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

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publisher

OPERA America

editor

Kelley Rourke

associate editor

Alexa B. Antopol

art director

Katherine L. Ehle

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

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ON THE COVER: San Francisco Opera's world premiere production of Theofanidis's *Heart of a Soldier*. The production was directed by Francesca Zambello with set design by Peter J. Davison, costume designs by Jess Goldstein and lighting by Mark McCullough. Photo by Cory Weaver.



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November was a great month for opera in America. Numerous successful productions of new American works were interspersed among outstanding performances of established operas. OPERA America's first New Works Forum was launched in New York and stimulated a lively and informed discussion among producers, artists and publishers. American creativity dominated the conversation — and stood up well in comparison to the international operas we all know and love. The balance between American operas and our inherited European repertoire felt different, and right.

OPERA America's inaugural New Works Forum has already emerged as the pre-eminent national convening dedicated to improving the quality and quantity of American operas produced and performed across the country. Discussion at the meeting was intense. Facilitated sessions explored the dynamics of collaboration among established opera companies and new works producers, strategies for funding and building audiences, and techniques for providing feedback to artists throughout the development process. Case studies highlighted lessons learned from a variety of new operas — each developed in a unique way: *Death and the Powers* (Todd Machover and Robert Pinsky/MIT), *Later the Same Evening* (John Musto and Mark Campbell/University of Maryland and the National Gallery), two works by composer Christopher Theofanidis: *Heart of a Soldier* (with Donna DiNovelli/San Francisco Opera) and *The Refuge* (with Leah Lax/Houston Grand Opera). Several productions from Opera Theatre of Saint Louis were also examined, including the important new production of John Adams's and Alice Goodman's *Death of Klinghoffer*, underscoring the importance of second and subsequent productions of works that have already premiered, and a new opera in development by jazz composer Terence Blanchard, slated for premiere in 2013.

Performances of works in process (for a complete listing, see page 15) provided an important context for discussion. A highlight of the Forum was a performance of the premiere production of Nico Muhly and Stephen Karam's *Dark Sisters*, which will be the featured work at *Opera Conference 2012* in Philadelphia (June 13-16). The Forum anticipated the performances of the Metropolitan Opera's acclaimed production of *Satyagraha*, and several Forum participants left New York for Minnesota Opera to attend the premiere production of Kevin Puts and Mark Campbell's successful new opera, *Silent Night*. The impact of the concentration of works was tremendous. Immersion in a series of varied works inspired formal and informal conversations about different musical styles, source material and artistic motivation.

The New Works Forum will be realized even more fully next year when it convenes in the new National Opera Center. Meetings and readings will take place in the new facility that is designed to promote just this kind of learning and collaboration, utilizing the Audition/Recital Hall, large Rehearsal Hall, Learning Center and various meeting rooms. Using the technology that will be installed in the Opera Center, some elements of the program will be streamed to members who are not able to travel to New York.

Many of us envision a future for American opera in which new works and works from an established American repertoire complement a rich legacy of European masterpieces in a lively artistic dynamic that thrusts opera to the center of contemporary culture. We look forward to the day when American opera is seen to be an essential part of every city's arts landscape and attracts new and diverse audiences to opera houses and other venues. Thanks to the hard work of many of our members, November provided a hint of what that reality would feel like, and it felt very good.

Marc A. Scorca
President/CEO



Western Washington Technical Theatre Summer Workshop for teachers and students. Photo by Bill Mohn.

“WE WANT THEM TO KNOW THAT JOBS ARE OUT THERE.”

“I believe that an opera education program has a responsibility to educate people in *all* the component practices of opera — writing, singing, instruments, construction, lighting, crafts,” says Sue Elliott, **Seattle Opera’s** director of education. “A lot of companies have children’s choruses, and it is certainly important to train that next generation of singers, but what about tech?”

Robert Schaub, Seattle Opera’s technical director, brought the idea of youth technical training to his fellow trustees at the **Western Washington Theatrical Training Trust**, an eight-year old 501(c)(3) that provides affordable training to students and workers in theater crafts.

As a result, in summer 2011, the Trust launched its first Technical Theatre Summer Workshop for K-12 drama teachers and students. The three-day workshop was a collaboration among IATSE Locals 15, 488 and 887, as well as several large theaters in the area, including Seattle Opera. Sessions covered the basics of safety, lighting, sound, costuming, hair and makeup, scenery building, fly systems and video/projections. Instruction was provided by seasoned technical professionals, assisted by members of the education departments of the participating theaters.

The Trust’s William J. Wickline notes that the need for such a workshop has long been evident. “Based on the calls we get from drama teachers, we know that in most cases the kids aren’t getting solid training in technical theater in the schools. All of the locals are recognizing that their technicians are getting older, and these kids are going to be the next generation of stagehands. We want them to know that jobs are out there, and we want to teach them the skills they will need. We also want to assist these high school drama programs in putting on the best shows they can.” 🍷

“MUSIC PUBLISHING OUTSIDE OF THE TRADITIONAL MODELS.”

Project Schott New York (PSNY), a digital music publishing platform recently launched by **Schott Music Corporation & European American Music Distributors**, allows Schott to bring promising self-published artists to the attention of producers and audiences.

An online space for the discovery, purchase and discussion of new music, PSNY is the first digital music publishing platform of its kind to be developed by a major music publishing house. In its pilot phase, PSNY's catalog features over 70 new solo and ensemble works by more than 30 active composers, all available for immediate download. Each PSNY Composer Edition is a published edition of the composer's self-published work. The edition preserves elements of the composer's individual "house style" while conforming to PSNY's professional publishing standards. As Schott noted in its announcement of the new project, "Composers of today possess a self-producing capacity that is far beyond the capacities of any other era in the history of notated music. We embrace this new development and believe our role as publisher is to make the very best new works available to the public in the most convenient way possible."

A search on the PSNY site for a particular composer yields his/her website, a profile, calendar, repertoire suggestions, program notes, a listening area, videos, reviews, comments and more. PSNY's homepage will include weekly repertoire and performance highlights, as well as blog posts with targeted suggestions for programmers, producers and performers.

Following the launch of the pilot phase of the project, the PSNY catalog will continue to expand with new composers and new works introduced on a regular basis. Some of the many composers participating in the pilot phase include: Robert Beaser, Douglas J. Cuomo, Kamran Ince, David T. Little, Tobias Picker, Alvin Singleton, Kate Soper and Gregory Spears.

"PSNY was born partly out of a fundamental concern I'd been hearing from composers, conductors and ensembles about the need for a new approach to music publishing outside of the traditional models," said Norman Ryan, vice president at Schott Music Corporation & European American Music Distributors in New York. "We have seen an explosion of interest in new music, especially from a younger generation of players and listeners, and PSNY is ideally situated to build and enhance connections among creators, performers and audiences. Launching an exclusively digital brand also offers us the opportunity to add new works and new composers much more frequently. It's a tremendous advance for the field of music publishing and one that will engender new avenues of collaboration." 🎵

THE ENVELOPE, PLEASE

Nominations for the 2012 GRAMMY awards, which will be presented on February 12, 2012, in Los Angeles, include several members and friends of OPERA America. **Florentine Opera's** recording of *Elmer Gantry* (Naxos) was nominated for Best Engineered Album, Classical, as well as Best Contemporary Classical Competition. The **Metropolitan Opera's** recording of *Doctor Atomic* (Sony Classical) was nominated for Best Opera Recording. Joyce DiDonato's *Diva Divo* (Virgin Classics) is a contender for Best Classical Vocal Solo. For a complete list of nominees, visit www.grammy.com. 🎵

“OUR JOB IS NOT ONLY TO BE STEWARDS OF GREAT ART, BUT TO BE COMPASSIONATE PEOPLE.”

“I believe every nonprofit has an obligation to go beyond its stated mission and think creatively about how the organization can meet needs within its community,” says Steven Aiken, general director of **Shreveport Opera**. For the past several years, he has worked with composers to create new operas for the company’s educational tour that not only introduce the art form, but also address current social issues.

Recent operas have included topics like recycling (*The Green Team*) and learning how to get along despite differences (*Diver City*). This season the company takes on the problem of bullying. *Stop, Bully!*, written by Aiken with composer Jason Heald, tackles the growing epidemic both in schools and on the internet.

School performances are structured so that 10-12 children can participate (sing and act) in them — and there is even a silent role for a school administrator. This year, Shreveport Opera Xpress will spend eight months touring the 30-35 minute production around the tri-state region in Louisiana, Texas and Arkansas, performing for nearly 50,000 children and adults, bringing messages and music to a diverse and welcoming crowd.

“The mission of Shreveport Opera is certainly to create great productions for the mainstage, but the more visible you can be within a community, the greater opportunity you have to gain a larger audience,” says Aiken. “Our job is not only to be stewards of great art, but to be compassionate people. Social needs have never been higher. All of us in the arts talk about changing a life. I really believe that stuff. The opera world gave me my career, as a singer and then as an administrator. It gave me my colleagues, my friends and my wife. My life truly was changed because of opera.” 🍷



Eliza Bonet as Skye, Robert Mellon as Big, Bad Bully and Rachel Hall as Paige in Shreveport Opera's production of Aiken's *Stop, Bully!*. Photo by Jenifer Hill Akers.



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS ANNOUNCES ART WORKS GRANTS FOR OPERA

In the first of two annual funding cycles, a number of OPERA America members received grants from the **National Endowment for the Arts** (NEA), many related to productions of American works. Funded companies and their respective projects include:

- American Opera Projects for *Paul's Case* (Gregory Spears/Kathryn Walat), as well as workshops of the chamber opera *The Weeping Camel* (Huang Ruo/Candice Mui-Ngam Chong)
- Beth Morrison Projects for *Song From The Uproar: The Lives and Deaths of Isabelle Eberhardt* (Missy Mazzoli/Royce Vavrek/Stephen Taylor)
- Boston Lyric Opera for *The Inspector* (John Musto/Mark Campbell)
- The Dallas Opera for *The Aspern Papers* (Dominick Argento)
- Fort Worth Opera for *Lysistrata* (Mark Adamo)
- Houston Grand Opera for *East + West*, a four-year program of chamber opera focused on Houston's Asian populations
- Long Beach Opera for *Ainadamar* (Osvaldo Golijov/David Henry Hwang), as well as a double-bill of Golijov's *Oceana* and the American premiere of *The Paper Nautilus* (Gavin Bryars)
- Lyric Opera of Chicago for a new semi-staged production, featuring Renée Fleming, of *A Streetcar Named Desire* (André Previn/Philip Littell)
- Lyric Opera of Kansas City for *Nixon in China* (John Adams/Alice Goodman)
- Madison Opera for *Galileo Galilei* (Philip Glass/Mary Zimmerman/Arnold Weinstein)
- North Carolina Opera for *The Fall of the House of Usher* (Philip Glass)
- Opera Company of Philadelphia for *Dark Sisters* (Nico Muhly/Stephen Karam)
- Opera Theatre of Saint Louis for *The Two Sides of Love* (Terence Blanchard/Michael Cristofer), as well as *Alice in Wonderland* (Unsuk Chin/David Henry Hwang)
- Portland Opera for *Galileo Galilei* (Philip Glass/Mary Zimmerman/Arnold Weinstein)
- San Diego Opera for *Moby-Dick* (Jake Heggie/Gene Scheer)
- San Francisco Opera for *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene* (Mark Adamo)
- Tulsa Opera for *Dead Man Walking* (Jake Heggie/Terrence McNally)
- Virginia Opera Association for *Orphée* (Philip Glass/Jean Cocteau).

Other OPERA America companies receiving NEA funding in this round include:

- Anchorage Opera Company (Verdi's *Macbeth*)
- Central City Opera (Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*)
- Chicago Opera Theater (Shostakovich's *Moscow, Cheryomushki*)
- Los Angeles Opera (Britten's *Albert Herring*)
- Metropolitan Opera (*The Enchanted Island*, a baroque pastiche)
- Michigan Opera Theatre (*Pagliacci*)
- Minnesota Opera (*Werther*)
- Nashville Opera (*La fanciulla del West*)
- Opera Boston (Tippet's *The Midsummer Marriage*)
- Opera Orchestra of New York (Wagner's *Rienzi*)
- Pittsburgh Opera (*The Abduction from the Seraglio*)
- The Santa Fe Opera (Szymanoski's *King Roger*)
- Seattle Opera (Gluck's *Orphée et Eurydice*)
- Washington Concert Opera (*Samson and Delilah*)
- Washington National Opera (Verdi's *Nabucco*)

Bert Wesley Huffman has been appointed to the position of director of development for **The Atlanta Opera**. Most recently, Huffman served as director of development for the ASHRAE Foundation, an international association of engineers. He is a graduate of Young Harris College, Tennessee Wesleyan College in Athens, TN, with an M.P.A. in nonprofit management from Kennesaw State University. Additionally, he holds the professional licensure of Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE). An avid advocate of the arts, Huffman has been involved with musical theater since childhood, appearing in a diverse array of regional theater productions and vocal ensembles.

Karol Nickell has been appointed as **Des Moines Metro Opera's** (DMMO) new executive director. Nickell comes to DMMO from the publishing industry, having served as vice president/editor-in-chief at both Meredith Corporation and the Reader's Digest Association. Her nonprofit experience includes two terms as a board director for United Way of America, during which she served as the organization's treasurer. A native Iowan, Nickell holds two degrees from Iowa State University and currently serves on the advisory council for the university's Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication.

Florida Grand Opera announces the appointment of a new managing director, **Kevin G. Mynatt**, who concurrently serves as the company's director of production. As managing director, Mynatt will oversee all day-to-day operations for the company and report to

General Director and CEO Robert M. Heuer. He held the same position previously at Central City Opera. Mynatt has a B.F.A. in technical theater from Central Missouri State University and an M.F.A. in theater and lighting design from Brandeis University. **Erin Turner**, the company's new technical director, most recently served as production manager for Cape Playhouse during the six-show 2011 summer season. Often working on a consultant and contractual basis, he has held the position of technical director with organizations that include Boston Lyric Opera and New England Conservatory Opera. Turner holds a B.A. in theater design and technology from Northeastern University.

After 17 years as executive director of the **Nashville Opera Association**, **Carol Penterman** will conclude her tenure with the organization at the end of the 2011-2012 season. Nashville Opera's artistic director, **John Hoomes**, will assume Penterman's duties as executive director while maintaining responsibilities in his current role. Hoomes has served as artistic director for the Nashville Opera since 1995. Also a freelance stage director, he has directed more than 150 productions of opera and musical theater in the U.S., South America and Canada, including the world premiere production of *Elmer Gantry*. Upon the departure of Penterman, the Nashville Opera Association will create a new chief operating officer position to assume responsibility for employee management, accounting, fundraising and day-to-day financial administration.

Anne Earnheart has joined **OPERA America** as the new membership and development manager. Earnheart comes from a classical music and arts administration background, and worked for organizations including Teach For America, Young People's Chorus of New York City and Milwaukee Ballet. She is a classical singer and has performed with a variety of groups including Florentine Opera and Skylight Opera Theatre. Earnheart received her degrees in vocal performance from Lawrence University and the New England Conservatory of Music. **Adrianna Martinelli**, a former OPERA America intern, has been hired full-time as administrative coordinator. Martinelli graduated from Hunter College in June 2011 with a degree in economics; she also attended Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts and Martha Graham's School of Contemporary Dance. Martinelli conducts choreography and technique workshops for students in modern dance and in evaluation of performance. **Katherine Baltrush**, who joined the company in December 2010, has been promoted from finance & operations coordinator to information & research manager. **Alexa B. Antopol**, research manager since January 2006, now holds the title of reference & research librarian. **Susan Schultz**, formerly the accounting manager, is now the company controller.

Lawrence J. Fried has been appointed executive director of **Opera In The Heights** in Houston, TX. His previous positions include executive director of the Bellevue (WA) Philharmonic, general manager

and artistic administrator of the San Antonio Symphony and orchestra manager and artistic administrator of The Little Orchestra Society of New York. He holds a B.M. from the New England Conservatory of Music and an M.M. from the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

Opera San Luis Obispo (OperaSLO) announces the appointments of a new artistic director and conductor, as well as a new artistic advisor.

Brian Asher Alhadeff will take over duties from former artistic director and conductor Robert Ashens. Ashens completed his three year contract with OperaSLO and continues his career as artistic director of West Coast Opera, as well as conducting productions with Anchorage Opera and numerous concerts nationwide and abroad. Ashens introduced Alhadeff to OperaSLO as associate conductor during the 2010 production of *La bohème*, and again during the spring production of *The Barber of Seville*. Alhadeff has served for several years as artistic director for an international summer opera festival in the Czech Republic. He has had an active performing career as a conductor and frequently lectures throughout the United States and abroad. Alhadeff received his M.M. degree from California State University, Los Angeles, and a D.M.A. in orchestra conducting from UCLA. **Jacalyn Kreitzer** will serve as artistic advisor for the company. Kreitzer is a teacher of applied voice at Cal Poly, emphasizing vocal health and vocology. She is the Founder & Producer of Cal Poly Student Opera Theatre, and produces master classes that have featured

Marilyn Horne, Frederica von Stade and Rod Gilfry.

Erin Kelley Sammis has been appointed as **Pensacola Opera's** new executive director. Sammis has been with Pensacola Opera since May 2007 as the director of development and marketing. Over the past year, Sammis has assumed the additional responsibilities of day-to-day operations and management of the company. She has over seven years of experience in nonprofit administration, having worked previously for Chicago Opera Theater and the Girl Scouts of Tulip Trace Council in Bloomington, IN. Sammis has also trained extensively as a singer and pianist, holding a B.M. in voice performance from Furman University (Greenville, SC) and an M.M. in voice performance from Indiana University (Bloomington, IN). While at Indiana University, she was an associate instructor of voice and was seen in several leading operatic roles and recital presentations. She also was selected to be a Gerdine Young Artist with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis in 2004.

Pittsburgh Opera General Director **Christopher Hahn's** contract has been extended through June 30, 2016. Hahn's tenure as general director began in 2008, after serving as artistic director since 2000. His artistic and administrative leadership at Pittsburgh Opera has been marked by an expansion of the repertoire to include productions of contemporary operas such *Dead Man Walking* (2004), *Billy Budd* (2007) and *The Grapes of Wrath* (2008). He has developed partnerships with Carnegie Mellon's School of Drama

for the company's annual Resident Artist production, and with Chatham Baroque and Attack Theatre. Under Hahn's guidance, the company moved to its new headquarters in the former Westinghouse Air Brake factory with administrative, rehearsal and performance space all on site. The building subsequently received LEED® Silver certification in Operations and Maintenance by the U.S. Green Building Council, making Pittsburgh Opera the first U.S. opera company to achieve certification in that category. Hahn has also led an expansion of audience development initiatives, including the popular Brown Bag Concerts.

Christopher Van Alstyne has been appointed as director of production at **Sarasota Opera**. Most recently, Van Alstyne served as the production manager with Baltimore Opera Company from 2006 until 2009. Prior to his role in Baltimore, he served as the production manager with the Boston Ballet and technical director for the North American and European tours of Cirque du Soleil. He has also held positions at CUNY Staten Island Center for the Arts, Midwood Field Concerts in Brooklyn, NY, and Opera Theatre at Brooklyn College, NY. He holds a B.A. in technical theater from the State University of New York at Fredonia and an M.F.A. in technical design and production from the Yale School of Drama. Additionally, **Greg Parry** has been re-appointed as the company's director of marketing and public relations. Parry previously held the position of director of marketing with Sarasota Opera from 2000-2004, during which

time he guided the organization in achieving overall opera ticket sales of 100.01% in 2004, which included a 5% growth in subscriptions. Most recently, Parry founded and served as CEO of Parry Arts Consulting in Paris, France, incorporating North American style marketing, fundraising and management techniques to the European context.

Tri-Cities Opera General Director **Reed Smith** is the recipient of a 2011 Heart of the Arts Award from the Broome County Arts Council (BCAC). BCAC established the annual awards in 2004, inviting the community to select and celebrate individuals who have made significant contributions to the arts in Broome County. Nominations are submitted by the general public, and Heart of the Arts (HOTA) Award recipients are chosen by the ballot votes of the BCAC's more than 100 members.

Vancouver Opera (VO) has received a generous gift of \$1 million from **Michael and Inna O'Brian** to support renovations and adaptations to their new facility near Commercial Drive. The gift was recognized with the naming of the new premises as The Michael & Inna

O'Brian Centre for Vancouver Opera. Operations moved to The Michael & Inna O'Brian Centre for Vancouver Opera in July 2011. Previously, Vancouver Opera occupied several spaces throughout the city. In the new Michael & Inna O'Brian Centre for Vancouver Opera, administrative offices, costume and properties shops, set storage, and staging and orchestra rehearsals will all take place under one roof. The company will continue to present mainstage productions in the Queen Elizabeth Theatre. The O'Brians are the third family in Vancouver to make a \$1 million gift to Vancouver Opera or the Vancouver Opera Foundation. To honor her outstanding service to opera in Vancouver, the family of Yulanda Faris made a \$1 million contribution to the Vancouver Opera Foundation. This gift will support VO's new **Yulanda M. Faris Young Artists Program**, slated to begin during the 2012-2013 season at The Michael & Inna O'Brian Centre for Vancouver Opera. Longtime Vancouver philanthropist and supporter of the arts **Martha Lou Henley** has made two \$1 million dollar gifts to the company, both directed towards operations and the VO Foundation. VO plans to open

the music library, rehearsal facilities and meeting space of The Michael & Inna O'Brian Centre for Vancouver Opera to arts groups in the broader area and looks forward to being an active and supportive neighbor in the Clark Drive-Commercial Drive community.

Lyric Opera Virginia (LOV) will name its Young Artist Program the Edythe C. Harrison Young Artist Program in honor of Founding Lyric Opera Virginia Board Member **Edythe C. Harrison**. Following her marriage in 1955 to Stanley L. Harrison, Mrs. Harrison became active in the arts community in Norfolk, VA. Harrison is the founding president of the Virginia Opera Association, which she organized in 1974, leading its rapid growth into a well-recognized regional company. She actively helped direct the campaign to replace the old Center Theater, which had been the company's home for 19 years, and to raise the \$10 million to replace it with a modern opera house in Norfolk's redeveloping downtown. With a grand opening in 1993, the venue was renamed the Edythe C. and Stanley L. Harrison Opera House. 🍷

2012 Winter Opera Festival

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Christopher Burchett and Jennifer Hoppe perform the work of David T. Little during OPERA America's *Salon Series*. Photo by José Rincon.

THE 2011-2012 SALON SERIES

OPERA America launched its third year-long *Salon Series* on October 5 with An Evening with **David T. Little**, featuring excerpts from *Dog Days*, *Soldier Songs* and *Vinkensport*, or *The Finch Opera* performed by sopranos Mary Bonhag and Lauren Worsham, baritones Christopher Burchett and David Adam Moore, and pianist Jennifer Hoppe. In November, An Evening with **Conrad Cummings** featured excerpts from *The Golden Gate* performed by soprano Katrina Thurman, mezzo-soprano Hai-Ting Chinn, tenor Keith Jameson, baritone David Adam Moore, bass-baritone Justin Hopkins, pianist Charity Wicks, actor Elliot Kahn and conductor Steven Osgood. In 2012, featured artists will include **Mark Campbell** (January 25), **Jake Heggie** (March 21) and **Wang Jie** (April 11). For more information, visit www.operaamerica.org. 🌐

ONLINE RESERVATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL OPERA CENTER

The National Opera Center is now accepting reservation requests for the acoustically excellent Audition/Recital Hall and large, versatile Rehearsal Hall. In addition to auditions, rehearsals and performances, these spaces are ideal for meetings and offer recording and streaming capacity.

Reservation requests, at a special introductory rate, are being accepted on a rolling basis. Additional ensemble rooms and vocal studios will be available for reservation beginning February 1, 2012.

For photos, booking details and the rate sheet or to submit your reservation request, please visit www.operaamerica.org/operacenter. For more information, contact Opera Center Manager Stephanie Helms at SHelms@operaamerica.org or at 212-796-8620, ext. 207. 🌐

AMBASSADOR CIRCLE VISITS THE WINDY CITY


OPERA America's Ambassador Circle trips have become increasingly popular events as travelers experience cultural highlights of various cities while building professional contacts and making new friends. In October, OPERA America invited Ambassador Circle Members to join fellow Annual Fund donors from across the country for an Opera Weekend in Chicago. The weekend activities included Lyric Opera of Chicago's production of *The Tales of Hoffmann*, an architectural tour of the city, a backstage tour of the Civic Opera House and fine dining at some of Chicago's favorite restaurants. A pre-performance dinner in The Graham Room included Anthony Freud, OPERA America chairman and newly appointed general director of Lyric Opera of Chicago, along with Kenneth G. Pigott, Lyric Opera's president and chief executive officer, and special guest Valerie Solti. As a memorable conclusion to the weekend, Ambassador Circle members joined OPERA America's board for a reception and dinner at the homes of Lyric Opera of Chicago board members: Christina Gidwitz, Women's Board; Ronald J. Gidwitz, Board of Directors; and Jane and Kenneth Pigott. Mr. Pigott is also OPERA America's newest board member. 🌐

INAUGURAL NEW WORKS FORUM

OPERA America's first New Works Forum, supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, took place on November 10-12, 2011; the annual gathering will be fully realized in 2012 in the new National Opera Center. The Forum gathers artists and producers for facilitated discussion about the creation and presentation of new operas; presentation of case studies that highlight successful artistic and managerial strategies; extended showcases of works both completed and in development; and network building among producers and creative artists.


Participants in the Forum also attended a number of performances, including:

- Premiere production of *Dark Sisters*, with music by Nico Muhly and libretto by Stephen Karam, co-commissioned and co-produced by Gotham Chamber Opera, Music-Theatre Group and Opera Company of Philadelphia.
- A workshop performance of *The Poe Project*, a trilogy of one-act operas inspired by Edgar Allan Poe stories, presented by American Lyric Theater. The three operas included *Buried Alive* by composer Jeff Myers and librettist Quincy Long; *...Of the Flesh* by composer Jay Anthony Gach and librettist Royce Vavrek; and *Embedded* by composer Patrick Soluri and librettist Deborah Brevoort.
- A dance and music workshop of *Wolf-In-Skins*, by composer Greg Spears and librettist/choreographer Christopher Williams. Presented by American Opera Projects, the work will feature five singers, five dancers, string quartet, harp and recorder.
- A 25-minute excerpt from *Faustine*, a work-in-development by Center for Contemporary Opera, with music by Arlene Sierra and libretto by Lucy Thurber.
- A 30-minute excerpt from *The Theory of Everything*, developed by Encompass New Opera Theatre, written by composer John David Earnest and librettist Nancy Rhodes.

On November 8-10, 2012, an extended version of the New Works Forum will meet in the National Opera Center. A panel of professionals will review submissions from across the country and select excerpts to be featured at the forum. 

NEW WORKS EXPLORATION GRANTS

OPERA America's New Works Exploration Grants continue to be available. These grants provide support to representatives of OPERA America Professional Company Members who wish to travel to another city to attend a performance or workshop of a new American work and meet with the creative artists and administrators who are responsible for the piece's creation. The goals of the program are to broaden awareness of new North American opera and music-theater works across the field and create relationships among opera companies interested in pursuing the creation and production of new works. Grants cover the cost of transportation and lodging.

Ten companies received grants during FY2011, with a total of \$8,945 awarded to support the exploration of new works. For more information, contact Lyndsay Werking at LWerking@operaamerica.org. 

Philadelphia's Cultural Revolution

By Katherine Baltrush

Home to trailblazers and idealists who changed the course of human history, Philadelphia became the birthplace of a new nation founded on a new paradigm. Over 200 years later, it is home to another revolution. The city's hereditary commitment to the arts both supports and is renewed by a community of opera companies adapting to a changed economic landscape through education, innovation and camaraderie.

Opera Conference 2012: Creative Resurgence | June 13 -16

Opera Company of Philadelphia, joined by Academy of Vocal Arts, Center City Opera Theater, Concert Opera Philadelphia, Curtis Institute of Music, Opera North, Inc. and Temple University, will host **Opera Conference 2012: Creative Resurgence**. A wave of creativity is sweeping the opera field as economic challenges and social change compel a rethinking of conventions. By combining rich traditions with inventive energy, opera is responding to new opportunities with flexibility and agility. Innovative artistic and administrative practices are re-envisioning the art form and increasing opera's impact in the larger cultural community. Participate in this creative resurgence by joining us in Philadelphia, June 13-16.



Adam Barta as Theatre Director in Boyer College of Music and Dance's production of Poulenc's *Les mamelles de Tiresias*. Photo by Joe Labolito/Temple University.

A Hub for Opera Education

While the East Coast is home to many prestigious music schools, Philadelphia has forged a reputation for excellence in voice studies. **Temple University's Boyer College of Music and Dance** is one of city's centers for operatic education. Approaching its 50th year, Boyer College offers both undergraduate and graduate degrees in voice. Boyer College students have the option to pursue a degree in either voice or specifically in opera; though the two programs are similar, opera majors take courses specially designed to develop a knowledge base and skill set required for opera.

Boyer College's mission of music education extends outside of its graduate and undergraduate enrollment. Temple Music Prep's Center for Lifelong Learning provides the Philadelphia community with

individual instruction, group music classes for school-age children and adult education. Music Prep also endeavors to identify and nurture the talents of children with financial limitations through its Community Music Scholars Program. Children may be nominated for the program by their school music teachers, and may receive subsidies for individual lessons, music theory courses and ensemble work.

This spirit of social consciousness is also central to **The Curtis Institute of Music**. Founded in 1924 through the vision of philanthropist Louise Curtis Bok and the guidance of Leopold Stokowski, the school has always operated on a tuition-free basis, ensuring that talent is not inhibited by one's means.

The opera program offers diverse yet balanced opera training. Students learn lead roles for Curtis Opera Theatre productions and are often cast in smaller roles in productions at Opera Company of Philadelphia, where they can test their skills in the real world. In addition to teaching bel canto standards, Mikael Eliassen, artistic director of the Curtis Opera Theatre, is committed to presenting modern opera. Since 1931, when Curtis was one of the producers for the American premiere of *Wozzeck*, contemporary and American works have been central to the program. While many conservatories avoid modern music, fearing for the vocal health of their young artists, Eliassen feels that "singers should be able to deal with this," and emphasizes the importance of "an awareness of the sound language going on around them." But perhaps no one makes the case stronger than local audiences: "In Philadelphia," Eliassen says, "these pieces, like *Phaedra* or *Elegy for Young Lovers*, are sold out!"

The **Academy of Vocal Arts (AVA)**, founded in 1934, also takes on the responsibility of training emerging artists. Denise Stuart, AVA's director of



Curtis Institute of Music's production of Rorem's *Miss Julie*. Photo by Mark Barton.



Academy of Vocal Arts's 2011 production of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Photo by Paul Sirochman.

marketing and public relations, describes the program as being “like special forces training for opera singers.” Like Curtis, AVA is tuition-free, ensuring that the most talented singers, regardless of financial circumstances, can attend.

AVA kicks off each season with a New Artists Recital, attended by both Philadelphia’s increasingly interested youth and the “opera cognoscenti, checking out the new kids in town.” This recital, in tandem with AVA’s radio broadcast and web-interactive voice competition, “gets the buzz going.”

Each year, repertoire for AVA’s three mainstage productions is chosen based on the talents and skills of the singers enrolled. Performances take place in the 120-seat Helen Corning Warden Theater, which Stuart describes as being “like a European jewel-box theater, giving young people a really unique ‘opera in your face’ experience.”

Outreach amplifies AVA’s educational mission. Students covering roles in the mainstage productions visit several local high schools each season. Stuart feels these events both increase the performance opportunities for AVA’s students and help cultivate tomorrow’s audiences. High school students are engaged by the drama of the operas themselves and intrigued by the young people performing them.



Ema Mitrovic will star in the title role of ConcertOPERA, Philadelphia’s upcoming production of Bizet’s *Carmen*. Photo by Barry Goldman.

Drawing New Audiences by Traditional Means

For 15 years, **ConcertOPERA, Philadelphia** (COPA) has been a platform for singers who have earned degrees, but seek further performance experience to move into the next stage of their careers. Providing emerging artists the opportunity to essay a new role is a strong emphasis for the company. A recent shift from concerts to semi-staged productions constitutes a leap forward in the experience the company provides for its emerging artists and audiences.

General Director Diana Borgia-Petro sees the company in an ambassadorial role: “The thrust of our company is to capture people who would ordinarily go to a sports arena or a movie; people who are not educated in [opera].” The company employs a number of methods to attract that constituency, including casting a large chorus of amateur singers. The chorus tends to draw supporters of family and

friends, who then join the growing ranks of COPA’s audience base.

Borgia-Petro also credits the company’s suburban performance venue, a 150-seat church auditorium, with their continuing success. Its casual, comfortable atmosphere puts inexperienced audiences at ease. Located 45 minutes from Philadelphia proper, the venue helps bring city entertainment to suburban doorsteps.

As part of its ambassadorial strategy, COPA keeps ticket prices low (\$25 or less) and relies on well-known titles. When audience members ask about where to see more opera, Borgia-Petro has a variety of venues and

companies to which she refers these new-found opera consumers. Many have begun to ask for COPA to mount a second production each year, a request she hopes to fulfill within the next three years.

New Works:

Opera's Present and Future

International Opera Theater (IOT) is committed to artistic self-discovery and social consciousness. Founder and Director Karen Saillant and Music Director Gianmarie Griglio practice and teach collaboration on a specialized level. Performing both in Philadelphia and Città della Pieve, Italy, IOT mounts only American works and world premieres, putting productions together, start to finish, in just one month. Work begins with awareness exercises, designed to put everyone, from the singers to the directors, into a unified frame of mind. Music and staging rehearsals are held concurrently and always on the performance stage. Guided by improvisation, their work together is underscored by Saillant's belief that actors should self-organize; she feels that the actors' artistic instincts play a vital role in the success of a production.

The works undertaken by IOT often focus on American social justice issues. Saillant traces her commitment to these themes to her own experiences as a native Philadelphian: "I have a deep love and appreciation for being an American and being raised here in Philadelphia. I grew up here as a foster child and I was a ward of the state. Without my city and state, I wouldn't be here." Often, the themes that fuel IOT's productions come from local organizations, including the African American Art Museum and the Da Vinci Art Alliance. IOT has also collaborated with Philadelphia Orchestra, American Composers Forum (Philadelphia Chapter), Philadelphia Museum of Art, Smithsonian Institution and Museum of Modern Art.

IOT is not alone in their specialization in new works. Part professional opera company, part young artist program and part new works laboratory, **Center City Opera Theater (CCOT)** has woven these three distinct functions into its mission. For the last five years, CCOT has been developing new work and displaying that intensive creative process to the public. According to General Director Andrew Kurtz, "For the art form to survive, it has to become part of the contemporary art landscape."

As Kurtz explains, "we want to distinguish ourselves by taking projects from the seed of an idea to a full premiere." In the company's Creative Development Projects, commissioned works are extensively workshopped, with artists and technical/production professionals working closely together. This provides the



John Andrew Fernandez as Prospero in International Opera Theater's world premiere production of Herion's *La Tempesta*, which was designed by Mi-Kyoung Lee who was assisted by interns from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia before it was performed at Teatro degli Avvaloranti, Città della Pieve in Italy. Photo by Alejandro Toyofuku.



Jason Switzer as Diaghilev, Matthew Mannes as Nijinski and Christopher Lorge as Stravinsky in Center City Opera Theater's staged reading of Moravec's *Danse Russe*. Photo courtesy of Center City Opera Theater.

writing teams with opportunities to learn how to anticipate and solve potential problems as part of the work's development, rather than as an afterthought.

Many of these workshops, from libretto readings to music rehearsals, are open to the public. By viewing these sessions, audiences participate in reciprocal education. Artists can gauge the reactions of a test group while audiences learn about the work involved in developing new opera. Kurtz and his artists have found audiences to be both perceptive about and receptive to this work.

CCOT's intensive, 10-month young artist program plays an important role in making the workshops possible. Composers and librettists receive the benefit of a ready and available pool of talent willing to help develop these works. The singers, in turn, learn to collaborate in the creation of new work. In addition to traditional instruction via master classes and workshops, participants discuss the business aspects of music, such as contract law, which are often omitted from conservatory education. These young artists perform in eight to 10 outreach events and visit local schools.

Kurtz acknowledges that providing full service for every aspect of creative development is a labor intensive, multi-year and costly mission. CCOT has help in the form of partnerships with Opera Delaware, American Opera Projects and an increasing roster of colleagues in the Mid-Atlantic region. Through these partnerships, costs and other burdens of producing new work are shared. The works and the artists involved in them benefit from wider exposure to multiple audiences.

Along with his colleagues throughout the city, Kurtz credits Philadelphia itself with some of CCOT's success: "What's great about the community is that we support each other and everyone has a specific niche that we all know and understand... Philadelphia is one of the few cities where you can make a living as a creative professional."



Brian Johnson in Opera North, Inc.'s production of Burrs's *Vanqui*. Photo by Ben Turansky.

Creating and Mirroring the Culture of a City

Like his colleagues around the city, Leslie Burrs, executive director of **Opera North, Inc. (ONI)**, also sees the harmonious mosaic of Philadelphia's identity mirrored in the city's opera community. "I'm greatly impressed with my colleagues," says Burrs, "in that no one is trying to compete with anyone else. We're all trying to figure out how to make it work together."

ONI's unique tessera comes in the form of the organization's commitment to African American artists and works. When ONI was founded 37 years ago, it sought to provide performance opportunities to African American singers, who, at that time, lacked outlets to hone and display their talents. Today, the focus has shifted toward viewing African American artists as part of the American artistic culture rather than as a subset of it.

As Burrs explains, "It's a fine line; you will want to take pride in your African

American heritage, but you don't want to be pigeonholed by it, either." The goal, then, is to empower African American artists through highlighting their talents rather than their ethnicity.

This mission is embodied in ONI's current collaboration with the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, whose upcoming exhibition of Henry Ossawa Tanner's work focuses on the painter's studies and output rather than his heritage. ONI will contribute performances of arias and duets to further illuminate Tanner's work.

Such partnerships with the community are becoming integral to the work of ONI. Growing out of their Opera for Seniors program, Burrs is composing a new work entitled *Transitions: Sung Stories* in collaboration with the residents of the NewCourtland Elder Services. The word "collaboration" is key in that the seniors have not only provided their personal stories upon which the libretto is based; they have also participated in the compositional process. Workshops with South African drummers, a choral director and Burrs as the composer have been held with the seniors, who have come to understand how their stories are being used. They have even contributed directly to the creation of the music. Burrs explains, "One of the seniors played a pattern on a xylophone and it became the material for a duet in the opera."

This type of community engagement not only fuels the work of ONI; it creates art that seeks universal understanding by embodying the unique voice of a Philadelphia community.

"An opera company," says **Opera Company of Philadelphia (OCP)** General Director David Devan, "when successful, is an expression of the ethos of the community, where it comes from and where it wants to go." OCP expresses Philadelphia's opera ethos by actively participating in the many traditions and innovations that Philadelphia's diverse cultural community has on offer, making it a leader in Philadelphia's ongoing cultural renaissance.

Each season, OCP presents innovative and re-imagined productions of beloved classics, giving these works new life — which appeals to both traditional operagoers and engages new audiences. OCP is also deeply committed to new and American works, exemplified by their American Repertoire Program. This 10-year initiative aims to produce at least one American work each season. The first production of the program, *Dark Sisters* by Nico Muhly and Stephen Karam, was co-commissioned with New York's Gotham Chamber Opera and Music-Theatre Group, and will have its Philadelphia premiere in June 2012. Though to some this might seem like an ambitious beginning to the initiative, Devan considers this level of commitment a duty: "Philadelphia, being the birthplace of America, requires that."

OCP also engages in cultural education for the community's audiences. Each season, panel discussions and recitals are offered to the general public, enriching their opera experience and educating them in both the repertoire and the art form.

The company endeavors to educate artists, as well. Students of nearby Curtis and AVA frequently perform in OCP mainstage productions, taking on small roles and gaining valuable practical working experience. Further, OCP now presents a Curtis Opera Theatre production as part of its Aurora Series for Chamber



Maureen McKay and Ruxandra Donose star in the title roles of the Opera Company of Philadelphia's company premiere of *Orphée et Eurydice*. Photo by Kelly & Massa Photography.

Opera. Performed in the intimate Perelman Theater, this series constitutes a second, more adventurous “product line,” distinct from the grand opera fare offered through Opera at the Academy. This year’s Aurora Series offering will be the Philadelphia premiere of Henze’s *Elegy for Young Lovers*.

OCP’s commitment to the education of artists is intertwined with its commitment to new opera. Devan explains, “The first thing we can do to help emerging singers with contemporary repertoire is to put them in it. There is no better way for new work to get into the DNA of a singer than to participate in its creation.” While many conservatories shy away from this attitude, the belief in the need to engender new work at the educational level fits with the spirit of many of Philadelphia’s educational and cultural institutions.

The innovative idea of product lines is not just an artistic goal at OCP. The company’s leadership believes that entrepreneurship is the key to success and longevity. Inspired in part by the methods of smaller, niche opera companies, Devan believes that “an opera company moving forward needs to be nimble and able to seek and develop opportunities in a flexible way.” OCP, like many of their Philadelphian colleagues, are enjoying the challenge of creating and defining the modern opera company.

In a city packed with more public art and philanthropic institutions than any other city in America, opera has the freedom to grow in a variety of directions. But the real boon for Philadelphia’s opera companies is the support they get from one another. Perhaps the City of Brotherly Love is becoming the city of operatic collaboration. 🌐

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The Face of the Company? The Production Department, of Course

By Megan Young



Abby Rodd and Joel Morain give a Changeover Talk at The Glimmerglass Festival. Photo courtesy of The Glimmerglass Festival.

Posting a video interview with your *Tosca du jour* to your company's blog is a fine tactic to engage and inspire operagoers. But your star soprano is not the only one who has interesting, insightful and entertaining anecdotes to share about your company, your production or opera in a broader sense. For some enterprising companies, this is where the production department comes in. Production staff members can have the dedication, excitement and knowledge to be ambassadors for your operation, and giving the public a glimpse of what

goes on behind the scenes may even help the bottom line.

This season, for example, **Los Angeles Opera** has gotten some great PR with a thoughtfully produced video featuring their 2011-2012 productions of *Così fan tutte* and *Eugene Onegin*. The productions themselves take a back seat to the star of the film — the repertory changeover from one production to the other. This short video offers nearly instant perspective—broadening to patrons. The winches, line sets and loading docks may be

routine to insiders, but to most they are elements of a foreign landscape. Companies across the continent are undertaking effective, refreshing PR and development initiatives like this one.

THE TEAM MATTERS

The Glimmerglass Festival has an increasing online presence, but one of the festival's most potent fund development tools is a series of backstage tours. "When you're on campus, says Director of Institutional Advancement Joan Desens, "you can



Seattle Opera's 2011 *Magic Flute* quick-change booth featuring the men's chorus, the dressers, and the hair and makeup staff. Videography by Alan Alabastro, Jeffrey Santos and Matt Holmes.

spend the better part of the day taking it all in: the grounds, the art, a Q&A with artists immediately following a performance, a program with our Young Artists. In working with donors and those who express interest in supporting the company, we want to take that experience one step further. What has been a pivotal aspect of our patron engagement strategy is our ability to go behind the scenes with Director of Production Abby Rodd and A/V Coordinator Joel Morain — two very smart and engaging people whose personal and professional lives intertwine. Abby, specifically, has 20 years experience at Glimmerglass. Together, they are able to express understanding, passion and detail for this particular operation.”

Desens elaborates: “Abby first started as an intern and grew up with the company. Joel loves his role in bringing a production to life and telling people how the art is made, and it’s very clear to tourists that he loves what he does. Abby is a primary mentor for the 30+ interns that her department engages each summer. As a result, she’s become an excellent teacher. When

she similarly interacts with donors and prospective donors, they feel it and they appreciate it. Having two people who love teaching, in addition to being able to express facts, is what makes these patron engagement tours so successful. The development department now identifies and invites prospective patrons on company-hosted tour and lunch packages every Sunday, Monday and Tuesday throughout the season. These are in addition to the free tours available to the general public, and are more in-depth.”

THE FORMULA MATTERS

“It is not only important to take donors behind the scenes, but it is also important to sit down and talk with them over lunch afterward,” Desens remarks. “Abby and Joel join us to continue the conversation.” And the formula seems to work. “Many people we take on the tour donate very soon after. Sometimes we receive a check two days later, and it is typically \$1,000. Last year, one individual was taken on a tour. He then wrote a lovely letter asking that we make sure we thank Abby and Joel, and increased

his annual gift to \$10,000. This year he asked if he could bring his entire family on a tour, and he subsequently upped his giving to \$15,000. We had another gentleman, a retired doctor, who decided upon a six-figure bequest to Glimmerglass as a result of this engagement. His letter said that not only did he enjoy everything, but that he wished to extend his gratitude to Joel and Abby.”

“Bringing donors and prospects on backstage tours is not unique to Glimmerglass. Success — anywhere — is based on how well company representatives communicate the work, the spirit and joy of the creative operation. I believe it really does matter who is involved. Joel and Abby are unique; I have had the pleasure of working with production staff at other companies who also excel at teaching. If you have the right staff members, you can succeed.”

COMMUNICATION MATTERS

“You have to be able to control what’s going on in your department,” says **Seattle Opera** Director of Production Vincent A. Feraudo, “but in this new

world, we can't think [of PR and development projects] as 'not part of our real jobs.' Partnering as much as is reasonable is good. I personally want the magic and mystery to remain in opera productions, but there seems to be a real appetite among patrons for backstage glimpses. You have to be protective of your staff and their time, but really it's all part of the gig at this point."

Seattle Opera has taken the Valkyrie by the horns, with over 100 videos at www.youtube.com/SeattleOpera ranging from director interviews to production previews to a recent video duo on how to apply stage makeup. Feraudo's colleague, Technical and Facilities Director Robert D. Schaub, is in favor of this uptick: "You're in it. You've got to do it. It's for the well-being of the organization."

In the spring of 2011, Seattle Opera created one of its most revealing videos yet — a *Magic Flute* chorus quick change in real time. "In our spring production," Feraudo says, "we had a quick change that involved

a number of crews and chorus... changing makeup, costumes. We thought PR might be interested in it, so we sussed it out." But before the cameras rolled, a lot of prep work was covered and details decided upon. "We asked permission from the chorus because they were going down to their skivvies," continues Feraudo. "We also asked our costume, hair and makeup crews. And we asked to have a final edit of the video in the end."

Schaub adds: "If you make the choice to create a video and show someone in a bad light — it could be one of your stagehands or an important designer or singer — if you make them look like a fool, then you've just taken steps back in your program. Video editors can do great work, but some may not necessarily know what is sensitive and what is not. I want to be involved in the final edit, not just to protect myself but the organization as well. And I want someone's first view of me to be a positive one. If I've been clipped or edited in a way that's not becoming, it's not good." To pull off a project like this,

he says, "it requires communication and a clear timeline."

Kevin Ramach, production director at **Minnesota Opera**, agrees with Schaub's assessment. "It's important that we let everybody on staff know what's going on with promotional projects. If we know about it, we can plan for it. We work in very high stress jobs and we shouldn't be giving anyone more stress. People need as much advance warning as we can give them. The media often works on very tight timelines, so the more we can do as a company to give advance warning, the better. More information is better than too little."

Minnesota Opera is taking measures to ensure staff members are covered the same way artists are in terms of A/V projects. "We are in the process," Ramach shares, "of putting language relating to video releases in our employee handbook. As part of signing off on their annual acknowledgment of the handbook, they also now sign a video release."

Douglas J. Cuomo, composer; Jonathan Stinson, CCM student playing Father Flynn; Robin Guarino, director; John Patrick Shanley, librettist; Gary Thor Wedow, conductor; Marcus Kühle, co-artistic director of the program; Julia Reichert, documentary filmmaker; Steven Bognar, documentary filmmaker; and the cast in the background of CCM's workshop of Cuomo's *Doubt*. Photo by Philip Groshong.



“Currently,” Ramach goes on, “Comcast is a sponsor of our pre-opera talks. As part of that sponsorship, they do a preview video where they talk to people on staff, directors and designers, in addition to filming the meet-and-greet when we start a new production. These videos are available on our website and our YouTube channel, and Comcast has been putting it on the on-demand cable TV service in the local information section. At this point, our videos are basically limited to these interviews and conversations. I think if we did something like the Seattle quick change video, we would think about our releases in a different way.”

ATTITUDE MATTERS

“You have to remember that we are all going for the same goal,” says stage director and Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM) Opera Chair Robin Guarino. “I’m really proactive about reaching out to PR. You get wiser about it as you get older. In Cincinnati right now, we have the PR departments from CCM and Cincinnati Opera dealing with *Opera Fusion: New Works*. We work with them really hard to make sure they have what they need from us to do their job. I also get on the phone with journalists myself and let them know who they should be talking to. All over the country, we are in danger of losing our local newspapers and the journalists who promote our

work. I work with the PR departments, and I also cultivate my own relationships with journalists. I have lunch dates with them!”

Opera Fusion: New Works, a collaboration with Cincinnati Opera, is Guarino’s newest creative adventure. “The award-winning documentary film team of Julia Reichert and Steve Bognar are following the current project,” says Guarino, who notes that timing issues required that they audition and cast artists without giving away the surprise of what they would be working on. “The crew filmed the first rehearsal where we announced to the artists who were cast what the project was,” says Guarino. “It was an exciting moment.” *Opera Fusion’s* first residency project will be *Doubt*, a new American opera composed by Douglas J. Cuomo with a libretto by playwright John Patrick Shanley, to be premiered at Minnesota Opera in 2013.

“Some film crews can be very in-your-face, but this team is great. They are going for the best shot and the story, but they’re sensitive in their practice. It’s like having a reality film crew — sometimes it’s good, sometimes it’s not. The next step for us is a schedule. Of course they want to be there ALL the time. You don’t want the film crew not to get the good material, but a rehearsal really goes down the tubes fast when the artists start acting for

the camera. It can become a different thing entirely. The singers and the creative team should feel comfortable to experiment and discover the piece. The film crew is there to make a film. We’re here to experiment. Like all good collaborators, we have to learn how to live together!”

“One of the companies that’s great at this is Seattle Opera,” adds Guarino. “When I direct there, the first week I’m there they tell me all of the PR projects they plan to do. We put them on the calendar and it’s great! Plus, they’re incredibly gracious about it.”

For all of these companies, graciousness, preparation and communication are key to planning and executing joint projects. “We do these backstage videos,” says Seattle’s Feraudo, “or our stage manager will give a lecture. It is extra work for our production staff, and I really appreciate that they’re doing it. Every company needs to think like this. Whether you’re a technician or a designer, it’s your responsibility to make the company the best it can be. Donors often don’t know the complexity of what goes on, and it’s great to see that shift in their understanding. When you show backstage work, there can be a real paradigm shift for patrons, from “What the heck did you spend half a million dollars on?” to “How the heck did you do all that for only half a million?”

The ATA Carnet Specialists.

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The National Opera Center



Improving the Creativity and Quality of American Opera Productions

Collaboration is at the heart of the operatic endeavor. The National Opera Center, opening September 2012, will provide artists and producers with a place to come together to do the essential collaborative work of creating productions for the 21st-century opera stage.

Facilitating Collaboration

One of OPERA America's very first endeavors was to bring together companies from across the country to discover how they could better collaborate and create more cost efficient co-productions. The National Opera Center will provide space to help facilitate every aspect of production planning, from initial design presentations to workshoping new works. Streaming capabilities will enable groups in New York to collaborate with others from around the world, allowing active participation in the discussion without the need to be in the room.



Celebrating American Artists

The Opera Center will feature several display cases throughout the space. The largest of these will be a dedicated Production Exhibit Gallery. This display will feature rotating presentations of sketches, props, photos and costumes from exciting work being produced at companies across the country. An additional display will be specifically dedicated to the winners of the Robert L.B. Tobin Director-Designer Showcase, showing OPERA America’s commitment

to encouraging the directors and designers of tomorrow.

Enhancing Artist Training

Together with singer training professionals from across the country, OPERA America has begun to discuss new initiatives for early career singers that might take place in the Opera Center. Leaders of training programs, both academic and company-based, have expressed interest in bringing program members to New York for feedback auditions, recording sessions

and showcase performances for members of the field.

Promoting Best Practices

OPERA America’s Forums serve different constituencies in the opera industry, from artists to administrators to trustees, bringing them together in person to share and advance ideas, and gain new expertise. The long-standing Technical/Production Forum, as well as the recently launched New Works Forum, will benefit from a facility that includes not only meeting rooms but a



performance space, an extensive library and state-of-the-art technology.

As OPERA America's relationship with members becomes more engaged, and as learning and networking services are more easily distributed using electronic media, the Opera Center will become the heart of an industry that is disbursed, but inherently collaborative. The Opera Center will provide unique and essential services never before available in a single location to increase the level of creativity, excellence and effectiveness in opera. 🎭

Opera Center Founders

OPERA America is deeply grateful to a partnership of public and private donors who have provided the leadership support to help ensure the success of the effort to create the National Opera Center.

Individual commitments of \$100,000 or more, payable over five years, together with a \$2 million challenge grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and a grant from the City of New York, have recognized the unique contribution the National Opera Center can make to realizing the full creative potential of American artists and our nation's opera companies.

OPERA America looks forward to expressing appreciation to the National Opera Center's leadership donors on a wall in the National Opera Center Lobby and named spaces within the Center.

Pamela J. Hoiles
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Horace H. Irvine, II
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For information about the Founders program, the Mellon Foundation challenge grant and naming opportunities within the Center, please contact OPERA America President and CEO, Marc A. Scorca, at 212-796-8620, ext. 211, or by e-mail at MScorca@operaamerica.org.

NATIONAL *Opera* WEEK



National Opera Week 2011 took place from October 28 - November 6. Nearly 100 organizations in 31 states (plus the District of Columbia) across the U.S. created fun, free activities for the public to encourage new opera audiences and to celebrate the art form, including backstage tours, a scavenger hunt and a lip-sync contest. This year, OPERA America convened an advisory committee to create clearer activity examples and invite participants in their member category and level to participate.





On October 27, the National Endowment for the Arts kicked off National Opera Week by honoring stage designer **John Conklin**, general director **Speight Jenkins**, mezzo-soprano **Risë Stevens** and composer **Robert Ward** for their lifetime achievements and contribution to opera in America. The honorees were hosted by Ruth Bader Ginsburg at a Supreme Court luncheon, with six justices in attendance. At the National Opera Honors Ceremony, held at the Harman Center for the Arts, artists including Javier Arrey, Sarah Coburn and Heather Johnson performed. National Public Radio legal affairs correspondent Nina Totenberg hosted the event, which is available for viewing in its entirety at www.arts.gov.

Alexa Bancroft, Wesley Morgan, Elizabeth Claxton and Wade Thomas in The Atlanta Opera's performance of Chamberlain's *Rabbit Tales*. Photo by Tim Wilkerson. | Lyric Opera of Chicago's Young Professionals hosted "La Triviata," a trivia night set in the heart of downtown Chicago at the Metropolitan Club of Willis Tower, emceed by Susanna Phillips (star of *Lucia di Lammermoor*). Photo by Aaron Ryskiewicz. | Residents of Capstone Village Retirement Community in Tuscaloosa, AL, participate in acting and improvisation class with members of the University of Alabama Opera Theatre. Photo by James Trotter. | Drew Ladd, a Chicago Opera Theater Young Artist sings at the Willis (Sears) Tower during their Pop-Up Opera. Photo by Colleen Flanigan. | The Glimmerglass Festival Young Artist Meredith Lustig performed at the opening of the OPERA-tion Arts exhibit, which featured the opera-inspired artwork of area second graders. Photo courtesy of The Glimmerglass Festival. | Area students submitted original artwork inspired by one of the operas of Nashville Opera's 2011-2012 season. This painting was inspired by Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci* and was submitted by Luisi Mera, student at Watkins College of Art, Design & Film. | Cabiria Jacobsen as Mother Nature, Meghan Çakalli as Flora, Christina Kompar as Fleet and William Roberts as Faun in Tri-Cities Opera's world premiere production of Knauf's *Seasons in the Glen*. Photo by Randy Cummings.



SUPPORTING FIRST-TIME DIRECTORS IN OPERA

BY CHUCK HUDSON

A stage director's job is basically the same in both the theater and opera. But there are also subtle differences between the opera and theater worlds, which may not be apparent at first glance, and which can either help or hinder the producer's goals. What might a new opera director — either fresh out of school or crossing over from another discipline — benefit from knowing, and how can producers best communicate this information? Last spring, in preparation for a panel at *Opera Conference 2011*, I spoke with a number of colleagues about challenges they faced in their early opera experience and what they wished they'd known in advance.

Casting

In the theater, the director is involved in every aspect of casting, whereas in opera the cast is often given to the director. A first-time opera director may need to dedicate a few days of rehearsal to discover the cast — their strengths and weaknesses, their personalities and affinities. An opera company can help by putting the director and principal singers in touch before rehearsals begin.

Staging Rehearsals

A typical theater rehearsal schedule is four to five weeks long followed by a week or more of preview performances before paying audiences. Opera production schedules are typically much more condensed and previews are unheard of. In addition, there are many differences between the operating procedures of the labor unions representing singers and actors — even as to how notes may be given to the performers — and it is truly only the stage manager who is on top of these many differences! A first-time opera director can benefit from the collaboration of a seasoned opera stage manager in developing a rehearsal schedule.

Opera singers arrive to the first day of rehearsal off-book. Actors work with their scripts in hand for a time, discovering the text during table work and fleshing out the actions in initial blocking rehearsals; the most creative work may come from improvising with the actors' creativity early in the process. If a director "plays with blocking" for several days, singers may feel the director is "changing his mind all the time" or has "arrived unprepared" when he is simply

committing to his usual creative process and being respectful of their input. A director can create a more collaborative environment by sketching his or her approach and schedule for the singers at the start of the process.

First-time opera directors are often surprised to learn that they must allow time for the conductor's work with the singers during staging rehearsals. Helping the director to understand he is not "losing time" from blocking but collaborating with the conductor is a healthy approach. As with all theatrical endeavors, timing is essential and the conductor can support the director's vision by collaborating to create a shared vision. Conversely, the staging of ensembles may need to be adapted based on which voice is cuing which in an ensemble.

Music and Languages

The ability to work from the score, in addition to the libretto, gives a director a better understanding of timing of each scene, as well as the emotional cues in the music. If the director does not read music, consider having someone from the music staff go through the score with him or her to indicate some of the key musical elements. If the director is not fluent in the language of the opera, it is helpful to supply both a word-by-word and idiomatic translation.

While it can be useful for first-time directors to be assisted by someone with a musical background, most agree that actual directing experience remains the essential qualification for an assistant director. Because of time constraints in opera, the director needs to be able to rely on his or her assistant to balance the picture, to work with a scene that needs more dramatic tension, to specify the behavioral life of the chorus characters or even to prepare a second cast.

Relationship to Stage Management

In any production, the stage manager takes a large responsibility for maintaining consistency throughout the run. In opera, conventions for documentation (blocking notes, props run sheets, etc.) vary from those in the theater. Directors and stage management may require some additional planning time to be sure they are "on the same page" before rehearsals begin.

Directing the Chorus

For directors who are not used to working with large groups of people, the chorus can seem like an overwhelming number of people on stage. Individual chorus members have a wide range of experience, from the singer who has been in every show for 20 years to young voices still training whose eyes are glued to the conductor. Creating a behavioral life for this large number of people is similar to working with background characters in a movie, where movements through the space are mapped out and timed.

Sometimes it is important to keep voice-types close to one another for balance, and the director can be encouraged to discuss this with the chorus master in advance or during the blocking rehearsal. An AGMA chorus has very specific regulations that stage directors coming from an Equity world may not know, and it is important to communicate these in advance. Unaware of these specifics, a director can inadvertently take the production over budget because of his particular vision for the chorus: rules for moving furniture on and off the stage, as well as the percentage of choristers asked to perform specific stage movement which might be perceived choreography are some of these.

In the Theater

If the hall is rented, in-house scheduling is based around the economics of the hall itself. A director will want to maximize all the time available, so helping him to understand that the end of rehearsal time is actually the time by which the theater must be cleared, the stage manager can end a rehearsal, clean up and be out of the hall on time.

To maximize time in the theater without overtaxing singers, scene shift rehearsals may be called during the day so that they are running smoothly by the time the singers get to the stage. Some companies may use volunteer light walkers for lighting session, who may or may not be familiar with terminology like “stage right” or “downstage.”

Any onstage work with the director must happen during rehearsals accompanied by piano: once the orchestra is in the house, rehearsals are scheduled around the rules of the musician’s union. In orchestra rehearsals, a stage director rarely stops the action unless there is danger involved — rarer still to work a moment that might take away time from the conductor’s work with the orchestra. Theater directors can become fearful during the first technical rehearsals because “the acting disappears.” The conductor and the singers have precious little rehearsal time with the orchestra, and preparing directors for the untidiness of these rehearsals is vital. Singers will be adjusting to a new acoustic and working out their visual connection to the conductor.

There is a day off before the opening performance of the opera so that the singers may rest their voices before opening. Stage directors are usually looking for something to do on that day, making it a great time for them to participate in a donor-related event.

In Closing

Each new director brings a different set of experiences to the opera stage. A visual artist may bring a keen eye for the larger picture but need assistance in collaborating with singers. A former singer brings a deep understanding of what performers need to do their best work but may lack experience in working with designers. Even seasoned opera directors have their strengths and weaknesses and through experience they have learned how to create a scenario that allows them to do their best work. Opera companies can help new directors succeed by having a clear picture of what the director brings to the production, as well as where he or she might require some additional support. 🍷

Chuck Hudson is a stage director who works in opera and theater.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2010 ANNUAL FIELD REPORT

BY LARRY BOMBACK AND KATHERINE BALTRUSH

OPERA America's *2010 Annual Field Report* (AFR) is based on the Cultural Data Project/Professional Opera Survey (CDP/POS), which OPERA America Professional Company Members in the United States and Canada complete each year. The CDP/POS collects detailed information on annual financial, performance and attendance activity, and this AFR highlights data from opera companies' 2010 fiscal years (which, when combined, span the range from March 2009 to December 2010). Companies that have reported consistently for five consecutive seasons comprise the AFR's Constant Sample Group (CSG). The 2010 CSG includes 59 U.S. and 12 Canadian companies for a total of 71 companies, six more than the 2009 report. This figure represents 59% of OPERA America Professional Company Members. Interestingly, of the 71 companies in the AFR CSG, 20 (or 28%) have budgets under \$1 million, the largest such percentage (adjusted for inflation) since OPERA America started publishing the AFR.

While last year's AFR demonstrated how opera companies and their patrons responded to the worst months of the Great Recession, the 2010 report illustrates ticket buyer and donor reactions to the early stages of the global economic recovery, as well as the tough choices opera companies have made as they entered what is now commonly referred to as the "new normal."

Many companies showed signs of stabilizing by the end of 2010; 39 of

the 71 companies included in the CSG reported an operating surplus in 2010, compared to 2009, when only 25 companies reported a surplus.

Total expenses of the U.S. CSG decreased by over 7% from \$478MM in 2009 to \$443MM in 2010. This decline, coupled with an increase in total operating revenue, resulted in an impressive turnaround in net operating income from an aggregate deficit of \$101.8MM in 2009 to an aggregate surplus of over \$47MM in 2010. Thirty-one of 59 (or 52%) companies in the U.S. CSG achieved an operating surplus in 2010. The effect of the rapid stock market ascent throughout 2010 is evidenced by the increase in total net assets (including unrestricted, temporarily restricted and permanently restricted funds) of the entire U.S. CSG, which rose from \$700MM at the end of FY2009 to \$774MM, an increase of over 10%, one year later. Total philanthropy received by the U.S. CSG increased from \$268MM to \$291MM — more than 8% — year-over-year, as well. The increase is most noticeable in individual giving, which rose 13% since 2009. Total operating revenue for the U.S. CSG rose 30%, leaping from \$376MM in 2009 to \$490MM in 2010. Despite this increase, ticket sales revenue dropped considerably from \$153MM to \$139MM, or over 9%, from 2009 to 2010 as companies across all levels reduced the number of performances offered.

In the Canadian CSG, however, ticket revenue held steady at \$25MM in both

2009 and 2010. Additionally, total contributed revenue remained stable at \$35MM year-over-year, although individual giving was up 8% from over \$9MM in 2009 to over \$10MM in 2010. Total expenses showed a slight decrease of less than 1%, dropping from just over \$68MM in 2009 to over \$67MM in 2010. Despite the subtlety of these changes, the Canadian CSG's aggregate surplus, of \$286,000 in 2009 reversed to an aggregate deficit of \$93,000 in 2010. Canadian CSG net assets dropped by 72% from \$719,555 in 2009 to \$200,916 in 2010, owing to write-downs in receivables and sizable increases in payables among a few companies. Invested capital fell from \$33MM in 2009 to \$26MM in 2010, a decrease of 25%.

The 2010 AFR reveals that opera companies are, in general, becoming increasingly reliant on individual philanthropy. Institutional grant making is declining, on average, and ticket revenue comprises a lesser percentage of total revenue than in any of the previous five seasons. In general, the dollar amount of a company's budget allocated to the creation of the art itself — including the costs of sets, costumes, singers, musicians and training programs — is shrinking. In some cases, artistic and production expenses have remained static as a percentage of total expenses, indicating that the shrinking dollar amount spent on the creation of opera is proportional to across-the-board reductions in costs. In other cases, however, expenses

related to the production of opera comprise a smaller percentage of a company's total expenses.

Level 1 and Canadian companies in the survey universe spent roughly two-thirds of their total expenses on the creation of art, on average. Level 2 companies have increased artistic spending since 2006, despite some decreases in artistic personnel expenses since 2009; in 2010, 55% of total expenses, on average, were spent producing opera. Level 3 CSG companies spent less on the creation of opera than in any of the previous five seasons; artistic expenses represented 53%, on average, of total expenses.

It should be noted that the decrease in personnel costs from previous years reflected not only cuts in administrative staff, but also reductions in fees paid to artists and performers. The stabilization of personnel expenses in 2010 indicates that decreases in both administrative staff and artist fees — hopefully — lie in the past. In addition, companies are identifying ways to reduce non-personnel costs significantly.


Negative working capital continues to challenge many opera companies, despite increases in net assets, as major gifts tend to be earmarked for specific programs or productions rather than for unrestricted purposes. While many companies report positive unrestricted net assets on their balance sheets, the lion's share of these assets are unavailable, being invested either in property and equipment (and thus illiquid) or in board-designated reserves rather than undesignated funds.

Ticket prices have fluctuated in recent years as companies have responded to both their own changing needs and those of their patrons in a challenging economy. In 2010, lowest single ticket prices decreased across most of the U.S. CSG by between 5% and 15%, on average. Inversely, highest single ticket prices rose across the board to

greater or lesser degrees. Orchestra seating also generally increased among the group, though Level 2 companies saw decreases in this category, on average. Subscription package prices rose as much as 36%, on average, in Level 2, 3 and 4 U.S. CSG companies, despite a general decrease in the number of productions mounted. Among the Canadian CSG, single ticket prices increased, on average, while both subscription packages and orchestra seating prices decreased by as much as 37%, on average. Interestingly, these decreases in subscription prices did not translate into increased subscription renewals among the Canadian CSG.

Finally, reductions in the number of performances in the U.S. CSG have had a noticeable impact on capacity utilization. With fewer seats available, aggregate capacity utilization reached nearly 81% in 2010. Though pre-recession levels still have yet to be attained, houses were fuller than they were a year before. Level 3 CSG companies, however, are an exception; despite decreasing the number of available seats, paid attendance for this group decreased by over 18%, on average, from 2009 to 2010. Unlike U.S. companies, the Canadian CSG produced more opera in 2010 than it had in any of the previous five seasons. That effort was rewarded with higher capacity utilizations than those achieved over the same period, increasing by almost 17%, on average, since 2006.

The AFR does not include information on attendance at the many community events and education programs conducted by all companies over the course of the year because it is difficult to measure accurately attendance at these informal and frequently unticketed efforts. Simulcasts in sports stadiums, flash mobs in malls, free outdoor concerts in public parks and the wealth of other creative audience development projects offered by companies nationwide and across

all levels — most recently during National Opera Week — indicate that the art form is thriving, albeit in a less traditional sense. Though the number of mainstage productions and performances may be decreasing, the door has opened for many new and varied opera-making activities. While the scope and nature of this trend is difficult to quantify, its impact is significant in terms of public engagement and related perceptions. 

The full AFR, contained within the *Year in Review*, is free to all members as a downloadable PDF. The *Year in Review* is available for purchase by non-members in both print (\$25) and PDF (\$15) versions.

Good research is important for understanding the health of an opera company and for developing both short- and long-term strategies. The AFR in its entirety presents an overview of the field's activity. While it offers a detailed look at levels within the opera field, the data and trends are averaged from groups of companies that may have little in common operationally beyond their budget sizes. Thus, the trends of a group may not reflect the circumstances of an individual company.

OPERA America has data on professional companies dating back more than two decades and, frequently, conducts 10-, 15- and 20-year trend analyses, on request, for general directors and trustees using carefully selected comparable organizations. For more information on OPERA America's research capacity, contact Katherine Baltrush at KBaltrush@operaamerica.org.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED

BY ALEXA B. ANTOPOL

**Integrated Practice:
Coordination, Rhythm & Sound**
Pedro de Alcantara
Oxford University Press
ISBN13: 9780195317084

Offering an innovative, comprehensive approach to musicians' health and well-being, *Integrated Practice* offers the tools to combine total-body awareness with a deep and practical understanding of the rhythmic structure of the musical language, so that one may use the musical text itself as a guide toward psychophysical and creative freedom. The book describes how to establish an imaginative dialogue between the relatively inflexible structure of music and one's individual personality as a singer, instrumentalist or conductor, and it explains how one can use the acoustic phenomenon of the harmonic series. *Integrated Practice* comes with more than 150 exercises demonstrated by video and audio clips on an extensive companion website that will inform one's daily practice, improvising, rehearsing and performing.

**Working with Your Voice:
The Career Guide to Becoming a
Professional Singer**
Jaime Babbitt
Alfred Music Publishing
ISBN13: 9780739075951

You say you want to become a professional singer. Where do you start? Is it really possible to make a living doing what you love? With over 25 years of experience as a professional singer, Jaime Babbitt has been there, done that and knows the drill. In this book, Babbitt examines everything involved with having a career as a

singer and offers you her first-hand experience. She applies a Zen approach to her tips on singing, gigs, marketing and the professional singer's lifestyle. You'll realize your goal of becoming a successful working singer and learn how your voice, body, connections, technique and attitude all help you every step of the way. Whether you're a pop superstar in the making, a stone-cold rocker, a Broadway baby, an R&B diva or a jazz crooner, *Working with Your Voice* helps singers become great at whatever they do — and know how to do it all.

**The Opera Fanatic:
Ethnography of an Obsession**
Claudio E. Benzecry
University of Chicago Press
ISBN13: 9780226043425

Opera lovers are an intense lot, Claudio E. Benzecry discovers in his look at the fanatics who haunt the legendary Colón Opera House in Buenos Aires, a key site for opera's globalization. Listening to the fans and their stories, Benzecry hears of 200-mile trips for performances and nightlong camp-outs for tickets, while others testify to a particular opera's power to move them — whether to song or to tears — no matter how many times they have seen it before. Benzecry proposes new ways of thinking about people's relationship to art and shows how, far from merely enhancing aspects of everyday life, art allows us to transcend it.

**Grétry and the Growth of
Opéra-comique**
David Charlton
Cambridge University Press
ISBN13: 9780521158817

Originally published in 1986, this book is a major study in English on André Grétry and opéra-comique. David Charlton's study examines the genre in the period before the French Revolution, considering the literary sources, performance conditions, contemporary aesthetic criteria and statistics which reveal the popularity of such works at that time. Charlton takes Grétry, composer of some 34 opéras-comiques, as the central figure of his study, drawing on Grétry's extensive *Mémoires* and other writing, not available in English translation, for the biographical sections. Twenty-four of Grétry's opéras-comiques are given a chapter each, with plot summary, critical discussion, summary of different versions and history of performance in Paris. The book can thus be used as a reference tool or read as a comprehensive survey of opéra-comique between 1768 and 1791.

**The Innovator's DNA: Mastering the
Five Skills of Disruptive Innovators**
Jeffrey H. Dyer, Hal B. Gregersen,
Clayton M. Christensen
Harvard Business Review
ISBN13: 9781422134818

Some people are just natural innovators, right? With no apparent effort, they discover ideas for new products, services and entire businesses. It may look like innovators are born, not made. But according to the authors, anyone can become more innovative. How? Master the discovery skills that distinguish innovative entrepreneurs and executives from ordinary managers. In *The Innovator's DNA*, the authors identify five capabilities demonstrated by the best innovators:

(1) Associating: drawing connections between questions, problems or ideas from unrelated fields, (2) Questioning: posing queries that challenge common wisdom, (3) Observing: scrutinizing the behavior of customers, suppliers and competitors to identify new ways of doing things, (4) Experimenting: constructing interactive experiences and provoking unorthodox responses to see what insights emerge and (5) Networking: meeting people with different ideas and perspectives. The authors explain how to generate ideas with these skills, collaborate with “delivery-driven” colleagues to implement ideas and build innovation skills throughout your organization to sharpen its competitive edge. They also provide a self-assessment for rating your own innovator’s DNA.

Letters and Diaries of Kathleen Ferrier (Revised & Enlarged Edition)
Edited by Christopher Fifield
Boydell Press
ISBN 13: 9781843830917

In 1953, at the age of 41, English lyric contralto Kathleen Ferrier lost her battle with breast cancer. Her appeal to a wide audience — in concerts, on records, on the radio and in the opera house — has ensured her name endures to this day, despite a career which lasted barely 10 years. In just half that time, this former telephone exchange operator was singing on stage at Covent Garden, before royalty at private parties and at New York’s Carnegie Hall. This collection of over 400 letters and 12 years of her personal diaries was first published by Boydell Press in 2003. Here, an enlarged paperback edition contains a new chapter revealing her growing importance to the BBC, an additional 90 letters, together with much revised material and a selection of tributes. Published to mark the centenary of her birth in 1912, the book provides a vivid picture of a life which illuminated the war and post-war years of austerity and hardship.

**Verdi in America:
Oberto through Rigoletto**
George W. Martin
University of Rochester Press
ISBN13: 9781580463881

The operas of Giuseppe Verdi stand at the center of today’s operatic repertoire, and have done so for more than a century. This latest book by Verdi authority George W. Martin details the changing fortunes of Verdi’s early operas in the theaters and concert halls of the United States, telling the story of how the reputation and wide appeal of these operas spread from Western Europe. Among the works whose fates Martin traces are *Nabucco*, *Attila*, *Ernani*, *Macbeth* (in its original version), *Luisa Miller* and *Rigoletto*, denounced in 1860 as the epitome of immorality. Martin also explores the revival of many of these operas in the 1940s and onward (including *Macbeth* in its revised version of 1865), and the first American productions — sometimes in small opera houses outside the main circuit — of some Verdi operas that had never previously managed to cross the Atlantic. Extensive quotations from newspaper reviews testify to the eventual triumph of these remarkable works. They also reveal the crucial shifts in tastes and expectations that have occurred from Verdi’s day to our own.

Fashion Designers at the Opera
Helena Matheopoulos
Thames & Hudson
ISBN13: 9780500515761

The most theatrical of arts inspires the most visionary fashion designers to create extraordinary costumes for extraordinary productions. Fashion and opera are natural arenas for collaboration. Leading figures in the world of fashion — Giorgio Armani, Marc Bohan, Christian Lacroix, Karl Lagerfeld, Ottavio and Rosita Missoni, Miuccia Prada, Zandra Rhodes, Emanuel Ungaro, Gianni Versace and Viktor & Rolf — are profiled, together

with illustrations of their costume designs. Helena Matheopoulos’s interviews with many of the designers illuminate the journey that led each to the opera and the challenges of working in a demanding new medium. Costume designs for many well-loved operas — including *Don Giovanni*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Carmen*, *Aida*, *Thaïs*, *Agrippina*, *Così fan tutte*, *Attila* and *The Magic Flute* — are featured. The opera houses commissioning the costume designs include La Scala, the Metropolitan Opera, the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, the Arènes de Nîmes, the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden and San Diego Opera, among many others. Hundreds of color illustrations include original designers’ sketches, photographs of the finished costumes and images of the actual productions.

Richard Wagner’s Women
Eva Rieger
The Boydell Press
ISBN13: 9781843836858

Richard Wagner’s music contains some of the most powerful portrayals of emotions in all opera, particularly love. Eva Rieger presents a new picture of the composer, showing how the women at his side inspired him and how closely his life and art intertwined. We follow Wagner’s restless hunt for the “ideal woman,” her appointed task being to give him shelter, warmth, inspiration, adventure and redemption, all in one. He could hardly have desired anything more contradictory, and this is reflected in the female characters of his operas. They are all in some way torn, faltering between their own desire for self-realization and the societal constraints that impel them to sacrifice themselves for their men. Rieger bids farewell to essentialist, naturalized notions of femininity and masculinity. Her investigations are comprehensive and avoid the pitfalls of imposing extraneous interpretation, instead focusing keenly on the music itself.

**Verdi's Shakespeare:
Men of the Theater**
Garry Wills
Viking
ISBN 13: 9780670023042

In *Verdi's Shakespeare*, Pulitzer Prize winner and lifelong opera devotee Garry Wills explores the writing and staging of Verdi's three Shakespearean operas: *Macbeth*, *Otello* and *Falstaff*. An Italian composer who couldn't read a word of English but adored Shakespeare, Verdi devoted himself to operatic productions that authentically incorporated the playwright's texts. Wills delves into the worlds of these men of the theater, focusing on the intense working relationships both Shakespeare and Verdi had with the performers and producers of their works. We see Verdi study the Shakespearean dramaturgy as he obsessively corresponds with his chosen librettists, handpicks the singers he feels are best-suited to the roles and coaches them intensely. With portraits of these artistic giants and their entourages, insights into music and theater, and historical details, this volume re-creates the conditions that allowed Verdi to complete his masterworks. 🍷

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