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Opera America Magazine
(ISSN – 1062 – 7243)
is published in September,
December, March and June.

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Correction: The title of the opera featured in the December Production Portfolio is *Later the Same Evening*.
For more information on this opera by John Musto and Mark Campbell, visit www.peermusicclassical.com.

ON THE COVER: Gerald Finley stars as J. Robert Oppenheimer in Lyric Opera of Chicago's 2007-2008 production of John Adams's *Doctor Atomic* (Peter Sellars, director; Robert Spano, conductor; Adrienne Lobel, set design; Dunya Ramicova, costume design; and James F. Ingalls, lighting design). Photo by Dan Rest/Lyric Opera of Chicago.



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One way I calibrate evolution in the field is by listening to lobby conversation during intermissions. When I began in the field, intermission chat was dominated by comparative (and sometimes heated) analysis of the performances of reigning divas. Would Nilsson return to the United States? Should Caballé record *Lucia di Lammermoor* even though she doesn't have the high notes? The talk in the 1970s was about singers in the traditional repertoire and, sometimes, about productions. Rarely was a comment made about American operas — because productions of them were so rare.

Fast forward 25 years and patrons can be overheard discussing American operas in comparative (and sometimes heated) terms. Is *Susannah* or *Of Mice and Men* Carlisle Floyd's most effective work? The Met should perform *Akhmaten*, not *Satyagraha*! Did John Adams make significant changes in *Dr. Atomic* between the San Francisco and Chicago performances? Whether the chat is about existing American operas of Samuel Barber or Douglas Moore or about the new commissions by Daron Hagen, Jake Heggie or Lowell Liebermann, to name just a few, lobby chat verifies that an American opera canon has emerged before our eyes.

Megan Young reports in this issue about the latest grants from OPERA America's *Opera Fund* awarded to opera companies in support of the creation and production of new works. She explains that OPERA America's strategic investment in new works spans more than 20 years, many of which corresponded to a parallel commitment by the National Endowment for the Arts through the New American Works program that existed until the mid-1990s. OPERA America and the NEA both responded to a common concern expressed by field leaders that without new operas that capture American stories in contemporary musical and theatrical terms, opera would never be embraced as an American art form worthy of public enthusiasm.

Early experiments with new operas did not always prove successful. It took time for producers and creators to develop a new aesthetic vocabulary that connects with audiences accustomed only to works from the core repertoire. Dedicated new works producers, established as early as 1970, fulfilled their potential as laboratories for experimentation only gradually. Andrew Eggert's article explains how dramaturgs have emerged as important partners in shaping new pieces. Time was needed, too, for board members to understand the importance of new works and to enjoy their closer relationship with composers, librettists and the creative process. Business leaders, in particular, had to make a connection to what they already understood — that for a business to remain vital, new product is essential. (Imagine if Chrysler, Ford or General Motors today articulated a strategy to increase their market share by placing a moratorium on new models. Investors would laugh. To regain vitality, they need more new products — good products — than ever before.) *The Ghosts of Versailles*, *Filumena*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Ainadamar*, *Margaret Garner*, *The Grapes of Wrath* — the list goes on and on. Audiences have come to realize that the most exciting evenings in the theater are filled with the surprises, compelling stories and beautiful music that are found in today's new American operas.

New works still represent only a fraction of the operas produced each year. We are a long way from the golden years of the mid-19th century when virtually every opera was new to its audience — the years from which the core repertoire emerged. Bold steps have been made, however, and with continued investment from OPERA America's *Opera Fund* and on the part of innumerable individual donors, corporations and foundations, opera will advance as a compelling cultural expression for millions and more millions of people.

Marc A. Scorca
President/CEO

OPERA IN THE HEARTLAND

Lyric Opera of Kansas City opened its 50th anniversary season with the grandest of grand operas — *Aida*. But General Director Evan Luskin and Artistic Director Ward Holmquist knew that wasn't enough. "Any company could do *Aida* — there is nothing Kansas City about it." So the company will close the season with the world premiere of *John Brown*, a new opera by Kirke Mechem based on the famous abolitionist. "The story is a huge part of Kansas and Missouri history, yet it really speaks to today — is violence ever justified?"

Since the company's founding, its leaders have thought hard about how an opera company outside a major metropolitan area could distinguish itself. According to Luskin, "You had a lot of instant opera then, where people would import a big name and throw together a show. Our founding artistic director spent a year in Germany and realized there was another way." Russell Patterson envisioned a company that would use emerging artists, perform in the language of the audience, schedule lengthy rehearsal periods and devote equal attention to musical and theatrical aspects.

The company, which was one of the founding members of OPERA America, takes great pride in offering opportunities for the next generation of opera artists. Through a joint apprentice program, it provides performance experience for students enrolled in degree programs at two local universities: "They tend to be fairly young, and the schools feel it is good for them to be on the stage. We use them in the chorus, but all their training is through the schools. When they're finished with their studies, they're ready for some of the bigger programs."

Although there have been changes over the last half-century, the founders' values are still evident. With the advent of projected titles, the company now performs in original language because, says Luskin, "the point was never to perform in English, the point was to be understood." That said, there have been plenty of opportunities for audiences to hear opera in their mother tongue — American works make up about a third of the repertoire. A handful have been world premieres, but the emphasis has been on second or third productions of works including Floyd's *Of Mice and Men*, Susa's *Transformations*, Hoiby's *The Tempest* and Heggie's *The End of the Affair*.

Luskin looks forward to the opening of a new opera house in 2010. With 1,795 seats, it will still be fairly intimate, but the stage will have greater depth and wing space — along with the latest technology. "I suspect there must have been people who never thought Kansas City could support an opera company," says Luskin, "But Russell knew that if it were not just music but also theater, people would come." 🍷



Lyric Opera of Kansas City's 50th Anniversary Celebration and opening night of their production of Verdi's *Aida*. Photo by Douglas Hamer.



NATIONAL
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NEA OPERA HONORS

For the first time in 25 years, the **National Endowment for the Arts** (NEA) has created a new award to recognize lifetime achievement and individual excellence: The National Endowment for the Arts Opera Honors. This award will honor visionaries and luminaries who, by making extraordinary contributions to opera in the United States, have become cultural treasures of this great nation. This honor represents the highest recognition that our country bestows in opera.

Opera, a musical, dramatic and visual arts experience, has the power to communicate to a wide audience through a combination of forces and imagery — singers, orchestras, choruses and dancers; colorful costumes; and innovative, elaborate set designs. Opera has evolved through time and, in the United States, has been influenced by our national traditions; however, universal themes are at its core. Whether opera is produced on a grand scale or for an intimate chamber setting, the creators and interpreters bring to life, through music, to stories that provide context for our human experiences.

The National Endowment for the Arts Opera Honors will honor those visionary creators, extraordinary performers and other interpreters who have made a lasting impact on our national cultural landscape. This impact may be based on a lifetime of artistic achievements or a single, uniquely valuable accomplishment. Recipients of the National Endowment for the Arts Opera Honors will be selected on the basis of nominations from the public. Nominees may include composers, librettists, singers, conductors, designers, directors, or, in special circumstances, collaborative artistic teams. The National Endowment for the Arts Opera Honors also will honor individuals whose mastery has advanced the knowledge and/or appreciation of opera for the general public.

A call for nominations was made in early 2008; winners will be honored in fall 2008 at a celebratory performance hosted by **Washington National Opera**. 



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“AS WE LIKE TO SAY IN CHICAGO, VOTE EARLY AND VOTE OFTEN.”

This election year, Chicagoans will have the opportunity to choose from an appealing slate of candidates: Britten’s *Paul Bunyan*, Rossini’s *Mosè in Egitto* and Mozart’s *La finta giardiniera*. A new initiative called “The People’s Opera” will allow local operagoers to cast their votes — at the cost of \$1 apiece — for a work to be produced in **Chicago Opera Theater’s** 2010 season. “The idea came from a board member, and I thought it was rather brilliant,” says General Director Brian Dickie, who notes that in addition to generating income and engagement, “It’s also useful market research. The audience votes when they buy tickets anyway — why not let them cast their votes in advance?”

It is not unheard of for wealthy opera patrons to influence programming by underwriting the costs of their favorite productions, but “The People’s Opera” allows everyone to have a voice in the decision-making process. “The purpose is to raise money for the company, raise our profile, give people a bit of fun and produce an opera that people want to see,” says Dickie, who feels that regardless of the choice, “Everyone will benefit because the company will be more prosperous.”

The campaign will begin in April 2008; votes will be accepted online and at the Harris Theater during performances of the 2008 spring season (April 30 to June 8). “There will undoubtedly be hoopla in the lobbies to engage people in the debate,” says Dickie. Although the company is still working out the details, he hopes that members of the board or others will step forward to lead the campaign for each opera. The company will track the progress of each title: “If people see that their favorite is just behind the lead, it may encourage them. As we like to say in Chicago, vote early and vote often.”



Leah Partridge as Konstanze and Christian Oliver as Pasha Selim in Chicago Opera Theater’s 2006 production of Mozart’s *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. Photo by Liz Lauren.



Julia Sukmanova and James Bobby in Staatsoper Hamburg's production of Eötvös's *Angels in America*. Photo by Matthias Baus.

DARK NIGHTS INSPIRE BRIGHT IDEAS

Two years ago, **Fort Worth Opera** made the bold decision to transform its seven-month season into a condensed summer festival. In 2008, as the company looks forward to its second festival season, it also looks forward to a mini-festival inspired by its production of Peter Eötvös's *Angels in America*. More than 20 arts and science organizations have come together to plan "More Life," a series of performances, educational events and discussions designed to increase awareness of AIDS in the community.

"More Life" was born, in part, out of the desire to get the most bang for the buck from a venue rental. Performances of *Angels in America* will be spread over a four-week run at the 400-seat Scott Theater at the Fort Worth Community Arts Center. With only seven performances, the theater would have been dark most nights, so the opera company seized the opportunity to expand programming.

General Director Darren Keith Woods began by talking to local AIDS service organizations, and the festival quickly gathered momentum, spilling beyond the Scott Theater and the Arts Center into a number of community venues. Programs are being planned by a steering committee that includes representatives from Fort Worth Opera, Samaritan House, AIDS Outreach Center and Tarrant County AIDS Interfaith Network, as well as a part-time manager and marketing consultant. The Fort Worth Public Library Foundation is underwriting a children's book, and a literary magazine is planning a photo and multimedia feature. Many events will be free; others will benefit the AIDS service organizations. "It's been really exciting to see how community has come together around the cause," says Woods. 📷

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In any industry, innovation is the key to longevity. Throughout this issue of the magazine, you'll see how opera companies across the country are creating new works and exploring new ways of working. A number of Professional Company Members have an ongoing commitment to the development of new opera artists and works. The "research and development" activity can take many forms — from readings and workshops to full productions. These pages offer a sampling of such activity across North America. 📖

New York's **Center for Contemporary Opera (CCO)** celebrated its 25th anniversary in February with a reading of excerpts from *The Secret Agent*, the new opera by Michael Dellaira and J.D. McClatchy co-commissioned by CCO, Long Leaf Opera and San Antonio Opera. At the same event, soprano Wendy Hill presented an encore performance of Jack Beeson's *Practice in the Art of Elocution*. Later this spring, CCO will present a recital of new music at Weill Recital Hall and the world premiere of Peter Westergaard's *Alice in Wonderland*.

Works in progress at **Compagnie Musicale La Nef** include *Opéra Báthory*, a new multimedia opera inspired by the life of a Hungarian countess said by some to be the historical character at the origin of the vampire myth.

SHAW SINGS! The Dark Lady of the Sonnets and Passion is one of several works in development at Brooklyn's **Encompass New Music Theatre**. Excerpts from the pair of one-act operas by composer-librettist Philip Hageman will be presented as part of Manhattan School of Music's New American Opera Previews in March. A full production with orchestra will take place June 19-22 at Symphony Space.

Long Leaf Opera's (Chapel Hill, NC) summer festival will feature two new works: an original opera for teens by Justine Chen presented in conjunction with the Arts Center of Carrboro, and a workshop of Dellaira and McClatchy's *The Secret Agent*. The company will also present revivals of several recent American works, including William Bolcom's *Medusa*, Gordon's *Orpheus & Euridice*, Dominick Argento's *A Water Bird Talk* and a song cycle by Jorge Martín entitled *The Glass Hammer*.

Long Beach Opera (California) continues to explore new ground not only in its repertory but also in its choice of venue. Ricky Ian Gordon's *Orpheus & Euridice* was staged in the Belmont Plaza Olympic Pool in February. In June, the company will reprise its acclaimed 2007 production of Grigori Frid's *The Diary of Anne Frank* staged in local parking garages.



Todd Palmer as Orpheus and Elizabeth Futral as Euridice in Long Beach Opera's 2008 production of Gordon's *Orpheus and Euridice*. Photo by Keith Ian Polakoff.

Inspired by the writings of Italo Calvino, Paul Drescher's *The Tyrant* is a solo chamber opera written for long-time collaborator John Duykers. **Musical Traditions** premiered the work in 2005, and has toured to venues across the country. 2008 will see performances in Chicago and San Francisco.



Tenor John Duykers in Musical Traditions production of Drescher's *The Tyrant*. Photo by Paul Drescher.



Elmer Gantry librettist Herschel Garfein introduces his work in a preshow video by Greg Emetaz at VOX 2007. Photo by Carol Rosegg.

New York City Opera has announced selections for VOX, orchestral readings of new works scheduled for May 10-11, 2008, at www.vox-nyco.com. The new Web site will offer streaming video and performance excerpts, and will also include a mechanism for audience participation. Composers will seek feedback on specific issues by posing questions in the program book; audience members will be able to submit anonymous responses online.

Tapestry New Opera Works (Toronto, Ontario) has a full schedule of workshops and performances this spring. In June, the company will partner with Theatre Direct Canada to present a world premiere in partnership with Luminato: *Sanctuary Song*, by Marjorie Chan and Abigail Richardson. The company will also continue its 2007-2008 tour of *Elijah's Kite*, which will be seen by over 20,000 children this season.

In April 2008 at the Espace Dell'Arte in Montreal, **Chants Libres** will present a remount of the oper'installation *L'Archange*. An opera which takes place within a video installation, *L'Archange* is the trial of the Archangel of Evil, held in absentia by The Judge, who slowly loses his grasp on reality as the trial progresses. Later in the year the company will present *Opera Actuel, Works in Progress*, a workshop of new opera works from around the world.

In February, Toronto's **Soundstreams Canada** presented the world premiere of *The Journey (Pimootewin)* in cooperation with the Elmer Iseler Singers. With a libretto by Tomson Highway and music by Melissa Hui, this Cree opera focuses on the figure of the Trickster. Soundstreams, which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, has a particular interest in cultural exchange, with projects such as last season's Cool Drumming's International Percussion Festival, which featured over 100 artists from seven provinces and seven countries.

“THE ARTS PARTNERSHIP IS AN HISTORIC AND UNPRECEDENTED COMMUNITY SOLUTION.”

The Minnesota Opera recently joined with the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts and its resident arts organizations to form The Arts Partnership, a distinct 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization that represents the interests of the four organizations at their point of intersection — Ordway Center itself.

Like the majority of opera companies, The Minnesota Opera shares its primary venue with other arts organizations, and allocating rehearsal and performance dates can be a struggle. In addition to touring shows booked by the Ordway Center, the theater is home to performances by The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and The Schubert Club. The Arts Partnership not only provides a forum for the organizations to address scheduling challenges, it creates new possibilities for expanded programming, venue enhancements and leveraging of assets.

“Scheduling the use of Ordway Center is complicated, and it historically has been a difficult task to balance the needs of its four main users,” says Patricia Mitchell, president and CEO of Ordway Center. “The problem of access can be considered a sign of success, as there is more quality programming for the community than there is time in the Ordway.”

The Arts Partnership’s master agreement articulates the terms and conditions for the new organization. Each partner organization has agreed to a usage calendar and operating agreement, which safeguards the use of Ordway Center to the benefit of all four organizations. The Art Partnership’s board of directors includes the CEOs and board chairs of each of the four partnering organizations and an additional representative of Ordway Center’s board, with the role of chair rotating each year among the CEOs. Kevin Smith, president and CEO of The Minnesota Opera, is the first chair.

“The Arts Partnership is an historic and unprecedented community solution,” says Smith. “The Arts Partnership master agreement maximizes Ordway utilization: It addresses long-standing challenges of scheduling and cost of use, and creates a model in which Ordway Center, a beloved community asset, can realize its full potential. The real winner is the community.”



The Minnesota Opera’s 2007 world premiere production of Gordon’s *The Grapes of Wrath*. Photo by Michal Daniel.



Andrew Garland, Amy Burton and Hal Czalet in the New York Festival of Song's performance of *English Garden, Earthly Delights*. Photo by Gabe Palacio.

"EVERYONE HAS A PRIMAL NEED TO BE SUNG TO."

"People say, 'Oh, you do all those obscure songs,'" says Steven Blier, artistic director of **New York Festival of Song** (NYFOS). "But a song isn't obscure just because you haven't heard it. Think of it as a friend you haven't met yet." This year, NYFOS celebrates 20 years of introducing artists and audience members to terrific songs in evenings that can feel like dream dinner parties — the kind where fascinating strangers come together to have wonderfully unexpected conversations.

A dizzying diversity has been a hallmark of NYFOS programming since its 1988 founding by Blier and Michael Barrett. This has challenged Blier and his collaborators to be extremely versatile, as when a program centered on two Russian 20th-century poets was followed a scant month later by "Fats and Fields," a tribute to lyricist Dorothy Fields and songwriter Fats Waller. "That kind of plunge has been important and bracing — it's a kind of Polar Bear Club of music making."

Later this month, NYFOS will present two newly-commissioned comic operas for five singers and two pianos, each with a libretto by Mark Campbell. John Musto's *Bastianello* is based on an Italian folktale and set in 18th-century rural Italy; William Bolcom's *Lucrezia* is a riff on a seduction satire by Machiavelli. "All of our programs are meant to have some kind of narrative," says Blier, "so why not do opera?"

Why not, indeed, especially since NYFOS already counts the librettist and composers — all respected opera artists — as members of the family. The organization has previously commissioned works by all three, and drawn heavily on their back catalogs as well. "Just because something is a few years old doesn't mean it's tarnished goods," says Blier. Musto has made frequent appearances on NYFOS programs, both as a pianist and composer, since its first season. For Blier, Bolcom is something of a role model: "He is such a cowboy — he embraces everything and plays everything. He really reveres American popular song. He loves modern music but has no patience for the kind of highly touted academic music that is, essentially, dull. He doesn't see any divide between art and entertainment."

"These are two composers who have honored song and honored American traditions," says Blier, who strives to do the same — and still find time for other compelling musical traditions from around the world, from Spain to Scandinavia. "When you play everything, it can be hard for people to get a fix on what you do. I feel song can be misunderstood and undervalued in the musical establishment, but our concerts play to sold-out houses. Everyone has a primal need to be sung to. There is nothing as arresting, personal or important as a song." 🎵

Shannon McClure has accepted the position of marketing director at **The Atlanta Opera** and left her previous position as marketing and public relations director at **Dayton Opera** as of February 2008. Previously, she served as director of marketing for Tulsa Opera; her other arts experience includes work at Opera Columbus, OPERA America and The Santa Fe Opera. McClure has a B.M. from the University of Tulsa.

Kelly Robinson has been appointed the **The Banff Centre's** new director of theatre arts. The department oversees programming and performances for Opera as Theatre in addition to many other programs. Robinson began his connection with The Banff Centre as a participant in the dance program, and as his career in theater grew, his work became integral to the Centre's performing arts programs, particularly in music theater and opera. As program director of the Centre's Opera as Theatre program (a role he will continue), Robinson has directed most of the recent Banff Summer Arts Festival opera productions, including premieres of two original Canadian operas, *Filumena* and *Frobisher*.

Boston Lyric Opera (BLO) General Director **Janice Mancini Del Sesto** will leave her position upon completion of her current contract in June 2009; she will have held her post for 17 seasons. In her first season at BLO, Del Sesto was cited in *Boston Magazine's* "Names and Faces" feature as a "Person to Watch," and again in 2003 when the magazine included Del Sesto in its list of the city's "100 Most Powerful Women." During her tenure, BLO

has grown to attract audience members from all six New England states. In 15 years, BLO has gone from a mainstage season in the 850-seat Emerson Majestic Theatre to regularly sold-out performances in the 1,500-seat Shubert Theatre in the Citi Performing Arts Center.

Calgary Opera welcomed **Gordon Gerrard** as répétiteur and conductor-in-residence on November 19, 2007. A graduate of the vocal accompanying program at Manhattan School of Music, Gerrard maintains a busy schedule as a recital partner, vocal coach and conductor. Currently on faculty at Iowa State University, Gerrard has also served as a conductor for Opera Nuova (Edmonton) since 2001 and most recently conducted *The Bartered Bride* there. When not performing, Gerrard works as a vocal coach and has held the positions of répétiteur for Vancouver Opera, associate music director of the Manhattan School of Music undergraduate opera studio and staff pianist for the Canadian Vocal Arts Institute in Montreal.

Opera Australia Music Director Richard Hickox has renewed his contract with the company to 2012. Hickox joined Opera Australia in 2005 and has conducted a number of operas not staged in Australia before: Prokofiev's *The Love for Three Oranges*, Dvorák's *Rusalka*, Andre Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire* and the forthcoming production of Strauss's *Arabella*. A champion of contemporary opera, Hickox was instrumental in the establishment, in 2007, of the Opera Australia New Works & Touring Fund, which supports the development of new

Australian productions. Hickox is an Honorary Fellow of Queens' College Cambridge, where he was Organ Scholar, and was awarded a Doctorate of Music at Durham University in 2003.

Mark Riggleman has been named the new director of education at **Lyric Opera of Chicago**. On February 11 he replaced Jean Kellogg, who has been named director of the Hylton Performing Arts Center and Community Arts Partnerships at George Mason University in Virginia. He has also served as executive director of the Suburban Community Music Center in New Providence, NJ, providing overall leadership for more than 900 students and 60 faculty members, developing programming and outreach programs. Previously, Riggleman was director of The School of Music at the 92nd Street Y in New York City and served as associate director of educational outreach for the Juilliard School, directing and producing 300 outreach concerts annually as part of the Community Service Fellowship Program. Riggleman holds a B.M. in piano pedagogy from the Shenandoah Conservatory of Music in Winchester, VA.

Madison Opera General Director **Allan Naplan** was named "Musician of the Year" in December 2007 by *The Wisconsin State Journal*. A composer and a baritone, as well as an administrator, he succeeded Ann Stanke, who co-founded the company in 1963 and served as its general director for 21 years. The *Journal* cited Naplan's efforts in areas of outreach and visibility, risk-taking in the context of repertoire

choices, harnessing the talents of young artists, producing quality shows, retiring debt and keeping in touch with the general public.

Larry Bomback joined **OPERA America** in February 2008 as director of finance and operations. Prior to that, he managed the financial and administrative operations of the New York Youth Symphony. Bomback is also an avid opera scholar. He has published articles in *The Musical Times*, *Musicological Explorations*, *Opera America*, *The International Faust Compendium* and *The Harmonizer*, and has presented lectures in the United States, Canada and Great Britain.

Jill Anderson, founder of **Pacific Repertory Opera (PRO)**, will step down as general director of the company as of June 1, 2008. The company will continue to operate with day-to-day leadership under Mikele Hushing-Kline, who will be staying on as managing director. Hushing-Kline was administrative director for PRO during her first three years with the company, and in the past year has taken on more management responsibilities. Additionally, **Robert Ashens**, formerly general director of the Eugene Opera in Oregon, will assume full artistic control over all aspects of opera productions beginning in June 2008.

Franklin P. (Pitch) Johnson will end his term as chairman of the board of the **San Francisco Opera Association** on July 31, 2008. San Francisco Opera's board of directors has named **John Gunn** as chairman-elect effective immediately. Gunn

and Johnson will work closely together on all matters pertaining to San Francisco Opera throughout the rest of this fiscal year. Gunn is currently chairman and chief executive officer of Dodge and Cox Investment Managers, one of the most successful professional investment management firms in the country. Gunn and his wife Cynthia are Company Sponsors and have underwritten many San Francisco Opera productions, including the recent world premiere of *Appomattox* and new productions of *La forza del destino*, *The Maid of Orleans* and *Le Grand Macabre*.

Jessica Koplos has been appointed as **San Francisco Opera's (SFO)** director of electronic media, a new position in the company reporting directly to General Director David Gockley. SFO has made major strides in the electronic media field with the recent launch of the Koret-Taube Media Suite and the company's simulcasts. Koplos joins SFO from Chicago, where she was most recently consultant to a number of creative companies, developing business models, funding strategies and media products; she began her career as a technical assistant at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. In her new role, Koplos will lead institutional efforts in electronic media projects including developing a comprehensive growth strategy over the coming years. **Michael Simpson** has been appointed director of finance and administration/chief financial officer (CFO). Simpson has served SFO as interim director of finance and administration/CFO since June 2007; he joined the company as director of finance

in March of 2005. His over 20 years of experience in finance and accounting, management consulting and organizational strategy have included positions at Thomas Dugan Partners, Watson Wyatt Worldwide and Deloitte & Touche. Additionally, **Ruth Nott** has been appointed as director of education. Nott was previously director of programs at the Metropolitan Opera Guild where she oversaw the development, implementation and evaluation of multiple arts education programs and partnerships, and where she worked as an education leader since 2000. Previously, she managed education programs for New York City Opera and spent time at IMG Artists, the Aspen Music Festival and School and Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Janice Bondar has been named **Seattle Opera's** director of human resources. Bondar has held positions at Sound Transit, King County and the Boeing Company; she also holds Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR) accreditation and is active in several community volunteer organizations. In addition, the company has appointed **Mary Kaufman-Cranney** as director of development. Kaufman-Cranney has raised more than \$100 million over the past 19 years and helped position the Seattle YMCA as a flagship organization for the YMCA of the USA. She has a Certified Fundraising Executive (CFRE) accreditation and serves on the Washington State Board for the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

Eric Dillner has been named managing director for **The**


Skylight effective March 5, 2008. Dillner comes to The Skylight from **Shreveport Opera**, where he served as general and artistic director for seven years. As the top administrator at the Shreveport Opera, he more than doubled the company's operating income and secured the company's largest corporate and individual donations in its 59-year history. As The Skylight's managing director, Dillner will work closely with Artistic Director Bill Theisen, board and staff on achieving the financial, production and administrative goals of the company.

Matthew Buckman became executive director of **Townsend Opera Players** in February 2008. Buckman previously served as director of development for the Modesto Symphony Orchestra

Association, and has held previous positions in nearly all areas of arts management. Buckman is the first executive director in the opera company's 25-year history. Erik Buck Townsend will continue as Townsend Opera Players's artistic director, and together they will form the company's leadership team.

Utah Symphony & Opera named **Melia Tourangeau**, head of Michigan's Grand Rapids Symphony, as the new CEO of the state's largest performing arts agency as of April 2008. Tourangeau has a long history with the Michigan regional symphony, beginning in 1997, serving as education director before she was tapped as president in 2005. Grand Rapids Symphony is considered a top regional orchestra, with an annual budget of \$8.3

million. Tourangeau is expected to be instrumental in the search for a music director, as Keith Lockhart will step down after the 2008-2009 season.

JoAnn LaBrecque-French has joined **Washington National Opera** as the director of marketing and audience services. Most recently, LaBrecque-French was the director of program resources at Neuhaus Education Center in Houston, TX, a professional teacher development organization. Her background in marketing, communications, public relations and the performing arts includes 13 years at Houston Grand Opera in various capacities, ultimately as director of marketing and communications; she also served as public relations manager for Los Angeles Opera. 




 AMERICAN OPERA PROJECTS
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 Based on the play by Lanford Wilson
 Libretto by Mark Shulgasser
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April 26, 4:30 PM
 w/ Lee Hoiby's *The Tempest*
 Purchase College Conservatory of Music - Purchase, NY

April 28, 8 PM
 w/ excerpts from Lee Hoiby's *The Tempest*
 and Q&A w/ Lee Hoiby and Lanford Wilson
 Symphony Space - New York, NY

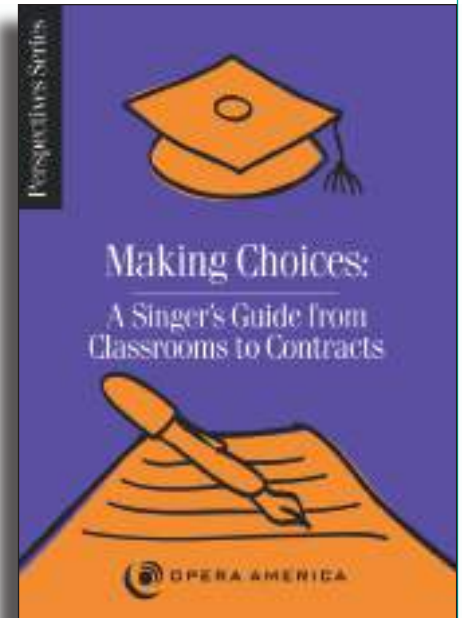
www.operaprojects.org for complete info

NEW PUBLICATION FOR SINGERS


Making Choices: A Singer's Guide from Classrooms to Contracts is the latest addition to OPERA America's *Perspectives* series. The book features articles from a wide range of professionals — singers, managers, coach/accompanists, teachers and opera company personnel — offering observations and counsel regarding important choices faced by all singers.

Some decisions, such as the choice of a university or the choice of a training program, belong to a particular moment in a singer's development. Others, such as the selection of a voice teacher, may be considered throughout a singer's career. Essays on these recurring topics are gathered in the opening chapter of the book, *Perennial Choices*. The chapters that follow are arranged sequentially, taking readers from Academic Training to Professional Training to Establishing a Career. In the Epilogue, one singer describes his journey to a new career in opera — one that calls on many of the skills developed as a singer but does not involve singing.

For more information or to order, visit www.operaamerica.org. 



M!W!O! TRAINING SCHEDULED FOR SUMMER 2008

OPERA America, in partnership with local opera companies across the country, provides training workshops for the *Music!Words!Opera!* curriculum. These professional development opportunities are led by an experienced group of teaching artists and provide a hands-on approach to discovering the program. For more information, please visit www.operaamerica.org/mwo or contact Education@operaamerica.org. 

Summer 2008 workshops include:

June 16 – 20, Indianapolis, IN
Sponsored by **Indianapolis Opera**

June 16 - 20, Saint Louis, MO
Sponsored by **Opera Theatre of Saint Louis**

June 30 – July 3, Salt Lake City, UT
Sponsored by **Utah Symphony and Opera**

July 7 - 11, Denver, CO
Sponsored by **Central City Opera**

July 28 - August 1, Charlotte, NC
Sponsored by **Opera Carolina**



Robert Orth as Nixon, Maria Kanyova as Pat Nixon and Mark Duffin as Chairman Mao in Chicago Opera Theater's 2006 production of Adams's *Nixon in China*. Photo by Steve Kagan.

NATIONAL PERFORMING ARTS CONVENTION: TAKING ACTION TOGETHER

When a group of service organizations came together to produce the first *National Performing Arts Convention* (NPAC) in 2004, they did so with equal parts excitement and trepidation. Each organization had, over the years, developed a conference that responded to its members' needs — from seminars and networking to exhibits and registration procedures. In coming together, members would be asked to change their habits, at least for one year. How would they respond?

Thousands of arts stakeholders convened in Pittsburgh, demonstrating an overwhelming attraction to the concept of cross-disciplinary programming. An assessment tool designed to analyze the ideas and outcomes of NPAC 2004 — Interview, Document, Observe and Clarify, or I-DOC — revealed a strong interest in collective solutions for issues facing all artists and cultural organizations. Participants felt that the next NPAC should further maximize opportunities for cross-disciplinary programming, as the gathering of so many arts professionals in a single city represents a rare opportunity to learn from one another. This response stimulated planners for NPAC 2008 to devote significant time to shared goals in areas such as education, creativity and sustainability, artist training, audience development and diversification, the impact of new technologies and leadership development across the boundaries of the individual disciplines.

As a result of this enthusiasm for collaborative action, planners for NPAC 2008 have created a new model. Cross-disciplinary activity will be the central focus for representatives of 24 national service organizations as they gather in Denver from June 10-14, 2008. Speakers and presenters will include well-known luminaries such as playwright and actor **Anna Deavere Smith**, **Jim Collins** (author of *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... And Others Don't*) and many more.

In addition to gaining new skills and ideas they can take back to their communities, NPAC delegates — artists, administrators, trustees and volunteers — will develop an action agenda with the assistance of **America Speaks**, a renowned organization that uses planning and technology to help large numbers of people tackle tough issues and arrive at consensus. Facilitated Caucus sessions held throughout NPAC will allow all participants to share their thoughts about the current state and future of our fields. These ideas will be collected, synthesized and presented at a **21st-Century Town Meeting**, at which delegates will work together to affirm an action agenda that positions us to build a better future for the performing arts in America in the years ahead.



Gerard Mortier. Photo by Lies Willaert and courtesy of New York City Opera.

A special *Opera Conference 2008* will be embedded within the Convention. As always, programming includes an exciting array of panel discussions, roundtables, performances and special events. Our keynote speaker will be **Gerard Mortier**, general manager designate of **New York City Opera**. Mortier brings a dynamic approach to the business of producing opera and building audiences. Join us to learn about Mortier's vision for the future of opera at New York City Opera and beyond. Other sessions for opera professionals include such topics as **Group Sales, 21st-Century Marketing Techniques, Making the Case for Education Programs, Leadership Transitions, Capital Campaigns, Creating/Managing Fellowships, Visa Roundtable** and **Partnerships with Universities**.

Attendees who wish for an even more intensive professional development experience should plan to attend one of a number of pre-conference seminars offered on Tuesday, June 10. **National Arts Strategies** will offer three different all-day workshops, providing insight and tools for building partnerships, funding opportunities and negotiating skills. In addition, on Wednesday, June 11, there will be four workshops of particular interest to those in the opera field: **Strategies for Engaging New Audiences, Electronic Media Forum, Keeping Your Company in the Spotlight Year-Round** and **To Your (Vocal) Health! A Morning with the Experts**. Registration for these seminars is open to all attendees on a first-come, first served basis; please visit www.performingartsconvention.org for details.

A variety of opera-specific events, performances, speakers and workshops will be offered. Highlights will include performances of *The Rape of Lucretia* at **Central City Opera** and *Nixon in China* at **Opera Colorado**. The **New Works Sampler** will acquaint listeners with the latest works composed for the opera stage. A separate session will feature two new bilingual operas for youth: *La Curandera* by Robert Xavier Rodríguez and *En Mis Palabras (In My Own Words)* by Roger Ames.

More information, including session descriptions and speakers, is available online now. Members of the opera field will register simultaneously for NPAC and *Opera Conference 2008*. Registrations received before March 31, 2008 will qualify for an Early Bird Discount. Register today at www.performingartsconvention.org!



Pittsburgh Opera's 2008 production of Dove's *Flight*. Photo by David Bachman for Pittsburgh Opera.

Flight

Jonathan Dove's *Flight* premiered at Glyndebourne in 1998 and has been performed more than 70 times in 11 productions around the world. American audiences have enjoyed performances at **Opera Theatre of Saint Louis**, **Boston Lyric Opera**, **Moore's Opera Center** (University of Houston) and, most recently, **Pittsburgh Opera**. The opera, with a libretto by April de Angelis, was inspired by the story of a refugee who lived at the Charles de Gaulle airport for 16 years. That character is at the center of this ensemble work, which also tells the stories of assorted travelers and airport regulars. When planes are grounded by a storm, they embark on unexpected journeys, separately and together.

The production pictured here featured members of the Pittsburgh Opera Center, including Audrey Elizabeth Luna (Controller), Dean Kokanos (Bill), Deborah Selig (Tina), Jonathan Beyer (Steward), Katherine Drago (Stewardess) and Liam Moran (Immigration Officer). They were joined by guest artists David Walker (Refugee), Myrna Paris (Older Woman), Craig Verm (Minskman) and Karin Mushegain (Minskwoman). James Lowe was the conductor; the production was directed by Kristine McIntyre and designed by Carol Bailey (sets), Toni West (costumes) and Allen Hahn (lighting).

“We wanted that 1960s ‘Come fly with us’ glamour, so we designed a space that hearkens back to the great public spaces of the era. We wanted to remind people of the time when the promise of travel was a great thing — the way they used to rush to the glass to watch planes take off as little kids.

For the past year I’ve been taking pictures of airports I fly through, and Carol [Bailey] has been doing the same thing. Her design is based on the best of the actual spaces that we found. There are some realistic things, like two double doors with crash bars. And we are using real airport chairs, which were removed (with permission) from the baggage claim area of the Pittsburgh International Airport.

However, the airport in this opera does not always correspond with what we know about airports. The space seems to be a waiting area for a lot of different departure gates, and yet there is an older woman waiting for an arrival in the same area. The steward and stewardess pass out hot towels — that doesn’t happen when you’re sitting in a lounge. The Minsk woman is flying eight or nine months pregnant, which is something that just isn’t done. And the control tower is part of the interior space.

We’re learning to trust the music, which allows us to suspend reality. There is the moment where the ladies knock the Refugee out with stones. They’re not large stones, but in the context of the music at that moment it seems plausible that they would knock him out. A baby is born onstage, which seems really clever and funny until you have to figure it out technically. But it’s amazing how well it works — the music takes you through.

Throughout the opera, there is a battle between the Refugee and the Controller, who is a sort of sky goddess. The Refugee has a kind of earthy magic, which allows him to lure everyone in. The Immigration Officer is the key to the conclusion, and he’s an interesting Wotan parallel — very powerful, but with a deep humanity underneath. I’m interested in exploring his relationship with the Controller — their confrontation reminds me of Brünnhilde saying to Wotan, ‘Dad, can’t you do something?’

Travel is about a lot of different things. Very quickly this piece stops being about airplanes and becomes about emotional flights and soaring emotions like love. We try to tap into that reality as much as we can.”

— Kristine McIntyre, Stage Director



Pittsburgh Opera's 2008 production of Dove's *Flight*. Photo by David Bachman for Pittsburgh Opera.

I think first about what the story needs — in this case, a sky element and an earth element. We talked about glass and metal and a space with a lot of options. There is a reflective surface in the windows that allows us to make the space very open and very light to begin, but when night comes, the walls reflect the space back at you. It was a simple way to change the space in a very dramatic way.

The controller’s area is somewhat mythic, because it’s not framed — you don’t see a cross piece or a roof portion. There is a moment where the controller steps through and goes out the window into space; you assume it’s a balcony, but you don’t really know. She just steps out into the storm.

There is another moment when the controller leaves the control booth and two characters go up to her space. In reading the libretto, I felt it would be more humanizing to see the ‘sky goddess’ come down to earth, rather than have her simply vanish and reappear, so we made the staircase prominent. Having her come down the stairs tells a different story about who she is and how she participates in the story. It also seemed more interesting if we could watch the other two characters sneak up there.

— Carol Bailey, Set Designer

Pittsburgh Opera’s 2008 production of Dove’s *Flight*. Photo by David Bachman for Pittsburgh Opera.



Generally, we shopped for the clothes, but we built a few things. When we looked at tropical shirts for Bill, they were all too tasteful— we wanted to go for something more silly or loud. One conversation we had was about whether Bill dressed himself or whether Tina, who is very controlling, would have chosen his wardrobe. In the end, we decided he did the shopping. His outfit is one part Ambercrombie, one part J. Crew, and then that shirt — it was something that he found on the back of the shelf, something that had been left there for good reason.

— Toni West, Costume Designer

Our intention with light was to have three vocabularies — earth and sky and something else. These vocabularies are established with color and also the direction the light is coming from — the quality and feeling of the light. The earth and sky are in conflict with one another, as are the Refugee and the Controller. There is also this third element that is neither — the messiness of the other characters, their human desires and ambitions and frustration. Even when the earth and sky are in conflict, they balance each other out. The humans and their baggage — literal and metaphorical — are the wild card. 🗺️

— Allen Hahn, Lighting Designer



Pittsburgh Opera's 2008 production of Dove's *Flight*. Photo by David Bachman for Pittsburgh Opera.

The Role of the Dramaturg in the Creation of New Works

The successful development of new work for the opera stage is a complex and often elusive process. Ask anyone who has contributed to the making of a new opera, and they will tell you there is no single formula that works every time. Composers, librettists, directors, designers and producers who collaborate on new work must always reinvent the process to suit the unique musical and dramatic needs of the piece they are creating.

Increasingly, composers and producers have called on the knowledge and experience of a dramaturg — a knowledgeable theater practitioner — to help give direction to the creative process. Whether one of the central members of the creative team (for example the director) or a freelance consultant, the dramaturg can be anyone who helps guide development by serving as advocate for the piece and catalyst for collaboration, as well as editor and sounding board for the authors.

Some opera companies in North America regularly employ dramaturgs to work

on new productions of established operas in the repertory. The dramaturg provides research on the historical and cultural context of the opera, helps in the translation or interpretation of words and music, and works with the director to find ways to transform a classic score into an original stage production. The development of new work is different, since the creators are engaged in an ongoing conversation about how to shape a work in progress. But in both cases the ultimate role of the dramaturg remains the same: to focus on the big picture, to think about the overall structure of the work and to make suggestions that will improve how the piece comes to life on stage.

“The dramaturg can ask the questions that no one else has asked because they are immersed in the process in a very particular way,” said Brian Quirt, president of the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas (LMDA), a service organization with over 500 members from a variety of theatrical and literary backgrounds. “Dramaturgs are different [from the other collaborators] in

that their responsibility isn’t to a single aspect of the creation. Whether dealing with text on the page, a musical played at the piano or in action on the stage in front of you, the dramaturg is there to respond to the ideas that are being expressed and to help find the next step in the process.”

Quirt works actively as a dramaturg in theater, dance and opera, and he values the creative energy generated by collaboration across the disciplines. “It’s great that we can begin a conversation between people who do this work in the opera world and the theater world,” said Quirt. “The work is similar — we’re both telling stories — but the tools that we use can be somewhat different... It’s the kind of crossover that can be particularly rich and productive.”

Composer Jake Heggie has built close collaborative relationships with artists who have extensive experience in the theater world, including stage directors and playwrights. For Heggie, it is important to have the entire creative team on board from the beginning of the

A workshop for Heggie’s *Three Decembers*, which premiered as *Last Acts* at Houston Grand Opera in February 2008. From left to right: Houston Grand Opera Assistant Conductor Eric Melear, Keith Phares as Charlie, Frederica von Stade as Madeline and Kristin Clayton as Beatrice. Photo by Terrence McCarthy.





process of writing a new opera, since each collaborator brings a different perspective on how to unlock the theatricality of the story. “As the composer, working from my perspective, you spend so much time alone, and it’s dangerous if you get too close to the show in the wrong way,” said Heggie. “You fall in love with one version of it, or you fall in love with one character, and you want to make sure that everyone gets their due. The dramaturg or director gives me perspective in the same way that the conductor gives me perspective on the score.”

In the case of the opera *Dead Man Walking*, the director Joe Mantello took on the role of dramaturg during development by asking questions that Heggie and librettist Terrence McNally had not considered, which led to further revisions to the structure of the first act. These changes addressed both large and small aspects of the storytelling, including what Heggie calls the “emotional thread” of the characters — how the background of their individual lives is told and connected to the dramatic action onstage. Other more detailed changes suggested by Mantello were geared toward the goal of clarity

for the audience on many levels: making sure the individual words of the libretto would be understood, and that the original set and costume designs would support the dramatic and musical arc of the story.

Heggie likes to use workshops to assess the dramaturgical effectiveness of his operas and to open up a dialogue that includes his creative collaborators and the singers who will interpret the opera’s characters. His latest opera, *Three Decembers*, premiered as *Last Acts* at Houston Grand Opera in February 2008, directed by Leonard Foglia. The opera, with a libretto by Gene Scheer adapted from a play by McNally, was given a full workshop in December 2007 by San Francisco Opera in preparation for the world premiere production. (The opera was commissioned by HGO in association with San Francisco Opera and Cal Performances.) For Heggie, the workshop was an important final opportunity to confirm that, in his words, “the journey of the piece was clear and balanced among the three characters.”

Workshops can also be important during earlier stages in the genesis of a new work. James Leverett, who teaches

dramaturgy and dramatic literature at the Yale School of Drama and the Columbia School of the Arts, has participated in a series of five development workshops with the composer Philip Glass and the director JoAnne Akalaitis, who are creating a new music-theater piece, *The Bacchae*, adapted from the ancient Greek play by Euripides. The work was co-commissioned by Stanford University and the Public Theater/New York Shakespeare Festival and is a hybrid of spoken theater and opera. The creators have used the workshops to look at one particular aspect of the storytelling: the role of the chorus and the many functions it serves in the stage production.

Leverett sees the workshop as an important time to refine the piece and increase its chances of reaching its intended audience. “One of the things that a dramaturg does is to serve as a kind of first audience as the work is coming into being, and that includes the work as it is being written,” said Leverett. “We often have to work in such curtailed circumstances — in terms of time and financial resources — that if you have this process by which a director and composer can have an ongoing sounding

By Andrew Eggert

“...when you are making something new, you are also looking back at older models and stories.”

board, you are actually increasing the work's likelihood of success on the stage.”

In the series of workshops for *The Bacchae*, Leverett has played an active dramaturgical role from the very beginning. He has supported the creators in the process of setting the text of the large chorus scenes to music, and his feedback has led to cuts and word changes in the translation. Because these text changes have been made on the spot, Glass has been able to respond by recomposing the music in small ways that accommodate the text and “make it sharper and sharper,” as Leverett said.

Important dramaturgical contributions can be made before composition even begins. The Canadian stage director and dramaturg Kelly Robinson has developed a specific type of workshop that he uses in the early stages of opera development to help composers and librettists reach consensus on the direction and meaning of the story they want to tell. Robinson will lead a workshop of actors who speak the text of the libretto. “With a group of actors, you can immediately change the interpretations, so the composer has a chance to actually hear the text spoken with intention by experts who can quickly change their approach. It becomes a very useful roundtable discussion about meanings,” said Robinson. He has conducted many such workshops at the Banff Centre in order to help composer-librettist teams deal with the dramatic reality of the spoken text before the first note of music has been composed.

In Germany, where extensive workshops of new operas are less common than in North America, some composers collaborate with freelance dramaturgs. The German composer Christian Jost has worked with the American dramaturg Minou Arjomand on several opera projects, including *The Arabian Night*

and *Hamlet*. For Jost, the collaborative relationship can be very personal, both an intellectual and emotional extension of his own creative work as a composer. “The process of creation is an intimate moment, so talking about it has to do with trust and the thoughts of the other person as well,” said Jost. “It is like performing chamber music: You think similarly and you feel similarly, and in the best case you have in the opposite person an extension of your own thoughts.”

Jost writes his own librettos or adapts existing texts, so his collaborations with Arjomand have focused on the range of source material and sometimes on the structure of the dramatic action. Arjomand has also assisted Jost in working out the unique compositional challenges of adapting sources from both German and English.

“Christian and I are similar, and we work so well together because we can appreciate the importance of sitting down and spending time with the book,” said Arjomand. Together they have worked on a range of source material, from texts by the German Romantic poet Friedrich Hölderlin for the choral opera *Angst*, to the writings of filmmaker Woody Allen for the one-act chamber opera *Death Knocks*.

Many North American opera producers are seeking to give composers, directors and dramaturgs adequate time for experimentation and discussion. Music-Theatre Group (MTG) is an organization dedicated specifically to supporting new works from the early stages of commission, through development, to fully-staged productions. Producing Director Diane Wondisford emphasizes that no two works have the same needs, and that creative teams must be given the necessary time and space before the work is rushed into rehearsal. “It’s

an exploration,” said Wondisford, who considers dramaturgy an important part of her role as creative producer. “We’re asking the ‘who, what, when, where, why’ questions about the material for the first time. One has to be acute and rigorous in the process, and it requires that all of the collaborators share the discoveries each step of the way.”

In fostering new work, Wondisford has also shown a commitment to bringing together creative teams of composers and writers who do not write primarily for the music-theater with experienced stage directors who assume the role of dramaturg during the development process. This was the case for the team behind the jazz-opera *Running Man*, the first of several stage collaborations for stage director Diane Paulus, the jazz composer Diedre Murray and the poet Cornelius Eady.

Music-Theatre Group and the MIT Media Lab are currently developing a new opera entitled *Death and the Powers*, which will have its world premiere in Monte Carlo before going on world tour, beginning with performances at Montclair State University and Chicago Opera Theater. Composer Tod Machover enlisted former U.S. poet laureate Robert Pinsky to write the libretto. The collaborative team also includes Randy Weiner, who co-authored the story with Pinsky, director Paulus, production designer Alex McDowell and a team of robot, content and technology designers from the MIT Media Lab. The project employs cutting-edge music and stage technology to tell the story of one man's life and his attempt to overcome death.

Even for an opera that is so avant-garde in musical language and stage technology, much of the dramaturgical inspiration behind the structure of *Death and the Powers* came from working with



theatrical texts of the past, in particular the plays *Oedipus at Colonus* and *King Lear*. “There are very few operas, even the great masterpieces, that are wholly original,” said Paulus. “I am a great believer that when you are making something new, you are also looking back at older models and stories. The hidden dramaturg in the room is the great theatrical literature of the past that you look at and consult.” Paulus emphasizes that the top priority in development is working out the right structure for the piece as a whole — the spine underneath the words, music and production technology.

The creators of *Death and the Powers* drew upon these classic plays to help forge complex relationships between characters. From the structure of *Oedipus at Colonus*, the team found a model for their meditation on death, and *King Lear* provided additional material for the way that the final chapter of life can bring out tensions within a family. Ultimately, the team found their own original perspective on these central themes, but only after a long period of experimentation in which these models provided important dramaturgical inspiration.

The future holds much potential for new directions in the creation and development of new works, especially

with collaborations at the institutional level between opera and theater producers. The Metropolitan Opera and Lincoln Center Theater are charting new territory in their partnership to co-commission new works. By working together, the organizations hope to provide more resources and flexibility to composers and playwrights working in various musical and dramatic styles. The collaboration was an initiative of the Met General Manager Peter Gelb and is being managed by the company dramaturg, Paul Cremo.

André Bishop, artistic director of Lincoln Center Theater, sees the partnership between companies — the first sustained collaboration of its kind between two constituents of Lincoln Center — as a joining of forces from which both sides stand to gain. From his extensive experience fostering new plays and musicals, Bishop hopes the new project will give operas more time to develop, even after they have been through an initial round of workshops. He cited the example of the Broadway musical, which traditionally has several weeks or even months of previews and out-of-town tryouts when the creators can make final changes before the official opening. “Part of the problem with new works in the opera world is that there isn’t a lot of rehearsal time,” said Bishop. “For something new there has got to be more

time.” The first collaboration is scheduled to debut in the 2011-2012 season, and new works will then be presented on an annual basis.

Cremo hopes the long-term support will give creative artists greater opportunity to experiment and refine their work both musically and theatrically. The proximity of the two organizations as neighbors at Lincoln Center will facilitate an ongoing development process that combines the best of both worlds. “We’re inventing something new here, to bring together both the theater-based model and the opera-based model,” said Cremo. “Opera boils down to essential emotions that are visceral, and the goal of new work is finding the most sophisticated way to focus those emotions both dramatically and musically.”

Whether on the intimate scale of a two-person collaboration, or for large-scale projects that bring together the resources of several arts organizations, the dramaturg can be both an active collaborator and a creative inspiration in helping to foster new work of lasting importance. 🌟

Andrew Eggert is a freelance stage director and dramaturg based in New York City.

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Danny Newman

A Personal Recollection

By William Mason



There was a full house for Danny's funeral in December, which would have pleased him greatly. He'd long grown accustomed to seeing every seat filled before a performance at Lyric Opera of Chicago, and he taught us all to expect nothing less.

It's difficult for me to remember a time when I didn't know Danny Newman. I first became acquainted with Danny when I sang in the Lyric Opera children's chorus in the very first season, in 1954. Because I had sung the shepherd boy in *Tosca*, Danny knew who I was. I would see him in subsequent years at performances and he would say hello, but I really got to know him well when I started working backstage at Lyric in 1962.

Danny was the quintessential old-school gentleman — charming, almost courtly. In all the years I knew him I never, not once, ever heard him utter a word of profanity. He was never nasty about anybody. He rarely said an unkind thing.

Although Danny lived in the world of show business, I don't think he was a frustrated performer — but he was a ham. Anyone who ever heard his booming "Ladies and Gentlemen!" announcements before performances knew that. In the office, we were treated to different facets of his artistry as he would pass through the halls. He often latched on to some operatic phrase, generally sung by a tenor. I still remember his sweetly intoning a falsetto "Poppea! Poppea!" or the more heroic declamation of "Laura! Laura!"

His talents weren't limited to opera. Danny was particularly fond of oration. He loved loudly declaiming polysyllabic Italian names. He quoted frequently from Shakespeare. My personal favorite was a speech that began, "Strrrrrrrrrrrriipp'd of my epaulets —" For the life of me, I can't remember the rest of it! I don't know where it came from, but I'll never forget Danny and his missing epaulets!

But opera was his passion. He enjoyed basses, baritones and sopranos, particularly Renata Tebaldi, but tenors — both operatic and cantorial — were really where it was at for Danny. Whenever a new tenor came to Lyric, Danny

I met Danny Newman in the spring of 1966 during the Metropolitan Opera National Company's tour of Chicago. Danny had been retained to market the company for the two-week run at the opera house and he proceeded to sell out the performances. This was the beginning of a long, warm friendship during which time I became a dedicated disciple of his theories. They remain sound today even in the face of modern marketers who claim they are outdated. They just require more imagination and work.

— Plato Karyanis

When I was general director of the Canadian Opera Company, the Canada Council engaged Danny to go across the country to promote subscriptions and help companies construct their programs. He was like an evangelist. He reminded me a bit of an old-fashioned barker at a tent show. Danny was the pioneer, and while Chicago was his home, he was willing to go to companies everywhere and work with the staff. I don't remember him to ever be condescending. He was always very positive and constructive and kind.

— Lotfi Mansouri



Danny Newman was one of the giants of the field of performing arts administration — and probably had as much influence on the successes of American orchestras and opera companies as any other single person in the second half of the 20th century. He not only had good ideas, but he had just the right personality to convey those ideas to multitudes and to motivate those same multitudes. He was tireless, inspirational, a true visionary. His passion and his energy and his dedication to the arts were legendary, and were a model for many of us who tried, however lamely, to follow in his footsteps.

— Henry Fogel,
League of American Orchestras

I met Danny Newman in 1969 when I went first to the Lyric Opera of Chicago for Mussorgsky's *Khovanshchina*. I was thrilled over the performance, but nothing could equal Danny's enthusiasm for what the opera was presenting. He was a force of nature, reveling in the wonders of what Lyric was producing. On other occasions when I came there and the opera was maybe not quite so amazing, he always found the special something that made it a great evening. When I was named general director in Seattle, in 1982, he was on the phone to me within a week talking about subscription, how to make it grow, how to sustain it, what to do. And his ideas were always sound. He loved opera; he particularly loved Lyric Opera of Chicago, and he adored singers. He was unforgettable.

— Speight Jenkins, Seattle Opera

would attend the dress rehearsal and make a stern but kind judgment. Richard Tucker was the standard by which all others were measured.

Danny's career and influence extended far beyond Lyric Opera of Chicago. Danny was a theatrical press agent, and was internationally known as the subscription audience-builder for theater, opera, symphony, ballet and performing arts centers. He was a child prodigy who began his performing arts involvement at age 14 as publicist and manager of a Chicago theater company. Over the years, Danny also worked as an actor, script writer, oratorio narrator, modern-dance impresario, classical-concert presenter, vaudeville, film, radio, television and legitimate-theater publicist, advance agent, playwright's agent, house manager, personal manager, general manager and producer.

Danny was born in Chicago on January 24, 1919, the son of wholesale tobacconist Jacob Newman and Rebecca Waldman Newman. As a youngster he sold school supplies, delivered groceries, worked at a soda fountain and sold Kosher hot dogs at the 1933 World's Fair. He attended elementary and secondary public schools and Wright Junior College for one year. His only academic degrees were honorary, but he was always extremely well read and well informed.

A decorated survivor of the Battle of the Bulge in World War II (who held a sharpshooter's rating), Danny won the Combat Infantry Badge, the Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Bronze Star and five Battle Stars. He fought in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany.

After World War II, Danny entered his prime as an arts promoter. He owned three motion-picture theaters in Chicago's pre-television era, and was press agent for many film projects. From 1946 through 1951, Danny co-produced the pioneer celebrity radio show, "Famous Names," hosted by the young Mike Wallace. In 1948, he became English-language publicity director for Maurice Schwartz's New York-based American Yiddish Art Theatre on tour, and throughout the 1960s he was executive producer for the Chicago Yiddish Theatre Association. In the 1950s, Danny promoted tours to Chicago by major ballet and opera companies. He staged a publicity coup for a touring production of *Porgy and Bess* starring William Warfield, Leontyne Price and Cab Calloway at the Civic Opera House in 1952, giving away a week's worth of tickets so the remaining three weeks would sell out on word of mouth — which they did.

Beginning in 1954, Danny's home base was Lyric Opera of Chicago, where he was a founding staff member. As Lyric's public relations counsel, he was responsible for both subscription marketing and media relations from 1954 through 1987. He launched Lyric's first subscription campaign in 1955 and founded the company's now-legendary "subscriber army." In 1988, Danny ceased his marketing responsibilities for Lyric, but he continued his storied "press agency" for the company through 2001. On the occasion of his 88th birthday on January 24,

2007, Lyric Opera of Chicago named its box office for Danny and inscribed his famous motto, "Subscribe Now!", on the box-office wall.

Yet Lyric Opera shared Danny Newman with the world. For 20 years Danny was the indefatigable "striking arm" for the Ford Foundation's efforts to build arts audiences throughout America. And, for 24 years, he similarly represented the Canada Council. Danny traveled extensively throughout North America, creating subscription programs for more than 500 professional performing arts entities.

The late W. McNeil Lowry, founder of the Ford Foundation's Division of Humanities and the Arts, recruited Danny for what became an historic success in building subscription audiences. Lowry stated that "Danny has done more for performing arts in this country than 10 foundations. His extraordinary achievements will be written in the history of the performing arts of our time!"

In the 1960s, '70s and '80s, Danny devised and widely promulgated his then-revolutionary principles of Dynamic Subscription Promotion. He generated an unprecedented proliferation of nonprofit professional producing organizations in all of the performing arts disciplines. This opened up large sources of new funding and detonated an explosion in the construction of new presenting venues. He created abundant new career opportunities and livelihoods for thousands of artists and arts administrators. His 1977 book, *Subscribe Now!*, the bible of arts trustees and marketers, remains in use in 31 countries and was reprinted in 10 editions by 1997. He brought his concepts to countless arts projects all over the world.

Danny received a knighthood from the Italian government and the Gold Baton of the American Symphony Orchestra League. He was honored by the Canadian government, the League of Resident Theatres, Theatre Communications Group, OPERA America, the National Theatre Conference, the Association of Canadian Orchestras and the British Society of Arts Publicists, among others. He received *Arts Management Magazine's* Career Service Award and was the first recipient of the Sidney R. Yates Arts Advocacy Award. The Vancouver Symphony commissioned a new symphonic work, Robert Farnon's *Canadian Rhapsody*, in Danny's honor. A consortium of 150 Boston arts organizations named him its "Arts Angel."

DePaul University and Roosevelt University awarded Danny honorary degrees. Dominican University presented him with its BRAVO Award. The Illinois State Senate officially spoke of his "shaping influence on the performing arts here and abroad." In 2000, Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley convened the

Danny Newman's contributions both to the field of opera and to the greater arts community are immeasurable. His once revolutionary ideas about marketing are now accepted tenets of the business, and his work as a founding staff member of the Lyric Opera of Chicago helped build the organization into the world-class company it is today. Danny's book *Subscribe Now!* was a seminal work for virtually every arts administrator I know, including myself — it provided the blueprint for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis's very first subscription campaign, which I developed in 1978 as a box office consultant. Danny's infectious energy, boundless enthusiasm and evangelistic fervor will be greatly missed, and — for every subscription dollar earned in our companies — we should be very thankful for his incredible legacy.

— Charles MacKay,
Opera Theatre of Saint Louis

In the late 1970s, a man named Fred Vogel was the executive director of an organization called FEDAPT (Foundation for the Extension and Development of the American Professional Theatre) — a national service agency for emerging regional theaters. That organization convened a national conference where Danny Newman — the avatar, the firebrand, the crusader for subscriptions — was invited to participate. It is difficult for professionals working today to envision a time when proposing a subscription series was an act of heresy. It took the golden oracle tones of a short man from Chicago with a grand passion to inspire the participants to seek out in their own respective organizations the resources to make a subscription series a reality. His *cri de coeur* was heard by all who had the privilege of listening to his impassioned speech.

— Joseph V. Melillo,
Brooklyn Academy of Music



Danny always had tireless energy and enthusiasm for the mere thought of selling subscriptions. Once on a trip to Toronto he burst into my office and exclaimed, “Margaret! I looked out of the window of my hotel this morning and saw all these commuters streaming out of the train station across the street and I thought: ‘Look at all those people who could become subscribers to the Canadian Opera Company!’”

Danny always preached good, solid principles of good salesmanship: simple, easy to understand sales propositions (one opera free), alluring and passionate copy about the product, messages in large type that made the desired action perfectly clear (buy now and save!), strong discounts where needed and wide distribution of the sales materials. He well understood the value of elbow grease and the huge impact of direct personal salesmanship, whether face to face, on the phone or — in a pinch — through personalized letter writing campaigns.

Companies without subscribers have trouble identifying potential donors. This Danny understood perfectly; he really cherished the direct relationships we can have with our customers. Because of him, I learned to meet my buyers live and in person, to seek them out in the house at performances, to give them individualized attention. I learned so much from him over the years, I get tearful just thinking about things he said (and wrote) which continue to inform my thinking about good arts marketing.

— Margaret Genovese,
Genovese, Vanderhoof & Associates



full City Council to express its “gratitude and admiration” for Danny’s 67 years of cultural contributions. Danny received Lifetime Achievement Awards from the American Federation of Musicians and the 2004 New York Arts & Business Council’s Arts Marketing Conference.

Danny was blessed with two wonderful wives. In 1948 in London, he married Dina Halpern, the celebrated actress of the Yiddish stage and screen. Their 40-year marriage ended with Dina’s death from cancer in 1989. In 1994, Danny married the extraordinary Alyce Katz of Lincolnwood, Illinois, which he referred to as “living in the country.” Danny lived in Lincolnwood until his death on December 1, 2007. He is survived by Alyce and his stepsons, Paul André Katz and Leonard Katz.

He never learned to drive a car but he was a lifelong bicyclist. He remained computer-unsophisticated to the end, utilizing his beloved manual typewriter with his two index fingers. When artists were ill at Lyric Opera and had to be replaced by their understudies, Danny ignored modern technology and appeared — unamplified and in clarion voice — to make the announcements for more than half a century in the 3,500-seat Civic Opera House.

Danny’s last great triumph came in December 2006 — the publication of his long-awaited book, *Tales of a Theatrical Guru*. It includes more than 30 essays about fascinating personalities with whom he’d worked closely over the more than seven decades of his truly spectacular career.

I’m reminded of the adage, “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for life.” Danny taught the arts how to fish, and we in the arts will be forever indebted to him. For his warm, endearing personal qualities, he’ll be missed and remembered fondly by all who knew him. 🍷

General director of Lyric Opera of Chicago since 1997, William Mason has been with the company for more than three decades.

Photo credits: Page 29: Danny Newman by Xavier Cugat. Page 30: Danny Newman and William Mason. Photo courtesy of Lyric Opera of Chicago. Page 31: Danny Newman. Photo by M. Spencer Green and courtesy of Lyric Opera of Chicago. Page 32: Danny Newman. Photo by M. Spencer Green and courtesy of Lyric Opera of Chicago. Page 33: Plácido Domingo and Danny Newman. Photo courtesy of Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Danny was a legend. He changed the face of the arts all over the continent. He changed individual lives, too. Mine was one of them.

I knew Danny for more than 30 years. He was my teacher, mentor, friend and colleague.

It all started in Vancouver, Canada. I came out of the advertising business to take over marketing and PR for the Vancouver Symphony. It was clear that the one person I had to meet was Danny Newman, the audience development guru — author of *Subscribe Now!*, the bible for arts marketers. Through the Canada Council, a visit with Danny was arranged. He consulted for VSO for close to 10 years, and together we built what was, at the time, the largest subscription audience for any orchestra in the world — close to 40,000 “saintly season subscribers.”

What I learned from Danny was that being the person responsible for filling the seats for an arts organization wasn't just a job — it wasn't even just a career — it was a CALLING, to be carried out with a missionary's zeal! I was hooked — and Danny Newman was responsible!

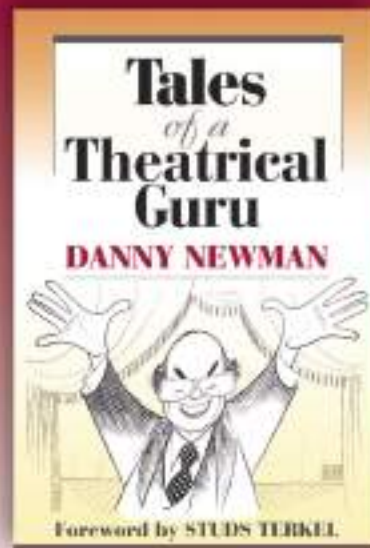
Once you saw Danny in action — the way he could inspire boards, administrations and would-be ace marketers — you understood how he could revolutionize an industry as he did. He was amazing. And he trained an entire generation of marketers like me to carry on his work.

The last time I saw Danny was at the hospital. By then he was very ill but we had a wonderful visit. Before I left, he tried to cheer me up. “Don't worry kid,” he said. “We'll get out of this mess yet.”

You see, Danny Newman always thought of himself as immortal.

And for those of us who love him, he is.

In 1988, Susan Mathieson Mayer succeeded Danny Newman as director of marketing and communications for Lyric Opera. To the great delight of Mr. Newman, she sold out the entire Lyric season for 17 consecutive years.



“The book . . . takes us from Laurel and Hardy to Luciano Pavarotti, with dozens of anecdotes dropped in between: gambling with Berle, watching Frank Sinatra bounce a loudmouth from the old Chez Paree, squiring producer Samuel Goldwyn around. But you need to read it for yourself.”
—*Chicago Tribune Magazine*

“Many of the events that are now ‘legendary’ in American operatic life are precisely that because Danny Newman knew an opportunity when he saw it and craftily arranged for photographers and journalists to be around at the right time. This book explains what was going through Mr. Newman’s mind as he supervised the press coverage of, for example, Luciano Pavarotti’s dismissal from the Lyric Opera and Maria Callas’ being served with a subpoena backstage. These are rich anecdotes told with considerable charm, warmth, and humor by one of American culture’s most lively figures.”
—James Wierzbicki, associate professor of musicology, University of Michigan

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Jill Anna Ponasik in Nautilus Music Theatre's commissioned production of Johnson's *Loss of Breath*. Photo by Ben Krywosz.

Alternative Paths for Singer Training

By Jocelyn Dueck

Another opening, another show! For most opera companies, regularly-scheduled mainstage performances are at the center of their activity. The rhythm of production influences all company operations, from marketing and fundraising cycles to the training and performing opportunities available for young singers. For companies that focus on new work, however, a regular mainstage season — with a set number of full productions in a fairly fixed schedule — is emphatically not the *raison d'être*. Instead, the public events offered in any given season vary according to the needs of the creative artists. With their orientation toward process rather than production, these companies provide a very different environment for singer training.

Nautilus Music-Theater (Minneapolis) usually presents one full production each year, but new music audiences can attend “Rough Cuts” — a series of presentations of new and developing works by artists from around the country — the first Monday and Tuesday of each month. At the same time, the company runs the Wesley Balk Opera/Music-Theater Institute, a 30-year-old program for directors, singers and coaches. Artistic Director Ben Krywosz describes Nautilus: “While most theaters are in the business of mounting shows... what we do is about expanding artists’ ability to be communicative.” Wesley Balk Institute alumna and OPERA America Artistic Services Manager Megan Young agrees: “It’s not about filling opera house seats, it’s about cultivating artists.”

Wesley Balk (1932-2003) was dedicated to nurturing the complete singer-actor. Krywosz, who started out doing psychedelic light shows in the 1960s, stood through his first operas — Wagner’s *Ring Cycle* — at the San Francisco Opera in 1972; over the next few seasons he was completely seduced by live performance. After reading two chapters of Balk’s book, *The Complete Singer-Actor* (1977), Krywosz wrote the author a letter, the beginning of a lifelong commitment to Balk’s philosophy. Krywosz began working with Balk under the auspices of a National Opera Institute directing internship, and in 1983 joined the staff of the Wesley Balk Institute.

“Wesley’s gift was his ability to observe, analyze, dissect and re-integrate the singer’s five performing tools — the mind, the emotions, the voice, the face and the body,” says Krywosz. At the Wesley Balk Institute, performers, directors and coaches meet on the Augsburg College Campus for a three-week summer program. A typical day begins with a group class team-taught by Institute staff exploring the basics of integrated singing-acting, and continues with small groups to study specific techniques such as vocal play, musical improvisation, collaborative principles, song and aria interpretation, etc. Scene rehearsals include material drawn from opera, musical theater and new music-theater repertoire. Soprano Jennifer Baldwin Peden, star of the Tony-award winning Theatre de la Jeune Lune and Nautilus veteran, states, “I can’t count the number of singers who find a more expressive, beautiful tone by working on a seemingly unrelated exercise. Who knew that the movement of eyebrows could potentially affect the way you sing a coloratura passage?”

Mezzo-soprano Jill Anna Ponasik (participant 2006) writes: “My experience made me notice how I was functioning — or not functioning — as a whole person. I began to open up to what Wesley might have referred to as “the freeing,” or that state of trusting yourself and your voice enough to dance freely between the various elements of singing-acting. I have never been so engaged as an artist, or so enthusiastic about what I do as I am right now, today. That is, at least in some part, thanks to my time at the Institute.” Nautilus commissioned Ponasik’s production of *Loss of Breath* (Ralph Johnson and Bill Corbett), the top-selling show at the Minnesota Fringe Festival in 2007.

Soprano Eleanor Taylor (participant 1996, 2001) sang in the Nautilus Composer-Librettist Studio sponsored by New Dramatists in New York City in February 2005. “I knew that any workshop run by Ben Krywosz was going to be an opportunity for those involved to stretch themselves — a work might require singing in a variety of styles, there might be scenes of dialogue (I recall having to attempt an Irish accent on the spot!), not to mention 25 sets of eyes and ears waiting to see what you did with it!” Taylor co-founded the new-music duo Two Sides Sounding, won an American Composers Forum grant in 2007 and has given numerous premieres and readings of contemporary music-theater works.

Each season, Brooklyn's **American Opera Projects (AOP)** selects six singers and six composers for its Composers & the Voice Workshop Series, which includes 11 workshop sessions between November and May. In addition, the company has a full schedule of readings, workshops and productions of works-in-progress. While a number of AOP productions grow out of projects begun in Composers & the Voice, the company also provides opportunities for more established composers to "try out" works in development: In January, the company produced a reading of *Séance on a Wet Afternoon*, a new opera by Stephen Schwartz, starring soprano Lauren Flanigan.

Inspired by her work with AOP artists, Flanigan recently worked with the company to create a new series of master classes for singers, "Creating the Dramatic Character for Opera." Flanigan developed the eight-class series with members of the SITI Company, an ensemble-based theater company founded by Anne Bogart and Tadashi Suzuki. Flanigan had observed that the young singers who participated in AOP's readings seemed hungry for more opportunities to create dynamic work and engage with other artists, and this struck a chord with her: "I was never in a young artist program. I met Anne Bogart more than 20 years ago and had the benefit of this rigorous training that enabled me to do interesting work in small venues that got written about. These singers need to figure out how to create their own work and get noticed. The class is a way of empowering them to think outside the box and make something unique out of every kind of opportunity."

Flanigan worked with Ellen Lauren and Barney O'Hanlon, two senior members of SITI Company, to plan and teach the class. The first portion of each class focuses on Viewpoints training, a series of exercises that strengthen the actor's awareness of his relationship to time and space. As each class progresses, singers continue to work with Viewpoints as they sing the song or aria of their choice. "There are a million different ways to perform any action," says Flanigan. "I'm asking them to start by finding seven. Once you learn to think that way, eight and nine and ten quickly follow."

Although Viewpoints is a training method that grew out of the post-modern dance world, Flanigan believes it can benefit all singers, even those whose careers are focused on older repertoire. "When you're in the school of communication in a modern university, you're not working with a kinescope, you're working with the most up-to-date digital technology. In 2008, opera singers need to be able to work with filmmakers and choreographers. We need a larger, more dynamic vocabulary. Once you understand Viewpoints, it allows you to cross into all kinds of production styles, to figure out how to do your thing inside this other thing. It is an appropriate way of working on a role by Gluck or by Philip Glass."

John Hess and Dáirine Ní Mheadhra founded Toronto's **Queen of Puddings Music Theatre Company** out of a desire to create a performer-based physical singing theater aesthetic and to develop and produce original Canadian chamber opera. Since its founding in 1995, the company has produced six new operas, which have played in Toronto, Halifax and Edmonton, as well as Covent Garden's Linbury Theatre.

The company provides singer training through "Songs and Scenes," a summer program that teaches skills for contemporary repertoire, art song and opera scenes. Training at "Songs and Scenes" has included African drumming and dancing, as well as South Indian classical singing. The company is currently developing a new opera by James Rolfe entitled *Inês*, which is inspired by Portuguese Fado music. As part of the development process, members of "Songs and Scenes" are working with the opera's composer and a fadista from Toronto's Portuguese community.

Mireille Lebel (participant 2003), a current member of the Atelier Lyrique of the Opéra de Montréal and twice-laureate of the Jeunes Ambassadeurs Lyrique competition, says, "It was the most incredible summer program I've ever done... it kicked off my professional training and inspired me to keep going... the Indian singing and tabla playing engaged my sense of rhythm with modern music as well as the long lines of Mozart. Feeling the sub-beats beneath me helped give my phrases life and direction."

2003 participant Catherin Carew echoes Lebel's sentiments, adding, "The thing that struck me most working with Queen of Puddings was the large amount of respect and consideration given to the participant... the confidence and self-assurance I gained working with Puddings has been with me ever since."



Krisztina Szabo and Alexander Dobson in *The Queen of Puddings* Music Theatre production of Ana Sokolovic's *The Midnight Court*. Photo by Greig Reekie.



OperaWorks alumna Jessica Rivera stars as Kitty Oppenheimer in Lyric Opera of Chicago's 2007-2008 production of John Adams's *Doctor Atomic*, directed by Peter Sellars. Photo by Dan Rest/Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Ann Baltz worked with Wesley Balk over a period of 10 years including several years as music director of the Wesley Balk Institute, and in 1987 she founded her own company, **OperaWorks**. While the company has staged a number of new works (including the world premiere of *Tony Caruso's Final Broadcast* by composer Paul Salerni and librettist Dana Gioia in January 2008) its primary focus is singer training. "OperaWorks was founded as an alternative to the traditional young artist programs," says Baltz. "We are process-oriented in a predominantly product-oriented field. Our mission is to train every aspect of the performing artist — musically, dramatically, physically, emotionally, psychologically and as savvy businesspersons. About 10 years ago, our core curriculum expanded beyond acting, coachings, improvisation and Alexander Technique to include visualization, daily yoga, musical-dramatic analysis, conducting, physical theater, psychology of the artist, translation classes, mock auditions, finances for singers, marketing for singers and multi-year career plans." Each summer, OperaWorks programs culminate in original works created through musical and physical improvisations, which allow singers to integrate the new skills they have learned.

Countertenor Randall Scotting (participant 2003) credits OperaWorks as being a springboard for his professional career. "I continue to strive for the openness and connection to something honest and pure that I felt was in my singing during OperaWorks." Scotting, whose credits include New York City Opera, the Juilliard Opera Center and Festival dei Due Mondi in Italy, also has to his credit commissions of new works with the groups Cantori and FusionChamber, the latter of which he founded. Jessica Rivera, another OperaWorks alumna, recently received accolades for her performance as Kitty Oppenheimer in John Adams's *Doctor Atomic* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. She also premiered the role of Nuria in Osvaldo Golijov's *Ainadamar* at The Santa Fe Opera and continues to perform it throughout the world.

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Curtis Bryant • (770) 964-3063 • cbmusic@bellsouth.net • www.curtisbryantmusic.com
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There are many paths to a successful singing career, and the development of an artist is as tricky and individual as the development of a new opera. For some singers, the ideal “next step” after academic training is a program that lets them experience the rhythms of rehearsal and performance at a typical opera company. For others, the opportunity to step back and explore different approaches to performance — whether as a complement to a more traditional training program or as an alternative — can be invaluable.

“The opera field knows that it must train singer-actors to ‘do it all,’ but it doesn’t really agree on how to do that. Of course, it’s an impossible task,” smiles Krywosz, “but that doesn’t keep us from trying.”

Pianist Jocelyn Dueck is a founding member of Two Sides Sounding and music director for Ensemble Youkali, a New York City-based opera collective. A frequent performer of new works, she has debuted works by Lisa Bielawa, Corey Dargel, Louis Durey, Judd Greenstein, Daron Hagen, Edie Hill and Gilda Lyons.

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Recognizing Opera's Trustee Leaders

By Kelley Rourke



Tony Boutté performs selections from Douglas J. Cuomo's *Arjuna's Dilemma* at the dinner celebrating the National Opera Trustee Recognition Program's honorees, pictured at right.



Jane Robinson (Florida Grand Opera), G. Whitney Smith (Fort Worth Opera), Betty W. Healey (Opera Birmingham) and Sally Levy (Opera Theatre of Saint Louis). Photos by Jon Simon.

Music, rhetoric, visual art — the experimental art form conjured by a group of Italian scholars over 400 years ago has been a collaborative endeavor from the beginning. Today, it takes a staggering number of personnel to make an opera production truly sing: from sopranos to violists, riggers to wigmakers. The ongoing success of an opera company also relies on the collective efforts of individuals devoted to fundraising, marketing, financial management and other crucial administrative tasks. The volunteer leadership of an opera company — its board of trustees — plays a vital role in the successful management of a company's operations.

In January 2008, with the generous support of U.S. Trust, Bank of America Private Wealth Management and the steady

leadership of Frayda Lindemann, OPERA America launched the National Opera Trustee Recognition Program to honor trustees for exemplary leadership, support and audience-building efforts on behalf of their opera companies and the communities they serve.

“It was an honor to be appointed the first chair,” said Lindemann, who is vice president of the **Metropolitan Opera** and member of the boards of OPERA America and **Palm Beach Opera**. “We want to encourage the relationship between the professional staff and the trustees, because the trustees really do a great service for their opera companies. First of all, they help to secure the resources needed to sustain the companies, and we cannot produce opera without resources. They act as advocates for the genre, inviting friends

and relatives, making business contacts for the opera company and generally stimulating interest for the performances. They also have to oversee the financial and legal well-being of the companies. This has become more and more important because the government has become increasingly interested not only in the for-profit, but also the nonprofit realm. We have to be sure that everything is done correctly. Trustees serve to monitor the overall performance of the opera company. Many have years of performing experience, and their ears and eyes are very well cultivated.”

As the service organization for opera, OPERA America has long supported and promoted the service of trustees. Beginning in the 1990s, the Trustee-Volunteer Resource Center provided ongoing professional development through a series of newsletters and bulletins. President and CEO Marc A. Scorca travels across the country to meet with boards and offer strategic planning counsel and other customized consulting services. In 2005, OPERA America launched the National Trustee Council, which acts in an advisory capacity to help define governance issues facing opera companies nationwide, to identify and share best practices and to shape OPERA America’s programmatic response to pressing governance issues. The Council meets annually and shares resources through mail and e-mail correspondence. Also in 2005, OPERA America welcomed the first opera company trustee to its board: Barbara Leirvik (**Cleveland Opera**). She has since been joined by Lindemann and Louise Gaylord (**Opera Santa Barbara**).

The National Trustee Council provided invaluable counsel as OPERA America designed the National Opera Trustee Recognition Award. Led by Lindemann, members of the Council including Patricia Compton, Fred Good (**Cincinnati Opera, Dayton Opera**), Meredith Hathorn Penick (**New Orleans Opera Association**) and Ruth Orth (**Pensacola Opera**) reviewed the nominations, selecting four honorees who represent companies of differing sizes. It was a daunting task, as each nomination made a strong case for a very individual relationship between a trustee and his or her opera company. “It was very, very difficult,” said Lindemann, “Every application seemed compelling.” After much deliberation, the committee selected **Betty W. Healey (Opera Birmingham)**, **Sally Levy (Opera Theatre of Saint Louis)**, **Jane Robinson (Florida Grand Opera)** and **G. Whitney Smith (Fort Worth Opera)**.

Each of the honored trustees has provided extraordinary financial support to his or her opera company. Healey is the single most generous donor in Opera Birmingham’s history, and has personally underwritten nine productions to date. Sally Levy most recently made a leadership gift that launched the effort to design and build a new 25,000 square foot facility, completed in 2006, that consolidates Opera Theatre of Saint

Louis’s administrative, rehearsal and community outreach activities. Levy has also provided support for the John D. Levy Master Classes, public workshops for the company’s young artists. Jane Robinson and G. Whitney Smith have been tireless fundraisers for their respective companies, setting a strong example by hosting events in their homes and working with development staff to secure additional major gifts.

In selecting the first recipients of the National Opera Trustee Recognition Award, the committee considered not only financial support, but also demonstration of consistent and informed leadership, responsiveness to specific opera company needs and goals, involvement with audience development efforts and advocacy on behalf of the company in the public and private sectors.

Many of the nominees have a long record of service with their opera companies: Levy has been an integral member of Opera Theatre of Saint Louis family since the company’s founding in 1976. “We were just hoping to get through the first year. We cleaned apartments and furnished them, and we picked up singers at the airport. It was very personal, and we got to know the singers, many of whom have gone on to wonderful careers. Little did we dream that Opera Theatre would be the success it has become.” Healey was one of the founding members of the Birmingham Opera Guild and subsequently served as its president. “Several of us wanted to form a supporting group for the opera,” she said. “We invited our friends, and they invited their friends.” Robinson became a Young Patroness of the Opera at what was then Greater Miami Opera in the late 1960s and been involved with the company every since.

Such long-term volunteer support is tremendously important to companies across the country. “Opera Theatre has always had a wonderful and active volunteer base,” said Levy. “It is one of our great strengths. Volunteers do everything from fundraising to ushering at rehearsals.”

Healey, too, has provided exemplary volunteer service. According to General Director John D. Jones, “If you attend any Guild or Opera function in Birmingham, you’re likely to see Betty Healey behind the scenes — bagging purchases in the Opera Shop, getting more cookies on the table or bringing a box full of artwork for a silent auction. And where else would Violetta’s camellias come from other than Betty’s front yard? Her enthusiasm for the company is unmatched; she is known as the “opera lady” for her advocacy in the community.”

Robinson, who now serves as president of Florida Grand Opera, estimates she spends at least three days a week in the company’s offices in Miami and Fort Lauderdale, and says: “When I’m not there, I’m working from home or meeting with donors.” She says the office of president is a culmination of

a life-long journey: “I have the ability to use my professional background in marketing and business at a time of life when most people are retiring. I get to work with young people who respect what I know — and I learn from them, too, of course. I feel that in retirement I’m working harder than ever.”

Distinguished service is not always measured over multiple decades. Smith’s involvement in Fort Worth Opera began in 1998, when the company was at a critical juncture. The opera was on the brink of financial failure and had lost a number of major supporters. “I read about the problems and was really troubled. I was born and raised here, and I care deeply about the art form,” said Smith. As a respected local business consultant, he was asked to observe the workings of the company by serving on the finance committee. “I found myself deeply immersed in the company, and I never looked back. I recognized that something needed to be done, and that perhaps they were right to bring in an outsider who had no vested interest.”

Smith accepted the position of president of the board in 1999, and moved quickly to streamline the executive committee and create meaningful new committees including strategic planning, community involvement, education and marketing. “Egos can really get in the way of doing what is best for the company. I insisted that you had to check your ego at the door. We had to be all about trying to salvage the company, about turning things around.”

“Nonprofit businesses are businesses nonetheless,” continued Smith. “It is our responsibility to the community to run them efficiently and professionally, or they will cease to exist. It is incredibly important that we do not lose sight of that responsibility, be it a performing arts organization or a health care agency. It is the responsibility of the board to remain mindful of the mission of the organization and treat the finances with care.”

Companies rely on the active leadership of trustees as they work to fulfill their mission. The winners of the inaugural National Opera Trustee Recognition Award take this responsibility seriously — but they are quick to note that their tireless work on behalf of opera is hardly a burden.

“Anybody who becomes involved in an opera company is very lucky. It is a wonderful part of my life,” said Levy. “Be as personally involved as you possibly can on an everyday basis. Especially if a company is brand new, there is a lot you can do. Be on committees, and be active in their work. Do more than just appear at meetings. You will get more out of it than you put into it.”

“It is such a pleasure to have been recognized,” said Robinson. “An award like this makes me want to do even more. It inspires me to inspire others. I would do it anyway, but it is very rewarding to be recognized for something I enjoy so much.”



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A Quarter-Century of Funding New Works

By Megan Young

Some may think that spending money is the surest way to find happiness. OPERA America, conversely, finds the greatest joy comes from giving money away. Since 1983, OPERA America has awarded over \$10 million for the express purpose of encouraging the creation and subsequent production of new opera and music-theater works. *The Opera Fund*, a permanent endowment from which OPERA America directly supports the creation, presentation and enjoyment of new and North American opera, was created with the benefit of OPERA America's experience from three previous re-granting programs.

OPERA America's first effort to fund new works was *Opera for the 80s and Beyond* (OFTEAB), a response to the low level of activity among opera companies in producing new work. With lead funding from The Rockefeller and Ford Foundations, OPERA America was able to award nearly \$3 million to member companies through OFTEAB. Grants included exploration fellowships, which covered some of the costs incurred when company representatives traveled to see new works and meet creators and performers; team-building grants,

which enabled opera companies to hold meetings with creative and producing artists; development grants, which supported some of the costs of creating enough of the proposed work for the company to determine whether to produce it, as well as workshop costs; and commissioning/production grants, which contributed substantially to the costs of actually producing the work.

Notable works funded by OFTEAB include John Adams and Alice Goodman's *Nixon in China* (Houston Grand Opera) and Philip Glass and Allen Ginsberg's *Hydrogen Jukebox* (Spoleto Festival).

The Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest *Opera for a New America* (LWRD/OFANA) program built on experience from OFTEAB to provide technical and financial support to OPERA America Professional Company Members and their partners as they produced new work. The goals of the program included developing new audiences for opera, creating more diverse audiences for opera, deepening audiences' understanding and appreciation of new work and increasing the participation of audiences in a company's activities. The project focused on the unique

relationship between audience development and new or existing North American works to advance these goals.

Through OFANA, OPERA America awarded nearly \$4 million to projects including *Dangerous Liaisons* by Conrad Susa and Philip Littell (San Francisco Opera); *Emmeline* by Tobias Picker and J.D. McClatchy (The Santa Fe Opera); *Grendel* by Elliot Goldenthal, J.D. McClatchy and Julie Taymor (Los Angeles Music Center Opera); *Harvey Milk* by Stewart Wallace and Michael Korie; and *Orphée* by Philip Glass.

As a result of OFTEAB and OFANA, OPERA America created an environment in which more and more companies made commissioning part of their regular activity. However, because companies were not particularly interested in presenting second or third productions of works that had premiered elsewhere, new works quickly disappeared. With the help of the Pew Charitable Trusts, OPERA America created *The Next Stage* to increase the number of North American works in the standard repertory by providing financial support — a total of more than \$1 million — to professional



Nancy Gustafson as Florencia Grimaldi in Seattle Opera's 2005 production of Catán's *Florencia en el Amazonas*. Photo by Rozarii Lynch.

opera companies for productions of existing, under-performed works by North American creative artists.

Among the numerous works that received support from *The Next Stage*, the most prominent include Philip Glass's *Akhmaten*, Shulamit Ran and Charles Kondek's *Between Two Worlds* (Lyric Opera of Chicago), Daniel Catán and Marcela Fuentes-Berain's *Florencia en el Amazonas* (Houston Grand Opera), Virgil Thomson and Gertrude Stein's *The Mother of Us All* (Glimmerglass Opera) and Martin David Levy and William Henry Butler's *Mourning Becomes Electra* (Lyric Opera of Chicago).

The Opera Fund was launched in 2000 with the assistance of a cooperative agreement from the National Endowment for the Arts and leadership support from the Helen F. Whitaker Fund. Established in conjunction with Opera.ca's **Canadian Opera Creation Fund (COCF)**, *The Opera Fund* represents the next logical step after nearly two decades of supporting new works. While previous programs were developed around limited-term contributions from foundations, *Opera Fund/COCF* awards are supported

by a permanent and growing endowment. The programs represent an ongoing effort to enhance the quality, quantity and creativity of new opera and music-theater. The goals are to enhance the vitality of opera and music-theater through the creation and production of new works, to encourage creative artists who will write and interpret new works and to develop a deeper and broader appreciation on the part of the general public for opera and music-theater companies. To date, awards from *The Opera Fund/COCF* total \$2.7 million.

This year, OPERA America and Opera.ca accepted applications within the Repertoire Development and Production categories of *The Opera Fund* and the *Canadian Opera Creation Fund*. Repertoire Development Awards provide financial assistance for companies' endeavors in assessing and refining a work in progress or revising a work after its recent premiere. Production Awards provide a portion of the direct costs of producing a work. They are intended to reduce the financial risk of a new work and are designed to offset costs above and beyond the production of a work from the standard repertoire. The

panel reviewed proposed projects in the context of established program criteria:

- Project merit: the excellence of the proposed project.
- Quality and distinction in concept and planning: the degree to which applicants have effectively designed or employed an appropriate and thorough planning process to guide the proposed activity.
- Artistic merit: the quality and distinction of the opera or music-theater work associated with the project.
- Robust partnership/collaboration (if applicable): the ways project participants have been or will be involved in the design, planning and implementation of the proposed activities.
- Evaluation: plans for assessing the impact of the activity beyond ticket sales and reviews.
- Organizational resources: the degree to which the applicant organization is able to carry out the proposed process and/or activity.

2008 AWARDS

The Opera Fund panelists came from all facets of opera; their varied experiences and areas of expertise made for lively discussion and thorough consideration of proposals. The U.S. panel included: Susan Carlyle, founder, The Carlyle Fund; Rinde Eckert, writer/director/composer/performer; Daron Hagen, composer; Wendy Hill, soprano; and Lowell Liebermann, composer. The panel met in New York City to decide upon the recipients of the 2008 *Opera Fund* awards. Through two days of careful deliberation, OPERA America granted \$180,000 to six deserving projects.

Florentine Opera

Río de Sangre
Donald R. Davis and Kate Gale
\$10,000

Houston Grand Opera

Brief Encounter
André Previn and John Caird
\$20,000

The Minnesota Opera

Joyeux Noël
Kevin Puts and Michael Korie
\$25,000

Music-Theatre Group

Arjuna's Dilemma
Douglas J. Cuomo and Ramananda Prasad
\$25,000

Opera.ca's panel of Canadian opera experts also met in New York City to consider applications for financial support from the **Canadian Opera Creation Fund**. The panelists included: baritone Theodore Baerg of London, Ontario; Marcus Handman, executive director of the Victoria Symphony Opera; technical director Julian Sleath of Toronto; and Montreal composer Ana Sokolovic. Opera.ca granted a total of \$200,000 to six worthy projects.

Calgary Opera

The Inventor
Bramwell Tovey and John Murrell
\$25,000 (Development)

Manitoba Opera

Transit of Venus
Victor Davies and Maureen Hunter
\$40,000 (Production)

Queen of Puddings Music Theatre

Inés
James Rolfe and Paul Bentley
\$50,000 (Production)

Nautilus Music-Theatre

The Risk of Flight
Mary Ellen Childs
\$25,000

Opera Theatre of Saint Louis

The Inspector General
John Musto and Mark Campbell
\$50,000

San Francisco Opera

The Bonesetter's Daughter
Stewart Wallace and Amy Tan
\$25,000

Soundstreams Canada

The Children's Crusade
R. Murray Schaefer
\$25,000 (Development)

Soundstreams Canada

Pimootewin (The Journey)
Melissa Hui and Tomson Highway
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Tapestry New Opera Works

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A Bright Future for Canadian Opera

By Colin Eatock

Everyone involved in the arts knows that raising money is hard work. But what about giving it away? As it turns out, that's hard, too.

This point was underscored last November, when Opera.ca assembled a panel of Canadian opera experts in New York to consider applications for financial support from the *Canadian Opera Creation Fund* (COCF). The panelists — baritone Theodore Baerg of London, Ontario; Marcus Handman, executive director of the Victoria Symphony Opera; technical director Julian Sleath of Toronto; and Montreal composer Ana Sokolovic — found themselves faced with the daunting task of comparing very different proposals and making some tough decisions.

"It was extremely difficult," recalls Sokolovic, "because there's never enough money. And we weren't just judging the projects, we were also judging the companies that requested the funding." Yet she's quick to add that she also found the task rewarding. "As a composer involved in opera and music-theater, it was interesting to look at the art form from other angles — from the position of presenters and performers."

At the conclusion of the panel's deliberations, a total of \$200,000 was awarded to six projects, ranging in scale from intimate chamber works to grand operas. Some are rooted in aspects of Canada's culture, past and present: *Inês* is about Portuguese immigrants in contemporary Toronto, *Pinooteewin (The Journey)* is inspired by native Ojibway mythology and *The Inventor* is based on the life of a remarkable Canadian swindler and charlatan. Others look farther afield: *Transit of Venus* recounts the struggles of an 18th-century French astronomer, *Sanctuary Song* tells the story of an Indonesian elephant raised in captivity and *The Children's Crusade* is drawn from events in medieval European history.

The diversity of these ideas reflects a growing engagement with opera as a contemporary art form, as Canadian companies both large and small increasingly commission, workshop and stage new works. These days, opera in Canada is boldly going where it's never gone before — often with assistance from the *Canadian Opera Creation Fund*.

In November, Winnipeg's **Manitoba Opera** premiered *Transit of Venus*, by composer Victor Davies and librettist

Maureen Hunter — the first opera commissioned by the company in its 35-year history. Remarkably, the decision to mount this work (with COCF support) was made when Manitoba Opera was struggling with a serious deficit. But the company's CEO and general director, Larry Desrochers, felt strongly that the time for a new opera had arrived. Desrochers came to opera from the theater world (he was associate artistic director of the Manitoba Theatre Centre), where, as he points out, it's considered normal to do new work. Why, he asks, should things be different in opera?

With a stellar Canadian cast — including Russell Braun, Judith Forst and Jean Stilwell — the \$1.2 million production of *Transit of Venus* was a resounding success. *The Winnipeg Free Press* declared the opera a "masterpiece," adding, "the entire company played its heart out in this performance." Moreover, *Transit* also turned out to be just the boost Manitoba Opera needed: The new opera attracted major donors and raised the company's profile to a new level. "It's been a great vehicle to increase awareness for our company in the community," Desrochers told *Opera Canada* magazine last fall.

These days, a growing number of Canada's mainstream opera producers — such as **Vancouver Opera**, **Calgary Opera** and Toronto's **Canadian Opera Company**, among others — are developing new work. Canada is home to several companies whose whole *raison d'être* is new work, as well. For these small but adventurous producers, the COCF is a vital source of support, allowing them to stretch the boundaries of opera and music-theater.

"Since its inception," says Wayne Strongman, managing artistic director of Toronto's **Tapestry New Opera Works**, "the Canadian Opera Creation Fund has been a lifeline to new work development at Tapestry. When the fund began, these resources were frankly not available elsewhere. If anything, the COCF is even more important in today's climate."

Another Canadian company dedicated to new work is **Chants Libres**. Since 2001, this Montreal-based company, directed by Pauline Vaillancourt, has received numerous awards from the COCF for development, production and documentation. This kind of support is crucial to Chants Libre's ethos: The company's cutting-edge musical and theatrical values demand innovation and experimentation at

all stages of the creative process. For example, *Opéra féerie*, "*l'oiseau qui dit la vérité*," by composer Gilles Tremblay and librettist Pierre Morency, scheduled for production by Chants Libres in 2009, received COCF Development Awards in 2003 and 2006.

It would be a wild exaggeration to claim that the proliferation of new opera in Canada is solely the result of support from the *Canadian Opera Creation Fund*. But the statistics are impressive: since the creation of the COCF seven years ago, almost \$2 million has been disbursed by Opera.ca to about 60 new opera and music-theater initiatives. Most of this money has come from funding provided by the Canada Council for the Arts. However, Opera.ca has recently begun to seek out private financial support for the fund, with promising success.

Several charitable foundations have answered the call for contributions, including the George Cedric Metcalf Family Foundation, the F.K. Morrow Foundation and the Fleck Family Foundation. And the response from individual donors has been especially encouraging. Opera.ca's Power of 100 campaign is an appeal for 100 Canadians to make a multi-year pledge of \$1,000 per year to the

COCF. Since the launch of the Power of 100 last fall, individuals from across Canada have demonstrated their commitment to new Canadian opera by making generous donations. (Every dollar donated goes directly to the COCF, with no funding directed toward administration or overhead expenses.)

This is all very good news — although it's not likely to make a COCF panelist's job much easier in the foreseeable future: As interest in new Canadian opera continues to grow, so too will the number of projects seeking funding from Opera.ca. And the challenge of deciding whether "Project A from Company X" is more or less deserving of support than an entirely different "Project B from Company Y" isn't likely to go away, either.

Yet perhaps that's how it should be. If the panelists face difficult decisions, it's because of strong proposals from talented artists and committed producers. And if more productions of Canadian operas leads to greater demand for funding — that's Opera.ca's job. 📷

Colin Eatock is a writer and composer who lives in Toronto. As Opera.ca's Manager of Operations, he helped to organize last November's COCF Awards.

Rinde Eckert and Ghislaine Deschambault in Chants Libres' 2007 production of Genni Gunn and John Oliver's *Alternate Visions*, an *Augmented Opera*, directed by Pauline Vaillancourt. Photo by Yves Dubé.




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IN THE WORKS

BY MEGAN YOUNG

A Listing of New Works and Works in Progress
www.operaamerica.org/artists/newworks/index.html

While traditional operas remain an important staple at many opera companies, artists and audiences alike benefit from exploring new works. The decades that spawned some of the great masterworks, particularly in the mid- to late 1800s, saw the creation of thousands of new operas. By celebrating and encouraging today's composers and librettists, we increase the chances of producing great works for the 21st century.

To raise awareness of works being created by individual and organizational members, OPERA America maintains an online database of North American opera and music-theater. The Baisley Powell Elebash Score and Recording Library, a non-circulating collection housed in OPERA America's New York office, is available to members who wish to peruse materials.

Works in progress, along with those that received a major workshop or premiere during the past two years, are featured in the fall and spring issues of *Opera America* magazine. More details about these works (including vocal/musical forces, contact information and more) can be found online at www.operaamerica.org/artists/newworks/index.html.

Alexandra

By Zack Settel and Yan Muckle

Set to premiere during the 2010-2011 season at Chants Libres, *Alexandra* chronicles the life of Alexandra David-Néel (1868-1969). An anarchist, opera singer, journalist, freemason, feminist, free thinker, reporter, lover of the Orient, philosopher and explorer, she was the first Western woman to enter the forbidden Lhasa, Tibet in 1924. This one-hour chamber opera uses her life and writings to touch upon the themes of courage, righteousness and wisdom.

Criseyde

By Alice Shields and Nancy Dean

Criseyde, by composer-dramatist Alice Shields and librettist Nancy Dean, is a feminist view of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*. Created in Middle English drawn from Chaucer's tale, the opera

focuses on the imbalance of power between the genders. The music is written in a lyric style that encompasses Gregorian chant and Indian ragas through the language of chromatic harmony. *Criseyde* is written for seven voices and chamber orchestra, and is 90 minutes in length.

A Dream Fulfilled:

The Saga of George Washington Carver
By Michael Patterson

Set for a premiere in January 2009 by Des Moines Metro Opera, *A Dream Fulfilled* describes the life of George Washington Carver in Iowa. His time in the Hawkeye state helped him develop his methods of teaching and research that propelled him to national prominence. The opera, which runs 60 minutes, is scored for six singers and uses a contemporary, neo-romantic musical style.

L'eau qui danse, la pomme qui chante, l'oiseau qui dit la vérité

By Gilles Tremblay and Pierre Morency

Scored for 16 singers and 26 instrumentalists, *L'eau qui danse, la pomme qui chante, l'oiseau qui dit la vérité* is currently being developed by Chants Libres. The full-length opera will receive its premiere in November 2009. A "fairy opera," the piece is based on historical facts and original ideas from the creative team.

Edalat Square

By R. Timothy Brady, A.R. Madabushi and Lou Rodriguez

Premiered on April 15, 2007 by Soulbird Music Project, *Edalat Square* follows the circumstances surrounding the execution of Mahmoud Asgari and Ayaz Marhoni in Iran. The two teenage boys were hanged in 2005 for the crime of lavaat (sodomy). Written

for R&B vocalist, tenor, baritone, Persian classical vocalist, string quartet and tape/laptop, the piece is one act (approximately 40 minutes) in length.

Moby-Dick

By Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer

A two-act work chronicling Captain Ahab's obsessive search for the great white whale, this opera comes from the creative artists behind such other successful works as *Dead Man Walking* and *An American Tragedy*. Based on Melville's classic novel, *Moby-Dick* will receive its premiere in 2010 at The Dallas Opera, and is co-commissioned by San Diego Opera and San Francisco Opera.

Sanctuary Song

By Abigail Richardson and Marjorie Chan

In *Sanctuary Song*, an Asian elephant poached at a young age from the jungles of Indonesia recalls her life in captivity as her keeper leads her on a journey toward sanctuary in the hills of Tennessee. The 45-minute piece, produced by Tapestry New Opera Works and Theatre Direct Canada in partnership with Luminato, will receive its premiere in June 2008. It is written for soprano, baritone, chamber ensemble, female dancer and male actor.

The Scarlet Letter

By Lori Laitman and David Mason

Commissioned by the University of Central Arkansas, this new opera is based on the classic story by Nathaniel Hawthorne in which a young woman in Boston is charged with adultery. The two-act work is written for three principal roles, three secondary roles, small chorus and chamber orchestra, and incorporates a tonal, lyrical

compositional style. *The Scarlet Letter* will premiere in the fall of 2008.

Séance on a Wet Afternoon

By Stephen Schwartz

Scheduled to premiere on Halloween 2009, this work from the composer of *Wicked* is based on the eponymous novel by Mark McShane and the award-winning screen adaptation by Bryan Forbes. With workshops held at American Opera Projects, the full-scale work will be produced by Opera Santa Barbara. The work is a psychological thriller about a medium, her doting husband and the spirit of their deceased 11-year-old son.


The Shadow

By Omar Daniel and Alex Poch-Goldin

Set at the turn of the last century in Barcelona, this opera is an original tale of intrigue, desire and destruction. The piece is written for soprano, tenor, baritone, countertenor, violin, cello, clarinet, trumpet, percussion, piano and Hammond organ and runs approximately 75 minutes. *The Shadow* is composed in a contemporary, 21st-century style and will premiere at Tapestry New Opera Works in early 2009.

The Ugly Duckling

By Andrew Duncan and Steve Malone

Written specifically for elementary students, *The Ugly Duckling* is based on the popular tale of the same name. The piece was premiered in February 2008 by members of Nashville Opera's Mary Ragland Young Artist Program and has a running time of 40 minutes. This whimsical children's operetta provides a light-hearted introduction to voice and drama, and can be accompanied by study guides and Web-based instructional resources. 

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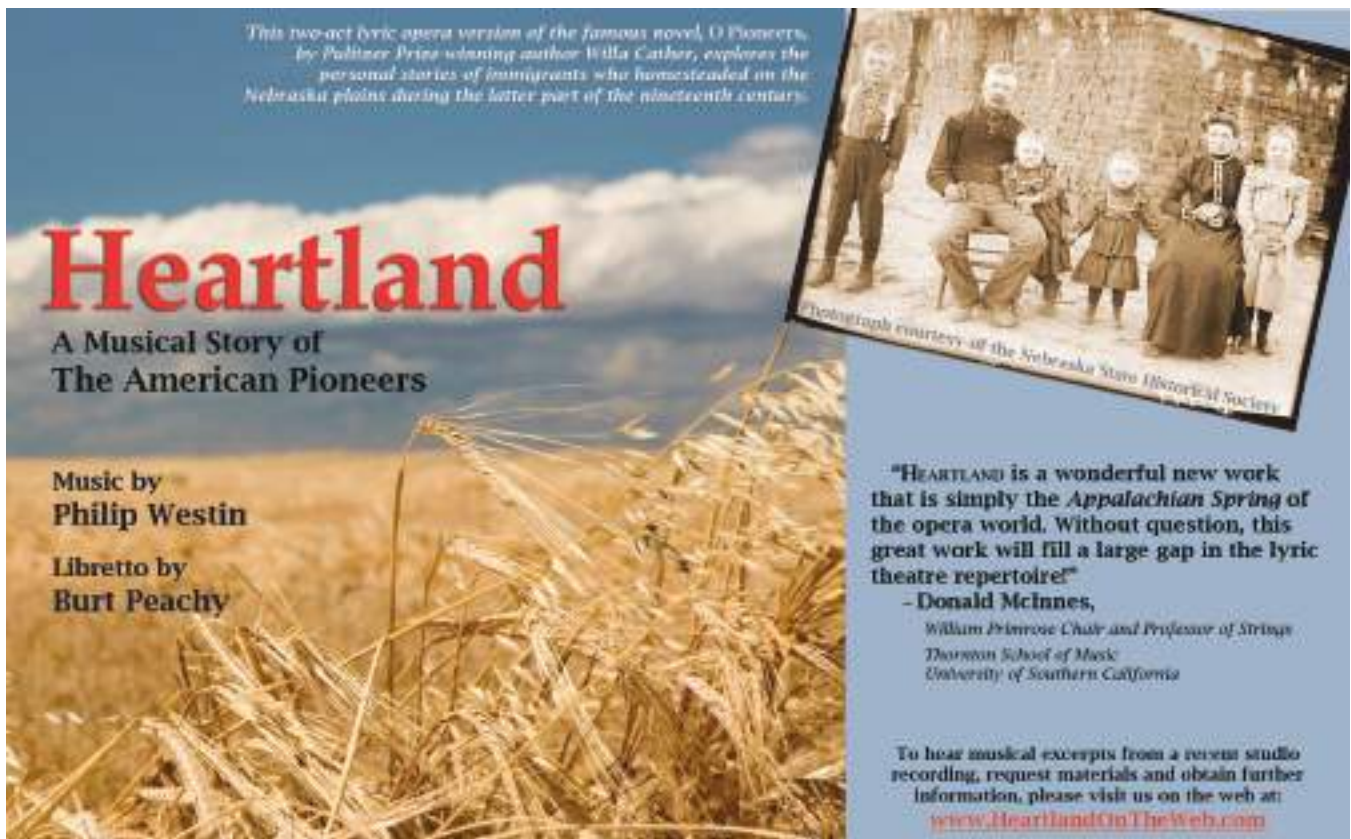
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IN MEMORIAM

Andrew Foldi died November 21, 2007, following complications of a stroke. He was 81. Foldi was a leading member of Chicago's music community in opera and education for more than 50 years. He appeared at Lyric Opera of Chicago in 1954 — the company's inaugural season — and also served as director of the Lyric Opera Center for American Artists (now The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center) for four years under Lyric's late general director, Ardis Krainik. For the decade prior to his directorship of Lyric Opera Center for American Artists, Foldi served as chairman and artistic director of the Cleveland Institute of Music's opera department. At that time he also performed internationally and directed opera productions both locally and nationally. Foldi began his career in the 1950s singing a wide variety of bass and bass-baritone roles at Lyric Opera of Chicago. He became a celebrated interpreter of the comic roles of Mozart and Rossini. In more than 40 years onstage, however, his greatest success was with a 20th-century masterpiece, Alban Berg's *Lulu*. In that opera, his definitive interpretation of a particularly challenging character, Schigolch, was acclaimed at The Santa Fe Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Metropolitan Opera and at major opera houses worldwide. In all, his operatic repertoire encompassed more than 100 roles. Andrew Foldi is survived by his wife, Marta, and their children, David and Nancy; his first wife, Leona, and stepsons Christopher and Gregory Hancock; and five grandchildren.

Martha Munro passed away unexpectedly from heart complications on December 18, 2007 in New Bedford, MA. Born in Boston in 1947, Munro was a graduate in music from Stephens College in Columbia, MO. After graduation, she joined the Boston Opera Company, which was the beginning of a long career in opera artist management. She continued her career with the San Francisco Opera, Houston Grand Opera and the Metropolitan Opera. In the early 1980s, she developed Munro Artists Management and ran the company until her death. She mentored many artists in the business and presented her expertise at professional opera festivals around the world. Surviving in addition to her parents, James and Kathryn Munro, are her siblings: Hugh Munro, Jamey Minich, Katy Norris and Jim Munro Jr.; nephews Henry and Bradley Minich, Michael Munro and Tom Norris, as well as a grandnephew and grandniece. 📷



This two-act lyric opera version of the famous novel, *O Pioneers!*, by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Willa Cather, explores the personal stories of immigrants who homesteaded in the Nebraska plains during the latter part of the nineteenth century.

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BY ALEXA B. ANTOPOL

A Celebration of Cincinnati Opera Charles Parsons

This volume offers a unique personal reflection on the 87-year history of Cincinnati Opera through little-known, behind-the-scenes stories about the company from its inception in 1920 at the Cincinnati Zoo through the company's 2007 season. Also featured in the book are rarely-seen photos of artists and productions. Charles H. Parsons, an opera scholar, critic and performer, has been involved in almost every facet of opera research and production. He is author of the *Mellen Opera Reference Index* — an ongoing series on many aspects of opera (35 volumes now published) — and is a music critic for *American Record Guide*, *Opera* (London) and *Opera News*. Parsons is frequently engaged as a lecturer for Cincinnati Opera, the University of Cincinnati's College of Continuing Education and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. *A Celebration of Cincinnati Opera* is \$45 and is available for purchase at Joseph-Beth Booksellers and at Cincinnati Opera by calling 513-768-5500.

Des Moines Metro Opera: A 35-Year Retrospective

Des Moines Metro Opera, Inc.
ISBN 13: 978061517627, hardcover

Hundreds of singers, directors, coaches, technicians, board members and others involved with Des Moines Metro Opera (DMMO) throughout its 35-year history contributed memories to this limited-edition book. It contains 140 full-color pages, featuring cast lists and photos from each production. There are also

behind-the-scenes pictures and stories from singers, musicians and members of the technical and production staff. The project was conceived to celebrate the company's 35th anniversary in 2007, and in honor of Founding Artistic Director Dr. Robert L. Larsen. "Until now, so much of the rich history of Des Moines Metro Opera has existed only in the hearts and minds of those who built the company from the ground up. It has always been a dream of mine to undertake the task of compiling these memories in a way that all can share them," said Michael Egel, the book's co-editor. *Des Moines Metro Opera: A 35-Year Retrospective* is available to the public for the price of \$50.

W.A. Mozart

Hermann Abert; translated by Stewart Spencer; edited by Cliff Eisen
Yale University Press
ISBN 13: 9780300072235, hardcover

Hermann Abert's classic biography, first published in German more than 80 years ago and itself based on the mid-19th century study by Otto Jahn, remains an informed and substantial biography of Mozart in any language. The book is both a full account of the composer's life and a deep analysis of his music. Proceeding chronologically from 1756 to 1791, the book interrogates every aspect of Mozart's life, influences and experience; his personality; his religious and secular dimensions; and the social context of the time. In "a book within a book," Abert also provides close scrutiny of the music, including the operas, orchestral work, symphonies and piano concertos, church music and cantatas, and compositions for solo

instruments. While the tone of Abert's work is faithfully rendered by Stewart Spencer, developments in Mozart scholarship since the last German edition are signaled by Mozart scholar Cliff Eisen in annotations on every page. Abert (1871-1927) was professor at the University of Leipzig and Germany's outstanding musicologist of the early 20th century. Eisen is reader in historical musicology, King's College London, and co-editor of *The Cambridge Mozart Encyclopedia*. Spencer is an author, translator and musical consultant. His most recent translation for Yale University Press was Joachim Kohler's *Richard Wagner: The Last Titan*.

**Culture and Sacrifice:
Ritual Death in Literature and Opera**
Derek Hughes
Cambridge University Press
ISBN 13: 9780521867337, hardcover

Human sacrifice has fascinated Western writers throughout European tradition and literature. It is prominent in Greek epic and tragedy, and returned to haunt writers after the discovery of the Aztec mass sacrifices. It has been treated by some of the greatest creative geniuses, including Shakespeare and Wagner, and was a major topic in the works of many Modernists, such as D. H. Lawrence and Stravinsky. In literature, human sacrifice is often used to express a writer's reaction to the residue of barbarism in his own culture. The meaning attached to the theme therefore changes profoundly from one period to another, yet it remains as timely an image of cultural collapse as it did over 2,000 years ago. Drawing on sources from literature and music, Derek Hughes

examines the representation of human sacrifice in Western culture from the *Iliad* to the invasion of Iraq. Hughes is a professor of English at the University of Aberdeen.

The Autumn of Italian Opera: From Verismo to Modernism, 1890-1915

Alan Mallach

Northeastern University Press,
University Press of New England
ISBN 10: 1555336832, hardcover

With the passing of Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti, and with Verdi in decline, Italian opera at the end of the 19th century appeared to be on the wane. The premiere of Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* in 1890 marked a new period of artistic creativity and commercial success for Italian opera. In *The Autumn of Italian Opera*, Alan Mallach chronicles the last years of Verdi and Catalani and the emergence of the *Giovane Scuola* (young school) of Italian composers led by Puccini and Mascagni, and lesser-known but important figures as Giordano, Cilèa and Leoncavallo. The author places the emergence of the *Giovane Scuola* firmly within the social and political upheavals of the time, which brought previously unexplored themes and exotic settings into the opera house. Their works expressed an intensity of passion, sentimentality and violence, which appealed to a new generation of operagoers, reflecting the growing dominance of the bourgeois in the new Italy that emerged after unification. While the principal emphasis is on operas and composers, portraits are provided of other operatic singers and conductors of the time, as well as developments that transformed the opera industry toward the end of the 19th century. Mallach discusses the powerful role played by the two dominant publishers, Giulio Ricordi and Edoardo Sonzogno, the ownership and operation of the nation's opera houses, the makeup of the operatic audience and the diffusion of opera throughout Italy through civic bands and choral societies.

Alan Mallach is a pianist, composer and independent scholar. He is the author of *Pietro Mascagni and His Operas*.

Acting for Singers: Creating Believable Singing Characters

David F. Ostwald

Oxford University Press
ISBN 13: 9780195145403, hardcover

Written to meet the needs of students and pre-professional singers participating in production workshops and classes in opera and musical theater, *Acting for Singers* leads singing performers step-by-step from the studio or classroom through audition and rehearsals to a successful performance. Using a systematic, positive approach, this guide explains how to analyze a script or libretto, shows how to develop a character building on material in the score, gives the singing performer the tools to act believably and addresses the problems of concentration, trust, projection, communication and the self-doubt that often afflict performers pursuing the goal of believable performance. Part I establishes the basic principles of acting and singing together, and teaches the reader how to improvise as a key tool to explore and develop characters. Part II teaches the singer how to analyze theatrical work for rehearsing and performing. David Ostwald teaches and directs at the Bay Area Summer Opera Theater Institute. He has taught at SUNY Purchase (where for 10 years he headed the Opera Program), The Juilliard School, Queens College and the University of California, Berkeley.

Herbert von Karajan: A Life in Pictures

Jürgen Otten;

foreword by Anne-Sophie Mutter
Amadeus Press

ISBN 10: 1574671650, hardcover

Herbert von Karajan: A Life in Pictures celebrates the centenary of Herbert

von Karajan's birth; this pictorial biography commemorates the life of the conductor in over 150 photographs and is the official book of the Karajan 2008 celebration. Jürgen Otten makes his home in Berlin and studied piano and musicology at Detmold and Würzburg. He is a music and theater journalist who has won awards from the German press.

Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy

Ellen Rosand

University of California Press
ISBN 13: 9780520249349, hardcover

Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) was the first important composer of opera. This study by one of the foremost experts on Monteverdi and 17th-century opera examines the composer's celebrated final works — *Il ritorno d'Ulisse* (1640) and *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (1642) — from a new perspective. Ellen Rosand considers these works as not merely a pair but constituents of a trio; a Venetian trilogy that properly includes a third opera, *Le nozze d'Enea* (1641). Although its music has not survived, its chronological placement between the other two operas opens new prospects for better understanding all three. A thorough review of manuscript and printed sources of *Ritorno* and *Poppea*, in conjunction with those of their erstwhile silent companion, offers new possibilities for resolving the questions of authenticity that have swirled around Monteverdi's last operas since their discovery in the late 19th century. *Le nozze d'Enea* also helps to explain the striking differences between the other two, casting new light on their contrasting moral ethos: the conflict between a world of emotional propriety and restraint and one of hedonistic abandon. Rosand is George A. Saden Professor of Music at Yale and author of *Opera in Seventeenth Century Venice: The Creation of a Genre*.


The Redeemer Reborn: *Parsifal* as The Fifth Opera of Wagner's *Ring*
 Paul Schofield
 Amadeus Press
 ISBN 13: 9781574671612, hardcover

Traditionally, Wagnerian scholarship has treated the *Ring* and *Parsifal* as two separate works. Paul Schofield shows how *Parsifal* is, in fact, the fifth opera of the *Ring*. Schofield explores how these five musical dramas portray a single, unbroken story which begins with *Das Rheingold*, when Wotan breaks a branch from the World Ash-tree and Alberich steals the gold of the Rhine, thus separating Spear and Grail, and ends with the reunion of the Spear and Grail in the temple of Monsalvat in *Parsifal*. Schofield explains how and why the four main characters of the *Ring* are reborn in *Parsifal* — completing in *Parsifal* the spiritual journey begun in the *Ring*. He also shows how the redemption that is not attained in the process of the *Ring* is finally realized in the events of *Parsifal*. Paul Schofield is a former Zen Buddhist monk, musician and writer. He has been a contributing editor of *Leitmotive*, a publication of the Wagner Society of Northern California.

Franco Corelli: Prince of Tenors
 René Seghers
 Amadeus Press
 ISBN 13: 9781574671636, hardcover

In *Franco Corelli: Prince of Tenors*, René Seghers presents extensive research from theater archives from around the world, personal correspondence and contracts and interviews with Corelli's friends, family and colleagues. Seghers also shares details from his time spent with Corelli himself before the tenor's passing in 2003. The result is a portrait of a singer and his times. This volume includes a foreword by Marco Corelli, Franco's cousin, and numerous color photos. Seghers is the editor *Villa d'Arte*, a European culture magazine, and a freelance writer with articles published in *Lustier*, *Opera Quarterly*, *The Record Collector* and *Het Parool*. He has also published a biography of Jaques Brel — *Jaques Brel: Leven en liefde, 1929-1978*. 📖

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