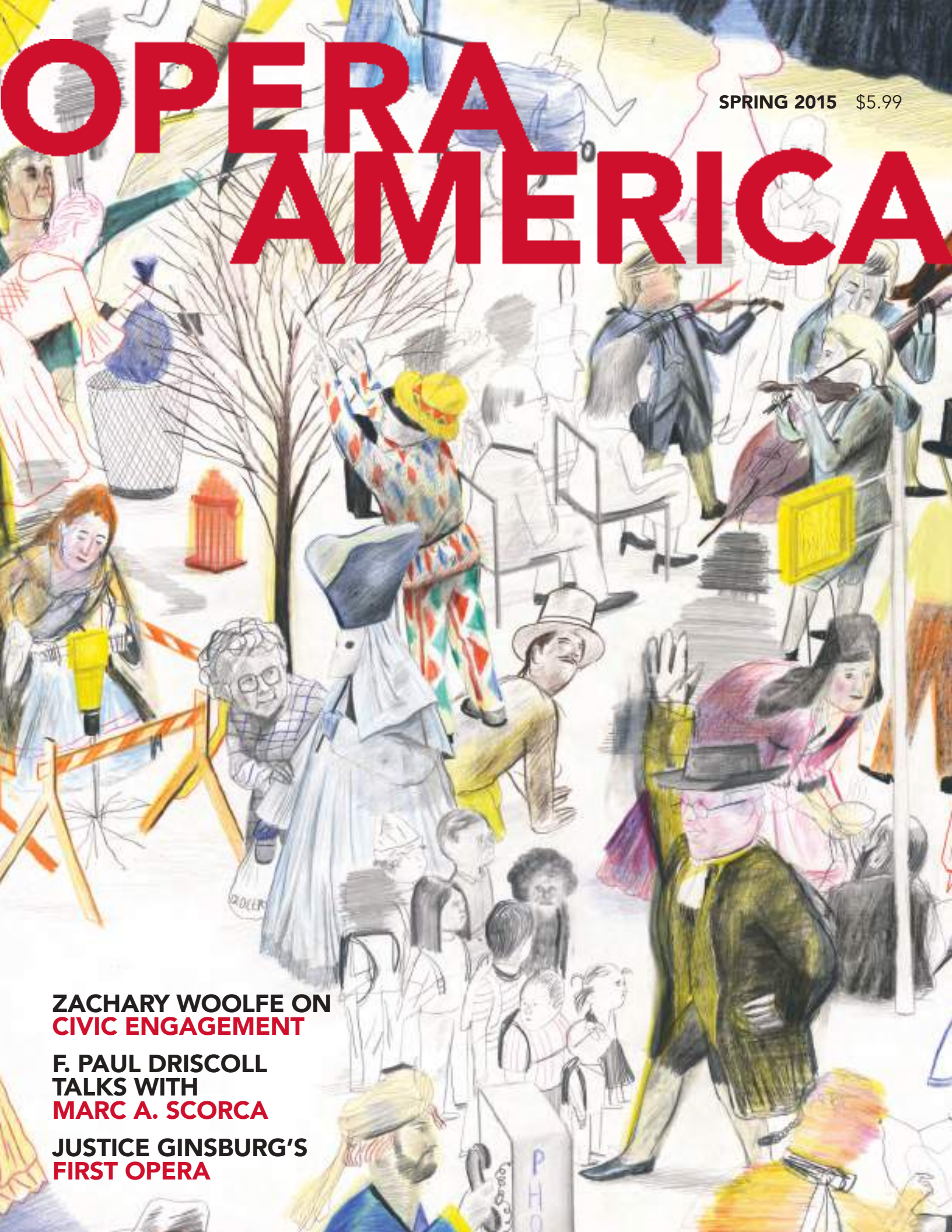


OPERA AMERICA

SPRING 2015 \$5.99



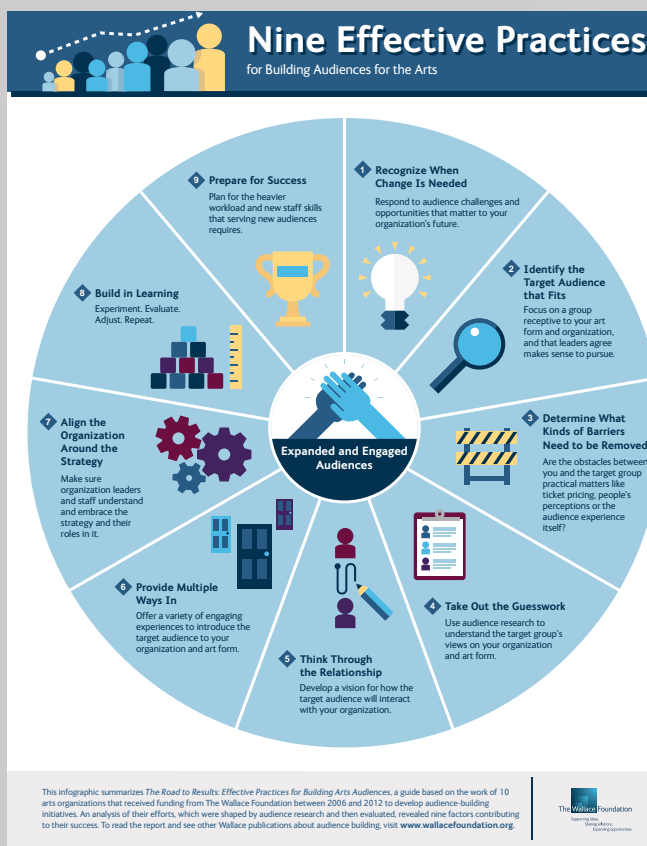
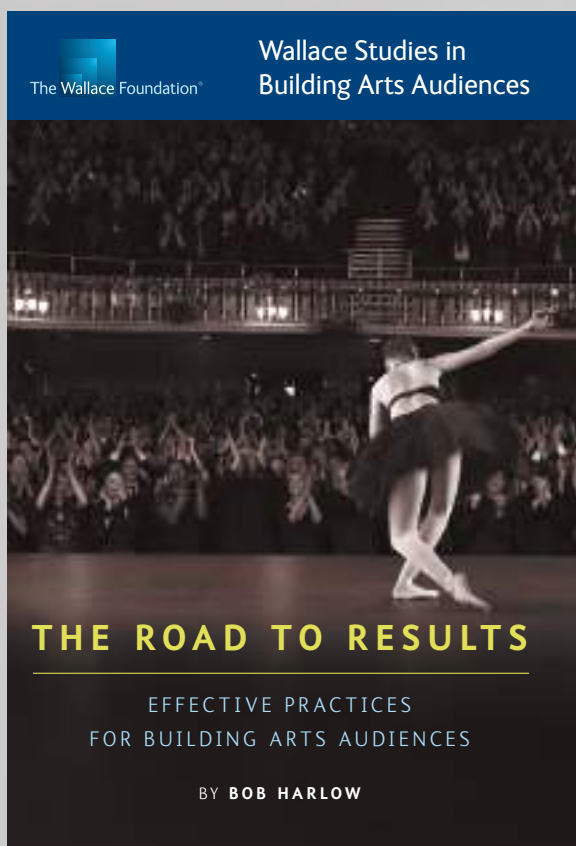
**ZACHARY WOOLFE ON
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

**F. PAUL DRISCOLL
TALKS WITH
MARC A. SCORCA**

**JUSTICE GINSBURG'S
FIRST OPERA**

YOU'RE WORKING HARD TO BUILD AUDIENCES.

Nine evidence-based practices can help.



Based on case studies of 10 arts organizations that undertook audience-building projects as part of the Wallace Excellence Awards initiative, this guide and infographic pinpoint nine practices that successful efforts had in common.

Download the report and infographic for free.
WALLACEFOUNDATION.ORG



OPERA AMERICA

SPRING 2015

EDITOR

Matthew Sigman
MSigman@operaamerica.org

ART DIRECTOR

James Ty Cumbie
TCumbie@operaamerica.org

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Nicholas Wise
N Wise@operaamerica.org

ADVERTISING MANAGER

Benjamin Newman
BNewman@operaamerica.org

**DIRECTOR OF MARKETING
AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Patricia Kiernan Johnson
PKJohnson@operaamerica.org

THE COVER

Yann Kebbi, a Paris-based artist, created the vibrant tableau of civically engaged artists on the cover. Kebbi, whose client roster includes *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker* and *Condé Nast Traveler*, has imagined classic figures from opera interacting with their community in myriad ways.

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

Copyright © 2015 by OPERA America. All rights reserved. This publication may not be reproduced in whole or in part without written permission.

Editorial policy: The views expressed in this publication are those of the various authors for the purpose of encouraging discussion. Unless expressly noted, they do not reflect the formal policy, or necessarily the views, of OPERA America. To contact the editor, e-mail Editor@operaamerica.org.

Send address changes to

OPERA America
330 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10001

The deadline for advertising submissions is 45 days before publication date. The presence of advertising implies no endorsement of the products or services offered. For advertising rates, e-mail Advertising@operaamerica.org.

Corrections: Please note the following corrections to the *Annual Field Report*, which appeared in the Winter 2014/2015 issue: On page 66, Operating Net Income for 2011 and 2013 was erroneously listed as negative. Those figures, as well as the corresponding Percentages of Expense, should be positive. On page 72, Total Attendance represents 297,095 people who attended performances, not dollars.

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

3 CONFERENCE: PAST AND PRESENT

By Marc A. Scorca

5 INNOVATIONS

10 PEOPLE

12 AGENTS OF CHANGE

By Zachary Woolfe

17 E PLURIBUS OPERA

By Matthew Sigman

**20 A PORTRAIT OF SCORCA:
OPERA'S ADVOCATE**

By F. Paul Driscoll

29 A NEW VOICE FOR NEW AUDIENCES

By Bob Harlow and Cindy Cox Roman

34 OA NEWS

40 PUBLICATIONS

43 CROSSWORD

By David J. Kahn

58 SUPPORT FOR OPERA AMERICA

64 MY FIRST OPERA

By Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg



OFFICERS

Frayda B. Lindemann, Ph.D.
CHAIRMAN
Trustee, The Metropolitan Opera

Susan F. Morris
VICE-CHAIRMAN
Trustee, The Santa Fe Opera

Stephen Trampe
VICE-CHAIRMAN
Trustee, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis

Darren K. Woods
VICE-CHAIRMAN
Fort Worth Opera

Timothy O'Leary
TREASURER
Opera Theatre of Saint Louis

William Florescu
SECRETARY
Florentine Opera Company

Marc A. Scorca
PRESIDENT/CEO

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

David Bennett
Gotham Chamber Opera

Daniel Biaggi
Palm Beach Opera

J.A. (Gus) Blanchard
Trustee Emeritus, Minnesota Opera

Gregory Carpenter
Opera Colorado

Keith Cerny
The Dallas Opera

Emilie Roy Corey
Trustee, National Guild for Community Arts Education

Rena M. DeSisto
Bank of America

Larry Desrochers
Manitoba Opera

David B. Devan
Opera Philadelphia

Robert Ellis
Trustee, San Francisco Opera, Opera Parallèle

James Feldman
Trustee, Washington National Opera

Allen R. Freedman

Anthony Freud
Lyric Opera of Chicago

Christopher Hahn
Pittsburgh Opera

Jake Heggie

Carol F. Henry
Trustee, Los Angeles Opera

Perryn Leech
Houston Grand Opera

Barbara Leirvik

Charles MacKay
The Santa Fe Opera

Andreas Mitisek
Long Beach Opera, Chicago Opera Theater

Zizi Mueller
Boosey & Hawkes

Esther Nelson
Boston Lyric Opera

Eric Owens

Nicole Paiement
Opera Parallèle

Kenneth G. Pigott*
Trustee, Lyric Opera of Chicago

Kathryn Smith
Madison Opera

Jill Steinberg
Trustee, VisionIntoArt, Original Music Workshop

Gregory C. Swinehart
Deloitte Financial Advisory Services LLP

Melia P. Tourangeau
Utah Symphony | Utah Opera

Francesca Zambello
The Glimmerglass Festival, Washington National Opera

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Christina Loewen, *Opera.ca*

Nicholas Payne, *Opera Europa*

NATIONAL OPERA CENTER BOARD OF OVERSEERS

John E. Baumgardner, Jr.

L. Henry Cox III

Elizabeth Eveillard

Barbara Glauber

Jane A. Gross

Frederick W. Peters

Stephen Prystowsky, M.D.

Jane A. Robinson

Anthony Rudel

Michael Scimeca, M.D.

Brett Stover

Robert Tancer

Barbara Teichert

*in memoriam

On Albany Records, the acclaimed world premiere

**WITH BLOOD,
WITH INK**

RECORDED DURING its triumphant debut at the 2014 Fort Worth Opera Festival, this one act opera by Daniel Crozier and Peter M. Krask is based on the visionary life of Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, the 17th-Century Mexican nun, and champion of intellectual freedom.

"...an **harmonically lush**, lyrically soaring score"
—*New York Times*

"...gripping, **dramatically powerful**, **inventively framed**, and philosophically relevant..." —*Opera News*

"...**seamless, spare, dramatic**...with ecstatic vocal lines and unusually adept ensembles..."
—*The Wall Street Journal*

"...a **remarkably vital** and stageworthy work..."
—*Journal of the Music Critics Association*



Available from Albanyrecords.com,
Amazon.com, Arkivmusic.com, and iTunes

CONFERENCE: PAST AND PRESENT



Although I attended my first OPERA America conference in 1983 when I was on the staff of New York City Opera (it was hosted that year by the Metropolitan Opera in honor of the company's centenary), my first "real" conference was in 1985, when I represented Chicago Opera Theater in Miami. General directors were all seated around a large square table; observers sat around the periphery of the room. There was welcome laughter when, after Robert Heuer introduced himself as representing the then-named Greater Miami Opera, David Gockley referred to his company as the Lesser Houston Opera. This break in the otherwise formal setting was a relief to the less experienced managers at that table.

My first conference as OPERA America's president/CEO was in Chicago in January of 1991. At the time, conferences were held in December or January. Hotels were less expensive in winter, companies like San Francisco and Chicago had already closed their seasons, and we didn't have as many members performing throughout the year as we do today. That conference, like the ones that had come before, was a single sequence of speeches and panel presentations. Professional tracks were introduced at the 1992 conference in San Diego and were greatly expanded the following year when we returned to Miami. (A winter conference in Miami was a popular destination, despite our appreciation of Chicago's cultural assets.)

Over the years, our conferences have featured the greatest names in our field, with an emphasis on those who have created our American repertoire: Menotti, Floyd, Bolcom, Machover and Glass. We have heard from advocates (Jane Alexander), critics (Alex Ross), novelists (Toni Morrison), futurists (Nicholas Negroponte) and philanthropists (Don Randel of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation). And of course, performers: Just last year in San Francisco, we were honored to hear Frederica von Stade and Jake Heggie as both artists and eloquent spokespersons for the art form.

After we moved the conference to the spring, attendance soared. Last year's conference in San Francisco drew more than 600 individuals from 200 organizations. The size and diversity of our sessions require months of planning and extraordinarily hard work by our staff, as well as the dedication of our host company. "See you at conference!" has become part of our field's vernacular.

We return to the nation's capital for the first time in 20 years for this year's conference, hosted by Washington National Opera in a new structural relationship with the Kennedy Center. We will visit Wolf Trap Opera and hear works by two companies established in the intervening two decades, UrbanArias and Opera Lafayette. As we have always done, we will strive to address current challenges and opportunities in the field, with a focus this year on increasing opera's civic impact in communities. An array of guest speakers will enrich discussion and learning as we renew longstanding friendships and inaugurate new ones.

Yes, this will be my 25th conference as president and CEO. I extend my deepest gratitude to the many people who have supported OPERA America these past 25 years and who continue to do so today.

See you at conference!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc A. Scorca".

Marc A. Scorca
President/CEO



Salutes Marc Scorca

President & CEO of OPERA America
25 Years of Distinguished
Service to the Field

New Operas from Schott|EAM

Bernard Rands

Vincent

Indiana University Jacobs School of Music | April 8, 2011

Described as "tramendous" and a work of "aural magic" (American Record Guide), Rands's *Vincent* depicts the life of van Gogh and the painter's complicated relationship to his art. *Vincent* is a "powerfully affecting opera" (The Huffington Post) featuring a libretto by J.D. McClatchy.



Tobias Picker

Dolores Claiborne

San Francisco Opera | September 18, 2013

Commissioned by San Francisco Opera, Tobias Picker's thrilling setting of Stephen King's best-selling novel *Dolores Claiborne* has been called "a triumph," "a brilliant musical inspiration," and "a tremendous addition to the expanding canon of American opera."

Julian Anderson

Thebans

English National Opera | May 3, 2014

The *New York Times* calls Anderson's treatment of the Greek trilogy "distinctly impressive" and "an opera like no other... arguably the most spectacular orchestral writing heard in any opera of the past half a century. For mastery of texture, color and invention, Mr. Anderson sets standards."



Gavin Bryars

Marilyn Forever

Aventa Ensemble | September 13, 2013

Commissioned by Aventa Ensemble and with a libretto by author and poet Marilyn Bowering, Gavin Bryars's *Marilyn Forever* examines the inner life of Marilyn Monroe and her intellectual and emotional relationships with love and death.

Also recently premiered:

George Benjamin, *Written on Skin*

Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, July 2012

Gerald Barry, *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Los Angeles Philharmonic, April 2011 (concert) | Opéra National de Lorraine, March 2012 (staged)

Douglas J. Cuomo, *Doubt*

Minnesota Opera, January 2013

Richard Ayres, *Peter Pan*

Staatstheater Stuttgart, December 2012

Schott Music Corporation & European American Music Distributors Company

254 West 31st Street, Floor 15 | New York, NY 10001

ny@schott-music.com • www.schott-music.com • www.eamdc.com



OPERA ON DEMAND

Is it possible to binge-watch opera? Devoted Wagnerites may say yes, but with the exception of the *Ring*, few operas inspire obsessive, successive viewing experiences. Even in the current heyday of “webisodes” and television on demand, opera largely stands apart as a storytelling genre that defies serialization and rapid consumption.

Lisa Bielawa seeks to revise that notion with her new opera *Vireo: The Spiritual Biography of a Witch’s Accuser*, composed to a libretto by Erik Ehn, which is being created exclusively for episodic release via television and online media. Over the course of 14 episodes, the opera will explore the nature of female hysteria throughout time — from the European Dark Ages to the Salem witch trials to the Surrealists of Paris — specifically examining how teenage girls’ visionary writings have been interpreted by the men around them. The series, which is part of Bielawa’s artist residency at California State University, Fullerton, is directed by multimedia director-designer Charles Otte, senior creative director with Thinkwell Group in Los Angeles.

At the end of February, the first two episodes were taped as part of free public performances at The Yost Theater in Santa Ana, CA, with the Kronos Quartet and San Francisco Girls Chorus accompanying the solo singers. Subsequent episodes will be filmed at other venues throughout the country. Through a partnership with *Artbound*, an arts and culture series produced by California broadcast network KCETLink, episodes of the opera will be made available online starting March 31.

LOS ANGELES OPERA is leveraging the appeal of opera in installments with its *Figaro Trilogy*, which presents the operas inspired by Beaumarchais’ three *Figaro* plays — Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville*, Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro* and John Corigliano’s *The Ghosts of Versailles*. The



CRAIG MATHEW

Los Angeles Opera’s premiere of *The Ghosts of Versailles* by John Corigliano and William M. Hoffman, with Patti LuPone as Samira (center). Conducted by James Conlon and directed by Darko Tresnjak. Scenic design by Alexander Dodge, costume design by Linda Cho, lighting design by York Kennedy and projection design by Aaron Rhyne.

company has instituted a multipronged marketing strategy to encourage ticket buyers to attend the entire trilogy, which runs through April. Attendees of all three operas receive benefits such as early-bird pricing, optional payment plans, priority seating and discounts for add-on performances.

In conjunction with its *Figaro Trilogy*, LA Opera created *Figaro Unbound*, an extensive series of community engagement programs that underpins themes from the opera and seeks to make them relevant to today’s Angelenos. Over the course of more than three months, the company is partnering with many of the region’s leading museums to illuminate the visual culture and music of the 18th century, in addition to offering an array of lectures and other educational events.

One of the highlights of *Figaro Unbound* has been the company’s world premiere staging, in January,



MATT GUSH

Composer Lisa Bielawa (at piano) rehearses her new opera *Vireo: The Spiritual Biography of a Witch’s Accuser* with (l-r) soprano Rowen Sabala and mezzo-soprano Maria Lazarova.

Los Angeles Opera is leveraging the appeal of opera in installments with its *Figaro Trilogy*, which presents the operas inspired by Beaumarchais’ three *Figaro* plays.

of *¡Figaro! (90210)*, a multicultural adaptation of Mozart’s opera that recasts the title character as an undocumented worker in a present-day Beverly Hills mansion. The work featured a new English and Spanish libretto by Vid Guerrerio. The Spanish-language crossover will continue in March when the company’s Zarzuela Project, joined by Mariachi Conservatory and Mariachi Voz de America, will perform two outdoor concerts of zarzuelas (Spanish operettas) inspired by the *Figaro* stories. ●

“We want to forge a group dynamic blending experience, geography and career focus so that this group will be an ongoing support network.”



KAREN ALMOND, THE DALLAS OPERA

Nicole Paiement rehearsing with The Dallas Opera Orchestra for the January 30 world premiere of Joby Talbot and Gene Scheer's *Everest*.

THE DALLAS OPERA LAUNCHES RESIDENCY FOR WOMEN CONDUCTORS

To provide training and career support for female conductors, **THE DALLAS OPERA** has launched The Institute for Women Conductors, to be held November 28 through December 6, 2015. The program, which targets women under 40, also encourages female singers, coaches, accompanists and instrumentalists seeking conducting careers to apply.

“It’s all too clear that there are still significant barriers to women getting major opportunities on the podium,” says General Director and CEO Keith Cerny. “It’s an area where I think we at The Dallas Opera can be helpful to the field, especially now that Nicole Paiement is our principal guest conductor. The applicant pool has already presented a great deal of international interest from top-tier talent.”

Paiement, founder and artistic director of San Francisco’s **OPERA PARALLÈLE**, who was named to the Dallas position in June, commented: “The women taking part in this program will have the all-too-rare opportunity to observe another woman in this leadership role, something that, regrettably, I never experienced in my early career as I sought role models from among my professional peers.”

The six women selected for the inaugural class will be provided with opportunities to conduct The Dallas Opera Orchestra and participate in master classes with Music Director Emmanuel Villaume and Paiement. Though the exact programming is still in development, each of the six participants will likely conduct an overture and two arias, plus sessions with piano and singers.

There will, however, be no competition or ranking. “One of the things we are encouraging is that applicants be not only first-rate musicians, but also good collaborators and colleagues,” says Cerny. “We want to forge a group dynamic blending experience, geography and career focus so that this group will be an ongoing support network.” The current framework for the Institute is based on a five-year plan, with initial funding provided by the Richard and Enika Schulze Foundation.

Applications can be submitted via yaptracker.com through April 15. Those chosen to participate will receive a travel stipend, housing and a per diem. For more information, visit dallasopera.org/WomenConductors. ●

THREE NEW NEA REPORTS ON ARTS AND AUDIENCES

In January, the National Endowment for the Arts released three reports examining how and why Americans participate in the arts and the impact of that participation on cultural industries and Gross Domestic Product. The three reports, based on data from 2012, provide a comprehensive view of a single year in the arts from three different angles: supply, demand and motivations for consumer behavior.

The first report, *When Going Gets Tough: Barriers and Motivations Affecting Arts Attendance*, is the result of a partnership between the NEA and the General Social Survey, conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago. Together, the organizations asked people why they attend music, dance, theater and visual arts events, and what factors prevented them from attending. The most common motivations for arts attendance were the desires to socialize with family and friends, to learn new things, to experience high-quality art and to support the community, whereas the most frequently cited barrier was a lack of time. Among non-attenders interested in the arts, only 38 percent cited high cost

among barriers to attendance, but for the majority of those who did, it was the most important barrier.

The General Social Survey also revealed self-identification to be an important factor in determining attendance. People who identified as middle class were more likely to attend the arts than those who identified themselves as working class, even if they shared similar household incomes and education. Those who identified as working class were less likely to attend arts events if they felt their standard of living was higher than their parents' had been at the same age.

The NEA's Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA), the largest and most comprehensive survey of arts participation among American adults, is the basis of the second report, *A Decade of Arts Engagement: Findings from the SPPA, 2002–2012*. The latest SPPA report compares arts participation rates from the 2002, 2008 and 2012 surveys. A new question in the 2012 survey revealed that individuals who attended arts events when they were children were three to four times more likely to attend as adults. The SPPA also showed that nearly three-quarters of American adults

experience the arts through electronic media.

The 2012 SPPA reported good news for the opera field: From 2008 to 2012, the level of participation in opera has remained constant at 2.1 percent of the adult population, with approximately 5 million individuals attending opera in 2012, up from 4.88 million in 2008. By comparison, classical music, plays and dance have all seen declines in participation since 2008. OPERA America's most recent *Annual Field Report*, based on data from fiscal year 2013, shows that opera attendance in America may now be increasing. Opera companies in three of the survey's four budget levels reported increases in paid attendance. These three budget levels combined sold, on average, 11.4 percent more tickets in fiscal year 2013 than they did 2012.

The NEA's third report, *The Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account*, which was created in partnership with the Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis, is the first federal effort to provide in-depth analysis of the arts and cultural sector's contributions to GDP. The report reveals that the arts are a bigger driver of GDP and jobs than previously estimated. In 2012, arts and cultural production contributed more than \$698 billion to the U.S. economy, or 4.32 percent to the GDP — more than construction (\$586.7B) or transportation and warehousing (\$464.1B). OPERA America's *Annual Field Report* estimates that opera alone injected nearly \$1 billion into the economy in fiscal year 2013.

The NEA has made its reports publicly available in order to inform arts providers and help them develop strategies for engaging individuals and communities in the arts.

Visit nea.gov/News for more information. OPERA America's *Annual Field Report*, part of the Winter 2014/2015 issue of *Opera America Magazine*, is available to members at operaamerica.org/Publications. ●

Individuals who attended arts events when they were children were three to four times more likely to attend as adults.

Why do people attend the arts?

MOTIVATIONS

73% To socialize with friends or family

64% To learn new things

63% To experience high-quality art

51% To support the community

BARRIERS

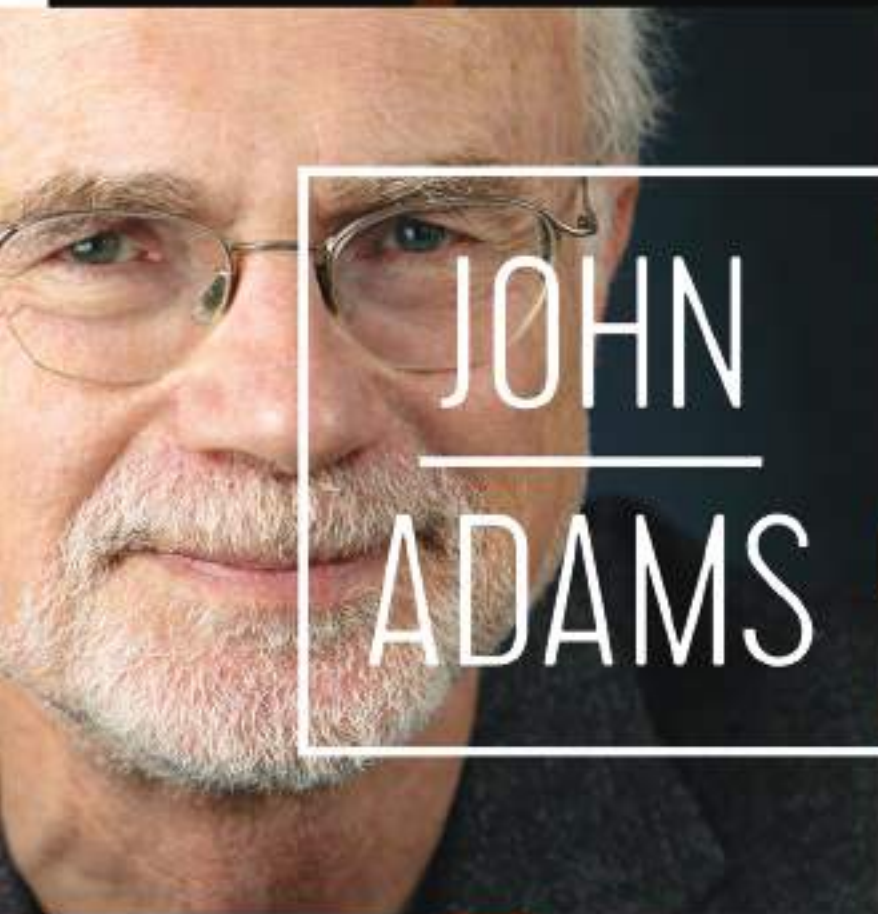
47% Time

38% Cost

37% Access

22% No one to go with

NEA.GOV



JOHN ADAMS AT 70 2017

AMERICA CELEBRATES

Join the campaign! Perform a work by John Adams in 2017 to celebrate the composer's 70th birthday.

Contact Boosey & Hawkes at
composers.us@boosey.com
for more information.
www.boosey.com/adams

BOOSEY & HAWKES

AN  COMPANY

SELECTED WORKS

- Nixon in China*
- The Death of Klinghoffer*
- Doctor Atomic*
- A Flowering Tree*
- El Niño*
- The Gospel According to the Other Mary*
- Short Ride in a Fast Machine*
- Doctor Atomic Symphony*
- Naïve and Sentimental Music*
- On the Transmigration of Souls*
- The Dharma at Big Sur*
- City Noir*
- Saxophone Concerto*
- Absolute Jest*
- Chamber Symphony*
- Son of Chamber Symphony*
- and more...



JILL STEINBERG

Beth Morrison Projects and VisionIntoArt presented *Aging Magician* by Paola Prestini, Rinde Eckert and Julian Crouch, with Rinde Eckert (at center) and the JACK Quartet, as part of the New Works Forum and PROTOTYPE Festival at the Park Avenue Armory. Scenic design by Amy Rubin, lighting design by Josh Higgason, video design by Katy Tucker and Josh Higgason, and instruments by Mark Stewart.

THE NEW WORKS FORUM

In January, OPERA America convened its fourth annual New Works Forum in New York City, bringing together creators, artists, producers and publishers to examine the landscape of contemporary American opera. The Forum, launched in 2011, is designed to provide an opportunity for attendees to network with colleagues, take part in panel discussions and examine new operas through staged performances, showcases and libretto readings. The program is made possible through the generous support of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

This year, more than 80 individuals participated in the Forum. Discussions focused on the value of new works in communities and their potential for civic impact; ways of laying the groundwork for socially resonant or controversial subject matter; and the role of dramaturgs at organizations that develop new works.

OPERA PHILADELPHIA's artist-in-residence composers and

faculty also presented a case study about how to develop a robust pre-commissioning discovery process.

Central to every New Works Forum is the opportunity to experience newly minted works by both emerging composers and established figures from the field. As in past years, the New Works Forum was organized to coincide with the PROTOTYPE Festival, co-produced by **BETH MORRISON PROJECTS (BMP)** and **HERE**, which presents chamber-scale operas and music-theater works in unique venues throughout New York City. As part of the festival, BMP, **VISIONINTOART**, OPERA America and the Park Avenue Armory co-presented *Aging Magician* by Paola Prestini, Rinde Eckert and Julian Crouch. The Forum also offered *Winter's Child*, by Ellen Reid and Amanda Jane Shank, in a PROTOTYPE co-presentation with Trinity Wall Street. Forum participants were able to experience and evaluate the creative process through **AMERICAN LYRIC**



JESSICA OSBER

The libretto reading of Bernard Rands and J. D. McClatchy's *Vincent*, featuring Ilan Ben-Yehuda as the title character.

THEATER's InsightALT series, which features the company's new works at various stages of development. ALT's opera-in-progress *Why is Eartha Kitt Trying to Kill Me?* by Jeffrey Dennis Smith and David Johnston was given a cabaret performance at (Le) Poisson Rouge.

In addition to the events around the city, OPERA America hosted several of its own showcase performances and also streamed them online via its YouTube channel. OPERA America's presentations included showcases of *Fellow Travelers* by Gregory Spears and

Greg Pierce, produced by **CINCINNATI OPERA's** Opera Fusion; *Prince of Players* by Carlisle Floyd, produced by **HOUSTON GRAND OPERA**; and *Tesla (or the Life and Times of Nikola Tesla)* by Phil Kline, Jim Jarmusch and Robert Wilson, produced by **AMERICAN OPERA PROJECTS**. Bernard Rands and J. D. McClatchy's *Vincent* was explored in depth through libretto and piano vocal readings at the National Opera Center, as well as an orchestral showcase performance at St. Paul's Chapel, produced in collaboration with **NOVUS NY**. ●

PEOPLE

Joel Forbes has joined **FLORENTINE OPERA COMPANY** as director of finance.

HOUSTON GRAND OPERA has appointed **Brian Speck** as director of HGO Studio. Speck formerly served as HGO's company manager. The company has also welcomed **Kelly Laning** as director of marketing.

INDIANAPOLIS OPERA has named **Kevin Patterson** as its general director. Patterson formerly served as general director of **AUSTIN OPERA** and, more recently, as executive director of **ANCHORAGE OPERA**.

THE INDUSTRY has welcomed **Elizabeth Cline** as its new executive director.

LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO has hired **Roberta Lane** as its first-ever chief financial officer and **Elizabeth Landon** as its director of human

resources. The company has named **Julia Faulkner** as the director of vocal studies for The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center.

OPERA America has appointed **Dan Cooperman** as its new director of development.

Keith A. Wolfe has left his post as executive director of **FORT WORTH OPERA** to become **OPERA BIRMINGHAM's** new general director, succeeding John D. Jones.

Sarah Squire is the new director of operations at **OPERA MEMPHIS**. She previously served as the company's director of education, among other roles.

OPERA NORTH has announced that **Evans Haile** will be its new general director, succeeding **Pamela A. Pantos**.

OPERA PHILADELPHIA has

announced three new staff members: **Jeremiah Marks**, formerly controller at **SEATTLE OPERA**, has been appointed chief financial officer; **Thomas Rhodes**, formerly development manager at **FORT WORTH OPERA**, has been named as director of institutional giving; and **Erin Sammis**, formerly executive director of **PENSACOLA OPERA**, will be director of major gifts. **Annie Burrigide** transitioned from the role of Opera Philadelphia's senior vice president for institutional advancement to become the company's managing director.

Tobias Picker, who had served as artistic director of **OPERA SAN ANTONIO** since its inception five years ago, left the company to fulfill a commission from the John F.

Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Scott Gripenstraw has joined **OPERA SAN JOSÉ** as director of marketing.

OPERALANCASTER has appointed **Robert Bigley** as chorus director.

PALM BEACH OPERA has named **David Stern** as chief conductor, effective June 1.

THE SACRAMENTO REGION PERFORMING ARTS ALLIANCE has named **Alice Sauro** as interim executive director.

Karen Keltner, resident conductor at **SAN DIEGO OPERA**, concluded 35 years of service to the company in February.

Jose Maria Condemi, who has directed for **SAN FRANCISCO OPERA**, has been named director of opera at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, effective July 1. ●

KUDOS

Bravo Greater Des Moines presented its 2015 Encore Award to **DES MOINES METRO OPERA** on February 7. Each year, the Encore Award is given to a Des Moines-area organization that exemplifies Bravo's core values of collaboration, accountability, regional impact, resourcefulness and passion for arts and culture.

In its *30 Professionals of the Year* report, *Musical America* recognized six leaders from the field: **Steven Blier**, artistic director of New York Festival of Song; **Carol Lazier**, board president of **SAN DIEGO OPERA**; **Sara Nealy**, general director of **FESTIVAL OPERA**; **Nicole Paiement**, artistic director of **OPERA PARALLÈLE**; **Mark Sforzini**, executive and artistic director of St. Petersburg Opera Company;



MAHARAY PHOTOGRAPHY

Encore Award Committee Chair **Connie Wimer** (l) and Bravo Board President **Michelle Book** (r) present the 2015 Encore Award to **Michael Egel**, general and artistic director of Des Moines Metro Opera.

and **Eve Queler**, founder and conductor laureate of The Opera Orchestra of New York.

On February 27, the George London Foundation Awards honored up-and-

coming American and Canadian singers. George London Awards of \$10,000 each were awarded to soprano **Julie Adams**, tenor **Michael Brandenburg**, mezzo-

soprano **Julia Dawson**, bass **Adam Lau**, mezzo-soprano **Sarah Mesko** and baritone **Reginald Smith, Jr.**

The recipients of the 10th annual *Opera News Awards* are tenor **Piotr Beczala**, bass **Ferruccio Furlanetto**, soprano **Sondra Radvanovsky**, bass-baritone **Samuel Ramey** and soprano **Teresa Stratas**. The honorees will be feted at a black tie gala on April 19 at The Plaza Hotel in New York City.

Kevin Puts and **Harold Meltzer** are among the recipients of the annual Arts and Letters Awards in Music, which honor composers who have made outstanding artistic contributions to the field. The American Academy of Arts and Letters will bestow the awards, of \$10,000 each, at a ceremony in May. ●

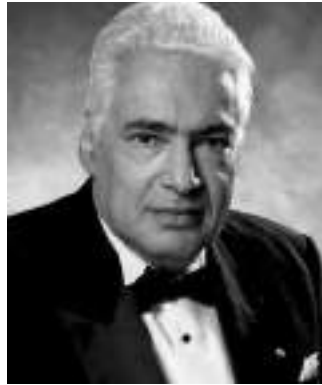
IN MEMORIAM



IRENE DALIS

Irene Dalis, mezzo-soprano and founder of **OPERA SAN JOSÉ**, died on December 14 at age 89. Though her singing career was international in scope, Dalis was most closely associated with **THE METROPOLITAN OPERA** and can be heard on many of the company's live performance recordings. She made her Met debut as Princess Eboli in 1957 and went on to perform nearly 300 times at the company, singing alongside such legends as Renata Scotto, Richard Tucker, Birgit Nilsson, Carlo Bergonzi and Leontyne Price.

After retiring from the stage in the mid-1970s, Dalis returned to her hometown of San Jose, CA, to teach voice at San José State University, and in 1984, she founded Opera San José. She served as the company's general director for the next three decades, during which time she acted as a mentor to innumerable artists. "She was unique in this world, and her love and wisdom and drive have changed the lives of hundreds of artists as well as opera lovers," said Opera San José's artistic director, Larry Hancock. "She leaves a void that will not be filled."



IRVING GUTTMAN

Impresario and director **Irving Guttman**, often described as the "father of opera in Western Canada," died on December 7 at age 86. The founding artistic director of **VANCOUVER OPERA**, Guttman devoted four decades of his life to establishing and nurturing professional opera in Western Canada. In addition to Vancouver, Guttman served as the artistic director of **EDMONTON OPERA**, Saskatchewan Opera and **MANITOBA OPERA**, and as artistic advisor to **CALGARY OPERA**. Guttman was renowned for bringing international opera stars to the companies he directed, as well as for shaping the careers of homegrown talents, such as Jon Vickers, Maureen Forrester and Ben Heppner.

Guttman is also remembered as a crucial mentor to fellow Western Canadian opera leaders. "He was always a source of good advice when asked, of constructive criticism when sought, and empathy and understanding gleaned from his years navigating through the same roiling waters," wrote James W. Wright, general director of Vancouver Opera, in a published tribute to Guttman.



MARVIN DAVID LEVY

Marvin David Levy, the American composer who rose to fame for his opera *Mourning Becomes Electra*, died on February 9 at age 82.

THE METROPOLITAN OPERA premiered *Mourning Becomes Electra*, based Eugene O'Neill's play cycle, in its inaugural season at Lincoln Center in 1967. The work was revived in 1998 by **LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO** and later by New York City Opera and **SEATTLE OPERA**. Levy, a longtime resident of Fort Lauderdale, collaborated with **FLORIDA GRAND OPERA** on a 2013 production of the opera. He also wrote a children's opera, *The Zachary Star*, as well as several vocal pieces.

The American singer **Janis Martin**, who appeared on the stages of Bayreuth, **THE METROPOLITAN OPERA**, **SAN FRANCISCO OPERA** and New York City Opera, died on December 13 at age 75. Martin began her career as a mezzo-soprano and later transitioned to soprano repertoire, achieving her greatest fame for Wagner roles such as Sieglinde, Brünnhilde and Kundry. She sang demanding dramatic soprano roles late into her career — including a final Met appearance, as Brünnhilde, in 1997 — and retired from the stage in 2000.



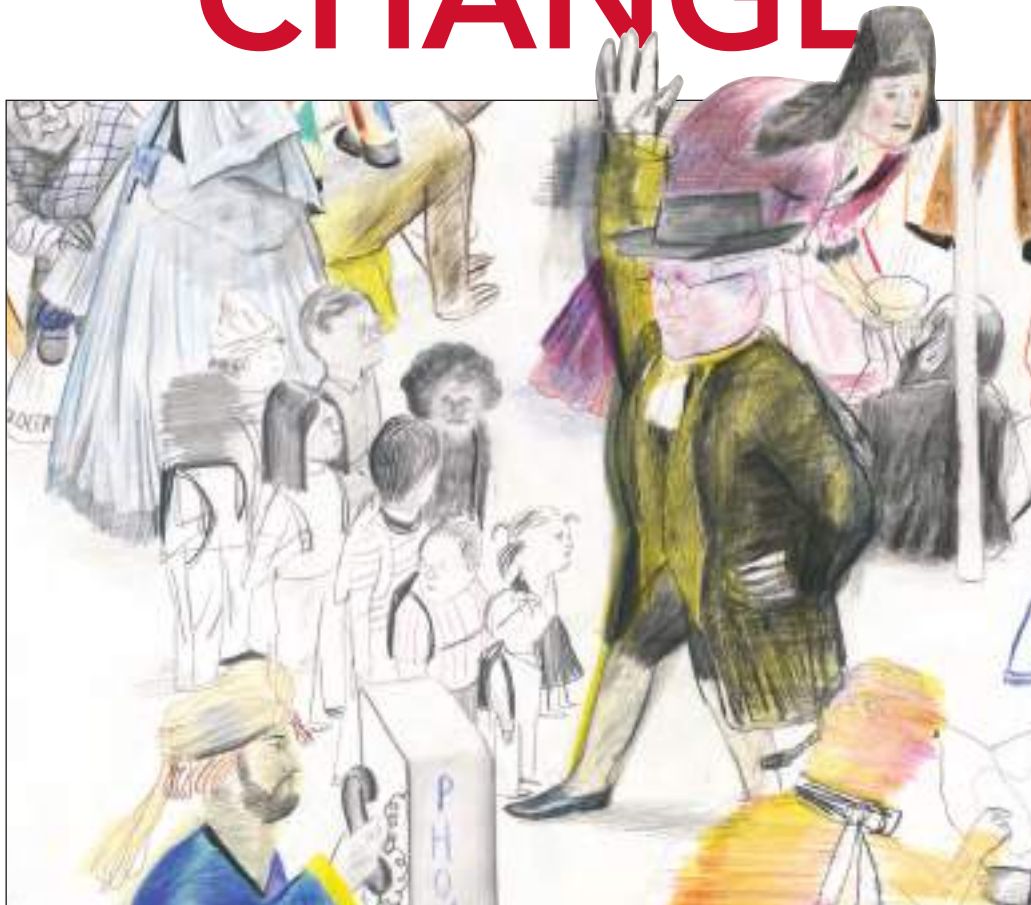
KENNETH G. PIGOTT

Kenneth G. Pigott, president and CEO of **LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO** and board member of OPERA America, died on February 13 at age 71. Pigott had served on Lyric's board of directors since 1998 and as the company's president and CEO since 2011. He played a crucial role in bringing Renée Fleming to the company as its creative consultant in 2010, and he chaired the international search that led to the appointment of Anthony Freud as general director in 2011. During his tenure, Pigott also spearheaded the company's strategic planning process. "He was a visionary whose wisdom and passion transformed the lives of everyone at Lyric," said Freud.

Pigott joined OPERA America's board of directors in 2011. In honor of his exemplary leadership at Lyric Opera of Chicago, OPERA America awarded him its National Opera Trustee Recognition Award in 2014. Pigott also served on the boards of the Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital and the Merit School of Music. ●

DREW ALITZER PHOTOGRAPHY

AGENTS OF CHANGE



Performance is the fundamental mission of an opera company, but **ZACHARY WOOLFE** argues that companies can — and should — expand their missions to tackle the socioeconomic and cultural needs of their communities.

When Ned Cauty took over as general director of Opera Memphis in 2010, he joined a program for local nonprofit leaders called Before You Ask. The goal of the series of workshops was to bring together a variety of organizations to think about funding priorities, to pinpoint parallels in missions and, where possible, to find ways to combine forces.

“The third session or so, we were talking about mission statements,” Cauty says. “We were going around the table and everyone was talking about what they do: ‘We deal with homeless teens.’ ‘We run a charter school for children of drug addicts.’ ‘We deal with reintegration of incarcerated men.’” As his turn neared and the worthy causes accumulated, Cauty got more and more anxious about whether he could articulate **OPERA MEMPHIS’** mission in a way that made it seem equally worthy — in relevance, in seriousness, in civic importance — of the others represented at the table.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY YANN KEBBI

"I basically said, 'We put on shows, and I'm feeling incredibly conflicted and odd even being a part of this conversation,'" Canty recalls. "What was great is that everyone at the table leapt to the defense of the arts."

Doubting the relevance of opera in the hierarchy of social needs is surely not uncommon among those who work in opera, as well as those who simply enjoy it. We love the art form, but now and then we question whether the time and the cost are worth it. Opera can seem hopelessly extravagant. And even when the product is good, it's ephemeral.

Like a commercial enterprise that seeks to establish itself as a good corporate citizen, should an opera company feel obliged to go beyond its "core business" to integrate itself into the fabric of civic life? Not just into the cultural life of a community, but into the realm of the socially disenfranchised? Opera companies obviously reach out through marketing and fundraising, with an expectation of financial return, but beyond the *quid pro quo*, how far should they venture outside of their strictly artistic and financial responsibilities?

To return opera to the center of a community's intellectual and social life is to return the art form to what it meant at an earlier time. Particularly in Italy, it was opera — as opposed to novels or poetry — that carried philosophical energies that gave audiences a place to think about themselves and their society while also confronting grand emotions and memorable characters. Opera itself could be perceived as threatening to moral

and political order, as when censors were discomfited by regicide in Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera*, or when the spark of revolt was provoked in Brussels by "Amour sacré de la patrie" from Auber's *La Muette de Portici*.

Opera companies today may not want to set off a political revolution, but they can strike emotional chords that resonate with citizenry inside and outside the opera house, just as *La Muette* mattered to the Belgians. The work must always resonate first, and that is the responsibility of the composer and librettist, but perfunctory references to "outreach" or "rebranding" must be replaced by a true rethinking of an opera company's place in the community — its moral, social and economic responsibilities — in order to make the civic bond part of the company's core mission.

CIVIC DNA

A civically engaged opera company does not just put on shows, implement education programs, develop singer training initiatives and pursue "other ventures," such as collaborations with other arts, education and social service entities; it ensures that those "other ventures" become as much a part of its DNA as its repertoire.

Such ventures are already on the scene. Earlier this season, **DES MOINES METRO OPERA** collaborated with StageWest Theater Company on a double bill honoring World AIDS Day, with a portion of the proceeds going to a local agency that provides services to people living with HIV/AIDS. The charitable impulse — raising

money for *others* — correlated with the repertoire: *The Baltimore Waltz*, Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Paula Vogel's tribute to her brother, who died of AIDS in 1988, and *Three Decembers*, the opera by Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer, inspired by a play by Terrence McNally. The opera tells the story of a famous actress (a role originated by Frederica von Stade) whose son's lover is dying of AIDS.

Money is certainly a tangible manifestation of community engagement. So too is access. **UTAH SYMPHONY | UTAH OPERA** sends vocal artists and instrumentalists into assisted living facilities to perform for those with dementia, recognizing that the joy of opera resides in the moment, as well as in the memory. Utah also presents an annual performance for families with special needs children for whom traditional norms of audience behavior would be a barrier to enjoyment; it's okay to fidget and talk and move about.

NASHVILLE OPERA, working with the Vanderbilt University Kennedy Center TRIAD program (The Treatment and Research Institute for Autism Spectrum Disorders), has undertaken a similar program, presenting performances for families whose children might otherwise be intimidated by the formalities of a 2,000-seat opera house. Performances take place in a rehearsal room, with lighting muted and singer volume adjusted. Nashville's chief operating officer, Noah Spiegel, doesn't see the TRIAD collaboration as an adjunct to the company's mission. "This is not outside our 'normal' activity," he says.

Opera companies reach out through marketing and fundraising with an expectation of financial return, but beyond the quid pro quo, how far should they venture outside of their strictly artistic and financial responsibilities?

CLASSICAL
MUSIC
NAXOS
CLASSICAL

MARIA LUIGIA BORSI

LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA - YVES ABEL

"I would like Borsi's clear, fresh and fully expressive
and vibrant singing to be heard."

—*Opera News*

"Borsi is a singing jewel because of her vocal skill and her
at the same time her lovely voice."

—*Classical Observer*, 2010 review

"Borsi has a unique presence and an intense light in her
—*Opera Magazine*, 2010 review"

—*Opera News*, 2010 review

"Her singing is like a ray of light in the darkness of
—*Opera Magazine*, 2010 review"

—*Opera News*, 2010 review



ITALIAN SOPRANO ARIAS

RESPIGHI PUCCHINI VERDI CATALANI

plus
beyond

amazon.com

www.naxos.com

apple



“It is part of our mission to serve the community through what we see as an opera organization. We are a community service organization working through the arts.”

In 2011, **SEATTLE OPERA** launched *Belonging(s)*, what Sue Elliott, the company’s director of education, calls “an adventure in community storytelling.” The project will culminate this summer with the premiere of *An American Dream*, an opera by Jack Perla and Jessica Murphy Moo. Of the many stories that emerged from the quilt of personal narratives, the composer and librettist chose to fuse two histories of exile: one about an American-born woman of Japanese descent, who, with her parents, was subjected to forcible removal and incarceration during World War II, and the other about a woman of German-Jewish heritage who fled Nazi Germany.

Elliott emphasizes that *An American Dream* was not created as an audience development program to connect with either the Japanese or Jewish communities: “We don’t need to tell them their own stories. They *live* those stories. Our goal is to show that opera can be about personal experience. By combining stories, we can reveal certain universals — that people continue to be displaced or exiled for religion or war.”

“There is a certain altruism behind this kind of work,” she says. “Our thinking about opera

is that we are a cultural service provider. While the technical definition of opera is stories told with music, our ultimate goal is to bring people together in all kinds of environments, for all kinds of circumstances and for all sorts of reasons.”

Opera companies are certainly not obliged to fix the world — nor, for that matter, are opera critics free to evade civic responsibilities. Matthew Peacock, formerly an assistant editor of the U.K. magazine *Opera Now*, was so appalled by a Tory leader’s comment that “the homeless are what you step over when you come out of the opera” that he established Britain’s Streetwise Opera, a company that recruits the homeless to perform in venues ranging from shelters to the Royal Opera House.

Streetwise Opera has received accolades from politicians and critics alike, but the greatest praise has come from those who participate, for whom the opportunity to perform returns them to the community from which they’ve been rejected. The company’s annual report presents an astonishing record of growth: In its 2013–2014 season, it presented 531 workshops in Britain and Wales, debuted an opera and film production, *The Answer to Everything*, and launched a touring program.

Its budget and global footprint are growing, with projects in place for North America, Australia and Japan.

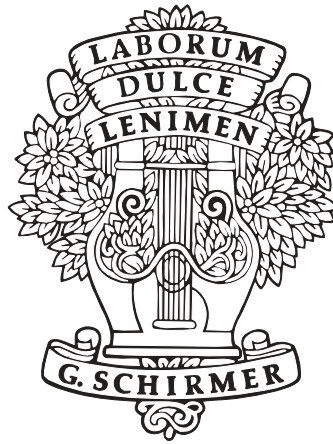
THE MORAL BOND

Opera belongs in soup kitchens and senior centers not as a means to an end, but because the end itself attests to those companies’ underlying belief that live music is strengthening to all involved — performers as well as listeners. Free performances in public venues (a street corner, a stadium, Times Square) are now *de rigueur* for opera companies of national and international stature, demonstrating that, like politics, all art is local. Artistic connections may be available (why not a production of Tchaikovsky’s *Iolanta*, a fairy tale of blindness cured by love, paired with an initiative to serve the visually impaired?), but they are by no means a necessary condition to forge enduring moral bonds in civic life.

Such civic investments don’t need to be restrained by the ephemeral nature of live performance. They can be sustainable if the relationships are properly forged. When **OPERA THEATRE OF SAINT LOUIS** produced John Adams’ *The Death of Klinghoffer* in 2011, it carefully laid the groundwork for what it suspected might be a volatile, controversial

Continued on page 44

Opera belongs in soup kitchens and senior centers not as a means to an end, but because the end itself attests to those companies’ underlying belief that live music is strengthening to all involved — performers as well as listeners.



G. Schirmer/AMP
warmly congratulates
Marc A. Scorca
on 25 inspirational years at
OPERA America.

A few of our operas introduced in America during Marc's illustrious tenure:

Mark Adamo *Little Women*
Iain Bell *A Christmas Carol*
Daniel Catán *Il Postino*
Stewart Copeland *The Tell Tale Heart*
John Corigliano *The Ghosts of Versailles*
Richard Danielpour *Margaret Garner*
Anthony Davis *Amistad*
Philip Glass *Appomattox*
Michael Gordon *Acquanetta*

John Harbison *The Great Gatsby*
Hans Werner Henze *Phaedra*
Rob Kapilow *Many Moons*
David Lang *the difficulty of crossing a field*
Peter Lieberson *Ashoka's Dream*
Peter Maxwell Davies *Kommilitonen!*
Missy Mazzoli *Song from the Uproar*
Kirke Mechem *The Rivals*
Gian Carlo Menotti *The Singing Child*

Theodore Morrison *Oscar*
Nico Muhly *Two Boys*
Thea Musgrave *Simón Bolívar*
Michael Nyman *Facing Goya*
Tarik O'Regan *Heart of Darkness*
Rachel Portman *The Little Prince*
André Previn *A Streetcar Named Desire*
Robert X. Rodríguez *Frida*
Poul Ruders *The Handmaid's Tale*

Kaija Saariaho *Adriana Mater*
Jeremy Sams *The Enchanted Island*
Bright Sheng *Madame Mao*
Lewis Spratlan *Life is a Dream*
Nathaniel Stookey *Ivonne*
Joby Talbot *Everest*
Tan Dun *Tea: A Mirror of Soul*
Richard Wargo *A Chekhov Trilogy*
Judith Weir *Blond Eckbert*



E PLURIBUS OPERA

THE NON-PARTISAN POLITICS OF OPERA IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL

With the curtain soon to rise on *Opera Conference 2015*, to be held in Washington, D.C. in May,

MATTHEW SIGMAN examines the ecology of opera in the nation's capital.



TEDDY WOLFF

Wolf Trap Opera's 2014 production of Poulenc's *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*. Conducted by Timothy Myers and directed by Matthew Ozawa. Scenic design by William Boles, costume design by Amanda Seymour and lighting design by Robert H. Grimes.

Were it not for the seriousness of their individual and collective missions, the intriguing interplay of *dramatis personae* on the opera stages of Washington, D.C. might read like a sophisticated *buffa*: Kim Witman, senior director of **WOLF TRAP OPERA**, once served as a vocal coach under Francesca Zambello. Zambello, now artistic director of **WASHINGTON NATIONAL OPERA**, recently hired Ryan Brown, artistic director of **OPERA LAFAYETTE**, to conduct at **THE GLIMMERGLASS FESTIVAL**, for which Zambello is also artistic and general director. Antony Walker, artistic director of **WASHINGTON CONCERT OPERA**, conducted this season's *Dialogues of the Carmelites* at WNO. Prior to founding **URBANARIAS**, Robert Wood conducted at Wolf Trap Opera.

"Everyone knows each other and everyone is connected to each other," says Zambello, "but we all have different missions and audiences. You find that diversity in London and Paris and New York. You wouldn't necessarily expect it here."

Washington National Opera, based at the Kennedy Center, plays the leading role on the opera scene, presenting repertoire in the grand tradition, from European masterpieces of previous centuries to contemporary works in the American canon. "We are selling what is best about America," says Zambello. That commitment is enhanced by the company's American Opera Initiative, an annual program in which composer-librettist teams work with distinguished mentors to create short works based on American themes.

WNO Executive Director Michael Mael regularly sees familiar WNO faces when he attends performances by fellow companies, and vice versa, but, he says, there is no rivalry: "The rich diversity means we have many, varied entry points for opera audiences, which benefits all of us. If someone enjoys one company, they are much more likely to give another a second look."

Operating as a constituent of the Kennedy Center frees WNO from considerable fundraising and marketing responsibilities, but "the resources at the Kennedy Center are not unlimited," Mael says. "To the extent we are part of the larger ecosystem, we benefit through shared services, as well as proximity to other constituents — the National Symphony Orchestra, ballet, theater,



The glamorous vamp.
 The mysterious houseguest.
 The prudish and suicidal wife.
 The adulterous husband.

The simple little girl whose
 bedroom floor became the resting
 place of a horrible secret...



Burry's libretto weaves a spellbinding tale.
 - Tiina Kiik, the WholeNote

...the coolest thing I've heard in a long time.
 - Jenna Douglas, Schmopera.ca

available at
 centrediscs.ca | iTunes.com



Skylight
 music theatre

The Snow Dragon

A World Premiere Opera!
MARCH 13 thru MARCH 29

Generously Sponsored By:
 Lloyd and Mary Ann Gerlach & Bangkok Opera Foundation
 414.291.7800 | www.skylightmusictheatre.org

This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts. Art Works. Events related to *The Snow Dragon* received funding from Opera America's Opera Fund. This project was supported in part by a grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
 UPAF UNITED PERFORMING ARTS FUND
 CAMPAC
 WISCONSIN arts BOARD
 THE NATIONAL OPERA CENTER AMERICA

jazz — and the global presence of events such as the Kennedy Center Honors.”

The result is a blend of loyal international and local audiences. “The old saw is that Washington audiences are retired federal employees who don’t give money,” says Mael, “but we have diplomats and doctors and lawyers and businessmen, too. And they are generous.”

“Everyone knows each other and everyone is connected to each other, but we all have different missions and audiences.”

Nancy Petrisko, executive director of Washington Concert Opera, lauds the collaborative environment, which includes cross-promotions and coordination of calendars. What divisions exist, she observes, are in tastes: There are the “diehards” of WCO, who relish the primacy of the musical experience; the classicists of Opera Lafayette, who like their opera intimate and Baroque; the young experimentalists of UrbanArias, who prefer their opera edgy; and those who venture out to Wolf Trap Opera in summertime to hear emerging artists.

The functional dynamics are diverse, as well. “Our budgets are different, our missions are different, and our venues are different,” Petrisko says. UrbanArias performs in a black box theater in a former museum in Arlington. Opera Lafayette performs at the 500-seat Terrace Theater at the Kennedy Center, where WNO’s primary home is the Center’s 2,300-seat main stage. Wolf Trap performs both at The Barns, a 350-seat venue, as well as at the Filene Center, an amphitheater accommodating 7,000. Washington Concert Opera performs at the 1,500-seat Lisner Auditorium at George Washington University.

The diversity of audiences, missions and venues means minimal competition for dollars. Tracking national norms, corporate and foundation giving is relatively modest, with individual giving serving as the bedrock of each company. The D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities is generous to all, and the National Endowment for the Arts is a significant presence. Says Petrisko, “Mostly the competition comes from social services and other nonprofit needs rather than opera companies.”

Locale further defines the boundaries of these companies. “There is a clear geographic divide with the Potomac River,” says Kim Witman, senior director of Wolf Trap Opera, a “singer-centric” summer residency program dedicated to identifying national talent. Wolf Trap Opera, which performs in a bucolic setting about 30 minutes from the District of Columbia, draws audiences primarily from Northern Virginia, with a smaller contingent coming from D.C. and Maryland. UrbanArias, just a Metro stop over the water, draws nearly half of its audience from Virginia. “Arlington is like Brooklyn,” says UrbanAria’s Robert Wood. “There is a lot of pride and defensiveness about not being the big city across the river.”

Witman has observed the region’s opera scene change dramatically over her 30 years at Wolf Trap. There are fewer small companies, she says, but “the high end has gotten higher,” and, with the growth of artistry, budgets and audiences has come a growth in expectations. “Our patrons here are demanding a higher level of everything than they were 30 years ago: singing, production values, patron experience,” says Witman. Like WNO, Wolf Trap Opera exists as part of a larger enterprise, the Wolf Trap Foundation, which provides marketing and fundraising services. But such support doesn’t free Witman from an ongoing commitment to develop new audiences, whether devotees who cherish The Barns or the more relaxed audiences who enjoy their opera with a picnic under the stars.

Continued on page 44



LOUIS FORCEN

Opera Lafayette’s 2014 production of Rameau’s *Les Fêtes de L’Hymen et de L’Amour* with Jeffrey Thompson as Osiris (at right) and members of New York Baroque Dance Company. Conducted by Ryan Brown and co-directed and choreographed by Seán Curran, Anuradha Nehru and Catherine Turocy. Costume designs by Jennifer Tardiff Beall and lighting by Colin K. Bills.



SCOTT SUCHMAN FOR WNO

Washington National Opera’s 2014 production of *The Magic Flute* with (l-r) John Easterlin as Monostatos, Kathryn Lewek as the Queen of the Night, Deborah Nansteel as Third Lady, Sarah Mesko as Second Lady and Jacqueline Echols as First Lady. Conducted by Philippe Auguin and directed by Harry Silverstein. Scenic and costume design by Jun Kaneko and lighting by Paul Pyant.



DON LASSBELL

Washington Concert Opera’s 2014 performance of Verdi’s *Il corsaro* conducted by Antony Walker, with (l-r) Tamara Wilson as Gulnara, Michael Fabiano as Corrado and Nicole Cabell as Medora.

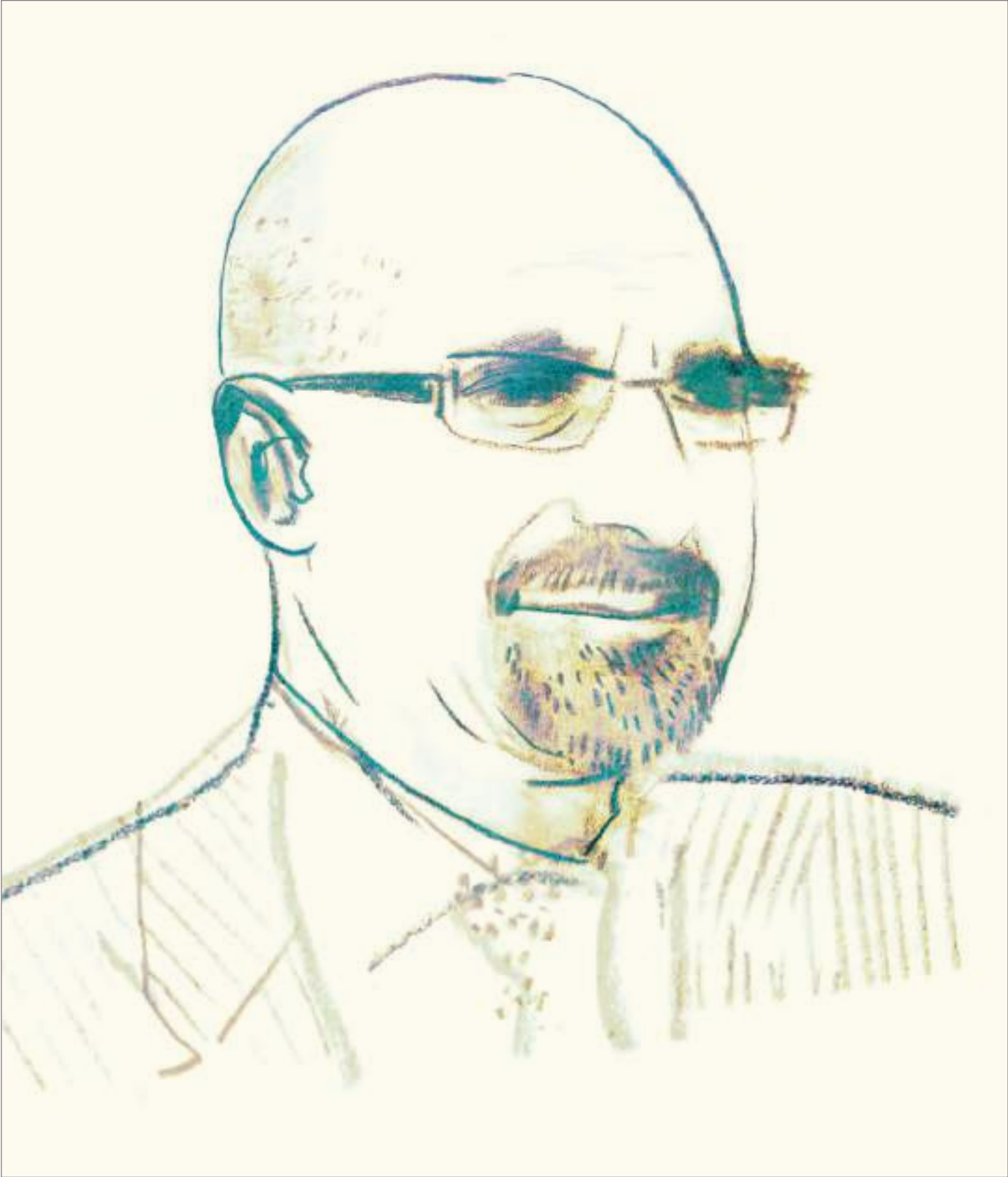


ILLUSTRATION BY VIVIENNE FLESHER

A PORTRAIT OF SCORCA OPERA'S ADVOCATE

This year marks the 25th anniversary of Marc A. Scorca's leadership of OPERA America as president/CEO.

In honor of the occasion, **F. PAUL DRISCOLL** sat down with Scorca at the National Opera Center to discuss how the field has evolved during his tenure.

FPD: You have defined your career as the leader of OPERA America. How did it begin, and could you have envisioned how the organization would evolve?

MAS: My first exposure to OPERA America was in 1983, when I was on the staff of New York City Opera. It was the Met's centennial year and the company hosted the annual opera conference. I only attended a reception and was completely intimidated. When I became managing director of Chicago Opera Theater in 1984, I became more familiar with OPERA America, and in 1988, I was elected to the board. Those two years on the board were a wonderful tutorial in understanding the organization.

FPD: How did the organization see itself at that time? What did it see as its collective purpose?

MAS: Its collective purpose at the time was to serve professional opera companies through their general directors. Some people referred to it as a general directors "club" rather than a service organization. That was one of the things I really wanted to overcome. I believed opera companies could be better served if we worked across the entire ecosystem: staff, boards, artists, publishers, artist managers, universities, conservatories. We began a strategic

planning process in 1990 to open up OPERA America.

One of the first things we changed was the format of the annual conference. Previously, the general directors sat around a large table like a committee of the old Soviet government, and panels presented sequentially. Others who attended were only allowed to observe from the sides. It wasn't until three or four years later that we introduced concurrent sessions for development, marketing, education and other tracks. It took a while to create the perception that the organization served many different constituencies.

FPD: Was there anything in particular that surprised you in those early years?

MAS: I traveled across the country to convene small regional meetings. If I were in Columbus, for instance, we'd bring together people from Dayton, Toledo, Cleveland and Cincinnati, and I would watch our members in the state of Ohio — all within a two- or three-hour drive of one another — meet for the first time. Even now, our members are under considerable pressure in their home cities and don't often travel or find time to have meetings. So, wherever OPERA America goes to this day, some 25 years later, our convening function brings members together for the first time.

FPD: What is the first thing members talk about once they meet?

MAS: Among smaller companies, it's usually "How do you grow? How do you grow from a one-person operation into a three-person operation? How do you pay for that growth? What's the next staff member you hire in a growth trajectory?" Members from larger companies talk a lot about the business of opera and its sustainability.

FPD: The notion of growth and sustainability has obviously changed quite a lot in 25 years. When did you see the beginning of that change?

MAS: Despite the shift in public funding priorities during the Reagan years, the 1990s were actually good for opera. The introduction of translation systems made opera more accessible. The Three Tenors crossed over into the popular culture. We didn't see the initial shifts in the opera infrastructure until the turn of the millennium, when the dot-com bubble burst and 9/11 sent the country into crisis.

FPD: Looking at the companies that have closed in past decade, I think there were indicators that they were in crisis.

MAS: You're absolutely right. In 2008, when we lost a number of companies, I said then and I would say it today, we



Marc A. Scorca interviewed by F. Paul Driscoll in the National Opera Center's Ardis Krainik Research and Reference Library.

“We are not only a granter. We are also a convener and a proponent of those who create and produce American work. And we are now seeing the results of our investments from the last three decades.”



AUDREY N. SACCONNE

didn't lose any strong companies. We lost companies that had accumulated financial problems. The recession of 2008 amplified those problems in a way that caused their closure. We did not lose a single healthy company.

Interestingly, at the same time companies began to experience increased financial pressures, we saw the rise of American repertoire. It's now hard to find an opera company in the U.S. that doesn't perform American opera, if not every season, then regularly. So many companies are commissioning and co-commissioning American works. OPERA America has had a role in shaping that over the last 25 years. We've awarded more than \$13 million in grants to support new operas, yet we are not only a granter. We are also a convener and a proponent of those who create and produce American work. And we are now seeing the results of our investments from the last three decades.

FPD: Would you say we may have reached a point where the financial outlook for opera companies seems a bit more optimistic?

MAS: OPERA America's most recent data report does show signs of recovery and stabilization. There are some increases in ticket sales and working capital, as well as in the number of companies with surpluses. So, there are some signs of an industry-wide turnaround that began in fiscal year 2013. There is now an explosion in the formation of smaller companies. And those companies succeed or fail as their dynamic, entrepreneurial artist-leaders succeed or fail. These smaller companies display a huge amount of energy — an energy that has mostly been focused on the creation and production of American work.

I wish we could address some of the larger financial challenges, particularly those that derive from changes in audience behavior. Many of our companies now report that they're serving more households than ever before, even as they are selling fewer tickets. More people are attending opera, but they're attending less frequently. People value flexibility more than loyalty to a single organization.

FPD: Do you think that the subscription model is obsolete?

MAS: When I first moved to Chicago in 1984, I took a lovely rental apartment, little knowing that living in that same building was Danny Newman, the guru of the subscription model. On Sunday evenings, while we were in the basement doing our laundry, he would lecture me about the theory of subscription. Danny used to say that the subscription model will really only die if we stop investing in it. Today, opera companies can't ignore the subscriber and must do everything possible to retain and attract new subscribers.

But we've also learned that we have to value every ticket buyer — whether it is someone who comes every other year to celebrate a birthday or an anniversary, or someone who comes twice a year. We need to observe their patterns to see if we can make them attend more frequently, irrespective of subscription.

FPD: How does an opera company market itself, whether it's a brand-new company or an old company? You must look at that a lot now, as companies are increasingly trying to make themselves more relevant to younger audiences.

MAS: A lot of our members' efforts to attract young people have been informed by older people who want younger people to behave just like they do because it would be nice to have them around. And that doesn't work. You can't trick young people into spending a lot of money to behave like old people and expect them to come back.

Technology has helped us become more sophisticated. The Internet, e-mail and social media have enabled us to escape from the prison of a single season brochure. Today, we can track the behavior of niche sectors of our audiences. We are more adept now at reaching out and finding the trigger that gets people to attend a performance.

FPD: Do you see a relationship between the size of an opera company board and the work that needs to be done? Is there such a thing as a board that's too big?

MAS: I get asked that question a lot. And I always explain that at OPERA

“Opera stars were legendary because they sang beautifully, with distinction, and inhabited the roles they portrayed.”

America, we don't promulgate models. What we talk about are reference points, reminding people that what works in one city or one company may not work in another. No "standard" model can simply be imported into your organization.

More important than the size of the board is the quality of its board member participation. The board needs to be big enough to encompass all the appropriate dimensions of diversity and the skills necessary to create a fighting force on behalf of the opera company. The board also needs to be big enough to guarantee essential resources for the company. At the same time, the board needs to be small enough to ensure bonds of mutual obligation. If someone doesn't show up at a board meeting, it should be noticed. If you're not at the opening night, it should be noticed. People need to feel that they are part of a team and that an absent member is noticed.

The success of opera companies is directly related to the skill set of board members, their understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and their fulfillment of those roles and responsibilities. A board of the past is preoccupied with trying to find a way to capture the golden years of the past, whatever those golden years may have been for them. These boards are frequently preoccupied with cutting costs. Boards of the future are responsive to the dynamics of the larger entertainment world and electronic media. They think about alternative venues, promote new work and invent strategies for engaging audiences in the artistic process. These boards exercise imagination.

FPD: When and how did you first become involved in opera?

MAS: I grew up here in New York and was an intern at the Met throughout college. My payment was access to the staff standing room (free!) in the back of the Dress Circle. My record was 41 performances in 44 days. Night

after night, I'd see singers of legendary stature.

FPD: What made a singer qualify as "legendary" at that time?

MAS: It was a variety of factors. They were legendary because they sang beautifully, with distinction, and inhabited the roles they portrayed. They were legendary because the recording industry plastered their images in record stores along Broadway. They had profiles in *The New York Times* and interviews with classical radio stations. They appeared on television and concertized across the country in cities of all sizes. Many complicated dynamics within our industry have diminished the perception of wonderful singers as stars. It's much harder to establish stardom today.

FPD: Who was the first star that you met face to face?

MAS: In college, I drove to Buffalo because Joan Sutherland was giving a recital. I went backstage, had her sign an autograph, began to drive home and got my first-ever speeding ticket. I got the speeding ticket because I was so excited about the concert.

FPD: When we talk about the industry now, there are not only star singers, but also people who have reached a degree of eminence offstage. Is there anyone that you have particularly admired over the years?

MAS: Whenever I face challenges in my work — making a decision or setting priorities — the person I channel is [the late Lyric Opera of Chicago General Director] Ardis Krainik. She was an extraordinary model of dedicated leadership. Completely intimidating, but such fun and so warm and nurturing. Today, the person with whom I either consult or think about if I have a challenging decision is Charles MacKay, general director of the The Santa Fe Opera. Charles is a model of diplomacy, good judgment and sound management. If something comes up during business hours, I will

call or e-mail Charles. After hours, I will channel Ardis Krainik.

FPD: What do you think of the next generation of opera leaders?

MAS: I'm encouraged by a number of really bright leaders in their 30s and early 40s. When I first came into the industry, the field was led by general directors who had a number of assistants running around. The chief assistant was tutored in the school of hard knocks and was then ready to take over an opera company someplace else. Today, we have expert staff in every department: fundraising, marketing, communications, education, technical, production, artistic, administration. So, rather than being the doer of all things, the general director now must be the expert manager of all things. It's a very different set of skills.

FPD: General directors of earlier generations would never have dreamed that they would be involved in fundraising the way modern general directors are now. When did that change?

MAS: The change has been gradual. Now, the general director is also the chief fundraiser, and OPERA America mirrors that trend. When I first came on in 1990, I did almost no fundraising. We had a list of 10 or 15 national corporations and foundations that supported our work. Slowly those corporations stopped funding the arts on a national level. It wasn't until the mid-1990s that we instituted our first individual donor program. Today, individual contributions almost exceed the dues member companies pay. Our members are experiencing the same thing; individual contributions frequently exceed ticket income.

FPD: Let's talk about fundraising here at OPERA America. You have a beautiful National Opera Center for which you have raised a substantial amount. What brought you to New York from Washington, D.C. to build the Opera Center?

Continued on page 46

FDA

Fisher Dachs Associates Theatre Planning & Design

22 West 19th Street, New York, NY 10011 | 212-691-3020 | www.fda-online.com



Mariinsky II Opera House, St Petersburg, Russia



Tony Kostecki, General Director
Darren K. Woods, Artistic Director

EXPLORE
OUR SEASON AT
SEAGLECOLONY.ORG

Supported by



The Italian Girl in Algiers 2014

CELEBRATING OUR FIRST 100 YEARS!

FALSTAFF
INTO THE WOODS

2015 SEASON

THE BARBER OF SEVILLE
LES MISERABLES

999 CHARLEY HILL RD., SCHROON LAKE, NY 12870 - (518) 532-7875

SHERRILL MILNES
VOICE PROGRAMS

Maria Zouves, Executive Director
Sherrill Milnes, Artistic Director



We celebrate
MARC SCORCA
for 25 years of excellence with OPERA America
"BRAVO!"

SAVANNAH
VOICE FESTIVAL

AUGUST 2 - 16, 2015
featuring our 2015 Festival Opera
Bizet's Carmen
starring Jennifer Johnson Cano

VOICE
EXPERIENCE FOUNDATION

2015 SUMMER INTENSIVES
Milnes VOICE Studio
Florida VOICE Project
for all levels of development

855.76.OPERA | SavannahVOICEFestival.org | VOICEExperienceFoundation.org | SherrillMilnes.com

2015 Festival Sponsors: The Ford Plantation Club, The Westin Savannah Harbor Resort & Spa, VisitSavannah, Savannah Friends of Music, Savannah Morning News, Savannah Magazine, WJCL News, Old Town Trolley, Lesley Francis PR, Tourism Leadership Council, Georgia Tourism Bureau, The Italian Society of Savannah, The Salt Table, The Ziegler House Inn, RedRover Interactive

Celebrating Opera in America



IMG Artists

IMG Artists

7 West 54th Street NYC 10019

T: 212 994 3500 ♦ www.imgartists.com

 [IMGArtistsNY](#)  [imgartistsvocalnyc](#)

Artist Management ♦ Dance & Attractions ♦ Touring ♦ Events ♦ Consulting
New York ♦ Los Angeles ♦ London ♦ Paris ♦ Hannover ♦ Berlin ♦ Lucca ♦ Seoul

Indulge yourself in this glittering new production!

Virginia Opera 40

Giuseppe Verdi

LA TRAVIATA

NORFOLK • FAIRFAX • RICHMOND • VIRGINIA BEACH

March 13 – April 12

Visit our website or call for more info and to purchase tickets

866.673.7282 • VAOPERA.ORG

The 2015-2016 Virginia Opera Season

Orpheus in the Underworld (September 2015)

La Bohème (November 2015)

Romeo and Juliet (February 2016)

The Flying Dutchman (April 2016)

Season Tickets now on sale starting as low as \$59 for all 4 productions!

Partner with us for special offers and exclusive content

VIRGINIA IS FOR OPERA LOVERS




San Francisco Opera salutes Marc Scorca on 25 years of championing Opera in America!




© Drew Altizer

© Cesar Rubio

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

DAVID GOCKLEY
General Director

NICOLA LUISOTTI
Music Director

A NEW VOICE FOR NEW AUDIENCES

A REPORT FROM THE WALLACE FOUNDATION

To explore arts organizations' efforts to reach new audiences and deepen relationships with existing audiences, The Wallace Foundation has commissioned a series stemming from its Wallace Excellence Awards initiative of 2004–2014. The *Wallace Studies in Building Arts Audiences* series provides evidence-based knowledge on audience engagement efforts that can be applied by performing and visual arts organizations across the country. The first opera case study, *Someone Who Speaks Their Language: How a Nontraditional Partner Brought New Audiences to Minnesota Opera*, by **BOB HARLOW** and **CINDY COX ROMAN**, was released in December. An abridged version appears below. (The complete study can be viewed at wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/audience-development-for-the-arts.) A second case study, with a focus on Seattle Opera, will be released this month and will be featured in the next issue of *Opera America Magazine*.

It was late February 2008, and **MINNESOTA OPERA** would soon raise the curtain on the 300-year-old German Baroque opera *The Fortunes of King Croesus*. It marked the first time a U.S. opera company would stage the obscure work, but despite advance praise from national and local media, ticket sales were dismal. As the company's marketing and communications director, it was up to Lani Willis to turn things around. "The opera had some of the most beautiful musical moments we've had since I've been here," says Willis, "but I couldn't sell it."

As she brainstormed ways to fill the house, Willis got a phone call from the producer of a local talk-radio show called *A Balanced Breakfast with Ian and Margery*. The drive-time morning show was hosted by Ian Punnett and his wife, Margery, on myTalk 107.1, a commercial radio station in Minneapolis-St. Paul that Willis knew well. As part of her job, Willis routinely scouted media outlets and personalities who might cover the opera company. When she discovered a few years earlier that Punnett was a longtime opera fan, she contacted his producer and arranged for Punnett to conduct several on-air interviews with Artistic Director Dale Johnson about upcoming productions.

This time, it was the myTalk 107.1 producer who had an idea to pitch.

Punnett's wife wanted to do something really special for his approaching birthday. Could one of the company's opera singers come to their studios and surprise Punnett by singing "Happy Birthday" on the air? Willis readily agreed — and then sensed an opportunity. Punnett's birthday was Monday, March 3, the day before a Tuesday-night performance of *Croesus* with poor sales. Willis asked if Minnesota Opera could give Punnett free tickets to the show as well as tickets to give away to his listeners. The promotion didn't present any conflicts of interest, so the radio station agreed.

Willis figured the giveaway would move about 50 tickets. Instead, callers jammed the phone lines of the opera company's ticket office and scooped up 500 tickets in two hours. The following night, the Ordway reached 91 percent capacity. The audience was "electric," says Willis. They were effusive, giving several vocal ovations and clapping loudly. The crowd's enthusiasm even caught the attention of the performers and backstage crew. The next day, myTalk 107.1 received several calls and e-mails from listeners thanking them for the night out. "This was my first opera," wrote one. "It was so exciting. Thank you for the free tickets."

Willis was delighted by what had happened so serendipitously — and

intent on figuring out how to do it again. A partnership with myTalk 107.1, the nation's only talk-radio show geared toward women, had never crossed her mind before. Five pairs of hosts entertain listeners for two to three hours a day with banter on the latest celebrity breakups and entertainment news. The tone is irreverent and cheeky, and hosts like to poke fun at themselves and guests, but the station's demographics intrigued Willis and her staff. Seventy percent are highly educated women between the ages of 35 and 64. That was exactly the target audience Willis was hoping to cultivate and draw in bigger numbers to the opera company.

Minnesota Opera's own research has identified that, in addition to cost, there is a steep perceptual barrier for opera. Many people who've never attended an opera believe that doing so requires specialized knowledge that they do not possess. Minnesota Opera also knew that people are most often introduced to the opera through family and friends. With that knowledge in mind, Willis and her staff launched a one-to-one marketing promotion in the 2008–2009 season that encouraged full-season subscribers to bring a friend to the opera for free. The only rule for the Bring-a-Friend program was that the friend had to be new to Minnesota Opera's database. The company then added them to future

Bravo, Marc!

For 25 years of distinguished leadership in opera.



SINGS YOUR PRAISES!

Michigan Opera Theatre
SPRING 2015 OPERA SEASON
 at the Detroit Opera House



FRANZ LEHAR'S

THE
MERRY WIDOW

April 11-19, 2015

Featuring Deborah Voigt
 Directed by Kelly Robinson
 Kristen Blodgett conducts the
 Michigan Opera Theatre Orchestra



CHARLES GOUNOD'S

FAUST

May 9-17, 2015

Featuring Caitlyn Lynch
 Directed by Bernard Uzan
 Steven Mercurio conducts the
 Michigan Opera Theatre Orchestra

FOR TICKETS & INFO
313.237.SING or
michiganopera.org

solicitations. While only 15 to 20 percent of subscribers took advantage of the offer in any given season, nearly half of the friends who were invited have gone on to buy tickets themselves.

Willis started to think about the one-to-one promotion in light of the success with the spontaneous ticket giveaway on Punnett's show. The giveaway had drawn a large number of women in the demographic that Minnesota Opera had been targeting through its Bring-a-Friend program. To his 50,000 listeners, Punnett was a friend whose opinion they valued. While his morning show captured a small share of the market — 3.4 percent of the 5:00 to 9:00 a.m. market among women ages 25 to 54 — his listeners were highly engaged. As Willis puts it, "People who listen to it, *really* listen to it."

Punnett's love of opera developed at an early age, prompted by the stories and characters. While his talk show revolved around gossip and TV, he sometimes interjected a review of an opera he had recently seen. For Punnett, there's not much of a leap between the drama on reality shows like *Real Housewives* and the timeless, over-the-top stories of opera. The elaborate costumes, beautiful music and gorgeous sets of an opera production add to its grandeur. Indeed, he knew how to make a 300-year-old Baroque opera sound so fun and exciting that his listeners jumped at the chance to get free tickets. Willis believed that Punnett, with his relatable style, had the potential to become "opera's Oprah" and ignite interest in the art form just as the TV talk-show host had done for books. Minnesota Opera's Bring-a-Friend program had been a modest attempt at relationship marketing. Could the company partner with an ambassador like Punnett and successfully scale that 1-to-1 concept to 1-to-50,000?

Making the Partnership

A partnership with myTalk 107.1 was certainly an atypical media choice, but given Punnett's love of opera and his strong connection with listeners, Willis approached the radio station about a formal relationship built around advertising that featured Punnett. She believed that Punnett's endorsement could help address the perceptual barriers among women ages 35 to 60 that opera was stuffy and "not for me," while the ticket giveaways could address the cost barrier, eliminating the financial risk that might keep them from trying something new. Minnesota Opera's proposal easily fit into the station's business model, as it already had a practice of having hosts endorse certain paid advertisers for which they felt an affinity. The radio station also suggested expanding the partnership to include a smaller role for its sister TV station, local ABC affiliate KSTP-TV.

Such an endeavor would be both risky and costly for Minnesota Opera. To cover the expenses, it applied for and received a four-year \$750,000 Wallace Excellence Award from The Wallace Foundation. Key budget areas included advertising and endorsement fees over four years (\$315,000); a new staff position to build, manage and track comp-ticket recipients (\$175,000); survey and focus group research to evaluate the program (\$70,000); and defraying the potential face value cost of tickets given away (\$155,000).

Midway through its 2008–2009 season, Minnesota Opera set in motion the following:

Live Endorsements: On average, Punnett did 20 one-minute live endorsements for each production every season, one every weekday morning, beginning two weeks before each production opened and continuing until the last performance. Endorsements were scheduled at a different time each day

during Punnett's four-hour show to catch listeners who tuned in earlier or later. As the performance date neared, Punnett tweaked his endorsements to create buzz and a sense of urgency to buy tickets. Punnett used talking points prepared by Willis and her team, but also improvised. In doing so, he tried to open what he calls the "fun door" to opera. He eschewed explanations of a work's history or discussions of aesthetic elements because unfamiliar audiences could easily get lost and feel that they did not know enough to be able to enjoy the opera. He wanted to find that hook that would, as he says, "create the shortest-distance line between me talking and somebody going."

Recorded Commercials: To expand his reach, Punnett recorded 30-second commercials to promote Minnesota Opera's productions on other myTalk 107.1 shows during the week and weekend. The ads were spread out across myTalk 107.1 programs to reach listeners in the target demographic who tuned in to the station at other times. Punnett wrote the commercials in collaboration with Minnesota Opera's marketing team to meet the same two-fold goal as his live endorsements: build awareness of upcoming performances and show the fun and familiar aspects of the art form.

Ticket Giveaways: Comp tickets were offered for the Tuesday-night performance, as it was often the show for which an attendee would be selected to watch the opera *Pretty Woman*-style in a box seat with Punnett and his wife, Margery. The promotion was a hit, but there was one snag: On one occasion Punnett drew the lucky winner of the box seat from among the performance's

entire audience, not the myTalk 107.1 comp-ticket holders. The winner was an older patron who didn't know the radio host and wasn't thrilled with his new seat.

Opera Insights: The partnership also called for Punnett to co-host Opera Insights, a free 30-minute educational talk held in the Ordway's lobby before each performance. Opera Insights, which has been part of Minnesota Opera's programming for many years, introduces audience members to the opera's music, characters, and historical and cultural contexts. Artistic Director Dale Johnson and members of the artistic staff lead the program, with young opera singers typically joining in to answer questions from the audience and to perform a brief excerpt from the production.

Punnett co-hosted Opera Insights at each Tuesday-night performance, the same night that ticket-giveaway recipients attended. His involvement reassured first-time operagoers that they would feel welcome when they walked into the Ordway. Willis noticed that the energy felt different when Punnett co-hosted Opera Insights — there was laughter and enthusiastic applause. However, not everyone loved Punnett's layman perspective, and a few longtime patrons complained that the new format was superficial and changed their season subscriptions to another night.

Artist Interviews: When the partnership began, Punnett conducted call-in interviews with opera singers on his radio show the day of the ticket giveaway. Punnett engaged his guests in typical myTalk 107.1 banter and celebrity gossip. The goal was to make the artists relatable and demystify the world of

opera for people who had never seen a performance. The marketing staff asked only those artists they knew well to participate in the interviews and prepped them by explaining the format. While some artists enjoyed it, others were irked that they had to get up early on a Monday morning, one of their few days off, to have such a fluffy conversation. Concerned by feedback, the interviews were tapered down in the second and third years of the partnership.

Partnership with KSTP-TV: The centerpiece of the partnership with KSTP-TV was a ticket giveaway during *Twin Cities Live*, a local talk and variety show airing weekdays from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. Five times a year — once for each production, usually on the Thursday before opening night — artists from Minnesota Opera appeared on the show and sang an excerpt from the opera with piano accompaniment. When they were finished, the *Twin Cities Live* hosts announced that each member of the 50-person studio audience would get a free ticket to the Tuesday-night performance of the production. This automatic giveaway meant that, unlike Punnett's listeners, audience members didn't have to call Minnesota Opera for a ticket.

Minnesota Opera quickly found shortcomings with the partnership. Unlike Punnett, the *Twin Cities Live* hosts didn't have a personal connection to opera. They interviewed the artists like journalists instead of enthusiastic fans, with maybe even too much reverence to make them relatable, according to Willis, and approached the ticket giveaway as just another segment on the show. There was also the issue

Congratulations to Marc A. Scorca for 25 years of visionary leadership of OPERA America!

2018 Prize
\$25,000
Commission
and a full production



Proposals due
December 1, 2015

For complete
information visit

potsdam.edu/pellicciotti

of frequency. Minnesota Opera was featured on *Twin Cities Live* only five times a year, compared to the continuous drumbeat on Punnett's show and during other myTalk 107.1 programs through his prerecorded commercials. In all, Minnesota Opera ran eight ticket giveaways on *Twin Cities Live* starting in the 2008–2009 season. Although it had originally planned to continue them alongside the giveaways on myTalk 107.1, a low redemption rate led the company to phase them out.

Transition to Purchase: Minnesota Opera planned to convert comp-ticket holders to paying patrons gradually. The company's recently hired database administrator managed the new database of comp-ticket recipients, segmented it for e-mail blasts to move them through a graduated sequence, and tracked movement through that sequence. The sequence began after comp recipients redeemed their free tickets. Minnesota Opera sent them an e-mail thanking them for coming and inviting them to attend the next opera that season for \$20. To give newcomers the best possible experience, the \$20 offer was usually good for any night and for any seat in the house, with occasional restrictions on top-tier seats. It was a significant discount, given that Minnesota Opera's very best seats cost as much as \$200. If a purchase wasn't made, the offer was repeated for every opera for the next two seasons or until a ticket was purchased. Recipients who didn't buy a ticket over the course of two seasons were dropped from the sequence.

Once a comp recipient bought a \$20 ticket, she was offered a half-price ticket for the next opera. As with the \$20 ticket promotion, the offer was extended for every opera for the next two seasons or until a purchase was made. A person who bought a half-price ticket was then offered a 25 percent discount on a regular subscription for the upcoming season. Those who didn't buy a subscription dropped back to the half-price ticket offer, and the cycle repeated for the next three operas. Once a patron purchased a subscription, she received a 10 percent discount offer to renew it. If she followed through, she was entered into the database of regular patrons.

While the action track looked great on paper, it turned out to be an imprecise predictor of consumer behavior. Some comp recipients bought \$20 tickets, then paid full price for advance tickets to see a popular opera. A few even jumped straight to a subscription in response to discounts offered outside of the action track. Minnesota Opera kept an open

mind because it didn't want to close off any opportunity to engage these new operagoers. "You have to keep giving them opportunities to engage with you," Willis says, "and then figure out what their participation level is going to be."

Partnership Results

Higher Redemption Rates: In the first year, 81 percent of Punnett's listeners who received a pair of free tickets used them, compared to 39 percent of the studio audience of *Twin Cities Live*, who received single tickets. Willis and her team attributed the low redemption rate among *Twin Cities Live* recipients

to having given out single tickets (they had assumed that people went to the TV show with someone else, who would also receive a ticket and be able to go with them to the opera). They changed course and gave out pairs of tickets the following season, but saw redemption rates fall to 25 percent. Also, *Twin Cities Live* audiences passively got tickets whether they wanted them or not. Punnett's listeners, meanwhile, had to actively pursue the free tickets by calling the Minnesota Opera box office, sometimes waiting up to 45 minutes on the line.

Continued on page 49

Irene Dalis

1925-2014

Irene Dalis, before her retirement from the stage in 1977, was a principal artist at New York's Metropolitan Opera for twenty consecutive seasons, appeared regularly with Covent Garden, Berlin, Hamburg, Bayreuth and other major opera houses in Europe and the U. S. and was distinguished by the range and large number of roles in her repertoire.

Of her debut at the Met in 1957 at age 31, Raymond A. Erickson, in a review in Musical America, wrote "Miss Dalis, young mezzo-soprano of San José, Calif., who has been singing for the past three years with the Berlin Municipal Opera,

met the exacting demands of the part of Eboli with such vocal and dramatic authority as to make her debut one of the most exciting in recent seasons. While there are mezzos with more luscious voices at the Metropolitan, hers is of first-rate caliber,



a little dry in the lower register but brilliant at the top, with carrying power all the way through. Her expert vocalism and musicianship were immediately apparent in the Veil Song, which Miss Dalis sang better than I have ever heard it sung. In the tricky ensemble with Carlo and Rodrigo in the Queen's gardens she was just as impressive, and her sweeping, almost torrential handling of "O don fatale" won her a genuine ovation from the capacity audience. Everywhere, Miss Dalis' acting went hand-in-glove with her singing."

We at Opera San José would like to acknowledge the significant contribution

Irene Dalis made to opera in general and in particular to Opera San José, the company she founded in 1984. She had a brilliance, energy, and passion that enriched our lives and the lives of countless others. She is greatly missed.

MET PERFORMANCES

1957 Don Carlo (debut) Il Trovatore Aida	1961 Tannhäuser Il Trovatore Tristan und Isolde Aida Don Carlo Parsifal Lohengrin Götterdämmerung Das Rheingold Die Walküre	1963 Adriana Lecouvreur Tristan und Isolde Cavalleria Rusticana Aida Götterdämmerung Don Carlo Il Trovatore	1965 Aida Salome Die Walküre Il Trovatore Don Carlo	1968 Aida Adriana Lecouvreur Don Carlo	1972 Salome Parsifal
1958 Aida Tristan und Isolde Die Walküre	1962 Götterdämmerung Das Rheingold Die Walküre	1964 Il Trovatore Aida Lohengrin Don Carlo Cavalleria Rusticana Pagliacci Macbeth Samson et Dalila	1966 Samson et Dalila Salome Aida Cavalleria Rusticana Pagliacci Die Frau ohne Schatten Tristan und Isolde	1969 Die Frau ohne Schatten Adriana Lecouvreur Il Trovatore Aida	1973 Un Ballo in Maschera Aida Il Trovatore
1959 Tristan und Isolde			1967 Tristan und Isolde Lohengrin Aida	1970 Aida Un Ballo in Maschera	1974 Bluebeard's Castle Gianni Schicchi
1960 Aida Tristan und Isolde Macbeth Die Walküre Tannhäuser	1962 Götterdämmerung Das Rheingold Die Walküre Aida Macbeth Elektra Cavalleria Rusticana Pagliacci			1971 Die Frau ohne Schatten Parsifal Aida Il Trovatore Cavalleria Rusticana Pagliacci Tristan und Isolde	1975 Bluebeard's Castle Gianni Schicchi 1976 Il Trittico



The National Trustee Recognition Award Dinner with (l-r) OPERA America Chairman Frayda B. Lindemann, Carol F. Henry, Sue Bienkowski, James H. McCoy, Frank Kuehn and John Nesholm. Not pictured: Michael Morres.

2015 NATIONAL OPERA TRUSTEE RECOGNITION AWARD

On February 27, at a reception and dinner at a private club in New York City, OPERA America honored four outstanding opera company board members as part of the 2015 National Opera Trustee Recognition Program.

The honorees were John Nesholm, **SEATTLE OPERA**; James H. McCoy, **HAWAII OPERA THEATRE**; Sue Bienkowski, **LONG BEACH OPERA**; and Frank “Woody” Kuehn, **OPERA SOUTHWEST**. The evening also honored Michael Morres, director and former president of **PACIFIC OPERA VICTORIA**.

Since its inception eight years ago, the National Opera Trustee Recognition Program, sponsored by Bank of America, has highlighted the exemplary leadership, generosity and audience-building efforts of opera company trustees. Each year, Professional Company Members are invited to nominate trustees for this award, and one honoree is chosen from each of OPERA America’s four budget levels. A committee led by OPERA America Board Member Carol F. Henry, chairman of **LOS ANGELES OPERA**’s executive



Mezzo-soprano Blythe Gaisert and baritone Christopher Dylan Herbert perform an excerpt from *As One*, by Laura Kaminsky, Mark Campbell and Kimberly Reed, following the presentation of awards.

committee, selected this year’s honorees.

“Successful opera companies depend on effective boards, and the National Opera Trustee Recognition Award affords the entire opera community an opportunity to salute and learn from those who have been so generous in their passion for the art form, vision and support of their opera companies,” said Marc A. Scorca, president/CEO of OPERA America. ●

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT GRANTS AWARDED TO 11 COMPANIES

In December, OPERA America awarded grants totaling \$150,000 to 11 companies through its Audience Development grant program, which promotes deep learning experiences about new or infrequently produced American operas and music-theater works. Each grant supports audience development activities associated with a specific work being produced by a North American opera company. The grants are drawn from *The Opera Fund*, a growing endowment that has supported new works and related audience programming with nearly \$13 million in grants.

Applications for *The Opera Fund*’s Audience Development grants were reviewed by an independent panel: Steven Osgood, conductor; Rebecca Ratzkin, senior consultant, WolfBrown; John Michael Schert, visiting artist, University of Chicago Booth School of Business; Lisa Steindler, artistic director, Z Space; and Theodore Wiprud, vice president, education, the New York Philharmonic.

Cincinnati Opera

Morning Star by Ricky Ian Gordon and William M. Hoffman

Cincinnati Opera will create a three-part series of programs to cultivate audiences for this world premiere: The Ricky Ian Gordon Songbook Concert, in which local singers will perform selections from Gordon’s works with the composer at the piano; a documentary film about the creation of *Morning Star* by Academy Award-nominated documentary filmmakers Julie Reichert and Steven Bogner; and Meet the *Morning Star* Creative Team, a forum in which the composer and librettist will speak about the creation of their opera.

Fort Worth Opera

JFK by David T. Little and Royce Vavrek

Fort Worth Opera will launch *JFK: Five Decades of Progress*, an eight-month community engagement event series that will explore social progress from JFK’s inauguration in 1961 through

the present day. Fort Worth Opera will partner with organizations throughout North Texas to produce events that highlight topics surrounding the piece, including the creative impetus behind the opera, the evolution and role of aeronautics in the United States, race and civil rights issues, and the evolution of political discourse in the media.

Gotham Chamber Opera

Charlie Parker's Yardbird by Daniel Schnyder and Bridgette A. Wimberly

Gotham Chamber Opera will present a series of public events to provide New Yorkers with access to the life and work of jazz legend Charlie Parker. Activities will include a symposium at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture; a lecture at the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation; a walking tour of East Village sites associated with Parker, including his historic home; and a concert at a New York City jazz venue that will include excerpts from the opera and compositions by Parker.

Long Beach Opera

Hydrogen Jukebox by Philip Glass and Allen Ginsberg

Long Beach Opera will partner with several local organizations and personalities on a series of events connected to its production of *Hydrogen Jukebox*, a kaleidoscopic retrospective of American counter-culture. Programs include a cultural monuments tour of downtown Los Angeles; a matinee screening of the cult classic *Easy Rider* at the historic Art Theatre of Long Beach; and a meal with the director at a 1960s Los Angeles diner. LBO plans to target audiences that are interested in opera, theater, visual and performing arts, movies, and American history and politics.

Michigan Opera Theatre

Frida by Robert Xavier Rodriguez, Hilary Blecher and Migdalia Cruz

Michigan Opera Theatre will celebrate and promote the Michigan premiere of *Frida* through Community Opera Club events in 12 Southeastern Michigan communities. This is part of a pilot project to establish a permanent network of community-based clubs in association

with MOT's annual opera season. The goal is to create an informal, social and personal way to interest new people in opera, as well as encourage those who already love opera to become more deeply involved in supporting, promoting and learning about the art form.

Minnesota Opera

The Shining by Paul Moravec and Mark Campbell

As a part of its New Works Initiative, Minnesota Opera will present *The Shining*, a world premiere based on the 1977 novel by Stephen King. To demystify the process of creating opera, Minnesota Opera will host musicians of the St. Cloud Symphony Orchestra at educational events and workshops associated with the opera. In addition, Minnesota Opera artists and staff will work with the St. Cloud Symphony Orchestra to perform a piece from *The Shining* for local audiences.

Opera Saratoga

The Long Walk by Jeremy Howard Beck and Stephanie Fleischmann

For the world premiere of *The Long Walk* with American Lyric Theater, Opera Saratoga will present programs relating to the opera's central character, a soldier and explosives expert who returns from Iraq. In collaboration with the New York State Military Museum and other community partners, Opera Saratoga will explore the highly topical issues of veteran reintegration, post-traumatic stress disorder and blast-induced traumatic brain injury, as well as the challenges faced by families of those who have served in the military.

Opera Theatre of Saint Louis

Shalimar the Clown by Jack Perla and Rajiv Joseph

In support of this world premiere, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis will host a series of audience engagement activities featuring author Salman Rushdie, composer Jack Perla, librettist Rajiv Joseph and tenor Sean Panikkar, as well as a variety of other artists. Events will focus on the adaptation of an acclaimed novel into an opera, the changing face of contemporary opera, shifting global politics, and common themes of humanity across different ethnicities and religions.

Seattle Opera

An American Dream by Jack Perla and Jessica Murphy Moo

This world premiere will be accompanied by programming inspired by the two Seattle women on whom the opera is based: Mary Matsuda Gruenewald, a Japanese-American author who was incarcerated during World War II, and Marianne Weltmann, a Jewish-German opera singer whose family escaped Hitler's Europe. To inform and enrich the audience experience, attendees will have the opportunity to engage with the work and its stories through participatory activities, including tableaux vivants, theatrical vignettes, and conversations with the creative team and community members, before and after each performance.

Skylight Music Theatre

The Snow Dragon by Somtow Sucharitkul

For this world premiere, Skylight Music Theatre will organize a series of activities to engage new audiences, connect young adults with opera and deepen audiences' understanding of the art form. Activities will include behind-the-scenes tours, artist talks and community discussions. Building upon interest in Sucharitkul as both a musical composer and writer of science fiction, the company will also host an "Operacon" science fiction convention to coincide with the opera's opening weekend.

Tulsa Opera

Shining Brow by Daron Aric Hagen and Paul Muldoon

The story behind *Shining Brow* will be explored through *Art, Architecture, and Opera on the Prairie*, a series of programs about the opera's protagonist, Frank Lloyd Wright. Inspired by a symposium on Wright's presence in Oklahoma, Tulsa Opera will facilitate a discussion between the composer and art enthusiasts, architecture students and Tulsa Young Professionals. The company will carry out a social media effort to maintain awareness of the arts, and will explore artistic themes relevant to the opera in collaboration with the Philbrook Museum of Art. ●

RECITAL HALL NAMED FOR MARC A. SCORCA

On February 28, the Audition Recital Hall of the National Opera Center was named in honor of Marc A. Scorca on the occasion of his 25th anniversary as president/CEO of OPERA America. Following remarks by Frayda B. Lindemann, OPERA America board chairman and vice president of **THE METROPOLITAN OPERA**, and Evans Mirageas, artistic director of **CINCINNATI OPERA**, mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade took the stage to perform a program curated for the occasion, including Canteloube's "Brezairola," Heggie's "A Route to the Sky" and von Stade's trademark aria, "Voi che sapete" from *Le nozze di Figaro*.

Charles MacKay, general director of **THE SANTA FE OPERA** and former chairman of OPERA America, led the formal dedication of the hall. "Under Marc's watch, the organization has grown exponentially in scope and range of services," said MacKay. "There has been a complete transformation in terms of inclusiveness in membership and board representation. He brought us to and created the Opera Center — virtually conjuring it out of thin air, while really conjuring it out of cement and steel and glass. It has surpassed even our wildest expectations."

The evening continued with a dinner for contributors to the anniversary celebration (see p. 38), followed by a cabaret led by soprano Amy Burton and her husband, composer and pianist John Musto. Other performers included sopranos Lauren Flanigan and Jennifer Zetlan, tenor William Ferguson, mezzo-soprano Heather Johnson, baritone Shea Owens, and pianists Timothy Long and Stephen Gosling. Composer Paola



Prestini and librettist Mark Campell wrote a special tribute song for the occasion.

Scorca spearheaded the creation of the National Opera Center, which opened its doors in 2012 and now welcomes more than 7,500 performers, creators and artists each month. The newly named hall is the central hub of the Opera Center, and throughout the year it serves as the venue for countless auditions, recordings and performances. ●

Top (l-r): Frayda B. Lindemann, chairman, OPERA America, and vice president, the Metropolitan Opera; Marc A. Scorca, president/CEO, OPERA America; and Charles MacKay, general director, The Santa Fe Opera.

Middle: Frederica von Stade.

Bottom (l-r): Jane M. Gullong, senior development adviser, OPERA America; Jane A. Gross and Jane Robinson, members, National Opera Center Board of Overseers.



ALL PHOTOS BY JEFF REEDER



Clockwise from left:

William Florescu, general director, Florentine Opera Company; Allen R. Freedman, board member, OPERA America; Nicole Paiement, artistic director, Opera Parallèle, and board member, OPERA America; and Judy Brick Freedman, board member, Beth Morrison Projects.

Shea Owens and William Ferguson.

Lauren Flanigan.

John Musto and Amy Burton.

Margee M. Filstrup; Melody and Warren Schubert, regional directors, Opera Volunteers International; Karin Eames; and Scott H. Filstrup, vice president, Tulsa Opera.

ALL PHOTOS BY JEFF REEDER



The Following Board Members and Friends of OPERA America Contributed to the Campaign to Celebrate Marc A. Scorca's 25th Anniversary as President/CEO of OPERA America.

LEADERSHIP GIFTS

Berwind Fund	Scott H. and Margee M. Filstrup	Horace H. Irvine II	John J. Pohanka
Emilie Roy Corey	Allen R. and Judy Brick	Harry Lee and Clive Potter	Jane and Morton Robinson
Elizabeth and Jean-Marie	Freedman	Ronald and Barbara Leirvik	Jill and William Steinberg
Eveillard	Mary Ann and Lloyd Gerlach	Jay Lesenger	Steve and Jenny Trampe
James A. Feldman	Jane A. Gross	Frayda and George Lindemann	John G. Turner and
and Natalie Wexler	Carol and Warner Henry	Susan F. and William C. Morris	Jerry G. Fischer
Alvin W. and Dale S. Filstrup	Pamela J. Hoiles	Michael and Noémi Neidorff	Anonymous

CELEBRATION COMMITTEE

Bank of America	Catherine French	Charles MacKay	Susan and Jeremy Shamos
Susan Bienkowski	Anthony Freud and Colin Ure	Beth Madison	Marilyn Shapiro
Gus and Mary Blanchard	Louise Gaylord	Eloise McEldowney	Sarah Billingham Solomon
Keith and Jennifer Cerny	Sherwin M. Goldman	David S. McIntosh	and Howard Solomon
Eugenie C. Cowan	Jane M. Gullong	David Mesker and	Mr. and Mrs. Paul A.
L. Henry Cox III	Jane Hartley	Dorothy Haase	Stuhldreier III
Don Dagenais	Meredith Hathorn Penick	Zizi Mueller and John LaCava	Gregory C. Swinehart
Julia W. Dayton	Margaret Haupt	Esther Nelson	Robert S. and
Dr. and Mrs. Joseph DeLeese	Evan J. Hazell	Timothy O'Leary	Shoshana B. Tancer
Karin Eames	Jake Heggie	Ruth Orth and Rick Harper	Melia and Mike Tourangeau
Bob Ellis and Jane Bernstein	Plato and Dorothy Karayanis	Mr. and Mrs. E. Lee Perry	Diane Wondisford
Lisa Erdberg and	Esther and Kenneth Kashkin	Patric and Mary Powell	Francesca Zambello and
Dennis Gibbons	Lori Laitman	James and Deborah Reda	Faith Gay
Carlisle Floyd	Carol Lazier and Jay Merritt	Melody and Warren Schubert	Anonymous

GIFTS IN HONOR OF MARC A. SCORCA

Mark Adamo and John Corigliano	David B. Devan and	Cassandra E. Joseph	OPERA America Staff
Patty and Jim Beggs	David A. Dubbeldam	Jenny Kallick and Robert Bezucha	Nicole Paielement
David Bennett	David DiChiera	Daniel Kleinknecht	Nicholas Payne
Beth Morrison Projects	Lawrence Edelson	Joseph H. Kluger	Anna Rabinowitz
Daniel Biaggi	Michael Egel	Ben Krywosz	Nicholas Russell
Dorothy Anne Blatt	Sarah Moulton Faux	Andrew M. Kurtz	Norman D. Ryan
Larry and Coren Bomback	William Florescu	Robert E. Lee III	Ian, Annie and Jacqueline Sale
Doris and Michael Bronson	Barbara Winter Glauber	J. David and Lucy Levy	Kathryn Smith
Wayne Brown	David Gockley	Perryn Leech	Lewis Spratlan
John Buscarelo	Neal Goren	Sally S. Levy	Peter and Joanna Townsend
Gregory Carpenter	Dr. Robert and Suzanne Hasl	Susan and Philip Marineau	Lyndsay Werking and Peter Yip
Anthony Roth Costanzo	J. David Jackson	Leslie Bradberry Mastroianni	Judith G. Wolf
Conrad Cummings	Charles Jarden	W.R. (Bob) McPhee	Sharon and Fillmore Wood
Susan T. Danis	William Jones	Patricia Mitchell	Darren K. Woods

As of March 3, 2015



A Division Of Maury Homelly & Parr, Inc.
www.mdpins.com
410-585-4625



**Providing comprehensive insurance
Solutions for the Opera Community**

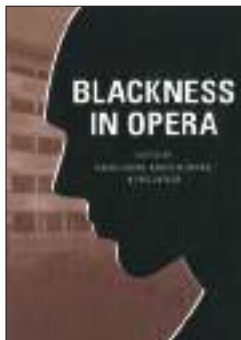
Robert B. Middleton, Director
bmiddleton@mdpins.com
410-547-3183

PUBLICATIONS

BLACKNESS IN OPERA

Naomi André, Karen M. Bryan and Eric Saylor, eds.

University of Illinois Press



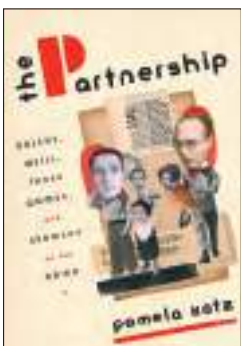
In this collection of essays, a diverse cross-section of scholars examines the intersection of race and music in operas ranging from popular successes like *Porgy and Bess*

and *Aida* to lesser-known works such as Frederick Delius' *Koanga* and William Grant Still's *Blue Steel*. The authors address questions about how blackness has been represented in these operas, the interpretation of racialized roles by both blacks and whites, and controversies over race in the theater and the use of blackface. An essay of reflections by tenor George Shirley rounds out the volume.

THE PARTNERSHIP: BRECHT, WEILL, THREE WOMEN, AND GERMANY ON THE BRINK

Pamela Katz

Nan A. Talese



Screenwriter and novelist Pamela Katz charts Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill's fruitful yet volatile partnership during the avant-garde ferment of Weimar Germany. The

author examines the genesis of their landmark music-theater works, *The Threepenny Opera* and *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, detailing the relationships between Brecht, Weill and the three women vital to their work — actresses Lotte Lenya and Helene Weigel and writer Elisabeth Hauptmann. For the first time, full credit is given to the women whose creative gifts contributed significantly to Brecht and Weill's masterworks.

NOT RUSSIAN ENOUGH?

Rutger Helmers

University of Rochester Press



This volume explores the efforts of 19th-century Russian composers to create a national style within the cosmopolitan world of opera. Four important operas — Glinka's *A Life for the Tsar*,

Serov's *Judith*, Tchaikovsky's *The Maid of Orleans* and Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Tsar's Bride* — are analyzed in terms of cultural context, musical composition and reception. The author looks at issues such as the influence of Italian and French opera, the use of foreign subjects, the application of local color and the adherence to the classics, considering how these related to a sense of "Russianness."

ROUNDING WAGNER'S MOUNTAIN: RICHARD STRAUSS AND MODERN GERMAN OPERA

Bryan Gilliam

Cambridge University Press



One of the few musicological studies to survey all 15 of Richard Strauss' operas, this book places each work within its historical, aesthetic, philosophical and literary context to reveal what

made the composer's operatic legacy unique. The author addresses Wagner's cultural influence upon this legacy, offering new insights on the thematic and harmonic features that recur in Strauss' compositions. The literary sources upon which Strauss' operas were based, including the works of Oscar Wilde, Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Stefan Zweig, are also investigated.

FATAL DESTINY

Frank J. Miller



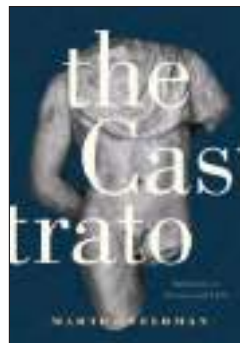
Partly inspired by themes from Verdi's *La forza del destino*, this modern-day novella presents a portrait of an aging diva who struggles to regain the spotlight after a fall from

popularity. Determined to earn back her fame while competing against a younger generation of singers, the protagonist realizes she must experience life to the fullest and make the most of her natural talents. The author, a longtime opera enthusiast, offers vivid behind-the-scenes glimpses of the opera world, detailing the diva's interactions with fellow singers and directors.

THE CASTRATO: REFLECTIONS ON NATURES AND KINDS

Martha Feldman

University of California Press

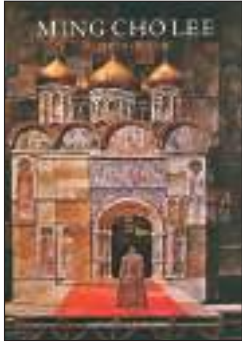


This in-depth study of castrati aims to show that the entire foundation of Western classical singing, culminating in bel canto, arose from unlikely and historically unique sets of

desires — public and private, aesthetic, economic, and political — that resulted in the castration practice. The author also looks at how castrati captivated audiences and composers, including Cavalli, Pergolesi, Handel, Mozart and Rossini, with their extraordinary vocal capacities, as well as how this phenomenon was ultimately unsettled by Enlightenment morality.

**MING CHO LEE:
A LIFE IN DESIGN**

Arnold Aronson
Theatre Communications Group



Illustrated with more than 500 images, this volume chronicles Ming Cho Lee's long and extraordinary career as a stage designer, from his

early training as a watercolorist in China to his work for some 300 opera, theater and dance productions. The author, a professor of theater at Columbia University, examines how Lee transformed the nature of design in America and introduced an aesthetic vocabulary that underlies scenographic styles to the present day. A chronological appendix of Lee's productions provides a helpful framework for understanding his rich output.

**ACH ICH FÜHL'S: GERMAN FOR
OPERA SINGERS**

Bernd Hendricks



This guide and its accompanying workbook are designed to sharpen the German-language skills of professional singers, vocal students and teachers.

Written by a Berlin-based language teacher, this volume illustrates grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary through opera-based examples. Readers will learn how to navigate language that is relevant to the daily routine of German opera houses as well as to the world outside. The book also includes new translations and linguistic interpretations of 10 major German arias, helping singers to deepen their interpretations of the texts.

**ROLAND HAYES: THE LEGACY
OF AN AMERICAN TENOR**

Christopher A. Brooks and
Robert Sims
Indiana University Press



This biography spans the history of Roland Hayes' life and career and the legacy he left behind as a musician and a champion of African-

American rights. At a time of racism and segregation, Hayes became the first African-American man to reach international fame as a concert performer, appearing at such venues as Carnegie Hall, Boston's Symphony Hall and Covent Garden. His trailblazing career carved the way for a host of African-American artists, including Marian Anderson and Paul Robeson.

**MODERNITY BETWEEN
WAGNER AND NIETZSCHE**

Brayton Polka
Lexington Books



The author analyzes the operas and writings of Wagner in order to prove that the ideas on which they are based contradict the values that are fundamental

to modernity. This book also considers the ideas that are central to the philosophy of Nietzsche, demonstrating that the values that spurred his break with Wagner and his repudiation of their common mentor, Schopenhauer, are fundamental to modernity. The volume's central argument makes use of the critical distinction that Kierkegaard draws between Christianity and Christendom, linking Nietzsche to the former and Wagner to the latter. ●

EARNEST
The Importance of Being

by **Victor Davies**
& **Eugene Benson**

Toronto Operetta Theatre remounts their 2008 World Premiere of Victor Davies' and Eugene Benson's sparkling musical based on the famous Oscar Wilde play ... music theatre at its best!

Internationally renowned mezzo

Jean Stilwell
is
Lady Bracknell

Larry Beckwith
Conductor

Guillermo Silva-Marin
Stage Director

Charlotte Knight
Michelle Garlough
Cameron McPhail
Thomas Macleay
Gregory Finney
Stuart Graham



**April 29,
May 1, 2 & 3, 2015**

St. LAWRENCE CENTRE FOR THE ARTS
27 Front St. E., Toronto, Canada
416-366-7723 | 1-800-708-6754
www.stlc.com

Photo by Cylla von Tiedemann



The National Opera Association

Gratefully
acknowledges

Marc A. Scorca

for 25 years of
dedicated and
innovative leadership
of OPERA America
and his unparalleled
contributions to
Opera worldwide.

A black and white photograph of a musician playing an electric guitar, with a yellow brushstroke effect behind the text "Get into the Black".

SHOWS
CONCERTS
CORPORATE EXHIBITIONS
STORAGE
TRAILER RENTAL
TRADESHOWS

**Get into
the
Black.**

- TOP-FLIGHT DRIVERS
- ON-TIME DELIVERY
- FULL SERVICE EVERYWHERE
IN NORTH AMERICA

A black and white photograph of two semi-trucks parked side-by-side.

**TRUCK
'N' ROLL**

CALL FOR A QUOTE TODAY
TOLL FREE 1 888 878-2551
TRUCKNROLL.COM
email: FTAYLOR@TRUCKNROLL.COM or
GHISLAIN@TRUCKNROLL.COM

CROSSWORD

BY DAVID J. KAHN

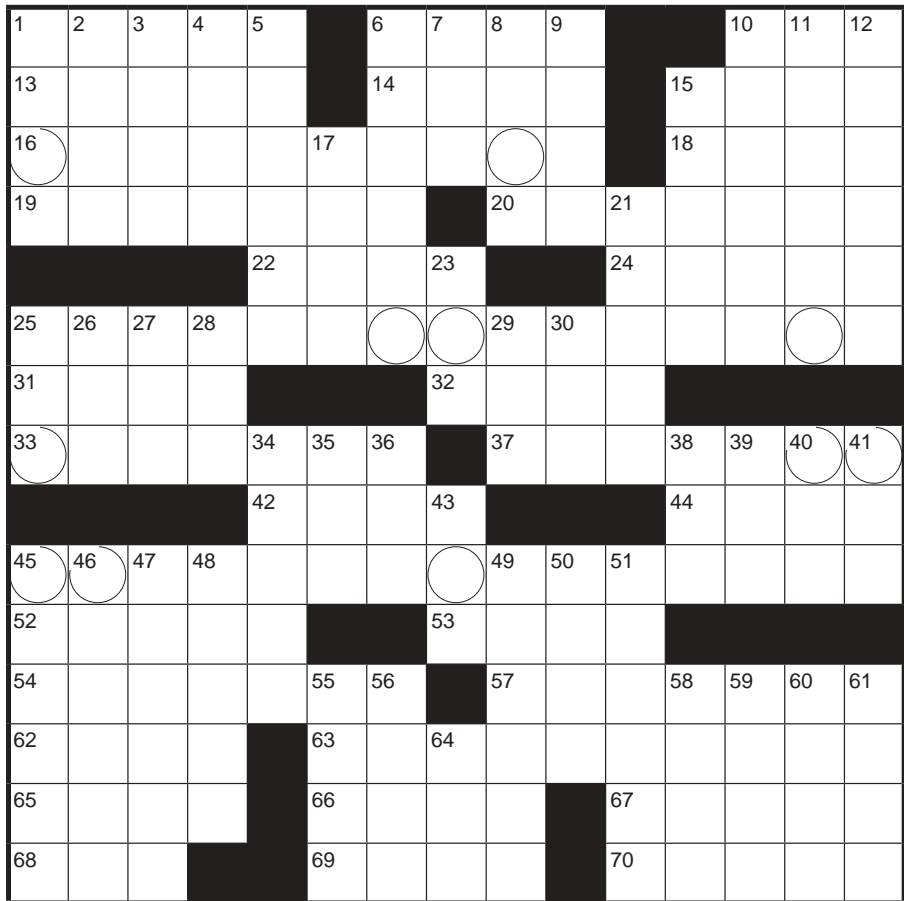
ACROSS

- 1 Super servers
- 6 Photos
- 10 Suffers from
- 13 Word on an invoice
- 14 Perched on
- 15 Mooring place
- 16 Adams opera about the Manhattan Project
- 18 Plácido Domingo's love
- 19 Produce again, as an opera
- 20 Sudden fancy
- 22 Painter who once wrote an opera libretto
- 24 *The Grand Budapest Hotel* actress Saoirse ____
- 25 Moore opera about Horace Tabor's second wife
- 31 Designed to fly, for short
- 32 Perjured oneself
- 33 German bass whose movie debut was in 2006's *The Magic Flute*
- 37 Conductor who was the longtime leader of the Chicago Symphony
- 42 Salon supply
- 44 Long, long time
- 45 Puccini opera that premiered at the Met in 1910
- 52 "Amscray!"
- 53 Opera critic's concern
- 54 Runway surfaces
- 57 Work like a Barber?
- 62 Writer's block buster
- 63 Apt adjective for the answers to 16-, 25-, 33-, 37- and 45-Across
- 65 Capone's nemesis
- 66 Fiber source
- 67 Gunpowder component
- 68 Prime meridian std.
- 69 1/100 of a euro
- 70 Campfire treat

DOWN

- 1 Passion
- 2 Grammy-winning Winans
- 3 Rescue crew, briefly
- 4 Knee-slapper

- 5 1954 Fellini movie, with *La*
- 6 Kneecap
- 7 "What am ____ do?"
- 8 Kind of opera
- 9 Pet welfare org.
- 10 ____ grits
- 11 Guacamole base
- 12 Tranquil
- 15 Chocolate substitute
- 17 "I've Got ____ in Kalamazoo"
- 21 Where to see an El Greco
- 23 Matinee follower?
- 25 Weight not charged for
- 26 Brooder
- 27 Poet's preposition
- 28 Jazz style
- 29 Fruit in a cookie
- 30 Spell-off
- 34 Antsy feeling
- 35 Little, in Lyon
- 36 Letter opener?
- 38 Cold and wet
- 39 "Imagine that!"
- 40 Most arias
- 41 Salon request
- 43 Blind feature
- 45 Like some impressions
- 46 Pretenses
- 47 What the weary get, in a saying
- 48 Stretches out?
- 49 Museum guide
- 50 Sufficient, old-style
- 51 Cars with kinks
- 55 Investor's TV channel
- 56 Teed off
- 58 Strait-laced
- 59 Conductor Klemperer, who also wrote the opera *Das Ziel*
- 60 Theater/opera director Bartlett
- 61 Theater/opera director Richard
- 64 Go for the bronze?



The solution to this issue's crossword puzzle can be found on page 62.

David J. Kahn is a nationally known crossword puzzle maker and opera aficionado whose puzzles have appeared in *The New York Times*. He is the author of *The Metropolitan Opera: Crosswords for Opera Lovers*.



Vancouver Opera
congratulates Marc Scorca
on 25 Years at
OPERA America!

VO's
2015–2016 Season



MADAMA BUTTERFLY ILLUSTRATION BY EDEL RODRIGUEZ

RIGOLETTO
DARK SISTERS
MADAMA BUTTERFLY
EVITA

vancouveropera.ca

SEASON SPONSOR  GOLDCORP

"Agents of Change," continued from page 15

undertaking. By developing a community task force across religious boundaries and holding a series of events to stimulate dialogue, the company managed to avoid protests without ignoring the opera's provocative subject matter.

The peaceful, thoughtful response to *Klinghoffer* would have been achievement enough. But the infrastructure the opera company has fostered continues on. The group formed for *Klinghoffer* led to the creation of a September 11th Interfaith Commemoration in Music and the development of Arts & Faith St. Louis, which sponsors an annual concert and develops community programming throughout the year. These same groups came together again last year in the aftermath of Michael Brown's death and the subsequent protests in Ferguson.

In a landscape for opera that can be challenging, all these ideas and more are on the table. The motto of Memphis' Canty is "All things to all people." All opera companies may not have the resources to reach all of the people all of the time, so perhaps a reasonable corollary to Canty's philosophy may be this: All the world is a stage, and all of us who cherish opera must play all the parts we can. ●

Zachary Woolfe is classical music editor for The New York Times.

"E Pluribus Opera," continued from page 19

The challenge of finding new audiences has not inhibited the emergence of visionary founders. When Robert Wood, a veteran conductor of **SAN FRANCISCO OPERA** and **MINNESOTA OPERA**, moved to D.C. seven years ago and decided to start his company, he asked himself, "What is nobody else doing, and where is there a need?" The answer was contemporary opera in a black box venue. He further narrowed "contemporary" to the last 40 years — an arbitrary number, he admits — but one, he feels, that delineates the music of our time. "Britten and Menotti were classics of an era, but that is not our era anymore," Wood believes. With financial support from friends and family, and contacts he met through the opera community, he was able to cultivate sufficient support to launch UrbanArias, which has now gained national attention for its progressive repertoire. "We're a small company in a small venue, but we are in a big media market, so things do get noticed," he says.

On the other end of the time continuum, Ryan Brown, founder and artistic director of Opera Lafayette, has achieved success in early French opera and music of the Baroque. Brown began his career as a conservatory-trained violinist, but after his wife, an attorney, accepted a position in D.C., Brown decided that "50 more hours in the practice room working on the Tchaikovsky concerto was no longer interesting." An interest in Rameau led to performing the broader repertoire of early music, performing led to conducting, and what began as a chamber ensemble evolved into an opera company with an international profile that performs regularly in Washington, New York and, in its newest residency, on the outskirts of Paris in Versailles. His instrumentalists are drawn from New York, D.C. and the rest of the United States, with vocal artists drawn from a national and international pool.

Washington might not seem the most likely place to grow a Baroque opera company, but Brown says that a devoted following quickly emerged. He attributes part of the interest to

"We're a small company in a small venue, but we are in a big media market, so things do get noticed."

the presence of a substantial international demographic, but he says that once audiences get past the notion that early music is “slow Handel,” they embrace its diversity. They also appreciate the opportunity to enjoy performances of the genre in a small venue. “The intimacy of the experience grabs people,” he says. “It’s great to hear this music at ‘boom box’ volume.”

In addition to offering audiences a diverse palette of opera, the Washington area also presents a variety of opportunities for singers at all stages of development. George Washington University, American University, George Mason University and University of Maryland all have substantial training programs. Wolf Trap Opera and WNO’s Domingo-Cafritz program offer residencies for young artists. Meanwhile, there are potential gigs with the National Symphony Orchestra, Vocal Arts DC, the National Philharmonic at Maryland’s Strathmore Center and a wide range of choruses. Cast the net wider and there are **BALTIMORE CONCERT OPERA** and **ANNAPOLIS OPERA** to the north, with **ASH LAWN OPERA** and the Castleton Festival to the south. This summer, Castleton will present the world premiere of *Scalia/Ginsburg* by Derrick Wang.

Tenor Robert Baker, director of performance studies at George Washington University, has been singing on Washington stages for 25 years, including 43 productions with Washington National Opera, from *Lucia di Lammermoor* in 1979 to this season’s *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. “The landscape continually changes,” he observes, “but Washington is a fine music town, and there are always brilliant additions to the scene.”

Not only has the Washington, D.C. opera stage evolved, but so too have the characters. “When I started at WNO, I was the youngest person in the cast,” says Baker, “and now I’m the oldest.” ●

Matthew Sigman is editor of Opera America Magazine.



C STANLEY PHOTOGRAPHY

UrbanArias’ 2014 production of *Three Decembers* by Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer, with Janice Hall as Maddy. Directed by Michael McConnell and conducted by Robert Wood. Scenic and costume design by Greg Stevens and lighting design by Joseph R. Walls.

LYRIC OPERA KANSAS CITY

Congratulations

Marc Scorca
for 25 years as
President/CEO of
OPERA America.

A toast to you!



Scott Quinn and Joyce El-Khoury in Lyric Opera of Kansas City’s September 2014 production of *La Traviata*

Photo by Cory Weaver

Opera in Williamsburg

at the Kimball Theatre
Williamsburg, Virginia



Così fan tutte
April 15 and 17,
2015



Don Giovanni
October 30
and November 1,
2015



Founder and Artistic Director:
Naama Zahavi-Ely
Music Director: Jorge Parodi
www.OperainWilliamsburg.org

Continued from page 24



AUDREY N. SACCONI

MAS: OPERA America was established in Washington, D.C. in 1970. At the time, the National Endowment for the Arts was five years old. There was a burgeoning arts policy community, with the National Council on the Arts convening the most distinguished artists in the country to talk about pressing issues. We thought about moving to New York at various intervals. In the 1980s, we felt we needed to stay in Washington to fight the culture wars. When our lease came up for renewal in 2004, we asked the question, "Should OPERA America remain in Washington, or should we move to New York?" And before the question was even finished, the answer was "New York." We wanted to move OPERA America to the center of the opera business in this country.

One of the challenges facing our members was that there wasn't good space in New York to conduct the essential business of opera. Companies were auditioning in church basements or in lofts that were not heated. Pianos were not tuned and people sat on the floor waiting for their next audition. So, not only did we approve the move to New York, but we approved the concept of creating a National Opera Center.

FPD: Your life can't be all opera. You have a farm in Vermont. How much time do you spend there?

MAS: I am in Vermont every day in my mind. And that — no joking — is a huge source of relief and pleasure for me. In reality, in a good year, I spend 40 nights there. But having that escape is something that exists for me every day. When things are stressful or I'm having trouble sleeping, I'll position myself there and all is well.

FPD: When you're there, how much opera gets played?

MAS: Absolutely none, not even on the car ride up to Vermont. I cannot drive and listen to opera at the same time. I become so focused on the singing that I completely lose sight of the road. Truthfully, opera exists for me in the theater. I wouldn't listen to a recording of a Shakespeare play. The acoustics, the balance between the voice and orchestra, the singers, the intensity of the drama — opera for me occurs in the theater.

FPD: Is there a particular performance at the top of your list?

MAS: During my internship at the Met in the winter of 1976, I supervised a program in which high school students were brought in to watch a whole series of rehearsals of the new *Aida* featuring Leontyne Price, Marilyn Horne, James McCracken and Cornell MacNeil, with John Dexter directing. The students met with Dexter before and after every rehearsal to hear about his objectives and the outcome of the day's rehearsal.

One afternoon, Price was in street clothes, which for her were glamorous, and Levine was conducting, but it was just a piano in the pit. Dexter had to fix something backstage, and Levine said, "Lee, do you want to sing 'O patria mia'?" And she said, "Okay." And with just piano accompaniment and her hands in her pockets, she stood on that stage and sang an "O patria mia" that I will never, ever forget. Alone in an empty theater, relaxed, dressed in street clothes, she sang a performance that Verdi himself would have loved. ●

F. Paul Driscoll is editor-in-chief of Opera News.



INCREASING

IMPACT

CIVIC

OPERA CONFERENCE 2015

WASHINGTON, D.C. | MAY 6–9

HOSTED BY WASHINGTON NATIONAL OPERA

conference.operaamerica.org

TO MAKE AN IMPACT, YOU HAVE TO BE HERE.

STANDARD REGISTRATION THROUGH APRIL 24

Members: \$595 | Non-members: \$695

FEATURED SPEAKERS



Roberto
Bedoya



Elizabeth
Merritt



Philip
Kennicott



Ilir Zherka

**BECOME A CONFERENCE
SPONSOR OR EXHIBITOR**

*and reach key decision-makers
from across the field.*

Visit operaamerica.org/Sponsorship
for details.

THE NATIONAL **OPERA** CENTER
AMERICA

Opera Lafayette brings its period-instrument artistry to staged opera seasons in Washington, DC and New York, with international tours to Versailles and 10 critically acclaimed recordings on the Naxos label.



“Opera Lafayette ... has built a sterling reputation through specializing in rarities by Gluck, Grétry and the like...” Steve Smith, *The New York Times*. Photo: Courtesy Louis Forget

Ryan Brown, *Conductor and Artistic Director*
OPERA
Lafayette



Opera Lafayette, 202 546 9332

10 Fourth Street NE, Washington, DC 20002

operalafayette.org

Opera Lafayette gratefully acknowledges
Pernod Ricard for its generous support.

BRAVO

Opera Philadelphia congratulates

MARC A. SCORCA

*on 25 exemplary years of leadership
and service to the field.*

*Opera
Phila
delphia*

OPERAPHILA.ORG

Continued from page 32

Slow Conversion Rates: Over four seasons, Minnesota Opera gave away 3,560 tickets, mostly in pairs. They were redeemed by 1,485 households. Of those households, 1,114 (or 75 percent) were new to Minnesota Opera's database. Of the 1,114 households, 48 percent returned to the opera in some capacity. Nearly one-third came back on another free ticket, typically by participating again in a call-in on Punnett's show. A total of 198 households, or 18 percent of the total, came back as paying customers, spending \$201 on average over the first four seasons of the initiative. Of those 198 households, 15 percent bought \$20 tickets, three percent bought half-price tickets, 13 percent bought other discounted tickets, and 11 percent bought full-price tickets or subscriptions.

Most returned initially on a \$20 ticket, which was the first graduated offer, and most did so within one year of receiving their free tickets. In any given season, eight to ten percent of all comp recipients to date were active as either new or returning ticket buyers. Through the end of the 2012–2013 season, these ticket purchases accounted for \$39,734 in revenue.

More Women 35–60: Women 35 to 60 now account for 22 percent of Minnesota Opera's patron database, up from 16 percent when the initiative started. Active patrons include single-ticket buyers as well as new, renewing and lapsed subscribers going back to 2006. It does not include comp-ticket recipients unless they have bought a ticket or subscription. Single-ticket sales to women ages 35 to 60 have also increased, more than doubling since the initiative began.

Punnett Was Effective: In 2010 and 2012, Minnesota Opera conducted two waves of attitudinal and opinion research among patrons 18 years and older. It recruited participants from its patron database (including some comp-ticket recipients) through an e-mail invitation to take an online survey. Respondents had to live in either Minnesota or neighboring Wisconsin and had to be involved in making their households' decisions to attend arts-related activities. The 2010 survey drew 1,635 respondents, including 592 women ages 35 to 60. The 2012 survey had 1,046 respondents, with 333 women ages 35 to 60. Participants answered a variety of questions about Minnesota Opera, such as which radio

and TV outlets informed them about the opera and their opinions about several media personalities, including Punnett.

Because participants were drawn from Minnesota Opera's general database, myTalk 107.1 and KSTP-TV were not the media outlets most often named as sources of information about the opera. Most female patrons ages 35 to 60 stay informed by listening to Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) or tuning in to the local PBS affiliate. Only 16 percent knew Punnett in the 2012 survey, about half the level who recognized the names of the MPR classical music host and arts correspondent. Punnett may not garner wide name recognition, but among middle-aged women who know him, he emerged as a strong advocate of Minnesota Opera and the art form itself — more so than his counterparts in public radio. Of respondents who knew Punnett, 81 percent said they had heard him talk about Minnesota Opera in the past year, compared to 28 percent among those familiar with the MPR host. Three out of four considered Punnett an advocate for Minnesota Opera, much higher than the public radio host.

Continued on page 51



HERE'S TO MARC
for 25 years of inspired, innovative, and visionary leadership.
If opera is a trill a minute, that's a lot of trills!

Cincinnati Opera's 2012 production of *La Traviata* featuring Ailyn Pérez as Violetta
Photo: Philip Groshong/Cincinnati Opera


CINCINNATI OPERA



Minnesota
OPERA
NWI new works
initiative

Minnesota Opera
congratulates Marc Scorca
on his 25 years as President
and CEO of OPERA America!

THE SHINING

MUSIC BY Paul Moravec
LIBRETTO BY Mark Campbell
BASED ON THE NOVEL BY Stephen King
World Premiere Spring 2016



Dinner at Eight

MUSIC BY William Bolcom
LIBRETTO BY Mark Campbell
BASED ON THE PLAY BY
George S. Kaufman
and Edna Ferber

World Premiere 2016-2017 Season

mnoopera.org

Continued from page 49

Analysis


Over four years of the ticket giveaway, Minnesota Opera welcomed new audience members from 1,114 households, and 18 percent of them enjoyed the experience so much they paid to come back. Minnesota Opera took risks — more risks than it likely would have taken without the outside financial support from The Wallace Foundation, according to Willis.

The number of women ages 35 to 60 buying tickets and subscriptions grew, but it's difficult to know just how much of that increase was due exclusively to the initiative. The research conducted over the four years was broad and didn't

track how first-timers got to Minnesota Opera. As can be expected with such an experimental approach, not everything worked. The television partnership did not have the same traction as the radio partnership. Moreover, ticket-sales revenue from the new audience during the four years of the initiative did not come close to recouping the cost of the radio partnership. Even so, the opera company gained important insights into the mindsets of first-time operagoers, including how to neutralize the seemingly formidable barrier of opera being seen as elitist and inaccessible. Its research also revealed some unexpected barriers to purchase that can keep first-timers from returning, and the company has used these insights to adjust its marketing strategy to bring a number of them back.

A Trusted Endorser: The high redemption rates for Punnett's audience suggest he was effective in attracting newcomers to Minnesota Opera. Qualitative research underscored the link between Punnett's advocacy for Minnesota Opera and the high redemption rates of his listeners. At the end of the 2008–2009 season, Minnesota Opera engaged a facilitator to conduct focus groups with people who had attended an opera after receiving a free ticket through a giveaway on myTalk 107.1 or KSTP-TV. Most participants were women ages 35 to 60, the desired target market. There were four focus groups in all, including two groups of people who had never attended live opera before the ticket giveaway and two groups who had.

Continued on page 53



The University of
Alabama Opera Theatre
congratulates Marc Scorca
on 25 years of leadership
and important contributions
to our field.

Paul Houghtaling, Director

music.ua.edu/opera

Your performance deserves a standing ovation.

CONGRATULATIONS
MARC SCORCA

25

YEARS WITH
OPERA AMERICA

FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT



MANITOBA OPERA

ONLY IN NEW MEXICO.
ONLY AT **THE SANTA FE OPERA.**

2015

JULY 3 - AUGUST 29

THE DAUGHTER OF THE REGIMENT | Donizetti

RIGOLETTO | Verdi

SALOME | R. Strauss

LA FINTA GIARDINIERA | Mozart

COLD MOUNTAIN | *World Premiere*

Composer Jennifer Higdon

Librettist Gene Scheer

Robert Godwin photo



THE SANTA FE OPERA

SantaFeOpera.org | 800-280-4654

OPENING NIGHTS SPONSOR

Ask our partners about a special offer for Opera guests.



855-674-5401
www.fourseasons.com/santafe



800-955-4455
www.eldoradohotel.com



800-727-5531
www.innatloretto.com



800-378-7946
www.druryplazasantafe.com

While the promise of free tickets was enough of an incentive for some, Punnett's listeners also said that the talk-show host's enthusiasm and knowledge of opera motivated them to go. They felt they were led to the opera, and noted that Punnett said they would be able to understand it, even if it wasn't sung in English. He told them why they would enjoy a particular opera and that he would welcome them at Opera Insights. To them, Punnett was a "regular guy." If he liked opera, they figured they might, too. Punnett believes his relationship with listeners allows him to be seen as a trusted source: "It's one voice that says, 'You're going to like this. If you like everything else I've told you about or you trust me enough to give it a try, that's all you need.' That's the difference of an endorsement."

Focus group participants who got their comp tickets through *Twin Cities Live* appreciated it and thought the giveaway was a "nice surprise." But they only had a hazy recollection of "something being talked or shown about the opera" on the show. They didn't get the consistent encouragement that Punnett's listeners did, something that may have contributed to their low rate of ticket redemption.

Conversion Takes Time: In the focus groups, first-time operagoers were overwhelmingly positive about the experience. Some seemed surprised they didn't get bored, while others credited Punnett for prepping them well for the event. Those who attended Opera Insights liked it and said the experience made them feel more comfortable about watching the performance. They were pleased to find other attendees weren't snobby or overdressed. Their feedback suggested that the perceptual barrier of the art form as stuffy and elitist wasn't insurmountable. In fact, it started to erode after just one trip to the opera. Nearly half of comp recipients enjoyed themselves so much they came back for another performance.

Getting them to pay for that experience, however, was an entirely different matter. Nearly one-third of comp recipients returned to the opera on another free ticket. Relatively fewer (18 percent) bought a ticket or subscription, even when offered at a hefty discount. Converting single-ticket buyers into subscribers was also a tough sell: Minnesota Opera sold only 37 subscriptions among the 1,114 new households over the course of the four years. That's not surprising, as even many regular patrons don't subscribe, and those who do, do not do so immediately.

Repertoire Selection: The focus groups also identified a significant barrier to ticket purchases that discounts alone would have limited power in overcoming: Newcomers don't know how to pick an opera and aren't familiar enough with the art form to know which ones they might like. That insight came when the focus groups were asked to review a postcard announcing Minnesota Opera's upcoming productions and ticket prices. The marketing piece puzzled them. They didn't recognize any of the opera titles, and there were no cues to help them figure out which ones they might like. Unlike the ticket giveaway, Punnett wasn't there to tell them which ones they would like and why.

A glossy, four-color brochure of Minnesota Opera's season elicited similar feedback. While the photographs and detailed plot descriptions provided some guidance, the focus group participants still didn't feel confident enough to make a decision and risk a lot of money on something they might not like. Comp recipients didn't have to choose which opera to see,



*Our Congratulations to
Marc A. Scorca on 25 years
leading OPERA America*

2015 Season

No Cowards In Our Band

By Anthony Knight
New Works Initiative
February 20, 2015
Performance Hall, Wagner College

Young Artists Concert

Featuring the winners and
finalists of the Benjamin Matthews
Young Artists Competition
June 14, 2015
Bruno Walter Auditorium, Lincoln Ctr.

Carmen

By Georges Bizet
October 9, 2015
Aaron Davis Hall

**Benjamin Matthews Young Artists
Competition**

October 24, 2015
National Opera Center, NYC

For ticket information call 212.877.2110



Wayne Sanders,
Founder and
Music Director



Gregory Sheppard,
Executive and
Artistic Director

www.operaeбony.org
2109 Broadway, Suite 1418
New York, NY, 10023

Continued from page 53

the performance date or the seats — all aspects of operagoing that are second nature to a seasoned patron, but can confuse and intimidate people new to the art form.

Willis points out that newbies don't necessarily need "safe" repertory; after all, hundreds of first-timers responded enthusiastically to Punnett's initial invitation to attend the unknown *Fortunes of King Croesus*. But, she says, newcomers must clearly see that a particular opera has something to offer that they will enjoy. "You've got to help somebody overcome the inertia, because the inertia is going to be there," she states.

Barriers to "Free": Some practitioners in the performing arts believe there's no place for comps at all because giveaways send a message that their work is worth less than the cost of a full-price ticket. Others worry that would-be audience members will come to expect freebies or heavy discounts and won't pay full price as a result. Minnesota Opera itself hesitated to give away tickets before the initiative, but staff members now

believe that comps and discounts have a place in an engagement strategy for new audiences, as long as those newcomers are tracked and cultivated as possible patrons. While mindful of these risks, Willis believes the giveaways were justified because getting people in the door is a powerful way to address the strong perceptual barriers that plague opera.

A Different Language: Minnesota Opera was often reminded that comp recipients approached the art form, as well as the organization, differently than traditional patrons did. They cared much more about the storyline than the composer or historical context. They didn't want to be talked down to, but they were interested in learning about opera in a way that felt approachable. Punnett tuned in to this feeling and used his endorsements to sell aspects of opera he believed would appeal to newcomers.

Moving Forward

While support from the Wallace Foundation Excellence Award has ended, Minnesota Opera continues to target women ages 35 to 60 who are new to opera. It discontinued

television advertising and Punnett's live endorsements, but it continued ticket giveaways and recorded commercials on myTalk 107.1 through the 2012–2013 season. While research during the initiative didn't track awareness of advertising or its impact on potential audiences, the staff believes the high redemption rate of the free tickets, as well as feedback from the focus groups, demonstrates that the radio partnership is effective in bringing new people through its doors.

Although the myTalk 107.1 partnership continued through the 2013 season, it did so without Punnett. The radio host resigned his position at the station in early 2013 due to an ongoing battle with tinnitus. Punnett's departure was both sudden and unexpected, and brings to the fore a potential pitfall of this approach: Investing in a spokesperson can help an arts organization break through to a new audience, but it carries risks. Any number of factors can suddenly make your endorser unavailable, throwing your marketing strategy into jeopardy.

Continued on page 62

Photo by Kristian Jamie ♦ Bill Peeler, Lighting Design

QUARTERLINE
Design Management

Dido and Aeneas
Opera Piccola San Antonio
Cynthia Stokes, Director
Liliana Duque Piñeiro, Scenic Design

Rainelle Krause as Belinda
Eric Schmidt as the First Sailor

Quincy Bruckerhoff, Principal Representative ♦ (802)773-6111 ♦ www.quarterlinemanagement.com

DESIGNED BY WORLD RENOWNED OMAHA ARTIST
JUN KANEKO

fidelio

by Ludwig van Beethoven

Friday, April 17 | 7:30 pm
Sunday, April 19 | 2:00 pm

Orpheum Theater, Omaha, NE



Leonore Wendy Bryn Harmer | Florestan Bryan Register | Rocco Kevin Short | Pizarro Mark Walters | Marzelline Sara Gartland | Jaquino Chad Johnson

operaomaha
f t i

FOR TICKETS: (402) 34-OPERA | OPERAOMAHA.ORG



congratulates

Marc A. Scorca

on his 25th anniversary
as President and CEO
of OPERA America.

"Your leadership has inspired a whole new generation of leaders to promote and sustain our fabulous art form. Thank you for encouraging Opera Columbus by your mentoring and constant support. We are among your biggest fans!!"

—Peggy Kriha Dye, Artistic Director

nothing
moves
like opera
operacolumbus.org *Opera lives here*

AMR announces two new albums by award-winning composer Robert Paterson



Musica Sacra • Kent Tritle, Music Director
Eternal Reflections • Choral Music

MUSICA SACRA

“This chorus is easily the best in this city if not in the country...” ~ *The New York Daily News*

KENT TRITLE

“The brightest star in New York’s choral music world” ~ *The New York Times*

ROBERT PATERSON

“The audience responded to the *Chamber Choir of Europe* performance with long, sustained applause and standing ovations.” ~ *Gmünder Tagespost, Germany*



American Modern Ensemble
Winter Songs • Vocal Chamber Music

“There’s Schumannian drama and melancholy in the song cycle *CAPTCHA* that opens this beautiful, witty and sometimes utterly desolate collection of vocal works.” ~ *The New York Times*

“A bright and magnificent score...effortlessly funny, clever and deeply resonant...” ~ *Opera News*

“*A New Earth* was an amazingly colorful tone poem... the music was beautifully crafted.” ~ *Times Argus*

Available on Amazon, iTunes and wherever albums are sold.
Distributed by NAXOS. Sheet music available from billholabmusic.com.



TRICITIES OPERA

Mary Beth Nelson as 'Isabella' in THE ITALIAN GIRL IN ALGIERS
Photo Courtesy of Randy Cummings and Sam Hill Photo

'25 years?!
Marc Scorca
looks good!'

New look... New feel... Newtricityopera.com
Coming March 24, 2015

WORLD PREMIERE ECO-OPERA

Inspired by the life and work of environmentalist
Rachel Carson, author of SILENT SPRING

A New Kind of Fallout



Music by GILDA LYONS Libretto by TAMMY RYAN

Staged by JONATHAN EATON, Artistic & General Director

OPERA THEATER SUMMER FEST

JULY 10–AUGUST 2, 2015

A NEW KIND OF FALLOUT
THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO

CAPRICCIO

DAMN YANKEES

FIGARO REDUX

THE TRUE STORY OF THE
THREE LITTLE PIGS

*Intimate performances in the historic
Twentieth Century Club, Pittsburgh*

412-326-9687

OTSUMMERFEST.org

CHAUTAUQUA OPERA COMPANY

*Chautauqua Opera congratulates Marc Scorca
for 25 operatic years with Opera America!*

2015 Season

opera.ciweb.org

Jay Lesenger, General/Artistic Director

Giuseppe Verdi

MACBETH

July 11

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

EUGENE ONEGIN

July 31 & August 3

Chautauqua Opera, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, 2014

For more information about
the arts at Chautauqua —
Opera, Symphony, Theater &
Dance — visit ciweb.org/arts



CHAUTAUQUA INSTITUTION • CHAUTAUQUA, NEW YORK • CIWEB.ORG

SUPPORT FOR OPERA AMERICA

NATIONAL OPERA CENTER LEADERSHIP GIFTS

\$2 MILLION OR MORE

Pamela J. Hoiles
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

\$1 MILLION–\$2 MILLION

Horace H. Irvine II
Anonymous

\$250,000–\$1 MILLION

City of New York
Baisley Powell Elebash Fund
Barbara and Ronald Leirvik
William C. and Susan F. Morris
Anonymous

\$100,000–\$249,000

Bloomberg Philanthropies
Booth Ferris Foundation
Elizabeth and Jean-Marie Eveillard
James A. Feldman
The Filstrup Foundation
Lloyd and Mary Ann Gerlach
Jane A. Gross
Cynthia Fry Gunn and
John A. Gunn
Henry Family Fund

Jay Lesenger
Dr. Steve and Rochelle Prystowsky
Marc and Cathy Solomon
Jill and William Steinberg
The Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation
Anonymous

\$25,000–\$99,999

Allen R. and Judy Brick Freedman
Emilie Roy Corey
Sherrill Milnes and
Maria Zouves Milnes
Michael and Noémi Neidorff
Harry Lee and Clive Potter
James and Deborah Reda
Jane and Morton Robinson
Rita G. Rudel Foundation
James R. Seitz, Jr.

\$10,000–\$24,999

Jane Goddard Akin and
Steven Paul Akin
Gus and Mary Blanchard
Luigi Caiola, Rose Caiola and
Edward Mermelstein
Patricia C. Compton

The Robert and Mercedes
Eichholz Foundation
Isabel and Algernon M. Ellien
Foundation, Inc.
Anthony Freud and Colin Ure
Jane Hartley
The Jeanette and H. Peter
Kriendler Charitable Trust
Lyric Opera of Chicago
Charles MacKay
Paul and Sandra Montrone
Minnesota Opera
Opera Theatre of Saint Louis
John J. Pohanka
Brig. Gen. (Ret) George B. Price
and Dr. Laura G. Kafra-Price
and Family
San Diego Opera
Board of Directors
Marc A. Scorca
Marilyn Shapiro
Gregory C. Swinehart
Thomas E. Terry
Mr. and Mrs. Stephen L. Trampe
John G. Turner and Jerry G. Fischer

OPERA AMERICA OPERATING SUPPORT

CHAIRMAN'S CIRCLE

\$20,000 OR MORE

Berwind Fund*
Emilie Roy Corey
Barbara Winter Glauber
Cynthia Fry Gunn and John A. Gunn
Barbara and Ronald Leirvik*
Mr. and Mrs. George L. Lindemann*
Susan F. and William C. Morris*
John G. Turner and Jerry G. Fischer

\$10,000 OR MORE

Mr. and Mrs. John E. Baumgardner, Jr.
Jane Bernstein and Bob Ellis*
James A. Feldman
Allen R. and Judy Brick Freedman*
Ronnie and Sylvia Hartman
Pamela J. Hoiles*
Horace H. Irvine II*
Jane and Morton Robinson*
Mr. William T. Weyerhaeuser,
President, Sequoia Foundation
and Mrs. Gail T. Weyerhaeuser,
Trustee, Sequoia Foundation

AMBASSADOR-AT-LARGE

\$5,000 OR MORE

Anonymous (3)
Louise Gaylord*
Jane A. Gross
Carol and Warner Henry*
Kenneth Kashkin
Beth Madison
Andreas Mitisek
Stephen Prystowsky, M.D.
Sarah Billingham Solomon
and Howard Solomon
Robert S. Tancer
Barbara Augusta Teichert

SUPPORT FOR OPERA AMERICA

\$2,500 OR MORE

Anonymous (2)
Anthony Corso* †
Peter and Deborah Bertling*
Gus and Mary Blanchard*
Susan T. Danis*
Karin A. Eames*
Terry and Catherine Ferguson*
Scott and Margee Filstrup*
Meredith Hathorn Penick*
Mr. and Mrs. E. Lee Perry*
James and Deborah Reda*
Marc A. Scorca*
Eva and Marc Stern*
Brett A. Stover
Gregory C. Swinehart*

AMBASSADOR CIRCLE \$1,000 OR MORE

Carla Alvarado
Roger and Julie Baskes
Daniel Biaggi*
Susan Bienkowski*
Nadine E. Bognar*
Eloise Bouye*
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth S. Brand*
James and Phyllis Bratt
Wayne S. Brown
Greg Carpenter*
Joyce Castle*
Keith and Jennifer Cerny*
Shelli Chase
David and Mary Jo Christensen*
Patricia C. Compton* †
L. Henry Cox III
Mary Sharp Cronson
Don F. Dagenais*
Wayne C. Davis
Dr. and Mrs. Joseph S.
DeLeese*
David DiChiera*
David A. and Carol E. Domina*
Thomas Dreeze
and Evans Mirageas*
Frank Dumont
Dunch Arts, LLC/Emma E.
Dunch
Elizabeth M. Eveillard*
Todd Gordon and Susan Feder*
Dale and Alvin Filstrup
Garry and Louise Fredericksen*
Catherine French*
Anthony Freud*
Margaret Genovese*
Mary Ann and Lloyd Gerlach*
David Gockley*
Sherwin M. Goldman
Jon Kevin Gossett
Christopher Hahn
Michael Hampe*
Jane Hartley*
Dr. Robert and Suzanne Hasl
Margaret Haupt
Evan Hazell

Mrs. Patricia G. Hecker,
Hecker Family Charitable
Foundation of the
Greater Saint Louis
Community Foundation
Jake Heggie*
Robert Heidenry
Holland Foundation*
Bruce Hyman and
Simone Quarré*
Plato and Dorothy Karayanis*
Patricia Kavanagh
Younghee Kim-Wait
Joseph H. Kluger
Joel Koppelman
Lori Laitman*
Sally Levy*
Mr. and Mrs. William Lockwood
Paul V. Lorton, Jr.*
Charles MacKay*
Susan Graf Marineau
Jacqueline Badger Mars*
Eloise McElDowney*
David S. McIntosh*
David Mesker*
Charles E. Metcalf
Daniel K. Meyer, M.D.
Leonard Michaels*
Dr. R. Ranney Mize
Alan Muraoka
Dr. and Mrs. Eugene Myers
Esther L. Nelson*
Theodore F. Newlin III*
J. Boyce and Peggy F. Nute
Dr. Ruth Orth*
Jo Pennington
Gloria M. Portela*
Charlotte Prince
Carey R. Ramos
Mary Lea Johnson Richards
Charitable Foundation
Hon. Frederick W. Richmond
Pamela Rigg
Nancy and Ed Rosenthal*
Chandra and Michael Rudd
Nicholas G. Russell*
Richard Russell*
Ian and Annie Sale*
Deborah Sandler
Olin Sansbury and
Mary Ann Claud
Roberta Schneiderman*
Melody and Warren Schubert
James R. Seitz, Jr.*
Susan and Jeremy Shamos*
John K. Shannon, Jr.
and Jan Serr
Marilyn Shapiro
Simon Charitable Foundation/
Eve and Fred Simon*
Kevin Smith*
Mira J. Spektor
Raymond F. Steckel*
Steve Suellentrop
Rhonda and Donald Sweeney*
Maryanne Tagney
Thomas E. Terry*
Lavell Thompson*
Mr. and Mrs. Terrence A. Tobias*

Mr. and Mrs. Stephen L. Trampe
Alan and Didi Weinblatt
Mr. Don Winspear
Dr. Judith G. Wolf*
Sharon and Fillmore Wood*
Francesca Zambello*

AMBASSADOR DESIGNATE \$500 OR MORE

Anonymous
Patricia K. Beggs*
David Bennett
Mark Black*
Dabby Blatt
Susan S. Braddock
Beatrice Broadwater
Doris and Michael Bronson*
Annie Burrige*
Lisa Bury
Dr. Heather F. Clarke
Eugenie C. Cowan
Larry Desrochers
Susan D. Eastman*
Lawrence Edelson
Anne C. Ewers*
Jill A. Fischer*
William Florescu
Roy Furman
Mrs. Rita Elizabeth Horiguchi
John Hrnrcir
Mr. and Mrs. David K. Ingalls*
Franklin P. Johnson, Jr.*
James M. Kendrick
Jay Lesenger*
Sylvia Lindsey
Raulee Marcus
Christopher Mattaliano*
Susanne Mentzer*
Erie Mills and Tom Rescigno*
Karl O. Mills
Eugene and Robin Newman
David and Amelia O'Dell*
Eric Owens
Nicole Paiement
Pelham Glenn Pearce, Jr.*
Rajika Puri*
Joel Revzen*
Thomas Rhodes
Patricia A. Richards
Norman D. Ryan*
Kathryn Smith
Mr. and Mrs. Paul A. Stuhreyer III*
Roselyne C. Swig
Melia Tourangeau
T. Peter Townsend*
Rochelle A. Weiner
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Weiss*
Diane B. Wilsey*
Bruce Munro Wright
James W. Wright*

Linda S. Arnold
Susan Shiplett Ashbaker*
Spencer and Phoebe Burke
Louise B. Carvey*
Michael Ching*
Gordon A. Cizon*
Barbara C. Cox*
Conrad Cummings*
Bruce Donnell*
David G. Edwards
Lisa Erdberg and Dennis Gibbons
Richard and Donna Falvo
Roy Fisher*
Henry A. Garrity
James Develin Geier*
Marsh and Ann Gibson*
Timothy Gillette*
Collin Glidewell
and Matthew Sigman
Craig Henderson
John Hoomes
Carol Howard
Cecilia Kelly*
Paula M. Kimper*
Stephen E. Kitchen
James J. Kolb
Camille D. LaBarre
Larry G. Ludwig*
Raymond and Nancy Lutz*
Judith and Leon Major*
William Mason*
Sasha Matson*
Christopher and Julie McBeth*
Francis T. McClain
Kelley McLendon
Michael McConnell
W.R. (Bob) McPhee*
Robert C. Miller*
Harvey and Joyce Mitchell
Family Foundation*
William Neill
Laurie E. Nelson
Timothy O'Leary*
Armando Olmedo, Esq.
Gordon F. Ostrowski*
Judy Pohlman
William Powers and Sari Gruber
Jeffrey and Paula Rimmel
Rosemarie V. Rosen
Stacey K. Rosenberg
Dolores E. Ruetz*
David M. Savard*
Nando Schellen
and Deborah Raymond*
Cherie L. Shreck
Thomas J. Terrell, Jr.
Dona D. Vaughn and Ron Raines*
Margo Viscusi
Ms. Gae Whitener
Andrew E. Yarosh
As of March 1, 2015

*denotes five or more years of giving

†denotes in memoriam

CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS \$250 OR MORE

Alan Agle*
Cally and Tom Aldrich*

Opera Siam presents two
premiere operas by Somtow Sucharitkul

DRAGON & EVER

BHURIDATTA *The Dragon Lord*

part three of the epic ten part
operatic cycle
DAS•JATI -
The Ten Lives of the Buddha

May 22-24

and straight from its
Skylight Music Theatre
debut in the USA

THE SNOW DRAGON

July 14-16



Thailand Cultural Center Main Hall
operasiam.com
for more information write
tickets@bangkokopera.com

co-production of Opera Siam and
the Department of Cultural Promotion
Ministry of Culture

SUPPORT FOR OPERA AMERICA

FOUNDATION AND CORPORATE SUPPORT

The Aaron Copland Fund
for Music, Inc.
American Express
The Andrew W. Mellon
Foundation
Ann and Gordon Getty
Foundation
Bank of America
Boosey & Hawkes
Booth Ferris Foundation
Deloitte Financial Advisory
Services LLP
Golet Charitable Lead Trusts
The Hearst Foundations
The Howard Gilman Foundation

The Hyde and Watson
Foundation
The James Irvine Foundation
John S. and James L. Knight
Foundation
New York Community Trust
The Penates Foundation
Schott Music Corporation
Tobin Theatre Arts Fund
The Virginia B. Toulmin
Foundation
The Wallace Foundation
Wells Fargo

OPERA AMERICA PROGRAM SUPPORT

Patricia Scimeca Fund
for Emerging Singers

SUPPORT FOR OPERA.CA

SUPPORTERS

Canada Council for the Arts
Ontario Arts Council

CORPORATE SUPPORT

BMO Financial Group

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS

VANGUARD (\$5,000 OR MORE)

The Dianne and Irving Kipnes
Foundation**
Roger Moore**
George Cedric Metcalf
Foundation*

INNOVATOR (\$1,000 TO \$4,999)

Gail Asper and
Michael Paterson**
Margaret and Jim Fleck**
Claire Hopkinson**
The Martha Lou Henley
Charitable Foundation**
W. R. (Bob) McPhee**
Sandra and Jim Pitblado**
Monica Sloan
Bruce M. Wright**

AFICIONADO (\$500 TO \$999)

Maria Antonakos and
Dr. Harald Stöver**
Richard Comparey**
Patrick Corrigan
Larry Desrochers

FRIEND (UP TO \$499)

Gerald Finley
Sandra Gavinchuk
Christina Loewen
Chris Lorway
Lorna MacDonald
Micheline McKay
Michael Morres
Alexander Neef
Virginia Reh
Ian Rye
Robert Vineburg
Deirdre Webster
Susan Worthington
James W. Wright
Tom Wright

*denotes Power of 100 donor
**denotes multiyear commitment

OPERA CONFERENCE 2015 SPONSORS

OPERA America acknowledges the generous contributions of the following businesses and corporations who have sponsored events and sessions for *Opera Conference 2015: Increasing Civic Impact*, which will be held from May 6 to 9 in Washington, D.C.



GOVERNMENT SUPPORT



National Endowment for the Arts



New York City Department of Cultural Affairs



New York State Council on the Arts

Continued from page 54

Punnett possessed a rare mix of attributes that will make replacing him nearly impossible. He not only was a true opera buff, but he also knew how to bridge the divide and make the art form accessible to people who thought they would never step foot in an opera

house. Minnesota Opera staff are now looking for other influencers in both traditional and nontraditional media, even hosting social-media nights at the opera to encourage bloggers to write about their experiences. They'll continue to develop relationships to see where they might lead, always remembering that their willingness to experiment and take risks led to their serendipitous

discovery of Punnett — and deepened their understanding of what it takes to welcome newcomers to the opera. ●

Bob Harlow, a market research expert, leads *The Wallace Foundation's* case study project. **Cindy Cox Roman** is a researcher and strategy adviser to businesses and nonprofits.

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

A	C	E	R	S		P	I	C	S		H	A	S		
R	E	M	I	T		A	T	O	P		C	O	V	E	
DO	C	T	O	R	A	T	O	MI	C		A	M	O	R	
R	E	S	T	A	G	E		C	A	P	R	I	C	E	
				D	A	L	I			R	O	N	A	N	
T	H	E	B	A	L	LA	DO	F	B	A	B	Y	DO	E	
A	E	R	O					L	I	E	D				
RE	N	E	P	A	P	E		G	E	O	R	G	SOL	TI	
				G	E	L	S			A	E	O	N		
LA	FA	N	C	I	U	L	LA	D	E	L	W	E	S	T	
S	C	O	O	T				T	O	N	E				
T	A	R	M	A	C	S		C	O	M	P	O	S	E	
I	D	E	A			N	O	T	E	W	O	R	T	H	Y
N	E	S	S			B	R	A	N		N	I	T	E	R
G	S	T				C	E	N	T		S	M	O	R	E

Crossword puzzle can be found on page 43.



THE STAFF OF
OPERA AMERICA
CONGRATULATES
MARC A. SCORCA
ON HIS
25TH ANNIVERSARY,
AND LOOKS FORWARD
TO HIS CONTINUED
LEADERSHIP.

THE NATIONAL **OPERA** CENTER
AMERICA

Opera Volunteers
INTERNATIONAL

*With a membership of Opera Volunteers,
Support Groups, Companies and Educational Organizations,*

- * Developing, mentoring, & celebrating volunteers
- * Creating networking opportunities in the US & Canada
- * Providing grants for opera volunteer groups

operavolunteers.org

OPERA AMERICA STAFF

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Marc A. Scorca, President/CEO
Kurt Howard, Managing Director
Kevin M. Sobczyk, CIO
Traci Djonne Schanke, Assistant to the President

ARTISTIC PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Laura Lee Everett, Director of Artistic Services
Jeffrey S. Larson, Artistic Services Manager
Justin Giles, Artistic Services Coordinator

DEVELOPMENT

Dan Cooperman, Director of Development
Jane Gullong, Senior Development Adviser
Barbara Thomson, Development Manager
Joseph N. Van Ullen, Development Coordinator

EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Leah D. Wilson
Director of Learning and Engagement
Sue Landis, Education Coordinator

FINANCE, OPERATIONS, RESEARCH AND MEMBER SERVICES

Susan Schultz, Controller
Miles Greenberg, Research Manager
Benjamin Newman, Membership Manager

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Brandon Gryde
Director of Government Affairs

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Patricia Kiernan Johnson
Director of Marketing and Communications
Matthew Sigman, Editor, *Opera America Magazine*
Audrey N. Saccone, Digital Media Manager
Nicholas Wise
Communications and Publications Manager
James Ty Cumbie, Art Director

NATIONAL OPERA CENTER

Nicholas Roberts, Manager
Ben Young, Technical Manager
Sarah McCann, Booking Coordinator
John Lynd, Facilities Coordinator
Customer Service Associates:
Stefa Alarcon, Jay Mejias, Alyssa Meyers,
Wayne Paul, Kendell Pinkney, Jude Thomas,
Katherine Yip

PROFESSIONAL COMPANY MEMBER INDEX

THE FOLLOWING PROFESSIONAL COMPANY MEMBERS ARE FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE:

American Lyric Theater 9	Fort Worth Opera 10, 37	Minnesota Opera 29, 35, 44	The Sacramento Region Performing Arts Alliance 10
American Opera Projects 9	The Glimmerglass Festival 17, 64	Nashville Opera 13	San Diego Opera 10
Anchorage Opera 10	Gotham Chamber Opera 35	Opera Birmingham 10	San Francisco Opera 10, 11, 44
Annapolis Opera 45	Hawaii Opera Theatre 34	Opera Lafayette 17	The Santa Fe Opera 24, 36, 64
Ash Lawn Opera 45	HERE 9	Opera Memphis 10, 12	Seattle Opera 10, 15, 34
Austin Opera 10	Houston Grand Opera 9, 10	Opera North 10	Skylight Music Theatre 35
Beth Morrison Projects 9, 37	Indianapolis Opera 10	Opera Parallèle 6, 10, 37	Tulsa Opera 35, 37
Calgary Opera 11	The Industry 10	Opera Philadelphia 9, 10	UrbanArias 17
Chicago Opera Theater 21, 64	Long Beach Opera 34, 35	Opera San Antonio 10	Utah Symphony Utah Opera 13
Cincinnati Opera 9, 34, 36	Los Angeles Opera 5, 34	Opera San José 10, 11	Vancouver Opera 11
The Dallas Opera 6	Lyric Opera of Chicago 10, 11, 24	Opera Saratoga 35	VisionIntoArt 9
Des Moines Metro Opera 10, 13	Manitoba Opera 11	Opera Southwest 34	Washington National Opera 17, 64
Edmonton Opera 11	The Metropolitan Opera 11, 24, 36	Opera Theatre of Saint Louis 15, 35	Wolf Trap Opera 17, 64
Festival Opera 10	Michigan Opera Theatre 35, 38	OperaLancaster 10	
Florentine Opera Company 10, 37		Pacific Opera Victoria 34	
Florida Grand Opera 11		Pensacola Opera 10	

ADVERTISER INDEX

American Modern Ensemble 56	Lyric Opera of Kansas City 45	Opera Siam 60	Skylight Music Theatre 18
The Arts Insurance Program 39	Manitoba Opera 51	Opera Theater of Pittsburgh 57	SUNY Potsdam 31
Boosey & Hawkes 8	Michigan Opera Theatre 30	Opera Volunteers Int'l 62	The University of Alabama Opera Theatre 51
Brad Joseph Burns 14	Minnesota Opera 50	Peter M. Krask 2	Theater for the New City 32
Chautauqua Opera Company 57	National Opera Association 42	Quarterline Design Management 54	Toronto Operetta Theatre 41
Cincinnati Opera 49	Opera Columbus 55	San Francisco Opera 28	Tri-Cities Opera 56
Dean Burry 18	Opera Ebony 53	The Santa Fe Opera 52	Truck 'N Roll 42
Fisher Dachs Associates 25	Opera in Williamsburg 46	Schott EAM 4	Vancouver Opera 44
G. Schirmer/AMP 16	Opera Lafayette 48	Seagle Music Colony 26	Virginia Opera 28
IMG Artists 27	Opera Omaha 55	Sherrill Milnes VOICE Programs 26	The Wallace Foundation C2
Lyric Opera of Chicago back cover	Opera Philadelphia 48		Washington National Opera C3
	Opera San José 33		

MY FIRST OPERA

BY RUTH BADER GINSBURG

STEVE PETERWAY, COLLECTION OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES



I owe my introduction to opera to a man ahead of the times, a conductor named Dean Dixon. A child prodigy, he read notes at age three, well before he could read words. At age nine, he made his radio debut as a violinist. Dixon graduated from Juilliard in 1936. There, he studied violin and took up conducting. Three years later, he earned a master's degree in music education from Columbia University. Among Dixon's endeavors, he sought to enrich children's lives, as his had been enriched, by early exposure to beautiful music and to opera. He organized, rehearsed and conducted youth orchestra performances. On Saturday afternoons, he toured New York City high schools presenting operas designed for children's appreciation. The settings were bare, but singers were costumed and principal vocal parts were performed. Dixon conducted and narrated the omitted portions so that operas could be contained within an hour's span.

In 1944, at age 11, I had the great good fortune to attend one of Dean Dixon's productions in the company of an aunt who taught English at a Brooklyn junior high school. The opera was *La Gioconda*, not the most likely choice for a first opera, but for me, it was an overwhelming experience. High drama conveyed through glorious music — I was spellbound.

Dean Dixon left the United States for Europe five years after that enchanting afternoon. An African-American, he was no more welcome in his native land as a conductor of major orchestras than African-Americans were accepted as players in Major League Baseball or on the stage of **THE METROPOLITAN OPERA**. His career flourished abroad, where, for

the first time, he was called "Maestro." Dixon returned to the United States 21 years later to a changed climate. He was engaged as guest conductor with leading orchestras across the country, from the New York Philharmonic to the San Francisco Symphony.

When my daughter, Jane, was born, opera LPs were often played in our home. It was time for her first opera, I thought, when she was four. I took her to an Amato Opera condensed presentation of *Il trovatore*. Midway through Leonora's first aria, Jane rose to her full height and screamed at the top of her lungs. I ushered her out swiftly, understanding that I had rushed things a bit. I waited four more years.

When Jane was eight, my husband and I carefully selected as her next exposure *Così fan tutte* at the old Met, sung in Ruth and Thomas Martin's English translation. In preparation, we played the recording again and again, and read the libretto together at least three times. Jane loved Despina and memorized her words. Our seats were in the first row of the Family Circle so that no heads would obstruct Jane's view. She wore proper opera attire: a black velvet jumper made for the occasion and patent leather Mary Janes. This time, I got it right!

No need for special planning when son James arrived. He was born with a passion for music. A lively child, he found it hard to sit still in school. But at The Little Orchestra Society concerts at Hunter College, and later, at the New York Philharmonic's Young People's Concerts,

his attention never wandered. In his high school years, he was a super at **WASHINGTON NATIONAL OPERA**, and he is today married to a captivating soprano, Patrice Michaels. His enterprise is Cedille Records, producer of exquisite CDs, among them Menotti's *The Medium* and Kurka's *The Good Soldier Schweik*, both performed by **CHICAGO OPERA THEATER**.

When the Court breaks for the summer, we enjoy opera *en famille* at our regular July and August venues — **THE GLIMMERGLASS FESTIVAL** in Cooperstown, New York, and the spectacularly situated **SANTA FE OPERA**.

In our capital city, I attend every production of Washington National Opera and, when I have done my homework ahead of time, WNO's dress rehearsals. I also attend the two productions Washington Concert Opera mounts each season. In the vicinity, I enjoy **WOLF TRAP OPERA** and the Castleton Festival.

Twice each term, the Court holds musicales, which I arrange with the aid of Washington Performing Arts Executive Director Emeritus Douglas H. Wheeler. Thanks to talent scout nonpareil Barry Tucker, who heads the Richard Tucker Music Foundation, the Court's fall musicales present the world's best voices. And I look forward to the staging, this summer, of Derrick Wang's marvelously amusing comic opera, *Scalia/Ginsburg*. ●

Ruth Bader Ginsburg is an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.



Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Justice Antonin Scalia as supernumeraries in Washington National Opera's 1994 production of *Ariadne auf Naxos*.

COURTESY OF WASHINGTON NATIONAL OPERA



RICHARD WAGNER "THE RING OF THE NIBELUNG

WASHINGTON NATIONAL OPERA
APRIL 30 - MAY 22, 2016

Directed by Artistic Director Francesca Zambello
Conducted by Music Director Philippe Auguin

SCHWAB

"One of the best *Ring* cycles in more than a quarter of a century [by] one of the best directors working in opera today."

—*The Washington Post*



KARIN COOPER



CORY WEAVER



KARIN COOPER



CORY WEAVER

Guarantee your seats to the 2016 *Ring* Cycle in the nation's capital!

Catherine Foster as Brünnhilde (Cycles I/II) **Nina Stemme** as Brünnhilde (Cycle III) **Alan Held** as Wotan **Daniel Brenna** as Siegfried

SUBSCRIPTION PACKAGES AVAILABLE AS OF APRIL 13, 2015

For more information, visit kennedy-center.org/ring

WASHINGTON NATIONAL OPERA

*Initial funding for WNO's 2016 Ring is provided in part by Jacqueline B. Mars.
David and Alice Rubenstein are the Presenting Underwriters of WNO.*

THE NATIONAL OPERA CENTER
AMERICA

330 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10001

Lyric Opera of Chicago congratulates and salutes
Marc Scorca for 25 years of inspired leadership.



Ana María Martínez, Antonio Poli,
and Marina Rebeka in *Don Giovanni*.

LYRICOPERA.ORG
LONG LIVE PASSION

Lyric