneth Hamrick** as music director and artistic co-director. Composer-in-Residence **Lee Hoiby** will continue to offer his operas in newly revised form while also creating new stage works. Development responsibilities have been entrusted to consultant Thomas Lipton's Vistas & Visions, whose activities encompass opera, orchestral and ballet management tasks in the U.S. and Europe.

Stewart Pearce has been named managing director of the **Metropolitan Opera Guild**. Pearce assumes the position after a long and distinguished association with both the Metropolitan Opera and the Metropolitan Opera Guild. He will continue in his role as assistant manager for operations at the Metropolitan Opera, a position he has held since 2006. Pearce has spent virtually his entire professional career at the Metropolitan Opera and the Metropolitan Opera Guild, in a variety of management positions spanning almost 35

years. His Master's degree in arts management, which he received from New York University, included an internship at the Metropolitan Opera Guild. He served as the Guild's director of membership, including broad-based marketing and fundraising responsibilities. In his tenure at the Metropolitan Opera, he has been involved in long-range financial and season planning, budgeting, touring, box office, audience development and educational outreach, presentations, merchandising, archives, visual arts and external relations.

The **Mississippi Opera Association** has announced the selection of a new artistic director, **Jay Dean**. Dean will assume his new duties with Mississippi Opera effective immediately. His performance debut as artistic director will be "Passion and Fireworks: The Heart of Opera" on November 6. Dean will continue in his full-time position as music director of The University of Southern Mississippi Symphony Orchestra, where he has been the music director since 1988, and work with Mississippi Opera on a part-time basis. In 2009, Dean and the University of Southern Mississippi Symphony Orchestra received the Governor's Award for Leadership in the Arts. Dean received his D.M.A. in orchestral conducting from The University of Texas at Austin.

The newly formed **North Carolina Opera** has named **Eric Mitchko** as its first general director; he assumed his new responsibilities July 6. North Carolina Opera was formed when The Opera Company of North Carolina and Capital Opera Raleigh merged. Mitchko comes to Raleigh from The Atlanta Opera where, as

director of artistic administration, he was responsible for the selection of the company's repertoire and casting, and oversaw all elements of each production. Mitchko is an alumnus of both Princeton University and Columbia University, where he studied politics and philosophy.

Costume designer **Martha Mann** received her first Dora Mavor Moore Award for Outstanding Original Costume Design for **Opera Atelier's** production of *The Marriage of Figaro*. The Dora Mavor Moore Awards recognize the outstanding achievements of Toronto's performing arts industry annually in five categories: General Theatre, Independent Theatre, Dance, Opera and Theatre for Young Audiences. *The Marriage of Figaro* received a nomination for best opera of the year. Also receiving Dora nominations for their work in *Figaro* were David Fallis for musical direction and Carla Huhtanen for outstanding performance.

Lisa James has been appointed to the position of director of development for **Opera Colorado**. Previously, from 1998 to 2003, James worked at San Francisco Opera, beginning as director of institutional gifts and completing her service as director of development; she oversaw a staff of 22 and led the restructuring of the fundraising program at the opera, as well as participating in crafting a strategic plan for the organization. Producer and presenter for nonprofit fine arts and performing arts organizations across the country, James has served as a panelist and site evaluator for the National Endowment for the Arts, the

Western States Arts Foundation, and other national and regional funding organizations. James received her B.A. from the University of Denver and her M.A. in business from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Matthew Shilvock has been promoted to the position of associate general director of **San Francisco Opera**. In this role, he will assume new managerial responsibilities for the company's education and media divisions, in addition to his continuing oversight of the areas of music administration, rehearsal department and San Francisco Opera Center. Shilvock joined San Francisco Opera as general director's associate in 2005 as part of the transition team upon the appointment of David Gockley, joining the company directly from Houston Grand Opera. Shilvock's background is in music performance and history, studying music at Christ Church, Oxford University. He holds a Master's degree in public administration from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, with a specialization in nonprofit administration. Prior to working for Houston Grand Opera, he was a fellow with OPERA America.

French conductor, composer, pianist and author **Frederic Chaslin** has been hired as the new chief conductor of **The Santa Fe Opera**. General Director Charles MacKay says the conductor's three-year appointment will end a nearly two-year search that included extensive conversations with orchestra members, artists and other leaders in the music field. Chaslin will start on October 1, filling the spot left vacant when Edo de Waart resigned

at the end of the 2008 season. **Michael Chang** has joined the staff of **Sarasota Opera** as director of marketing and public relations. He comes to Sarasota from New York, where he was managing director for MC Art Strategies, a consultancy for nonprofit visual and performing arts institutions. Previously, Chang was executive director for Downtown Music at Grace, a community concert series in White Plains, NY. As executive secretary of the board of directors for Maverick Concerts, a summer chamber music festival in Woodstock, NY, he served as marketing and publicity chair. For the last five years, he has been an adjunct instructor in the Arts Administration Certificate Program

for New York University SCPS. Chang received a B.A. in music education and performance from San José State College, and earned an M.M. in opera performance from Indiana University.

Benjamin E. Juarez has been named dean of **Boston University's College of Fine Arts**. Prior to being appointed dean, Juarez directed the Centro Nacional de las Artes, Mexico's national arts center, running professional schools in music, dance, arts, theater and film, research centers, the organization's TV channel and more than 20 theaters and performing spaces. At the Centro Nacional de las Artes from 2007 to 2009, he oversaw 600-

plus employees, 1,800 students and an \$8 million annual budget. He signed student and faculty exchange agreements with other art schools in Mexico and the U.S., launched joint programs with such places as the Kennedy Center, hosted international arts conferences and presided over a 30 percent increase in visitors to the center. Earlier, Juarez served as director of cultural activities for Universidad Anahuac del Sure. Juarez received his B.A. in 1969 from Centro Universitario Mexico; a M.F.A. in music from the California Institute of the Arts in 1973; and a certificate in business administration from Universidad Anahuac del Sur in 2002. 🌟







Members of the Los Angeles Opera Domingo-Thornton Young Artist Program Yohan Yi, Hak Soo Kim, Erica Brookhyser, Valerie Vinzant and Erika Wueschner perform excerpts from Spears's *Paul's Case* at the *New Works Sampler* at *Opera Conference 2010*. Photo by Katherine L. Ehle/OPERA America.

NEW WORKS EXPLORATION GRANTS INTRODUCED

Through the auspices of *The Opera Fund*, OPERA America will offer three different programs in 2010-2011 to enhance the vitality of opera in North America through the creation and production of new works, as well as the encouragement of creative artists. In addition to Repertoire Development Grants and the Robert L.B. Tobin Director-Designer Showcase, the organization is pleased to introduce **New Works Exploration Grants**, which provide support to representatives of OPERA America Professional Company Members who wish to travel to another city to attend a performance or workshop of a new opera and meet with the creative artists and administrators who are responsible for the work's creation. A generation ago, Exploration Grants were a key part of *Opera for the '80s and Beyond*, OPERA America's first effort to broaden awareness of new North American opera and music-theater works across the field and create relationships among opera companies interested in pursuing the creation and production of new works. Grants cover the cost of transportation and lodging. OPERA America gratefully acknowledges The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for supporting the revival of this program. *Applications are accepted on a rolling basis until June 1, 2011.*

Further information, including guidelines and application procedures, is available at www.operaamerica.org/grants. 

MUSIC! WORDS! OPERA! TEACHER WORKSHOP GRANTS

This past summer marked the 20th anniversary of OPERA America's cornerstone arts curriculum, *Music! Words! Opera!*. Since its inception in 1990, the recently revised multi-level series has reached more than 32,000 students, nearly 1,300 educators and over 600 arts programs. A new granting opportunity will provide funds for five opera companies to offer the program in their communities through teacher workshops. With the support of MetLife Foundation, OPERA America will provide grants of \$15,000 to Professional Company Members (PCM) and their partners to host training workshops for teachers. The grants will support PCMs by covering 100 percent (\$10,000) of costs for workshops during their first year and 50 percent (\$5,000) of costs in the second year. 


NORTH AMERICAN OPERA JOURNAL

The first issue of the *North American Opera Journal*, OPERA America's new scholarly electronic publication, will be published in fall 2010. As a complement to OPERA America's array of practical publications for opera producers, the *Journal* will engage in issues of opera history, aesthetics, cultural/interdisciplinary studies, business, music and libretto composition, production, reception history, performance practice and more.

Michael Pisani, professor of music at Vassar College, is consulting editor to the *Journal*, along with an academically and geographically diverse review committee, which includes:

- Caryl Clark, associate professor, University of Toronto
- Sean David Cooper, assistant professor of voice, Bowling Green State University
- John Dizikes, author, *Opera in America* and professor emeritus, University of California, Santa Cruz
- Ryan P. Jones, assistant professor of music, University of Wisconsin
- Elise K. Kirk, author, *American Opera*
- Ralph P. Locke, professor of musicology, Eastman School of Music
- Michael McKelvey, associate professor and coordinator of music, St. Edward's University
- Howard Pollack, professor of music, Moores School of Music, University of Houston
- Katherine K. Preston, professor of music, The College of William and Mary
- Pierre Ruhe, music critic


Submissions are invited from all scholars regardless of nationality or academic affiliation. The *Journal* will be published twice each year, with submissions welcomed on a rolling basis.

The *North American Opera Journal* is a benefit of OPERA America membership, starting at the \$75 level. Members will receive a notice when it is available for download on www.operaamerica.org. The *Journal* will also be available to non-members starting at an annual rate of \$35. Please contact Education@operaamerica.org with questions. 

NATIONAL OPERA WEEK

From October 29 through November 7, opera organizations across the United States will offer a variety of free public events, including backstage tours, flash performances and YouTube contests. With support from the National Endowment for the Arts, National Opera Week will be coordinated and publicized through OPERA America, bringing national attention to efforts in communities across the country. In 2009, more than 100 organizations participated in National Opera Week.

In addition to celebrating the excitement and accessibility of opera activity in the United States, National Opera Week honors the outstanding careers of the 2010 NEA Opera Honors recipients: soprano Martina Arroyo, general director David DiChiera, composer Philip Glass and conductor Eve Queler. (For more information on the NEA Opera Honors, see page 36.)

Event listings will be posted on www.operaamerica.org beginning in September 2010. For more information about National Opera Week, please contact Patricia Kiernan Johnson at PKJohnson@operaamerica.org or at 212-796-8620, ext. 217. 



Family Opera Initiatives puts on a performance during National Opera Week 2009. Photo courtesy of Family Opera Initiatives.

OPERA AMERICA WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Seven new members were elected to the Board of Directors during the organization's recent annual conference in Los Angeles.

J.A. "Gus" Blanchard currently serves as non-executive chairman of the board of ADC Telecommunications (Eden Prairie, MN). Previously, he held chairman and CEO positions at eFunds Corporation, Deluxe Corporation and Harbridge Merchant Services. Opera became his first musical love and passion as a result of the Texaco radio broadcasts in the 1950s. Blanchard is a trustee emeritus at Minnesota Opera, and served as a director of New York City Opera for five years.

Gregory Carpenter joined the staff of Opera Colorado as director of development in 2004 and became general director in 2007. Carpenter was the chairman of the fundraising committee for the 2008 National Performing Arts Convention in Denver. Prior to joining Opera Colorado, he worked for three years as the manager of development with the National Symphony Orchestra at the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts in Washington, D.C.

Rena M. DeSisto is head of marketing & corporate affairs for Europe, the Middle East & Africa; and Global Arts & Heritage executive at Bank of America Merrill Lynch. In her marketing & corporate affairs role, DeSisto superintends the company's marketing, sponsorships and philanthropy for the region. In her role as global arts & culture executive, she oversees investments in nonprofit arts institutions and the communities they serve. DeSisto also oversees a grant program for nonprofit arts organizations to strengthen their ability to educate and serve their local communities.

David B. Devan arrived at the Opera Company of Philadelphia in January 2006 following an extensive search to identify a managing director. In March 2009, the company's board of directors unanimously supported his appointment as executive director. Since his arrival, Devan has worked closely with board and administration on strategic planning initiatives and building community partnerships with such organizations as Arts Sanctuary, the Curtis Institute of Music and Kimmel Center Presents. Devan was a member of the board of OPERA America previously, when he served Pacific Opera Victoria as executive director.

Allen R. Freedman founded Assurant Inc in 1978 and retired as CEO in 2000. He has also been a private equity investor since the 1970s. He was previously chair of the board for two public companies, Systems and Computer Technology Corp. and Indus, Inc. He has served as chair of the audit committee of two public companies. Freedman and his wife co-founded the annual Freedman Prizes at Hartwick College, which are intended to dramatically reposition the focus of this small liberal arts college in Oneonta, NY. During 2004 and 2005 he served pro bono as full-time executive director of Glimmerglass Opera.

Jake Heggie is the composer of the acclaimed operas *Moby-Dick*, *Dead Man Walking*, *Three Decembers*, *The End of the Affair* and *To Hell and Back*, as well as the stage works *For a Look or a Touch* and *At the Statue of Venus*. The recipient of a 2005-2006 Guggenheim Fellowship, he has also composed more than 200 songs, as well as concerti, chamber music, choral and orchestral works. Since its San Francisco premiere in 2000, *Dead Man Walking* has received more than 150 international performances. Upcoming projects include songs commissioned by Carnegie Hall, The Dallas Opera and Houston Grand Opera.

Andreas Mitisek has been the artistic and general director of Long Beach Opera since 2003. He is also increasingly sought after as a guest conductor in North America, leading productions for Seattle Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Vancouver Opera, Austin Lyric Opera, Hawaii Opera Theatre and Yale Opera. A native of Austria, he served as music director of the Wiener Operntheater from 1990-1997, which earned critical and popular acclaim as the foremost contemporary opera company in Austria. 🌐

NATIONAL OPERA TRUSTEE RECOGNITION PROGRAM

The health and vitality of every opera company is determined in large measure by the commitment and effectiveness of its board members. In early August, OPERA America Vice Chairman Frayda B. Lindemann invited Professional Company Members to submit their nominations for the fourth annual **National Opera Trustee Recognition Program**. Sponsored by Bank of America, the program honors opera company trustees for exemplary leadership, support and audience building efforts on behalf of their respective opera companies. The deadline for nominations is October 4, 2010.

The award event, including a reception, dinner, award presentations and a performance will take place in New York City on February 25, 2011. This award dinner is not a fundraising event. Honorees and their respective general directors receive complimentary tickets.

The award event will take place in conjunction with a meeting of the **National Trustee Forum**, which meets twice annually to share best practices. In addition, year-round networking opportunities make the National Trustee Forum a highly valued resource for opera company board members from all walks of life. Each professional company member is invited to nominate one trustee to the Forum. Findings from the work of the Forum are broadly disseminated to all OPERA America members through articles, publications, Web resources and Annual Conference sessions.

The National Opera Trustee Recognition Program is just one of an array of services OPERA America has created that focus on the unique information and skills trustees need to meet the challenges and opportunities that are a part of governance. For more information, contact Bill Higgins, BillHiggins@operaamerica.org.



Lauren Flanigan instructs Andrea Arias Martin during *Making Connections*. Photo by Katherine L. Ehle/OPERA America.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

OPERA America's *Making Connections* professional development program is a series of workshops and panel discussions on a variety of topics of interest to aspiring and emerging opera artists, held at OPERA America headquarters in New York City. The 2010-2011 season of *Making Connections* will feature several sessions streamed live on the OPERA America website so that artists from around the country can share in the learning.

The first session, on September 29, 2010, will be "Make the Most of Audition Season," featuring **Ken Benson**, consultant; **Anthony Roth Costanzo**, countertenor; and **Edward Yim**, New York City Opera.

Additional sessions in the coming season include:

- Create New Opera: Workshop to Scene Shop
- Internet Famous: Strategies for Branding and Promoting Yourself Online
- Stress Management for Opera Artists
- Fuel Your Art: Grant Writing 101
- Keys to a Successful Singer/Conductor Relationship
- The Nuts, Bolts and Secrets of Covering

Speakers will include such noted artists as **Steven Osgood**, **Tobias Picker**, **Dolora Zajick** and **Francesca Zambello**. For the latest news or to register for the 2010-2011 season of *Making Connections*, visit www.operaamerica.org/makingconnections.

FIND ANSWERS

ON WWW.OPERAAMERICA.ORG

OPERA America's website offers vast resources for artists and administrators. Find professional development support, job opportunities, artistic support and more.

ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

Explore new information under "Advocacy and Public Policy" including top legislative issues, policy updates and tips on how to *take action* and advocate for the arts.

MARKETING PROFESSIONALS

Find the latest on events like National Opera Week or the Electronic Media Forum to make sure you're in synch with new media and marketing opportunities for your company.

EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS

Find literature and resources on over 60 operas to supplement your own research; find out how to partner with schools in your community using our curriculum-based *Music! Words! Opera!* program. **License** an *Online Learning* course from OPERA America to enhance offerings for your patrons. **Use** the newly updated Opera for Youth Directory to find operas with children.

ARTISTIC AND PRODUCTION PROFESSIONALS

Plumb the North American Works Directory to inspire your creative thinking and find lesser-known works. **See** who's performed them in the past, when, and where to find the music. **Find** production-related personnel, resident theater information and information regarding rental inventories of sets, costumes, props, musical materials, titles and translations in the Production Directory.

STAY ABREAST OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD:

Find details of the **2010-2011 Webcast Series**, featuring sessions on Succession Planning, Building Leadership Support for Marketing Projects, Capitalization and Business Planning, Governance and more. **Subscribe** to an RSS feed of member announcements. **Contact** your colleagues with the Professional Company Member directory, now downloadable to your desktop.

For questions or for a guided tour, please contact MFeilotter@operaamerica.org.

In Search of the Next Great American Opera or Waiting for Godot?

By Daniel Catán

In the last 50 years or so, opera leaders have accomplished extraordinary things. Yet, one of our most important goals has remained elusive. We want to reach new and larger audiences; we want to move beyond the group of loyal aficionados. We want to make opera part of the cultural conversation of this country.

So far, we have to admit, we have not succeeded. And I think it's important to address this issue because, if we don't, sooner or later, our accomplishments will be at risk.

First our greatest accomplishment: We've achieved an incredibly high standard in our presentations. Opera has become attractive even to those who claimed to be allergic to it. An extraordinary group of artists has developed in this country and has made this possible — singers, orchestral musicians, conductors, stage directors, designers, stage managers. As a member of the opera community and as a citizen of the U.S., I feel extremely proud.


Furthermore, we've succeeded in presenting the standard repertory in contemporary and relevant new ways. Scarpias and Pinkertons have come up in a multitude of guises; Carmens and Violettas have found new incarnations;

Susannas are easily identified and their employers continue to harass them; and Count Almaviva's privileges have not exactly disappeared.

But let's not forget that the point of showing the modern equivalents of these characters is not simply to point out historical parallels, but to bring these issues into the conversation. It is here that we've not succeeded.

At present, it's far more likely that we'll find ourselves discussing Sandra Bullock's misfortunes and not the Countess's. We are more likely to talk about Tiger Woods than Count Almaviva, even though the issues are exactly the same ones. This brings me back to the question of updating operas and making characters reincarnate in their contemporary equivalents.

Do we make Almaviva more relevant if we dress him up as a golfer? Do we make the Countess's suffering more real if we make her look like Sandra Bullock? Yes and no. Yes, because we point out that the issues are still with us. No, because when we update an opera, we do so exclusively in one dimension, namely, the setting and the costumes. We do not like to tinker much with the libretto because it is so closely tied to the music, and we never touch the music itself. There is, therefore, a dissonance between these



Daniel Catán delivers the Keynote Address at *Opera Conference 2010* in Los Angeles. Photo by Katherine L. Ehle/OPERA America.

elements and often that dissonance is so loud that we lose more than we gain.

We need to update fully — the music, the libretto and the point of view. In other words, we need to write our own operas that reflect our concerns.

But it turns out that we've been doing just that: commissioning, writing and presenting new operas with an astonishing frequency. Just last month, for example, we had three new operas — *Moby-Dick* in Dallas, *Amelia* in Seattle and *Before Night Falls* in Fort Worth. And in the last few years we've had operas like *Margaret Garner*, *Dr. Atomic*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Dead Man Walking*, *Ghosts of Versailles*, *A View from the Bridge*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Brief Encounter*, *Florencia en el Amazonas*, *Salsipuedes*, *An American Tragedy*, *Little Women*, *Elmer Gantry*, *Appomattox* and *The Bonesetter's Daughter*, to name but a few. All of them are notable accomplishments, truly contemporary.

Audiences are interested in new works, of that there is no doubt. Many of these new operas have played to sold-out houses. In fact, some of the worst box office flops opera companies have had recently have been with standard rep and not with contemporary operas.

Why, then, have we not succeeded in making opera part of the cultural conversation in this country?

I think the answer is this: the system under which we operate practically ensures that they cannot be part of the conversation.

Imagine the following scenario: a film called *Avatar* premieres in only one theater, in only one city. If that particular audience doesn't like it, for whatever reason (and think of the huge difference between audiences in Minnesota and Florida), that's the end of the film forever.

If on the other hand, the film has tremendous success, then a second manager might decide to show the film in his theater, but four years later, because he has no earlier slot in which to show it. Think about it. No film would ever make it under this system. No film would ever recover its investment — never mind make millions in profits. In other words, no film would ever become part of the national conversation.

By the time *Avatar* gets to its second venue four years later, it's old news. And even if it was a success the first time, it's unlikely to be so the second time. The momentum has been lost.

Now, if that second manager were to conclude that the film was not good enough to stand the test of time, he would be drawing the wrong conclusion. It is the conditions under which we are testing the film that are not right. This is why I say that even if an operatic *Avatar* were to show up, our system would soon kill it.

We have not focused sufficiently on this issue. Instead of looking at the deficiencies in the system, we've been dreaming about The Next Great New American Opera, waiting for it to come, sweep us off our feet and impose itself on the conversation nationwide. As things are now, we might as well be waiting for Godot.

Let me report a conversation I had recently:

"Daniel, I love your work. I would like to do one of your operas and introduce your music to our audience."

"Great, how about *Florencia en el Amazonas*? Audiences love it and relate well to it."

"No, I want a new piece."

"Oh, ok, what about *Il Postino*?"

"Mmm, no, that's already being done by Los Angeles Opera..."

Strange reasoning, right? But stranger still is the fact that it has become so familiar that we don't find it odd anymore! It has simply become the way we think about new operas. Why?

Companies want to present a work that has proven to be successful. That is why general directors go and see new operas, so they can decide whether to present them in their venues later on.

At the same time they want to be the initiators of a successful new work. They do not want to be seen promoting an opera that was initiated elsewhere. Some companies have even made it their policy not to perform a contemporary work that was not initiated by them. This has become so common that anyone with the opposite view feels the need to say so. Peter Gelb, for example, has found it necessary to declare that he doesn't mind doing at the Met works that are premiered by other companies. "They can be tweaked before they get here," he says, quite wisely.

It seems like common sense, but unfortunately that has not been the general rule. On the contrary, there is resistance to doing a work that premiered successfully somewhere else because it's perceived that this would benefit the initiating company above all. Instead, many companies decide to commission their own new opera, hoping it will be even more successful than the one they liked but discarded.

Now, competition can be good, but this is clearly not the good type, because when the second company comes out with its own opera, other companies will do their best to ignore it too. And thus we ensure that no new opera makes it beyond its own local community.

What about co-productions? Isn't that what they're meant to combat?

Yes, and the formula works better than single companies, but what remains intact is the mentality. If anything, co-productions reinforce that mentality because by the time an opera has been done by the three companies that commissioned it, nobody else wants to hear about it for at least 10 years, regardless of how successful it was. It is the mentality that we need to change now.

Opera companies have been working for their own communities, trying to develop them, expand their audience, etc. This has been great. Now they need to connect them to one another. I am not suggesting that we get rid of our system and start from scratch. Not at all. I know there are good reasons why our system works the way it does; I am aware of the tremendous financial constraints under which we operate and of the miracles needed to produce each show. I can see why opera companies program well in advance, why they book great artists early on to ensure their audiences will be well served.

In actual fact, I firmly believe that it is because of this system that we've been able to achieve such wonderful results — the results I mentioned at the beginning of this talk. Our present system came into place when we needed to create great singers, seasoned orchestras, experienced directors, specialized venues, skillful managers. We also needed to establish the standard rep. Furthermore, there weren't many new operas.

Now the situation has changed: the standard rep is well established and there is a wealth of new operas waiting to take center stage in the cultural conversation of this country. We need to make room for that. And it is important we do so. Otherwise our companies will become irrelevant to all but a few: the few that can travel. And that spells death, if I read it correctly.

So I'm asking for a system that is more flexible. Is that at all possible? Let us look at some dates from the past before we answer that question.

Il trovatore was first performed in Rome, on January 19, 1853. The premiere was a big success, so within the next three years it received some 229 productions worldwide. That is one new production every five days. In Naples alone, for example, in its first three years, the opera had 11 productions in six theaters, the performances totaled 190. Naples, by the way, is only a short train ride away from Rome — like San Diego is from Los Angeles.

There was fierce competition between Rome, La Scala and Naples. But this competition did not lead them to ignore a new opera and deprive their audiences of the opportunity to be part of the conversation of the moment. On the contrary, they put it on as soon as they could in order to keep their audiences interested and connected.

Tosca premiered in January 14, 1900 in Rome; eight weeks later it was playing in La Scala. I won't mention the huge list of performances it garnered in Italy. But listen to this: five months after the Rome premiere it was playing in Buenos Aires, one month later in England, three weeks later in Turkey, Brazil, Spain, Ukraine, Portugal. One year later in the U.S., Greece, Chile, Mexico, Egypt, Romania, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Malta, Monaco, Peru, Tunisia, France, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Paraguay, Costa Rica and the list continues to include the most unlikely countries.

One more example — the most surprising one to me. *Rosenkavalier* is a very long and difficult opera. It premiered in Dresden in 1911. Big success with the audience but not so with the critics: they didn't like the use Strauss made of the waltzes in the opera.



Even so, eight weeks later, less than two months after the Dresden premiere, Tullio Serafin was conducting *Rosenkavalier* in La Scala and in Italian!

They did not have photocopying machines or computers. They copied the parts by hand. They relied on ordinary mail and regular trains. They deemed it important, however, to respond quickly so as to keep their audiences in the loop.

One hundred and fifty years after *Trovatore*, we are far richer and our technology is infinitely faster. We have airplanes, computers, faxes, telephones, PDF files. Via computer screen, we can conduct an orchestra in Czechoslovakia from our living room in the U.S. Yet, our operatic system takes four years to respond to a new opera. This needs to be modified.

Developing a great product is essential. But if the distribution system works against it, it will go down the drain,



A set concept and costume sketch from Los Angeles Opera's world premiere production of *Catán's Il Postino*. Design by Riccardo Hernandez.

regardless of how good it was. Our model is a serial killer and needs serious rehabilitation.

Here are a few ideas that could be implemented fairly easily.

Given the fact that we need to sell tickets and fundraise, we like to announce our next season months in advance. How about leaving one slot undetermined in the middle of the season? We can call it THE MYSTERY OPERA. We can still budget for it (no more than so much, for example) and there are plenty of excellent singers with more time than work that would be happy to take the job.

It takes about \$300,000 dollars to make a very good recording of a new opera. Let's imagine that there are 50 companies willing to participate. They could be screening the new work to their audiences a few days after it premieres somewhere else. They could even use their own house on a day that it's dark but paid for — say between

performances or between rehearsals. If they were to charge \$20 dollars a ticket, each of the participating houses would only need 300 patrons to come out even!

Of this sum, a good \$250,000 is made up of fees to musicians and stage hands. The individual fees are small, but the number of participants is high, so it adds up. Could we negotiate with the unions so that those fees are paid out as profits rather than up front? The time delay for them would be short, but the project would be far more easily realized. And since the payments to individuals are small and hence do not make a big difference in terms of monthly salary, how about channeling those profits to an orchestra fund instead? If that orchestra made, say, two video recordings a year, it could have a fund of one million dollars by the end of the second year and use this money for the benefit of its members. I am still calculating that each participating house will screen the video to 300 hundred patrons only. But

this number could easily double and so would the profits.

Dear friends and colleagues, please note that I am addressing these words to the most powerful members of the opera community in the world. You started from scratch and you've succeeded in setting a new standard of excellence. You've raised the bar. You've achieved miracles.

We are about to enter the Golden Age of Opera in this country and you have been the visionaries behind it. We now need your intelligence and creativity to focus on this one aspect. I have no doubt that you'll succeed once again.

And then, when you have vanquished this last obstacle, we'll all be rewarded, because we'll see opera — the art form we love, the art form we believe so important to our sense of humanity — we'll see it occupy the preeminent place it deserves in the cultural life of this country. 🍷

Boston's Opera Entrepreneurs

By Melanie Feilotter



Chelsea Beatty (seated) as Mary Warren and Julia Teitel as Elizabeth Proctor in Boston Opera Collaborative's 2009 production of Ward's *The Crucible*. Photo by J. Justin Bates.



Marion Dry as the Mother, Andrea Matthews as Cathleen, Elizabeth Merrill as Nora and Aaron Sheehan as Bartley in Intermezzo Opera's production of Vaughan Williams's *Riders to the Sea*. Photo by Michael Moran.

"I brought my grandmother to a nightclub to hear our opera," Brittany Duncan of **OperaHub** says, with clear delight. "She loved it." It's a story you're perhaps most likely to hear in Boston, which supports close to 20 opera ensembles. There, the opera world evokes the realm of dance or theater, with diverse, artist-driven organizations that thrive through experimentation — with repertoire, artists, venues, structures. These companies often evolve from a kernel of an artistic idea, not unlike a business startup, but without the expectation of fiscal reward. Sheer dedication to the art form invites, even if it doesn't guarantee, success. Obvious challenges aside, the artist-driven model eliminates some of the constraints of the traditional nonprofit business model and in so doing, allows for creativity and spontaneity.

Boston's opera history is unique, to be sure. The legend of Sarah Caldwell looms large; she founded the **Opera Company of Boston** in 1958 and fearlessly staged American premieres and little-known existing works in unusual venues like churches and movie theaters. Caldwell's company ceased operations in 1991 after a long history of financial turmoil, but a plethora of opera companies sprang up before and since that echo her entrepreneurial and edgy style.

Too Much Talent, Too Little Opportunity?

Boston is of course home to a wide array of top-notch educational institutions, including conservatories. It's a rich training ground for emerging artists, and some companies are jumping in to provide opportunities in the face of too few artistic outlets. "There is no young artist program in

Boston,” observes Dana Schnitzer, founder of **MetroWest Opera**, which started with a fiscal sponsorship from Fractured Atlas and is now acquiring nonprofit status. The Waltham-based company seeks to alleviate the problem with very specific parameters. To maximize opportunities for young artists, MetroWest performs “accessible” operas with big casts — 10 to 14 principals — which are then double-cast with covers (so, essentially triple-cast). **Longwood Opera**, in existence since 1986, also serves young artists with two annual productions and a summer concert series, all of a different ilk. “We try to do something edgy and contemporary every spring,” explains General Director and Co-Founder J. Scott Brumit. For their 25th season, he commissioned an opera by composer Jeffrey Brody and librettist Jim Saslow based on *The Picture of Dorian Gray*,

they pay a \$100 fee to participate artistically and to assist in the administrative oversight of the company. “Structures like this allow singers and administrators to take ownership,” comments Artistic Director David Gram. **New England Conservatory**, with the same goal in mind, established a program to guide musicians in building practical skills like grant writing and budgeting, which, as Director of Entrepreneurial Musicianship Rachel Roberts says, “is built to complement artistic training.”

David Bass saw a different demographic need when he drew on the inspiration of his own seven-year-old son to start up **North Cambridge Family Opera** in 1999. “Some of his friends were in [the now defunct] **Boston Children’s Opera**, and I was impressed with just how much fun the kids were



Amy Dancz, soprano, sings Marietta’s Lied from Korngold’s *Die Tote Stadt* at Boston Metro Opera’s January 20, 2010 Inaugural Concert Series. Photo by Marion Cohen.



Aliana de la Guardia singing the role of Sarah Palin in Guerilla Opera’s production of Hughes’s *Say It Ain’t So, Joe*. Photo by Karen Snyder Photography.

“our third world premiere in 25 years.” In the fall, they turn to something more traditional. “Singers have a chance to do Mimì with us, and then go audition with more success and confidence.”

The sheer number of singers in Boston ensures competitiveness but also inspires new methods of employing and refining their skills. Renee Hites, president of **Boston Opera Collaborative**, fosters an environment that is deliberately more supportive than competitive, not an easy balance in the world of singing. She also recognized the need to educate artists about business. Boston Opera Collaborative has a sophisticated membership-based model, extending a hand to singers, conductors, music and artistic directors who are at early to mid-career stage. As members,

having.” Bass, a composer, proceeded to write an opera with his son based on *Star Wars* to attract youngsters and adults, and performed it at a local arts festival. The experience surprised him: “We began creating a sense of community that’s hard to find these days.” After a year, Bass, a chemical engineering Ph.D., left his corporate job to compose and focus on the opera company. He recruits students or graduates from the Longy School to provide vocal training to his young artists.

Unconventional Models and Music

Bass’s biggest challenge is finding repertoire, preferably with choruses, that kids of all abilities, and their parents, can enjoy but also sing well. Unlike traditional opera that starts with the premise of the professional singer, artist-driven

companies are often defined by specific parameters or goals that can be (somewhat paradoxically) more liberating than confining. **Boston Metro Opera** for example, founded in 2008, focuses almost exclusively on premieres. General and Artistic Director Christopher Smith says, “We wanted to re-establish Boston’s reputation for new music with quality opera. It’s the nice thing about being non-traditional. There are so many artists in the area, but not quite enough opportunities for them all.” Last season, Boston Metro received 61 new works from composers worldwide hoping to be heard, along with over 200 song cycles and choral works.

Intermezzo: The New England Chamber Opera Series, founded in 2003, commissions new works, much like



Queen Esther (Reina Bass, 12) is attended by her servants in the North Cambridge Family Opera’s 2010 production of David Bass’s *Springtime for Haman*. Photo by Jon Chomitz.

Boston Metro. But the process is different, with Intermezzo employing more established local singers, directors and instrumentalists, paying them close to union scale and making the overall experience as close as possible to that of a big company, which often results in a fairly short rehearsal period. **Guerilla Opera**, an ensemble-in-residence at the Boston Conservatory, also focuses on contemporary music and themes, but operates on a smaller scale, typically with four instrumentalists, four singers and no conductor, in a 75-seat black-box theater. For Guerilla, promotion of new works is the stated goal. “I think older audiences recognize that their art form has a problem if it’s not creating new art. There must be new operas, and that’s where we’re coming from,” says President and Artistic Director Mike Williams.

The differences in approach are striking; every company is akin to an inventor who’s found a new market to serve.

The issue of audience engagement invariably crops up in discussions of new works, and frequently these smaller companies are able to create an unexpectedly intimate experience. “There’s a quicksilver performance component that’s very striking to people,” says Williams. **Boston Baroque**, much like the companies focusing on new works, also strives to make audiences feel part of the experience, placing the orchestra onstage so that it “becomes almost an actor,” says Music Director Martin Pearlman. “We perform in a space that is small enough (1,050 seats) that people see the singers’ faces — it becomes a much more human



Metro West Opera’s production of Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*. Photo by Maureen Fleming.

kind of drama.” The well-established **Boston Early Music Festival (BEMF)** has since 1980 also valued lesser-known or never-heard works of the 17th and 18th centuries. “The non-standard works are fascinating to our constituency,” says BEMF Executive Director Kathleen Fay.

My First Love, My Second Job

“Everyone has established their own niche,” remarks **Opera by the Bay** Artistic Director Beth MacLeod. In its ninth season now, MacLeod says for the past three years singers and artists have solicited her for jobs and roles; she no longer has to advertise. She also holds rehearsals in the evenings, to allow for daytime jobs. This commonality is striking: very few leaders among these smaller organizations

have the luxury of staging opera on a full-time, paid basis. Intermezzo's founder and artistic director, John Whittlesey, is a principal for a healthcare consulting firm. Boston Opera Collaborative's Hites works for MIT's annual fund. Even if the top spot at a company is paid, the artistic and music directors (assuming the positions exist) are often volunteers. "We were all really passionate about opera," says OperaHub's Duncan, referring to how the organization started. Duncan and her entire staff are volunteers, and they charge no admission to the full operas and excerpts that they perform everywhere from nightclubs to churches. "We wanted to get young people in, so we took away that price barrier to draw in the people who weren't sure about spending anything."

William Chapman observes: "It's in our best interest to work around each other somewhat. Subscribers can't be in two places at once!"

Many see room to extend partnerships further; Opera by the Bay, for example, has a goal of reaching into schools with an opera program. Boston Metro will partner with a local church next year and hopes to use local students as interns. Artistic collaborations are also developing: OperaHub has worked with a number of music theater groups; Opera by the Bay hopes to use South Shore Conservatory's orchestra someday, but hasn't yet found a suitable space.

Partnership is still needed on the level of mentorship for emerging companies. Boston University's Sharon Daniels,



Michael Maniaci in the title role and Amanda Forsythe as Atalanta in Boston Baroque's 2008 production of Handel's *Xerxes*. Photo by Eric Antoniou.



Sol Kim Bentley as Rosalinda and Ethan Bremner as Alfred in Longwood Opera's production of Strauss's *Die Fledermaus*. Photo courtesy of Longwood Opera.

Adapting to Survive

The small companies are also united in a need and desire to partner and share resources. New England Light Opera, Intermezzo and Longwood regularly share repertoire plans with each other and discuss opportunities to cross-market. **Opera Boston**, one of the city's two larger houses, advertises the season of **Boston Midsummer Opera**, offering incentives to patrons. Many companies' websites advertise the seasons of others. MetroWest's Schnitzer, whose attitude is not atypical, says, "I'm very careful with respect to what else is happening in the city, and I won't program repertoire where there's too much audience overlap." She avoids new music or commissions, noting that "there are so many others that do this so well, I'm going to leave them to it." As Opera Boston Director of Marketing and Development

who runs the opera program, maintains the larger companies are very supportive of their smaller counterparts, citing a respect for the different artistic and production values within each organization. But the budget gap makes true collaboration daunting, especially for the small independent companies without institutional support. Most survive on ticket sales and individual donations, spending as little as \$4,000 on an entire production. Mentorships and even partnerships with larger, more established companies could serve an important role and add another layer to the learning experience for artists as well as administrators. **Boston Lyric Opera** General and Artistic Director Esther Nelson is reaching out now to smaller companies to try some form of collaboration. But it must be done sensitively. "I am interested in exploring possible collaborations with some of these

wonderfully creative smaller companies. Much of what makes the smaller companies so interesting is that they have much more flexibility and less marketing and funding pressure, and we don't want to be the big elephant in the room crushing that creativity."

More Opera, Please?

Lest we forget, Boston's biggest audiences belong — though not exclusively — to the city's two biggest companies, Boston Lyric Opera and Opera Boston. Together, they serve about 42,000 patrons annually. The other companies discussed in this article combined serve about 15,000 people per year. Seen as such, unrealized audiences still wait to be tapped — in a city with a metro population of six million. Several years ago, Opera Boston undertook a study

of operagoers from another era. Indeed, whether it's because of smaller or non-traditional venues like churches, nightclubs or schools, or because of audience cravings for something new, few of the smaller companies complain about attendance. Some audiences are ready-made, comprised of parents, friends, artist colleagues. But there is anecdotal evidence that those with no ties to the field are also venturing out. "New works create an audience," Boston Metro's Smith says. "The audience is making history, and they know it."

Of A Moment

Amid the cultural riches, Boston, oddly enough, lacks a space to stage grand opera. For a long while after the decline of Sarah Caldwell's empire, financial support for



From top: Boston Early Music Festival's 2007 production of Lully's *Psyché*. Photo by André Costantini.



OperaHub's January 2009 production of Spanish Sirens, which included Ravel's *L'Heure espagnole* as well as excerpts from Bizet's *Carmen*. Photo by Christine Fernesnber Eslao.

of opera supply in the 1980s, and found annual capacity at 80,000 to 90,000 at that time. Based on that, says Chapman, "There's still upside potential in this city if we get it right, and keep doing it right."

Doing it right, to Opera Boston, also means engaging in some unusual, esoteric repertoire, and bringing the audience along with it. BEMF's Fay says "I believe opera is thriving in Boston because of such diverse programming." Boston Lyric's Nelson concurs. The key to opera's vitality, she says, is to remain committed to new works. Nelson hopes to coax an already "loyal audience" to be as accepting of the new as they are of the old. And to that end, the smaller companies are already playing a crucial role, in reviving some of the curiosity that Nelson says was more typical

opera withered, deemed a poor investment. Slowly, that attitude is changing and "the fence is mending" in the funding arena, per Nelson, and that bigger venue may eventually become possible. But while money is a necessity to any business venture, it is by far not the only deciding factor in the success or failure of Boston's non-traditional companies. The test lies with their willingness to embrace risk while still satisfying audiences. Catherine Peterson, executive director of ArtsBoston, takes a Darwinian approach, saying "some of these companies may just be tapping into a *Zeitgeist* — they may just be of a moment." That ephemeral quality is an integral part of these non-traditional ventures, and it is the reason that when they thrive, they leave an indelible mark on the art form, no matter how long they stay. 🌐

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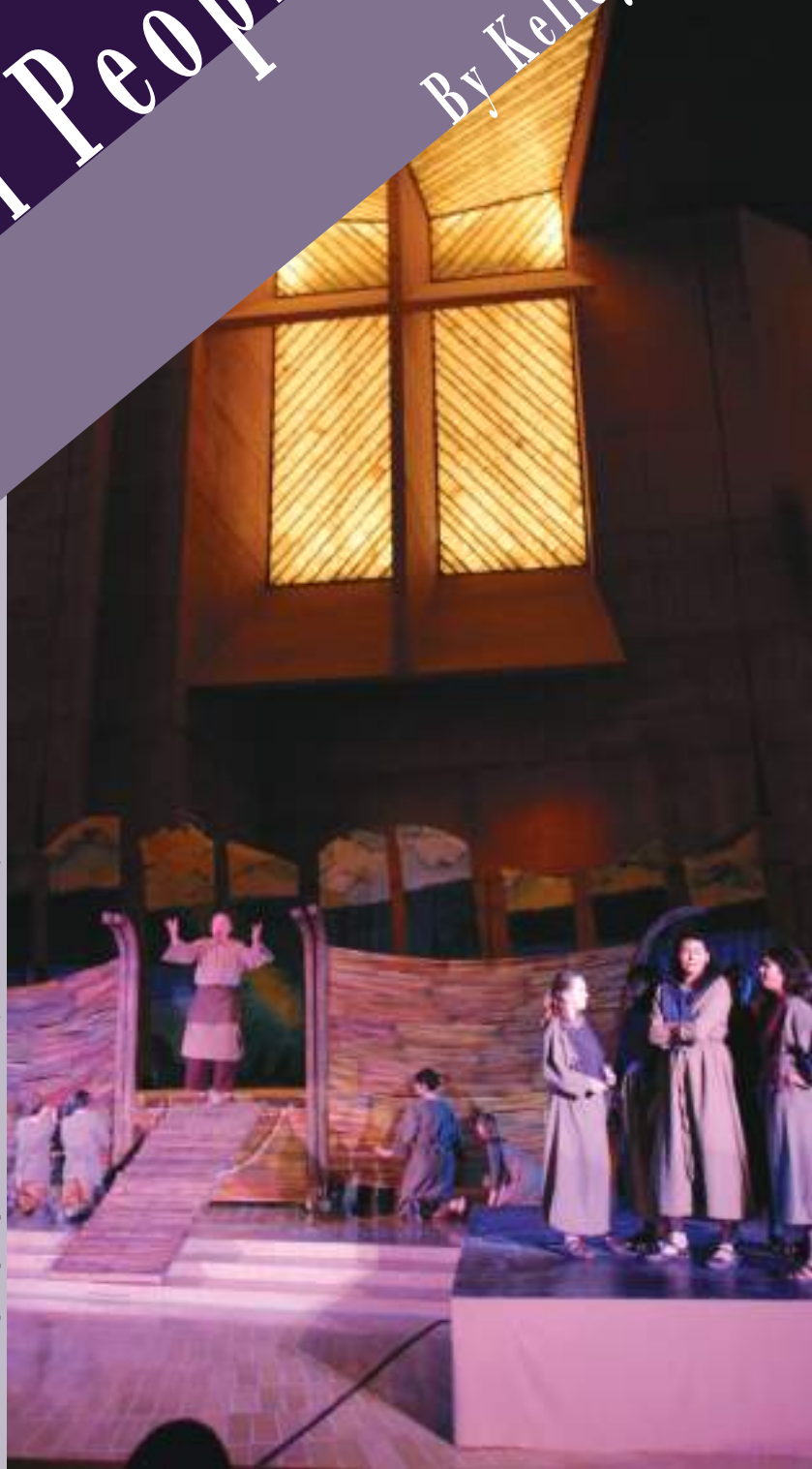
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A House for All People

By Kelley Rourke

Los Angeles Opera's production of Britten's *Noy's Flutte*. Photo by Robert Millard.



Opera houses have historically been a meeting ground for many art forms. Today's opera companies also strive to provide a meeting ground for a broad cross-section of their communities.

Considered from that perspective, they have a lot in common with houses of worship. Compared with church calendars, however, most opera seasons offer relatively few opportunities to gather the community under one roof. As arts organizations everywhere seek to raise their visibility and demonstrate their relevance, creative partnerships with churches help them do just that.

A certain amount of collaboration between churches and opera companies is nothing new — a church sanctuary can be a great venue for a concert — but some companies have moved beyond run-out events to create fully collaborative performances with local churches, in which community members perform alongside opera artists. “You learn best by doing,” says Stacy Brightman, Los Angeles Opera’s director of education. “The experience is more powerful than just talking about it. Collaboration takes a lot more work, but the impact and results are so much deeper. You really give and share ground.”

Los Angeles Opera’s Cathedral Project, conceived by Music Director James Conlon in 2006, has brought together amateur and professional and amateur musicians for performances of Britten’s *Noye’s Fludde*, Handel’s *Judas Maccabeus* and the medieval music drama *The Festival Play of Daniel*.

Cincinnati Opera and Allen Temple A.M.E. Church recently completed their fifth Opera Goes to Church!, a summer evening of gospel, jazz and classical music that featured Cincinnati Opera mainstage artists alongside the Allen Temple A.M.E. Church Combined Choir under the direction of Robert Gazaway. This year’s program, hosted by news anchor Courtis Fuller, also included The Christian Howes Jazz Quartet, featuring pianist/organist Bobby Floyd and 15-year-old vocalist Tyshawn Colquitt.

“Building meaningful relationships and engaging the community in a variety of arts experiences is my passion,” says Cincinnati Opera Director of Community Relations Tracy L. Wilson. “What better way to take the art form to the people than to bring gospel lovers, jazz lovers, opera lovers and churchgoers together?”

Making the Connection

When Brightman contacted Frank Brownstead, music director of the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, about collaborating on a production of Britten’s *Noye’s Fludde*, he immediately jumped on board, having

participated in a performance of the work 40 years ago with Immaculate Heart College. “I knew, from my own experience, the spell *Noye’s Fludde* could cast,” he said. “I have seen what it can do for beginning cellists who can sit next to professional players and saw away on an open string.”

“Stacy is an exceptional woman,” continues Brownstead. “I can’t imagine saying no to her for anything. But even though the project is natural for our mission, church officials don’t like surprises. It’s important to have someone between the opera company and the cathedral staff to help establish some common ground. That’s been my role, and it’s been a lot of fun.”

Like Brightman, Wilson began by cold-calling a respected local choir director. “I started with Robert Gazaway at Allen Temple A.M.E. because I was familiar with his work as a choir director. He has experience in a number of realms of musical styles. At that time, his choir was preparing to do *Porgy and Bess* with the Middletown Symphony. I introduced myself and he turned me down, mainly due to the *Porgy* schedule.” Gazaway was also concerned, in part, that the collaboration with the opera would take away the focus of the summer concert, held in honor of former music director Percy G. Pryor. “But,” says Wilson, “I’m a very persistent person.” And the collaboration between the two organizations continues to honor the former music director.

Putting it Together

“When Frank and I began to talk about our notion of how to do the project, we thought of it like a medieval pageant,” says Los Angeles Opera’s Brightman. “We decided to parcel it out to a bunch of different guilds that would each work on their piece and then come together for the performance.” Another church, with a choir of about 250 people, made up the main body of the singing performers. Hamilton High School provided the orchestra. “We now face a lovely problem as we build this tradition. The groups we’ve worked with before want to keep doing it, but we also keep adding new groups. We were up to 450 community participants for *The Play of Daniel*.”

Community participation is key, and it goes beyond the “guilds” of performers, according to Brownstead. “Britten went out of his way to write something for the community, not just something for them to listen to. We always include a hymn for the congregation.” The opportunity for professional and amateur musicians to work together is galvanizing, he says: “James Conlon is one of the most sought after conductors anywhere, and he will conduct an opera in the afternoon and then come for rehearsal with us in the evening. My choir members are volunteers, but they are professional

quality, and they enjoy the chance to work with him.”

Just as the amateur musicians are held to professional standards, the professional participants bring the open-hearted enthusiasm associated with the roots of the word amateur. “Everyone who participates has some kind of spiritual connection. That’s why it works,” says Wilson. “You can’t just put someone up there to do a gig. The whole idea is to build a relationship with the artists and that church family.”

“If you are going to partner with a religious institution, you have to enter into the spirit of it,” agrees Brightman. “We are guests in their house, and we are working with people who may have different priorities.”

“The first year was probably the most difficult because we didn’t know each other,” says Gazaway. “I have a vision for the choir. We are very eclectic in terms of the music we perform. We always try to include all the sacred genres — classical, gospel, hymns, spirituals. The first year I chose the songs for the choir and then submitted selections for the other artists to see how comfortable they were with them. But now, if you ask who makes the final decision for the concert, I’d have to say I don’t really know. We work together so well.”

Cincinnati Opera has worked with different churches over the years. Depending on the musical tradition with each church, Wilson adjusts the program, which also typically includes familiar opera arias and jazz selections. At St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, the priest played timpani in a program that featured Maureen O’Flynn and Thomas Hammons. Bass Morris Robinson, who sang the role of the Grand Inquisitor in Cincinnati Opera’s 2009 *Don Carlo*, participated in *Opera Goes to Church!* in 2009. In addition to singing, he volunteered to play drum set with the choir. “The crowd loved it,” says Wilson. “This year he came back by popular demand and played for the whole choir set. It was fun watching him go from singing an aria in a suit jacket to getting behind a drum set in suspenders.”

Standing Room Only

“The first year, we made the tickets available on a Monday morning and they were gone within an hour,” says Brightman. Normally, when Los Angeles Opera distributes tickets to free events, they count on a significant number of no-shows. “We gave out 5,000 tickets and everyone came. It was scary. The Cardinal leaned over and said to my board chair, ‘This is what



I have always hoped and prayed for. This house is for all people of the community to come together and celebrate.’ Tickets go so quickly that we keep adding performances.”

According to Wilson, the situation in Cincinnati is similar. “The concerts are always packed. Word of mouth is powerful. There are no printed or electronic promotional materials, but the tickets are gone in a day. So many people want to attend — we always have a huge waiting list.” Church members are notified about a week before the free tickets become available at the Cincinnati Opera box office; Wilson estimates that the crowd is evenly divided between church members, operagoers and the general public. “This year the concert didn’t start until 7:00 and people were showing up at 4:30. There is something cool about sitting shoulder to shoulder in a pew with someone you’ve never met. People of all race, ages and backgrounds — you really have to squeeze in. All these people are jamming together, not just on the jazz and gospel music, but on the opera as well. It’s astounding to me how the community has embraced and literally become ambassadors for the *Opera Goes to Church!* experience. By the end of each concert, they’re already asking when the next one will be.”

The Allen Temple A.M.E. Church Combined Choir performs at Cincinnati Opera’s 2010 *Opera Goes to Church!* Photo by Samantha Grier.

“It brings a diverse audience — not necessarily people who enjoy opera, but who may enjoy jazz or gospel,” says Gazaway of the Cincinnati event. “Our pastor has said, ‘I’m not a great opera fan, but I’m being converted.’ Other people are in a conversion state from opera to gospel or jazz. It reflects our approach in our church service — we try to include every kind of sacred genre on Sunday morning.”

While opera companies would like to convert more community members to become regular operagoers, that’s not the primary goal of these collaborative concerts. “I’m a firm believer in building long-term, mutually beneficial relationships in our city,” says Wilson. “Opera Goes to Church! is not just about ‘educating’ people. How do we come together and fellowship through music? How do we get to know one another? How do I make you comfortable? The event is so popular, we could easily fill Music Hall. But that’s not what it’s about.”

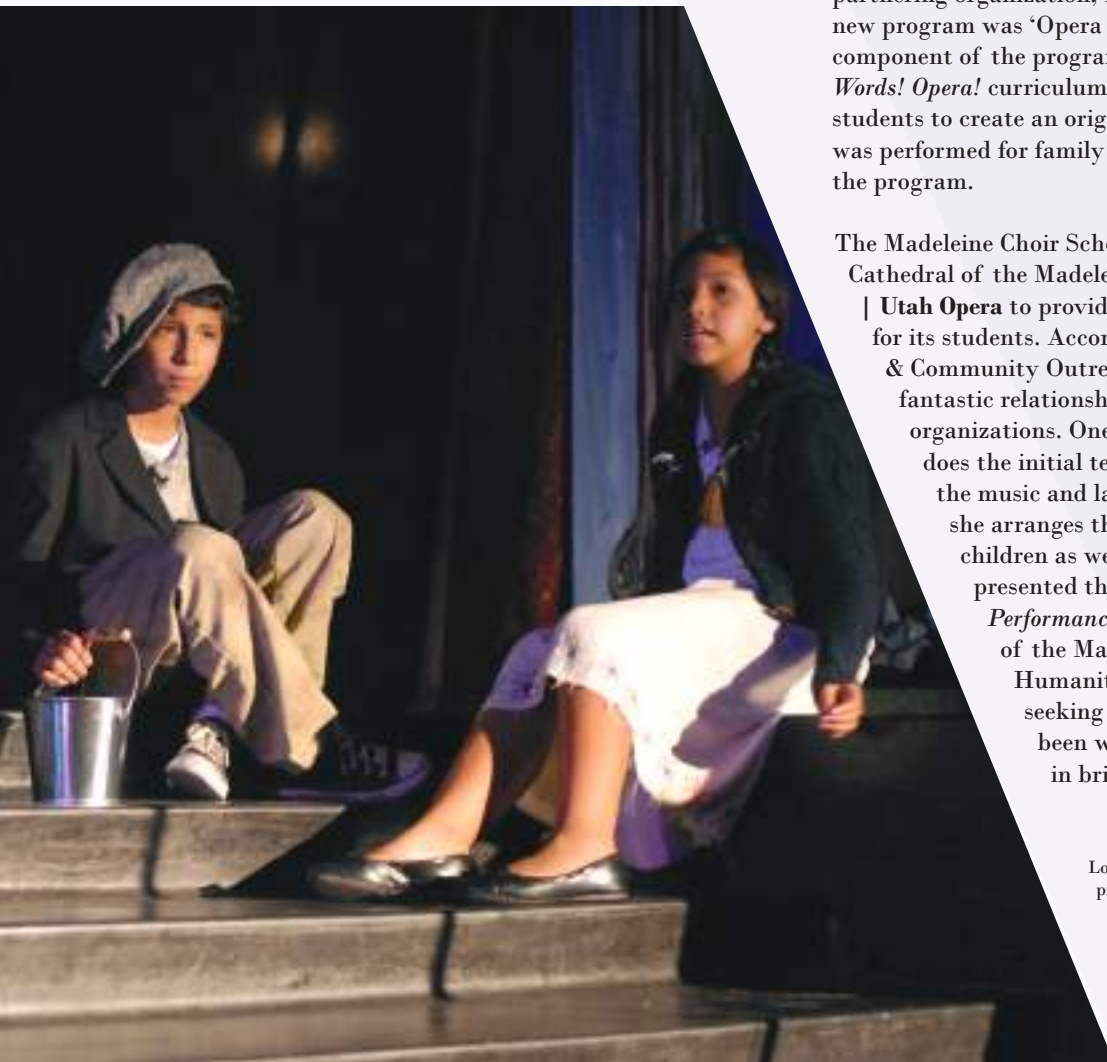
Other Models

In Cincinnati and Los Angeles, opera companies and churches have created blockbuster events that are fast

becoming cherished civic traditions. But important collaborations aren’t always on such a large scale. **Long Beach Opera (LBO)** partnered with The Neighborhood United Methodist Church and First Congregational Church of Long Beach for Opera Camp in summer 2008. During the camp, which was led by LBO and Downtown Associated Youth Services, 40 children in fourth through sixth grades rehearsed and designed a production of *Brundibár*, which was performed at the end of camp for over 300 friends, family and community members. According to Education Director SuzAnne Mathai, Opera Camp helped pave the way for a free after-school program called CANTO! (Creative Artists of the Neighborhood Together for Opera!), in which students worked with professionals contracted by LBO to present *Brundibár 2009*.

After the first year of CANTO! it was decided to take fall 2009 off to revamp the program, which was relaunched in January 2010. “During the first year, it was very challenging for me to juggle the administration and marketing of CANTO! with teaching, directing, and all my other LBO duties,” says Mathai. “The Neighborhood had a vision to turn the program into a multi-curricular program. So the Neighborhood took over all administrative and marketing for the program and enlisted another partnering organization, Fitness 4 All. My role in the new program was ‘Opera Coach’ and I taught the arts component of the program, which used the *Music! Words! Opera!* curriculum.” Mathai worked with the students to create an original three-song opera, which was performed for family and friends on the final day of the program.

The Madeleine Choir School at Salt Lake City’s Cathedral of the Madeleine turns to **Utah Symphony | Utah Opera** to provide performance opportunities for its students. According to Director of Education & Community Outreach Paula Fowler, “It’s a fantastic relationship that serves both of our organizations. One of the choir directors even does the initial teaching and coaching of the music and language with the kids, and she arranges the offstage oversight of the children as well.” In the 1990s, Utah Opera presented the Britten *Parables for Church Performance* at the Cathedral as part of the Madeleine Festival of Arts and Humanities. Indeed, several companies seeking collaborative projects have been well-served by Britten’s interest in bringing together amateur and



Long Beach Opera’s Opera Camp education program’s production of Krása’s *Brundibár*. Photo courtesy of Long Beach Opera.

professional musicians. Beginning in February 2011, **Kentucky Opera** and the Choral Arts Society at St. Francis in the Fields church will collaborate on the *Parables for Church Performance*; they expect to complete the cycle in 2013.

Making the World a Better Place

Is there an inherent conflict between faith-based organizations and those that promote a form of entertainment that frequently features lust and treachery center stage? According to those interviewed for this article, their most basic mission is all but indistinguishable. “Along with presenting world class grand opera, our mission also calls for us to share the art form with the community,” says Brightman. “I think we all believe that when we invite people in we are literally making the world a better place, doing the right thing. That makes us very closely aligned with the churches’ priority. This is an art form for all people. It is an art form that is living and evolving, and sometimes we’re doing our best work when we leave our palatial opera house.”

“The cornerstone on this cathedral says, ‘My house shall be a house of prayer for all peoples,’” points out Brownstead. “We’re right in the middle of the city, with the courthouse, museums, concert halls and schools. A decision had to be made before we even opened — was this going to be a place that served only Roman Catholics or that served the community of Los Angeles? Cardinal Mahoney’s vision was to serve the community.”

“We have not had any negative reaction to the combination of sacred and secular music in the concert,” says Gazaway. “It’s my thinking that music is one of the ways God speaks to us. He doesn’t always speak with ‘Gloria in Excelsis.’ Sometimes He speaks through some Coltrane.” ©

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The Potential of the Event

By Diane Paulus

When we think about opera we often think about the baggage associated with it. What do we call it? What is opera? Does it feel inclusive? Is there a future? Where is the audience? Can opera be popular?

The chief job of a director is to have a nose for potential. That is what we do. We are looking for some potential that needs to be released. We don't necessarily know how we are going to get there, but we know we must get there. We must point everyone toward the top of the mountain and provide that guiding spirit to keep climbing.

More than any other art form, I think opera has incredible theatrical potential. I remember my mother saying to me that opera is the ultimate art form. All my life I wanted to be involved in the opera. There is something about opera, and I think it has to do with the sense of event.

I don't start with the premise that people *should* come to the theater, or that they *should* have arts in their life. I think, "How can I make the theater an experience that is necessary? How can I say, 'Yes, I know it is an extremely generous act to give up two or three hours of your life, but you have to see this.'" It has to feel like an event, a must-see, can't miss kind of happening.

For me, opera has that potential. I think the fact that we have very few performances — something we might see as a limit — is something we should embrace and celebrate. In theater, your goal is to get to Broadway

and run a show as long as you possibly can. A lot of energy is given to making something that can sustain an audience over years. To me, in many ways, that takes away from the event. In opera, you have only five or six performances, and it's gone. It is once in a lifetime, so you have to get there, have to buy your ticket, because it's not going to be around for so long. The event of opera is something we should focus on and embrace as much as possible.

I want to say very clearly that thinking about the audience and thinking about the event is not just what the marketing department does. I am interested in training artists to think like entrepreneurs, to think, "How can we make this viable and sellable in the best possible way?" Making something appeal to audiences doesn't have to mean pandering to the audience, or lowering, or dumbing down in any way. The greatest playwrights of all time — Moliere, Shakespeare — they were not just playwrights. They were entrepreneurs.

Why don't people go to our performances? It is not that going to the opera takes too much time. It is that we don't question what the duration should be. In theater we've gone to a formula: it should be two and a half hours. But we have seen confirmation that the audience will come out for a long duration. The extreme duration can become part of the event. Look at something like *The Coast of Utopia*, where you are required to pack your trail mix and do it, the same way you do the *Ring*. I was speaking with someone in the orchestra for the *Ring*



Diane Paulus delivers the Closing Keynote Address at *Opera Conference 2010* in Los Angeles. Photo by Katherine L. Ehle/OPERA America.

and they said they get more curtain calls after five hours than they do after shorter operas. Why? It's not just because it's great art, which it is, but because you want to stand up and make yourself present and say, "We are here. We did it."

Audiences are too beaten down. They think that if they express their likes and dislikes they will be asked to leave. I always talk about how great opera audiences are — because they boo if they don't like something! I think it's great that people care enough to boo, like they do at sporting events, where they scream at the ref or coach or players. I'd rather have an audience get on our case and say, "You're not doing well enough" than have them fall asleep. ☺

Diane Paulus is the artistic director of American Repertory Theater. She has directed for opera and theater, including a Tony award-winning production of Hair. The above is excerpted from her closing remarks at Opera Conference 2010. Her complete talk can be found on www.operaamerica.org.

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Martina Arroyo. Photo by Marty Umans.

MARTINA ARROYO, SOPRANO

Born in New York City on February 2, 1937, and raised in Harlem, American soprano Martina Arroyo is admired around the world for her operatic roles, oratorio and recital performances, recordings, teaching and commitment to young artist development. Arroyo has performed on the stages of the world's most prestigious opera houses — New York's Metropolitan Opera, the Paris Opera, London's Covent Garden, Milan's La Scala, the Vienna State Opera and the Buenos Aires Teatro Colón — and in the world's premiere concert halls — Salzburg, Berlin, Rome, Paris and New York. She is famous for her interpretations of Verdi, Puccini, Strauss and Mozart.

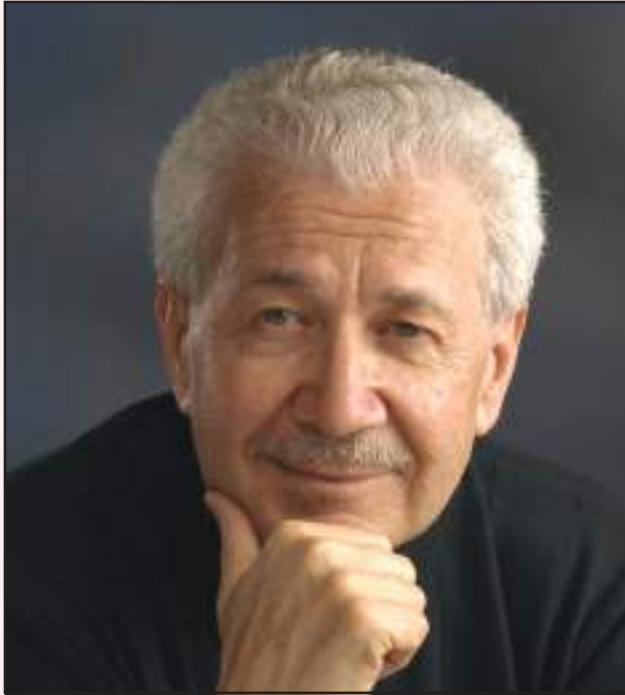
While studying at Hunter College to become a high school language teacher, Arroyo participated in the college's renowned Opera Workshop. In 1958, she won the Metropolitan Opera Auditions, and that same year she sang at Carnegie Hall in the American premiere of Pizzetti's *L'assassinio nella cattedrale*. After performing minor roles at the Met, Arroyo went to Europe and performed major roles in Vienna, Düsseldorf, Berlin, Frankfurt and Zürich. At the Met in 1965, she substituted for an ailing Birgit Nilsson in the role of Aida. She went on to perform at the Met all of the major Verdi roles that would become the basis of her repertory, as well as Donna Anna, Cio-Cio-San, Liù,

Santuzza, Gioconda and Elsa. In 1968, she debuted in London as Valentine in a concert version of Giacomo Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* and also made her Covent Garden debut in *Aida* in the title role.

The breadth of Arroyo's work is reflected in more than 50 recordings of major operas and orchestral works with such conductors as Leonard Bernstein, Karl Böhm, Rafael Kubelik, Zubin Mehta, Thomas Schippers, Ricardo Muti, Claudio Abbado, James Levine and Colin Davis. Her recordings of Samuel Barber's *Andromache's Farewell*; Verdi's *Requiem*, *Aida* (La Scala, Munich and Teatro Colón), *Un ballo in maschera*, *La forza del destino* and *I vespri siciliani*; Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (both as Donna Anna and Donna Elvira); Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*; Handel's *Judas Maccabeus*; Mahler's Symphony No. 8; Rossini's *Stabat Mater*; and Schönberg's *Gurrelieder* have all been recently reissued on CD. Arroyo's most admired recordings include *Elena* (*I vespri siciliani*), *Amelia* (*Un ballo in maschera*), *Leonora* (*La forza del destino*), *Aida* and *Messa di Requiem* by Verdi.

Appointed by President Gerald Ford in 1976, Arroyo served six years on the NEA's National Council on the Arts and currently serves on the boards at Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Opera Guild, Collegiate Chorale and is a trustee emerita of the Hunter College Foundation. She delighted television and radio audiences with more than 20 appearances on the *Tonight Show*. Arroyo is a frequent guest and moderator on radio's *Singers Roundtable*, the live intermission feature of the Saturday afternoon broadcasts from the Metropolitan Opera.

While she continues to present master classes and lectures at many institutions throughout the world, she is most passionate about having established the Martina Arroyo Foundation in New York City in 2003 to offer emerging artists at the inception of their professional careers a structured curriculum, focusing on the study and preparation of complete operatic roles.



David DiChiera. Photo by Ameen Howrani.

DAVID DICHIERA, GENERAL DIRECTOR

David DiChiera was born in McKeesport, PA, and raised in Los Angeles, CA. He graduated from UCLA in 1956. Upon receiving a Master's degree in composition at UCLA, he was selected to be a Fulbright Scholar for studies in Italy where he contributed a series of articles on 18th century Italian opera to the world's leading music encyclopedias. He returned to UCLA and received his Ph.D. in musicology.

In 1962, DiChiera became a professor and ultimately the chairman of music at Oakland University in suburban Detroit. His work at the university laid the foundation for him to create Michigan's own professional opera company, Michigan Opera Theatre (MOT), in 1971. At the same time, he spearheaded the establishment of the Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts in Detroit.

From 1979 to 1983, DiChiera was OPERA America board president. During this time, he spearheaded a major project entitled *Opera for the '80s and Beyond*, which developed innovative methods of encouraging and funding new American music-theater works.

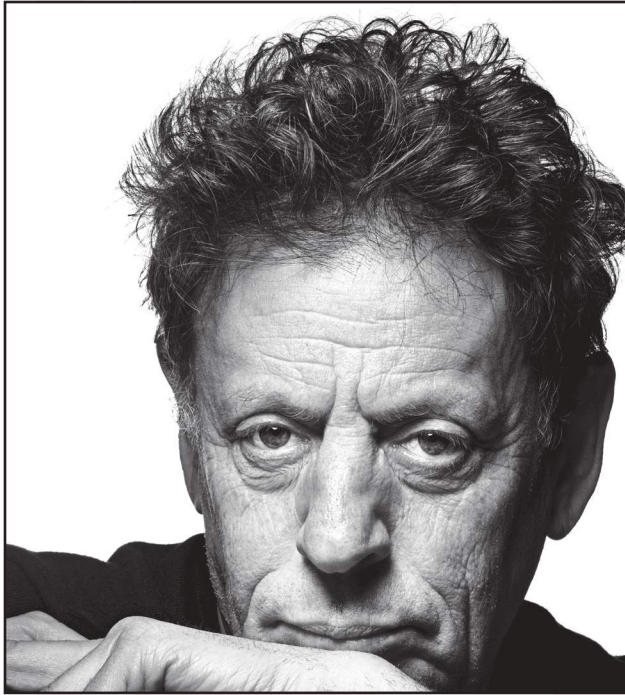
In 1981, DiChiera was appointed artistic director of the financially troubled Dayton Opera Association. The success of

his first season was evident in a 25 percent increase in season ticket sales and a dramatic turnaround in critical response to new artistic standards. In 1986, DiChiera became the founding general director of Opera Pacific in Orange County, CA, becoming the only general director in the nation to have founded and led two opera companies in a unique collaboration.

In 1993, DiChiera retired from his association with the Dayton Opera Association and in October 1996, he announced his resignation as general director of Opera Pacific, citing the need to devote more time to his mission of creating an opera house for Detroit. In April 1996, DiChiera realized this dream. On Michigan Opera Theatre's 25th anniversary, Joan Sutherland cut the ribbon for the grand opening of the Detroit Opera House, making MOT one of only a handful of American opera companies to own its home.

Throughout its history, Michigan Opera Theatre has been at the forefront of nurturing the careers of leading African-American artists. In his desire to present an opera representative of the local community, DiChiera commissioned Richard Danielpour and Toni Morrison's opera *Margaret Garner*, which became the first world premiere on the Detroit Opera House stage in 2005. DiChiera has been recognized locally and nationally for these efforts, receiving the 2000 Bridge Builder's Award, bestowed by Partners for Livable Communities.

As a composer, David DiChiera continues to receive critical acclaim for his music. Among his works, his *Four Sonnets* for soprano and piano — with verses by Edna St. Vincent Millay — premiered at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. in 1978 and has since been performed in Europe and North America. In October 2007, his opera, *Cyrano*, received its world premiere at the Detroit Opera House. Subsequently, it was successfully presented by Opera Company of Philadelphia and will be heard in Miami in April 2011 with Florida Grand Opera.



Philip Glass.

PHILIP GLASS, COMPOSER

Through his operas, his symphonies, his compositions for his own ensemble and his wide-ranging collaborations with artists such as Twyla Tharp, Allen Ginsberg, Woody Allen and David Bowie, Philip Glass has had an extraordinary and unprecedented impact upon the musical and intellectual life of his times.

The operas — *Einstein on the Beach*, *Satyagraha*, *Akhnaten* and *The Voyage*, among many others — play throughout the world's leading houses. Glass has written music for experimental theater and for Academy Award-winning motion pictures such as *The Hours* and Martin Scorsese's *Kundun*, while *Koyaanisqatsi*, his initial filmic landscape with Godfrey Reggio and the Philip Glass Ensemble, may be the most radical and influential mating of sound and vision since *Fantasia*.

His associations, personal and professional, with leading rock, pop and world music artists date back to the 1960s, including the beginning of his collaborative relationship with artist Robert Wilson. Indeed, Glass is the first composer to win a wide, multi-generational audience in the opera house, the concert hall, the dance world, and in film and popular music — simultaneously.

He was born in 1937 and grew up in Baltimore. He studied at the University of Chicago, the Juilliard School and in Aspen with Darius Milhaud. Finding himself dissatisfied with much of what then passed for modern music, he moved to Europe, where he studied with the legendary pedagogue Nadia Boulanger (who also taught Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson and Quincy Jones) and worked closely with the sitar virtuoso and composer Ravi Shankar. He returned to New York in 1967 and formed the Philip Glass Ensemble — seven musicians playing keyboards and a variety of woodwinds, amplified and fed through a mixer.

The new musical style that Glass was evolving was eventually dubbed “minimalism.” Glass himself never liked the term and preferred to speak of himself as a composer of “music with repetitive structures.” Much of his early work was based on the extended reiteration of brief, elegant melodic fragments that wove in and out of an aural tapestry.

There has been nothing “minimalist” about his output. In the past 25 years, Glass has composed more than 20 operas, large and small; eight symphonies (with others already on the way); two piano concertos and concertos for violin, timpani and saxophone quartet and orchestra; soundtracks to films ranging from new scores for the stylized classics of Jean Cocteau to Errol Morris's documentary about former defense secretary Robert McNamara; string quartets; and a growing body of work for solo piano and organ. He has collaborated with Paul Simon, Linda Ronstadt, Yo-Yo Ma and Doris Lessing, among many others. He presents lectures, workshops and solo keyboard performances around the world, and continues to appear regularly with the Philip Glass Ensemble.



Eve Queler. Photo by Steven Edson.

EVE QUELER, CONDUCTOR

Founder and creator of the Opera Orchestra of New York, Eve Queler has conducted more than 100 operas in concert at Carnegie Hall, many of which are rarely performed, bringing them to the attention of the American public and introducing them to the standard repertoire. Renowned for her work, she has been a guest conductor of symphonic and opera venues that span the international musical world. Standing out among her successes are Wagner's *Rienzi*, Berlioz's *Benvenuto Cellini*, Smetana's *Dalibor* and Strauss' *Die Liebe der Danae*. She celebrated her 100th Carnegie Hall performance as music director of the Opera Orchestra of New York during the 2007-2008 season.

Queler has guest conducted at opera companies including the Kirov Opera in St. Petersburg, Russia, Hamburg Oper, Frankfurt Oper, Oper Bonn, Australian Opera in Sydney and Nice Opera. She guest conducted *Anna Bolena* with San Diego Opera; *La bohème* with Utah Symphony | Utah Opera; *I puritani* in Royal Festival Hall, London; *Lakmé* in Caracas; *Tales of Hoffmann* in South Africa and Quebec City; and she led Rossini's *Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra* at Buenos Aires' Teatro Colón.

Her opera gala concerts have included performances at the Salle Pleyel, Paris, and with the Honolulu Symphony, the Montreal Symphony, the National Symphony and the Hong Kong Philharmonic. She has conducted numerous symphony orchestras including the Philadelphia Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Rome Opera and Montreal Symphony. Recently, she conducted the Orchestra Sinfonia Siciliana in Palermo, Italy, in Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 1* and Poulenc's *Piano Concerto*.

In September 2009, Queler conducted the opening of the Bellini Festival at the Teatro Massimo Bellini in Catania and made her debut at the Puccini Festival, Torre del Lago in July 2010 conducting a new production of *Madama Butterfly*. During Opera Orchestra of New York's 2010-2011 40th anniversary season, Queler will conduct an opera-in-concert performance and continue her Rising Star recital series.

Queler has been named a *Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*, one of the highest awards presented by the French government, for her commitment to French operas. She has also received the Sanford Medal, Yale University's highest musical honor.

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NEW CHALLENGES, NEW OPPORTUNITIES, NEW CAPACITIES: 2010-2015

OPERA America's Strategic Plan for 2010 - 2015 takes into account the unique challenges and opportunities present in today's opera world. The essay that follows, excerpted from the Strategic Plan, considers the environment and its effect on the opera industry.

The year 2010 marks the 40th anniversary of OPERA America's evolving service to the field. In comparison to an art form that recently marked its 400th anniversary, the history of OPERA America is short. Yet, in the last four decades, the progress of the field in this country has yielded a new American opera repertoire, a vast network of producing companies and training programs, and an audience that has grown larger and more diverse. OPERA America has played an important role in supporting the emergence of opera as a North American art form.

The rate of change in the creation, production and enjoyment of opera has accelerated over the last 10 years. At the same time, OPERA America's ability to serve members with comparative data analysis, professional development, grants and general assistance has continued to strengthen.

Changing and challenging times require increased capacities for creative thinking and problem solving. The vision, strategic objectives and recommended actions described in the organization's new strategic plan renew OPERA America's mandate as the national service organization for the field to forge a unity of purpose among a diverse membership and to engage all members in the generation of resources that are beyond the ability of any one person or organization to develop. Such resources will build OPERA America's capacity to deliver a broad range of programs that deliver tangible benefits to organizations and individuals.

OPERA America's ability to serve the field derives from the active participation of members as contributors to a growing body of resources, and as users of those resources. The process associated with the development of this plan exemplifies the mutually beneficial compact that unites OPERA America and its stakeholders in a partnership that will help develop and promote opera as a vital cultural expression in the 21st century.

OPERA America's Strategic Plan defined five strategic objectives. A more detailed discussion of the objectives, as well as actions planned toward their realization, can be found at www.operaamerica.org.

1. Develop OPERA America's capacity and identity as the leading action-oriented think tank for opera by working with members as full partners to develop ideas and strategies that will advance their work and strengthen the field as a whole.
2. Establish an Opera Center in New York City that will provide members with space and support services that are essential to the efficient conduct of business, strengthen the identity of the art form and industry, and engender a greater sense of common purpose.
3. Build *The Opera Fund* and other artistic services to increase support of new and existing American works, co-productions and artist training.
4. Strengthen the membership by increasing direct contact with current and new members to ensure they derive the full benefit of managerial and artistic services available to them.
5. Address OPERA AMERICA governance, partnership, staffing and related budget issues in order to ensure that expertise and resources are available to fulfill the objectives and actions articulated in this plan.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

“The scientific mind does not so much provide the right answers as ask the right questions.”

— Claude Levi-Strauss, The Raw and the Cooked

The FY2010 strategic planning process took place during the most severe economic recession since the 1930s — what has come to be called the “Great Recession.” Observations about the field and suggestions of future directions reflect the financial limitations and related frustration of the moment. While it is difficult to escape the gravitational force of immediate challenges, long-term planning encourages consideration of larger, over-arching issues.

Members of a Strategy Committee and 10 working groups confirmed many trends and issues already familiar to leaders in the field. Some of the trends appear to be accelerating and have taken on new urgency in light of ever-changing technologies; increased competition from the expanding arts, entertainment and nonprofit sectors; and economic uncertainty. At the same time, these same trends are seen to offer new opportunities for creativity and audience development. The Strategic Objectives and Recommended Actions enumerated in this plan are designed to respond to both the challenges and opportunities that grow from the current forces of change.

Artistic Creativity and Excellence

Whether in relation to the standard repertoire or new works, artistic excellence must be the highest priority for all opera stakeholders. Excellence reinforces opera’s relevance and motivates ticket buyers and donors to renew and increase their participation in and support of opera companies.

The creation and production of new work continues to be essential to the vitality of the art form. Some new works may expand the definition of opera and benefit from productions in alternative venues. Subsequent productions of works that have already premiered, innovative producing partnerships, extended workshops and improved training for producers, composers, librettists and dramaturgs are among the strategies that should be used to increase the frequency and quality of the North American opera repertoire.

Investment in the development and training of artists and their inclusion in all facets of the industry should increase. Artists themselves should be encouraged to become more skilled and active as producers, teachers and advocates. Partnerships between opera companies and universities/conservatories can help overcome the barriers that inhibit career development. These same partnerships can also enhance the artistic scope of both opera companies and educational institutions, and increase the potential for audience development.

New approaches to producing opera that offer the potential to heighten the impact of performances and contain costs should be explored fully. Such strategies might include increased co-production, re-purposing of existing production materials, alternative venues, and semi-staged and concert opera.

Relevance

The need to sustain and increase opera’s relevance is of paramount importance. This challenge is intensified by the relatively small number of performances offered each year by most opera companies, limiting their visible presence in the community. Despite measurable progress in creating an American opera tradition, stereotypes persist about the art form as being old-fashioned and foreign. The image of elitism is reinforced by high ticket prices and fundraising strategies that promote the visibility of social events and major donors.

Finding new and effective ways to communicate opera's relevance is even more urgent in an ever more crowded environment. A growing array of live and electronic arts and entertainment options are competing for public attention. The entire nonprofit sector continues to expand in response to pressing civic issues, making it more important than ever to convey the case for support of the arts in general and opera in particular. The traditional communication infrastructure represented by newspapers and classical radio stations has been reduced severely, increasing the difficulty of transmitting the value of opera and opera companies to communities.

A nationally coordinated, locally implemented effort to increase community presence and value through work on the mainstage, education programs and community service will help position opera and opera companies in the marketplace.

Audience Behavior and Attitudes

There is no single audience for opera. As opera companies have matured, opera audiences have become more varied. Every community is now home to sophisticated audiences who want to attend performances of new and unfamiliar works, long-time attendees who enjoy traditional productions of the standard repertoire and newcomers to the art form, some of whom want to see the most popular operas for the first time and others who are attracted by the works of contemporary composers. With a limited number of productions in any single season, opera companies are challenged to respond to the divergent tastes of these audiences.

Outside the opera house, audiences have become accustomed to new forms of entertainment that involve them more actively as participants. Opera companies should examine ways to supplement the passive delivery of performances with more interactive strategies that encourage participation in the creation and enjoyment of the art form. All audiences appear to be increasingly interested in an expanded cultural experience that extends before and after performances. Engaging people with opera must be as high a priority as producing opera.

Regardless of their aesthetic sensibilities, audiences are less likely than ever to subscribe and more likely to purchase single tickets at the last minute from a broader spectrum of arts and entertainment options. Marketing specialists have to identify new ways to make opera appealing to newcomers. Opera companies need new strategies to encourage customer enthusiasm in a marketplace where fewer people identify themselves as devoted opera fans and attendance comes in patterns that do not conform to current labels. At the same time, opera companies have to revive and revise techniques for engaging current patrons to serve as advocates for the art form and for attendance.

Education and Adult Learning

Education and audience cultivation programs are central to broadening and diversifying opera audiences, and deepening their relationship with opera companies. These programs also expand opera companies' civic impact, beyond the limited number of performances that can be offered in a single season.

The staff of opera companies who deliver education, adult learning and community programs are often the first points of contact between opera companies and populations who are new to the art form. Such programs are at the vanguard of establishing and expanding the awareness and appreciation of opera and opera companies.

For some audiences, education and enrichment activities are a necessary precursor to the understanding and enjoyment of the art form. Enrichment activities should become more varied to reach adults and engage them actively as participants in learning rather than as just passive recipients of traditional lecture/demonstration materials.

Education priorities and related legislation shift constantly. In the K-12 school setting, opera education programs offer a variety of learning connections among the arts and other subjects that must be linked to current learning priorities.

Opera companies should capitalize on other resources to expand service and visibility. In some communities, the local opera company has created special activities around The Met's HD transmissions to increase the frequency of contact with opera lovers. In other communities, local university performances are the centerpiece of learning programs throughout the year.

In light of the importance of enhancing the perceived value of opera, the position of education and community programs within opera companies should be re-examined and, where appropriate, enhanced. Nomenclature may need to be revised; the range of activities offered by opera companies suggests that "education" is a term that may be too narrow.

Fundraising

Contributions will continue to represent the majority of income for most opera companies. The recession has reduced corporate and foundation giving which, in light of shifting philanthropic priorities, may not rebound quickly or substantially. Individual giving will increasingly be the most important source of contributed income. Despite the passion of opera lovers and the resilience of their giving during the recession, dependence on individual donors underscores the importance of demonstrating opera's relevance, especially among the next generation of donors. For younger donors, new fundraising techniques will emerge, including giving on the Internet, which may attract more donors at lower levels of support.

Opera leaders will have to intensify their attention to building endowments, cash reserves, facility reserves, working capital and risk capital in order to increase their ability to generate earned income, sustain cash flow throughout the year, maintain infrastructure and invest in new projects. As the expense of producing on the mainstage continues to increase, companies will be challenged to raise additional funds for community programs which return value over a longer horizon.

New Business Practices

The same business model has shaped opera company operations for nearly a century. Earned and contributed income combine to cover expenses, the majority of which represent salaries and fees for performing artists, technical specialists and administrators. While this model has been refined over the years, questions arise as to whether a new business model, perhaps in relation to a new type(s) of business activity, can help companies achieve a higher level of effectiveness in increasing relevance, artistic excellence and the repertoire of new works.

Alternative sources of earned income should be explored. New departmental/staff structures may reflect the ways new technologies are altering job descriptions and established procedures. Producing strategies should be examined to find new opportunities for collaboration with local arts organizations, as well as nationally among opera companies.

Electronic media will continue to change the way opera companies create and distribute performances, promotional messages and educational materials. More companies, including smaller companies, are now able to participate in the development and distribution of electronic resources. Beyond the distribution of materials (a one-way flow of information), opera companies should use new media to establish interactive relationships with their communities.

Exchange of Information and Professional Development

Many opera companies are protective of ideas and data. Central to the advancement of the field must be a broader unity of purpose that will make members more willing to share information and best practices. The failure to cooperate across the field presents a greater risk to opera companies than competition among them. The accelerated pace of innovation has intensified the need for a continuous cycle of learning that includes the sharing of ideas, experimentation, documentation and analysis of results, dissemination of findings and professional development. While OPERA America's annual conferences and various committees are a good basis on which to build, the need for connection among peer opera companies throughout the year is essential. Experts from outside the field should be recruited to enrich discussion and generate new ideas.

The importance of the exchange of information is not limited to opera company staff. Artists will gain from the increased exchange of information and sharing of best practices. Opera companies, too, can benefit from the creative involvement of artists in planning and evaluating programs.

The training of current staff is an urgent need in light of opportunities made possible by new technologies and the pressure to generate contributed and earned income. Leadership training is equally important as the number and complexity of opera companies grows, requiring mastery of a growing list of skills. Adapting to new technologies and new business models requires organizational change. Opera leaders must learn how to manage change. Companies must commit to the professional development of staff in order to reap the benefit of increased creativity and productivity, and improve the prospects for retention of staff who seek to grow in their work. Some leadership training methods are very expensive, but others require only cooperation and coordination among members.

Concurrently, OPERA America's commitment to professional development among artists must be expanded to be fully reflective of a greater variety of career opportunities and strategies for achieving artistic goals.

Governance and Volunteerism

The success of opera companies depends on the leadership and support of board members who understand and fulfill their unique roles and responsibilities. Good trustees master a set of specific skills. Although they already contribute time and resources to their opera companies, trustees must make an additional commitment to learn how best to work with professional staff and represent the opera company in the community. Opera company trustees who benefit from exposure to field-wide trends and best practices will be better able to make local decisions that are informed by a deeper understanding of industry norms.

At the same time, company staff need to take full advantage of board member skills and ensure that their involvement is effective and rewarding. Strategies are needed to harness the enthusiasm of community leaders with connections and resources who are willing to make them available, but do not wish to serve as trustees.

New technologies and a higher level of professionalism across the field have not replaced the need for the active involvement of opera enthusiasts, although volunteer practices have evolved. Individuals are more likely to dedicate their time and talent to specific tasks rather than to traditional volunteer "guilds" built on a membership model. Still, volunteers will continue to be critical to the fundraising effort of opera companies. Companies need to identify ways to turn current patrons into advocates for the art form and for attendance, and to ensure that the volunteer base reflects the diversity of the community.

Collaboration

Organizational and artistic collaboration should continue to be a dynamic aspect of the art form and the industry. Opera companies exist in a complex environment populated by other arts organizations, performing arts venues, and state and local arts agencies, to name just a few. Many of the trends and issues noted in the course of OPERA America's planning process are shared by most if not all the other disciplines and support organizations. Perhaps it is because opera is inherently collaborative in virtually every artistic and administrative dimension that opera companies are frequently at the center of collaborative projects in their cities. Opera leaders should embrace opportunities to demonstrate their commitment to advancing the larger arts community.

On stage, too, opera creators are increasingly integrating other arts into the tapestry of opera and should be encouraged to do so. The fusion of new ideas and styles with the honored traditions of the art form holds promise for the art form and the industry.

ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Over the last two decades, guided by successive strategic plans, OPERA America has broadened its service to the field. The plan of 1990 established membership categories for individuals, university opera programs and conservatories, and related businesses, building on the incorporation into OPERA America of the resources of the National Opera Institute and Central Opera Service. The plan of 1998 articulated a bold dedication to artistic and educational programs in conjunction with continued administrative services to opera companies. As a result of these efforts, OPERA America programs offer direct benefit to artists, educators, administrators, trustees and other stakeholders who are committed to the advancement of opera and opera companies in North America.

Deeper Service Relationship

Having succeeded in achieving a breadth of service that now spans the field, this new strategic plan charts a course for OPERA America to deepen its relationship with institutional and individual members. In light of the accelerating rate of technological innovation, shifting civic priorities and changed audience behavior, a new level of collaborative effort is needed to respond effectively to challenges and opportunities. Accordingly, the objectives and actions articulated in the following pages are designed to engender a stronger community of purpose among members in which as much value is placed on contributing to the attainment of common goals as on the tangible benefits that can be derived from membership. Ultimately, members will come to view themselves as equal partners in building resources that benefit the entire field.

Enhanced Leadership

Concurrent with the development of a stronger partnership with members, OPERA America will enhance its leadership role on behalf of members and the field. Through convenings and facilitated discussion, new physical resources in a national Opera Center, increased financial support for artistic projects through *The Opera Fund*, stronger collaborations and coordinated national communications, OPERA America will increase its effectiveness as an agent for innovation and progress.

The Planning Process

On April 29, 2009, members of the OPERA America Board of Directors authorized the formation of a Strategy Committee to guide a year-long planning process. The committee was appointed by Board Chairman Anthony Freud and Marc Scorca, president and CEO, over the summer of 2009. J.A. (Gus) Blanchard, trustee emeritus of The Minnesota Opera, agreed to serve as committee chairman. Broadly representative of OPERA America's membership, including company representatives, artists and other interested stakeholders, committee members dedicated their first meeting in September 2009 to identifying priority trends and issues that are likely to shape the art form and the field over the next 10 years.

Ten working groups comprised of over 75 other members were convened by telephone conference call immediately following the first meeting of the Strategy Committee. Participants were asked to review the summary of trends and issues identified by the Strategy Committee and to supplement, amplify and clarify the subjects that had been discussed.

At the second meeting of the Strategy Committee, trends and issues were prioritized before attention was turned to ways OPERA America could respond to implicit challenges and opportunities. Taking the outcome of this meeting as a point of departure, OPERA America staff wrote a draft of a plan that was reviewed by members of the Strategy Committee at a meeting in February 2010. A final draft of the plan incorporating their recommendations was submitted to members of the Strategy Committee and working groups for further review.

Members of the OPERA America Board of Directors reviewed the work of the Strategy Committee and working groups at each board meeting in order to assess the progress that has been made and to contribute additional perspective to the discussion.

The final plan was distributed for review by OPERA America's voting members in May 2010. Final adjustments were presented to the Board of Directors at the meeting of June 9, 2010 and then submitted for final approval to voting members at the Annual Business Meeting, which took place in Los Angeles in conjunction with *Opera Conference 2010*.

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**The Japan of Pure Invention:
Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado***

Josephine Lee

University of Minnesota Press

ISBN: 9780816665808

Before Sofia Coppola's *Lost in Translation*, before Barthes explicated his empire of signs, even before Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado* has presented its own distinctive version of Japan since its premiere in 1885. Tracing the history of *The Mikado*'s performances from Victorian times to the present, Josephine Lee reveals the continuing viability of the play's surprisingly complex racial dynamics as they have been adapted to different times and settings. Lee connects yellowface performance to blackface minstrelsy, showing how productions of the 1938–1939 *Swing Mikado* and *Hot Mikado*, among others, were used to promote African American racial uplift. She also looks at a host of contemporary productions and adaptations, including Mike Leigh's film *Topsy-Turvy* and performances of *The Mikado* in Japan, to reflect on anxieties about race as they are articulated through new visions of the town of Titipu. Josephine Lee is associate professor of English and Asian American studies at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. She is the author of *Performing Asian America: Race and Ethnicity on the Contemporary Stage*.

Maria Callas: A Musical Biography

Robert Levine

Amadeus Press

ISBN13: 9781574671834

Maria Callas was almost as famous for her personal life — her jet-setting,

her staggering weight loss, her tigress-like temperament — as she was for her singing. Of Greek parentage, the New York-born, internationally famous Callas was one of the most influential singers of the 20th century, reviving a school of singing — bel canto — that had been forgotten for 75 years. Unlike most of her generation of sopranos, she was a superb actress both vocally and physically: Her voice encompassed many colors and she embodied each character she portrayed. After seeing or hearing her in a role, it was said, it was difficult to imagine another singer attempting it, so fierce was her individual stamp. Her status went beyond cult; her triumphs and failures appeared on the front page of newspapers all over the world. This softcover edition, illustrated musical biography covers Callas's life and career. A final third of the book analyzes the tracks on the two included CDs, describing what made Callas unique.

Lotfi Mansouri: An Operatic Journey

Lotfi Mansouri with Donald Arthur
Northeastern University Press

ISBN13: 9781555537067

Lotfi Mansouri has lived a full life in opera: triumphs and near disasters, divas and divos, moneymen and true artists — he has known them all. In this memoir, Mansouri lifts the curtain and invites the reader to see how magic is created on stage. He has lived a storied life: early years in Iran, move to America, long stays in Europe and Canada, directing on several continents, leading San Francisco Opera as the general director, all the while continuing to mount productions worldwide. Mansouri was also a central figure in the recent rejuvenation

of opera through innovations such as supertitles and the staging and commissioning of new works that would appeal to a contemporary audience, such as San Francisco Opera's productions of *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Dead Man Walking*. Mansouri isn't shy about dropping names and bruising some egos (even his own). Anyone who wants to know what the opera world is really like can now find out in the company of a charming and expert guide. Mansouri is a former member of the board of OPERA America, and was a recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts Opera Honors in 2009.

**The Gilded Stage:
A Social History of Opera**

Daniel Snowman

The Overlook Press

ISBN13: 9781590203958

From opera's beginnings in the courts of northern Italy to its spread across Europe and the world, *The Gilded Stage* is an operatic Grand Tour of opera houses, monarchs, artists and audiences. This volume tells the complex story of the development and influence of the world's most ambitious art form. Complete with photographs, illustrations and paintings, the role of opera in society and culture throughout the world, from its conception to modern times, is charted by Daniel Snowman. The author explores the relationship between the art form and the social, political and artistic atmosphere of the time, as well as the great works which inspired composers and performers.

Opera for All Seasons: 60 Years of Indiana University Opera Theater
 Marianne Williams Tobias; George Calder, Nancy J. Guyer, C. David Higgins and Charles H. Webb, contributing editors
 Indiana University Press
 ISBN13: 9780253353405

From operas presented in reconfigured army barracks to those mounted on a stage rivaling that of New York's Metropolitan Opera House, Indiana University Opera Theater (IU) has grown into a world-class training ground for opera's next generation. A lavishly illustrated history, *Opera for All Seasons* captures the excitement, hard work and talent that distinguish each performance and that have made IU Opera Theater what it is today. More than 300 photos and drawings illustrate

six decades of opera production from a performance of Martinů's *Greek Passion* at the Met to a 2008 *La bohème* — the first opera streamed live on the internet from Indiana University to a worldwide audience. Opera lovers will delight in this sumptuous memento of IU Opera Theater's history. Marianne Williams Tobias is author of *Classical Music Without Fear: A Guide for General Audiences*, as well as a pianist, public radio commentator and lecturer.

Richard Wagner: Self-Promotion and the Making of a Brand
 Nicholas Vazsonyi
 Cambridge University Press
 ISBN13: 9780521519960

All modern artists have had to market themselves in some way. Richard Wagner may just have done it better

than anyone else. In a self-promotional effort that began around 1840 in Paris, and lasted for the remainder of his career, Wagner claimed that he was the most German composer ever and the true successor of Beethoven. More significantly, he was an opera composer who declared that he was not composing operas. Instead, during the 1850s, he mapped out a new direction, conceiving of works that would break with tradition and be "brand new." This study examines the innovative ways in which Wagner made himself a celebrity, promoting himself using every means available: autobiography, journal articles, short stories, newspaper announcements, letters, even his operas themselves. Nicholas Vazsonyi reveals how Wagner created a niche for his works in the crowded opera market. 🎭

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A SPECIAL THANK YOU

The economic downturn of the last two years stimulated OPERA America and its members to envision a new program of national communication and collaboration that promises to build the field's capacity through the economic recovery and beyond. The creation of a new professional development program was among the highlights of OPERA America's dual anniversary celebrations. Crafted by a team of OPERA America members and staff, this new program was a direct response to needs articulated by the field's most experienced professionals.

OPERA America set an Anniversary Celebration Annual Fund goal of \$400,000 this past year to successfully build this new \$1.4 million program. OPERA America is proud to announce that \$451,219 was raised through individual and major gifts.

These contributions are making it possible for OPERA America to advance the professional development initiatives articulated in the Strategic Plan, introduced on pages 40–47. Primary among the goals is the expansion of our Forums. Meetings of the Singer Training, Education, Electronic Media, Technical/Production and Trustee Forums will soon be scheduled, along with a new Finance/HR Forum and New Works Forum being introduced this fall. These convenings will provide invaluable opportunities for members to learn from one another and to work with outside experts to address the most important challenges and opportunities in opera today.

As a result of this generous individual support, OPERA America will also be able to provide critically needed travel stipends. These stipends will make it possible for a broad range of member company decision-makers to participate in the Forums, enabling them to bring the collective expertise and best practices these unique discussions will yield back to their company colleagues.

The development of these activities would not have been possible without the commitment of our generous Annual Fund donors. We are also deeply appreciative of the support from the Anniversary Celebration Committee for their endorsement of our work, generous gifts and dedication to the continued growth of the field.

The Anniversary Celebration Committee represents a coast to coast salute to the value of OPERA America's services and the remarkable leadership of Marc A. Scorca as President and CEO. OPERA America proudly acknowledges the support of the Anniversary Celebration Committee and with deepest gratitude, its Annual Fund, Corporate and Foundation donors.

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