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ON THE COVER: Curtis student Joshua Stewart in the role of Ruiz Alonso; middle, left to right: Curtis graduate Rachael Garcia and Curtis students Ashley Thouret, Karen Jesse, Sarah Shafer, Allison Sanders and Marquita Raley; bottom: Curtis student Katherine Lerner in the role of Federico Garcia Lorca in Curtis Opera Theatre's (in association with Opera Company of Philadelphia and Kimmel Center Presents) production of Golijov's *Ainadamar*, conducted by Corrado Rovaris and directed by Chas Rader-Shieber, with designs by David Zinn (sets), Richard St. Clair (costumes) and Mark Barton (lighting). Photo by David Swanson.

Opera America's fall 2007 cover contained a photo of Francesca Zambello's production of the Gershwins' *Porgy and Bess*®. While the performance pictured took place at Los Angeles Opera in May 2007, the photo credit neglected to mention that the production is owned by and originated at Washington National Opera.



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From national politics to local performances, many people feel indifferent to activities in which they don't have an active role. Presidential candidates appear to be selected through a nearly incomprehensible process involving superdelegates and Electoral College members. Opera companies conduct audience surveys and other kind of research, but what role does the audience actually have in shaping a season or performance? This month, a number of events reminded me that we do have a role to play — and that having a role to play can energize the public in ways that are healthy for politics and for opera.

In a “back to the future” fashion, I was reminded last week of the active role the audience once played before the lights were turned down in the auditorium. The performance was *The Daughter of the Regiment*. Juan Diego Flórez had made it known to a worldwide audience in his intermission interview during The Met's HD transmission that he only repeats the stratospheric aria “Ah, mes amis” if the audience applauds long enough. The night I attended in person, the audience was ready from before the curtain went up. I have attended many sold-out performances, but it is rare to feel an auditorium filled with such anticipation and, yes, a mission. Following Flórez's splendid performance of the aria, the audience applauded and he bowed. The audience applauded and Flórez placed his hand over his heart with appreciation. The audience applauded more and, finally, Flórez signaled the conductor to repeat the aria. The audience was empowered for the rest of the evening. During the second act, knowing they now could influence the rhythm of the performance, the audience applauded Natalie Dessay until she crawled out from under a mountain of her regimental compatriots to take an extra bow. I was reminded how actively involved 18th- and early 19th-century audiences must have been, along with the artists, in making opera the most exciting of the performing arts. The producers of *American Idol* haven't invented anything — they've merely borrowed from opera's more exciting past. What can we borrow back?

In current politics, the general public is experiencing a similar empowerment to influence the selection of the Democratic candidate for President. As I write this, the outcome is still uncertain. More important was a recent report that the turnout for the Democratic primaries has been 50 percent greater in 2008 than 2004. Thirty million voters have participated in the primaries, compared to only 20 million in 2004. Empowering the public in the selection process increases participation. Could the same be true for the arts?

The 2008 National Performing Arts Convention has been designed to invite all members of the performing arts community to participate actively in the formation of an action agenda that will shape the work of the national service organizations over the next several years. Arts policy goals and service organization programs are not determined — at least should not be determined — by a few staff or volunteer leaders. To ensure broad participation, policy and service priorities should emerge from the people who are the primary beneficiaries of the policies and services. Those who attend the Convention in Denver will read in the program book that we have hired *AmericaSpeaks* to design a series of roundtable caucuses and conduct a 21st-Century Town Meeting, at which member recommendations will be placed front and center in the action agenda we will circulate after the conclusion of the historic meeting.

At the National Performing Arts Convention, in the 2008 election and, hopefully, in the opera house, the public has an active role to play. How do we make everyone feel truly welcome and empowered? Let's work on this question together in Denver.

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

Marc A. Scorca
President/CEO

“A CULTURAL HUB”

When the **Canadian Opera Company** (COC) opened the Four Seasons Centre with sold-out performances of Wagner’s *Ring Cycle* in 2006, all eyes (and ears) were on the R. Fraser Elliott Hall, the company’s splendid new auditorium. A month later, COC began its Free Concert Series in a second space, The Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre. Over the course of that first season, more than 20,000 people gathered at lunchtime and in the early evening to enjoy not just opera, but also classical concerts, jazz, modern dance and world music.

“Richard Bradshaw felt a strong responsibility to make this new civic building accessible to the community at large,” says Director of Programming Nina Draganic. “He wanted it to be a cultural hub, a meeting place.” In putting together this year’s 100-concert series, Draganic cast a wide net, paying particular attention to young artists on the cusp of major international careers. Sometimes she finds talent close to home: There have been recitals by members of COC’s Ensemble Studio, as well as chamber music programs by members of the orchestra. Other times, COC guest artists have enjoyed the opportunity to pursue special interests — for instance, soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian put together a tango program (with piano, strings and bandoneon), which she later went on to record.

Draganic also looks for ways to connect concerts with mainstage productions. Last season, there was a Shostakovich Festival in conjunction with performances of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. As Canada’s premier opera company, COC is committed to promoting the work of contemporary Canadian artists, and the series offers a perfect opportunity. “We need to cultivate audiences for new Canadian work, and if we can make it completely accessible in this lovely space, I think people will be much more likely to pay for a ticket down the road.”

While the Free Concert Series may have the effect of inciting interest in regular season offerings, it is above all an opportunity for COC to expand its artistic programming and invite the community into its new home on a regular basis. “People feel welcome,” says Draganic. “The Amphitheatre is very visible from the street. People can see what’s going on inside, and there is a wonderful feeling of vibrancy.” 🎭



The Sugarbeats Ensemble performing in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre as part of the Canadian Opera Company’s Free Concert Series, October 2007. Photo by Caitlin Coull.



David Walker as the Angel accompanied by dancers from the Baltimore School for the Arts in Opera Vivente's North American premiere of Jonathan Dove's *Tobias and the Angel*. Photo by Cory Weaver.

"OPERA IS AT BASE A DRAMATIC NARRATIVE COMMUNICATION."

"It really bothers me that opera is seen as this elitist, stuffy, somewhat irrelevant thing," says John Bowen, general director of **Opera Vivente**. "In the 19th century, opera was like television. People didn't go for some kind of intellectual experience. They went expecting to be moved." The company, which earlier this year was accepted as a Professional Company Member of OPERA America, seeks to move audiences through innovative and unusual productions in intimate spaces.

One unusual choice — at least in the context of today's opera industry — is a commitment to performing in English. "I realized that this was a rarity, but I was not prepared for the slight air of patronization that seems to be brought to bear on English-language companies," says Bowen. "I find this curious, because for most of opera's history, opera in the vernacular was the norm. And American spoken-theater audiences don't expect to see Schiller performed in German or Racine in French. The basis for being all-English was a strong belief on my part and the part of the board that opera is at base a dramatic narrative communication, not to be contemplated in the abstract, but to be experienced viscerally and directly."

The company also seeks immediacy in its visual aesthetic: "I think about the central themes of the piece and then figure out what visual language is going to most clearly communicate those themes." A recent production of *Tamerlane* — which Bowen calls "one of the most brutal stories Handel ever set" — was placed in an environment resembling Abu Ghraib. However, Bowen doesn't believe a setting needs to be contemporary to be comprehensible: noting the spate of recent Jane Austen movies, he felt audiences would connect with a Regency period setting for *Così fan tutte*, an opera that — like Jane Austen's novels — concerns itself with women who "get a raw deal" in a restrictive society.

Opera Vivente makes its home in a city that already boasts a lively opera scene, courtesy of Baltimore Opera and the Peabody Conservatory, but Bowen does not feel a sense of competition with his neighbors: "If you are a restaurateur, you don't want to be the only restaurant in your area," he says. "At the same time, you don't want two mid-priced French bistros right next to each other. You would be hard-pressed to find two companies more different. We perform in an intimate space, and that impacts repertory choice. Unlike Baltimore Opera, we rarely touch 19th-century rep — we are not looking to do *I vespri siciliani*, ever. But there is such a large portion of the repertory that was never intended for these gigantic American houses. I'm committed to dealing with works that gain a great deal from being seen in an intimate space, and I don't think we're going to be running out of appropriate rep anytime soon." 🍷



Ménéck at work, 2008. Photo by Yves Renaud and courtesy of Opéra de Montréal.

“WHEN YOU HAVE A STRONG VISION ... EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE.”

In June 2006, **Opéra de Montréal** faced an accumulated deficit of \$2 million. Just two years later, thanks to a rigorous new business plan and the full participation of the staff and community, the company is nearly back in the black. General Director Pierre Dufour says it has been necessary to look at every area of operations for opportunities to cut expenses and increase revenue: “If our problems had just one cause, they would be easy to correct, but it was not just one thing.”

“Montreal is challenging because there is so much art — hundreds of companies are knocking at the same doors” seeking contributions, says Dufour. He and his staff have strategically invested in projects to raise visibility in the community. A free outdoor simulcast of *Madama Butterfly* is expected to draw thousands of enthusiastic viewers in June 2008. The company is also in the process of creating a DVD and study guide for distribution to all schools in the province of Quebec.

At the same time, they have reconsidered their marketing efforts, looking for creative, inexpensive ways to garner publicity. For instance, in conjunction with a production of *The Barber of Seville*, they engaged Ménéck, a celebrity barber and opera fan, to offer free shaves for an afternoon at Place des Arts. “You can’t imagine the press coverage we had for that event,” says Dufour.

While in deficit-reduction mode, the company cut back to four productions each season, but for 2008-2009, they’re back to five — three of them new. Dufour feels that new productions can make economic sense: “Including the gas, the trucking, the supervisor and the rental fees, sometimes we are able to create a new production for basically the same cost as a rental.” The company has planned its new productions with an eye to opportunities for future rental revenue. “There are not many *Macbeth* productions on the market,” notes Dufour; the company will coproduce Verdi’s take on “the Scottish play” with Opera Australia. “When you have a strong vision, even if you are in financial difficulty, everything is possible — you just have to find the right balance.” The season also includes new productions of the legendary rock opera *Starmania* (a coproduction with Opéra de Québec) and *La fanciulla del West*.

“We take a chance with every season; you never know how profitable you will be,” says Dufour. “But right now we are very confident that the storm is behind us. We look forward to creating great things for the future. Montreal deserves a world-class opera.” 🌟

“STUDENTS SEE WHAT IS POSSIBLE FOR THEM.”

Shayna Leahy, director of vocal music and theory at Highland Community College (HCC), still speaks regularly with her former boss at **Wichita Grand Opera** — President/CEO Parvan Bakardiev. One day, Bakardiev wished aloud for a more substantial ensemble for the Triumphal Scene in an upcoming production of *Aida*. Leahy volunteered some of her voice students — and a new collaboration was launched.

The students who participated in that *Aida* production were supers, but with Bakardiev’s encouragement, Leahy created a new course, for credit, that allows students to fully participate in the production and performance of an opera. The course is by audition, and as Leahy says, “I am looking for students who enjoy a challenge and are ready to work for it.” Students begin learning the choral parts in early fall; they also discuss the historical context of the opera and watch a video, if one is available. Class members are expected to return from winter break with their music memorized, and their preparation is tested in quartets — “No matter how they are staged, I expect them to be able to hold their part.”

Students are in residence in Wichita — approximately four hours away from HCC — during the week of the performance. The college pays for transportation, per diem and scores; the opera company provides housing, as well as discounted tickets for the students’ friends and families. In addition to attending rehearsals, students work in various departments of the opera company to prepare for opening night — stitching costumes, putting the final touches on the set, selling tickets, assisting at fundraising events.

Since the first year, more than 50 students have participated in Wichita Grand Opera productions; they make up anywhere from 10 to 25 percent of the chorus. HCC is a two-year school, and some alumni continue to register for the course after moving on to other institutions. Leahy holds separate rehearsals for them: “Once they have been through the process, they understand what is required and they’re much better about working on their own.”

The students have the opportunity to interact with soloists such as Samuel Ramey, who was featured in last season’s *Tosca* and this season’s *Faust* — and who happens to hail from the small town of Colby, Kansas. “He is so good about answering questions, and is very approachable. It lets the students see what is possible for them,” says Leahy. “A lot of these kids have never been in a city the size of Wichita. Both Parvan and I consider it an awesome opportunity to reach out to students who have no experience of opera.” 🍷



Samuel Ramey in Wichita Grand Opera’s 2007 production of Puccini’s *Tosca*. Photo by Henry Nelson.

SUMMER FESTIVAL PREVIEW

This season, **Chautauqua Opera's** Young Artist Program will celebrate its 40-year anniversary. Alumni and current program members will be featured throughout the summer 2008 season — five of six cast members in the company's production of *Così fan tutte* are former program participants. The season will also include *Street Scene*, *La traviata* and *The Cunning Little Vixen* — the first Janáček opera ever to be staged by the company.

Glimmerglass Opera will present the North American staged premiere of Wagner's *Das Liebsverbot* (based on *Measure for Measure*) as part of a Shakespeare-themed season, which will include four operas and one concert performed on a set inspired by the Globe Theatre. The bard will make appearances on several stages this summer, with productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at **Festival Opera**, *Roméo et Juliette* at **PORTopera** and *Falstaff* at **The Santa Fe Opera**.



John Conklin's set model for Glimmerglass Opera's 2008 Festival Season.

A number of companies will feature North American works: **Long Leaf Opera**, which makes a specialty of home-grown hits, will present William Bolcom's *Medusa* on a double-bill with Gian Carlo Menotti's *The Medium*, as well as Ricky Ian Gordon's *Orpheus & Euridice*, Dominick Argento's *A Water Bird Talk* and Marc Blitzstein's *Regina* (which will also bow at **Des Moines Metro Opera**). *Susannah* and *Of Mice and Men*, both by Carlisle Floyd, will be performed by **Central City Opera** and **Fort Worth Opera**, respectively. At **Cincinnati Opera**, Daniel Catán's *Florencia en el Amazonas* will be the company's first-ever mainstage opera in Spanish. Michael Ching's *Buoso's Ghost* will be paired with *Gianni Schicchi* at **Lake George Opera**. Masterpieces of American musical theater slated for summer performances include *My Fair Lady* (**Ash Lawn Opera**), *West Side Story* (**Central City Opera**) and *Kiss Me, Kate* (**Glimmerglass Opera**).



Monica Groop as Adriana and Pia Freund as Refka in the Finnish National Opera's production of Saariaho's *Adriana Mater*. Photo by Heikki Tuuli.

The Santa Fe Opera will present the American premiere of *Adriana Mater*, which reunites composer Kaija Saariaho, librettist Amin Maalouf and director Peter Sellars, the team behind the company's critically acclaimed 2002 production of *L'Amour de loin*.

The British are coming! **Opera Theatre of Saint Louis** has commissioned a new performing version William Walton's *Troilus and Cressida* for the 2008 season. Several works by Benjamin Britten will be featured this summer, including *Billy Budd (The Santa Fe Opera)* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream (Festival Opera)*. **Central City Opera** will present *The Rape of Lucretia* in conjunction with the National Performing Arts Convention; later in the season, the company's apprentice artists will perform *Curlew River*, a church parable by Britten, on a double-bill with another great British opera: Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. Dedicated Savoyards can sample British wit at **Lake George Opera** performances of *The Pirates of Penzance*.

Many companies will include concert performances as part of their 2008 festival season. **Berkshire Opera** will present "Women on the Verge" with orchestra, "Exhilaration," a program featuring settings of works of Emily Dickinson and poets she admired, and three programs of musical exploration inspired by current exhibitions of visual art in The Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute. **Ash Lawn Opera** will present two "Music at Twilight" programs: Broadway Bound and Mozart & More. **Long Leaf Opera** will highlight American works with a performance of *The Glass Hammer*, a song cycle by Jorge Martín, as well as cabarets featuring the music of Weill and Blitzstein.

NEA OPERA HONORS

On May 13, 2008, NEA chairman Dana Gioia announced the first recipients of the NEA Opera Honors, the highest award our nation bestows in opera. The award goes to luminaries who have made extraordinary contributions to opera in the United States. The honorees are soprano Leontyne Price; composer Carlisle Floyd; administrator Richard Gaddes, general director of the Santa Fe Opera and co-founder of Opera Theatre of Saint Louis; and conductor James Levine, music director of the Metropolitan Opera and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Also participating in the event were Plácido Domingo, renowned tenor and general director of the Washington National Opera, which partners with the NEA in this inaugural event; Wayne Brown, director of music and opera for the NEA; and Marc A. Scorca, president and CEO of OPERA America.



Leontyne Price. Photo courtesy of Leontyne Price.

Leontyne Price

There are very few singers with voices as instantly recognizable, and revered, as the rich, creamy lyric soprano of Leontyne Price. She continues to be a powerful advocate not only for the art she loves, but for human rights. Born in Laurel, Mississippi in 1927, Price played the piano early on and soon began to sing at church and school. When she was nine years old, she heard Marian Anderson in concert; that, Price has said, “was what you might call the original kickoff” for her pursuit of what became an astonishing vocal career. Although her 1961 debut as Leonora in Verdi’s *Il trovatore* at the Metropolitan Opera instantly made her a legend — and landed her on the cover of *Time* magazine — she was already well known to opera audiences in cities such as San Francisco and Vienna. While Price is best known as a Verdi and Puccini singer, she has always embraced the work of American composers, particularly Samuel Barber. She gave the premiere of his *Hermit Songs* at New York City’s Town Hall in 1954, with the composer at the piano, and Barber went on to write many pieces for her.

Carlisle Floyd

One of the most admired opera composers and librettists of the last half century, Carlisle Floyd speaks in a uniquely American voice, capturing both the cadences and the mores of our society in works including *Susannah* (1955), *The Passion of Jonathan Wade* (1962; revised, 1990), *Of Mice and Men* (1970), *Bilby’s Doll* (1976), *Willie Stark* (1981) and *Cold Sassy Tree* (2000). Born in Latta, South Carolina in 1926, Floyd studied both composition and piano. He taught at South Florida University from 1947 to 1976, all the while actively composing, and in 1976 became the M. D. Anderson Professor of Music at the University of Houston. In Houston, he and David Gockley established the important Houston Grand Opera Studio, which for more than three decades has helped train promising young artists — including Erie Mills, Denyce Graves and Joyce Di Donato — in the full spectrum of opera.



Carlisle Floyd. Photo by Jim Caldwell.



Richard Gaddes. Photo by Ken Howard.

Richard Gaddes

Richard Gaddes has spent most of his professional life guiding and raising the profile of two important regional American companies, The Santa Fe Opera, where he is currently the general director, and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. Born in Wallsend, England, in 1942 and now a citizen of the United States, Gaddes studied at London's Trinity College of Music. In the Sixties, he launched a program of lunchtime concerts by young musicians at Wigmore Hall, an initiative that is emblematic of his work since: in both Santa Fe and Saint Louis, he has championed young singers. In 1969, at the invitation of Santa Fe Opera founder John Crosby, he became the company's artistic administrator. He founded the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis in 1976 and ran it until 1985, but remained a consultant to Santa Fe. He returned there full-time in 1994, and later succeeded John Crosby as general director. Throughout his tenure at both companies, Gaddes made a reputation for programming adventurous repertoire, imaginative casting and productions, building audiences and spotting young stars before others did.

James Levine

Since he first took the podium at the Metropolitan Opera in 1971, James Levine has conducted almost 2,500 performances there — a record number — and his repertoire is equally staggering: 85 operas. He is noted for his collaboration with singers, but equally important is his work with the Met orchestra, which he has fine-tuned into one of the world's leading ensembles. He has led Met premieres of works by numerous composers, including Mozart, Verdi, Stravinsky, Berg, Schoenberg, Rossini, Berlioz and Weill, as well as the world premieres of two American operas, John Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles* and John Harbison's *The Great Gatsby*. While maintaining his position at the Met, Levine has continued to work as an accompanist and chamber musician and has led orchestras around the world. In 2004, Levine became music director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, a post he continues to hold. With the BSO, he has introduced new works by such composers as Elliott Carter, William Bolcom, Milton Babbitt, Charles Wuorinen and John Harbison.



James Levine. Photo by Koichi Miura.

The official NEA Opera Honors awards ceremony will be held on Friday evening, October 31, at the Harman Center for the Arts in Washington, DC, with performances by the Washington National Opera and members of its Domingo-Cafritz Young Artists Program. 🎭

Steven Osgood will step down as artistic director of **American Opera Projects (AOP)** after a seven-year tenure, during which he played a crucial role in helping to implement the company's mission to commission, develop and present new, innovative opera-theater works. Osgood cited the pressures of increased personal and professional demands here and abroad as preventing him from continuing to devote sufficient time to his AOP commitments.

Molly Sasse has been named executive director of the **Chattanooga Symphony & Opera (CSO)**. Sasse has served as the CSO's acting executive director since October 2007. Prior to joining CSO, she served as executive director of Allied Arts for 15 years and as vice president for development at Siskin Hospital for Physical Rehabilitation for five years. Along with her background in music, as well as in arts administration, she is familiar with Chattanooga-based musicians, donors and patrons. She is a former member of the boards of the Chattanooga Theatre Centre, Choral Arts and the Convention and Visitors Bureau and is a member of Rotary. In 2000, she was honored as Arts Administrator of the Year by the Kennedy Center and Arts Services, Inc. Sasse holds degrees in music and arts administration from Centre College and Indiana University.

Anne Ford-Coates has been appointed associate director of wig and make-up firm **Elsen Associates, Inc.** She has been with the company for the past 12 years, designing for such companies as Glimmerglass Opera, Manhattan School of Music, Opera Boston, Opera Omaha, Utah Opera and Yale University. In addition

to her design work, she will focus on training of new talent, improving product quality and developing new strategies to fit varied production budgets.

Meyer Sound has announced two promotions at Meyer Sound Germany: **Jim Sides** to CEO and **Sascha Khelifa** to managing director. Sides relocated to Meyer Sound Germany in 2006 to serve as the office's managing director. Since that time, he has managed and driven an upsurge of growth in the German and Scandinavian markets, successfully doubling sales within these two markets. Khelifa, who has been with the company since 1999, will be responsible for the day-to-day direction and operations of the office, as well as the management of staff members at a new location in Montabaur. Additionally, **Helen Meyer**, co-founder and executive vice president, has been honored by California's *East Bay Business Times* as one of this year's Women of Distinction.

Jonah Nigh joined the **OPERA America** staff as grants and development manager in April 2008. He earned his B.M. and M.M. in vocal performance from Lawrence University and New England Conservatory, and his operatic credits include engagements with the Boston Lyric Opera, Aspen Music Festival, Opera Boston and Longwood Opera. Nigh's featured solo during the *Massachusetts Remembrance* concert marking the first anniversary of 9/11 was broadcast on NBC, ABC and Public Television. Prior to joining the OPERA America staff, Nigh served as artist representative for Elsie Management, program development

associate for the Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts of Massachusetts and acting concert coordinator for the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. An avid food and wine connoisseur, Nigh earned his level one certification from the Court of Master Sommeliers in San Francisco, CA.

Opera Colorado's executive director, **Greg Carpenter**, has been given the title of general director. **Brad Trexell** has been appointed to the newly created position of director of artistic planning. Trexell will be responsible for identifying emerging and established talent in the areas of singers, directors and conductors, and will oversee the areas of artistic administration and artist services. **Rex Fuller** has returned to the position of director of marketing at the company. **Becky Lathrop**, who held that position until recently, has accepted the position of the director of marketing with INTIMAN Theatre Company.

Leigh Anne Huckaby has resigned her position as assistant director of production at **Opera Theatre of Saint Louis**; she had been with the company since 1999. Previously, Huckaby was production manager at The Atlanta Opera and Dayton Opera. She began her career as a stage manager and worked with companies including The Atlanta Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, Sarasota Opera, Houston Grand Opera and Spoleto Festival U.S.A.

Melissa Cirone has been appointed as the new director of development at **Sacramento Opera**, and **Joey Castaneda** has been promoted to community engagement coordinator. Cirone has 20 years of professional

experience in development, strategic planning and communications, serving as development and marketing consultant to many performing arts companies, museums and visual arts centers. Cirone received her B.A. in English and art history from Holy Cross College in Worcester, MA. Castaneda is responsible for developing and strengthening relationships with organizations and diverse communities throughout the region. He first joined the company as a marketing and development intern in 2006. Castaneda received his B.A. in music (emphasis in flute performance) and communication from the University of California, Davis.

Shane Gasbarra has resigned his position as director of artistic and music administration at San Francisco Opera; he had been with the company since 2006. Gasbarra's responsibilities included managing artistic planning for the company: repertoire choice, commissions and principal artists; overseeing all areas of artistic and musical operations including orchestra, chorus and dancer


administration; and overseeing the company's dealings with the American Guild of Musical Artists and American Federation of Musicians. Previously, he held a similar position at Houston Grand Opera.

Seattle Opera's chief financial officer, **Katherine Anderson**, has been named the *Puget Sound Business Journal's* 2008 Annual CFO of the Year in the nonprofit category. Anderson joined Seattle Opera in fall 2005 as the company's first CFO. She has over 20 years of experience as a senior financial officer and CPA. Previous positions include CFO and controller for Casey Family Programs and vice president and controller for First Interstate Bank of Washington. Anderson has held several board positions with Financial Executives International, and she currently serves as area vice president; she has also been involved with the American Institute of CPAs, the Washington Institute of CPAs, the Seattle Rotary Club, Leadership Tomorrow and the Women CPAs of Seattle. She is a graduate of Humboldt State University. ☺

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OPERA AMERICA'S 2008 – 2009 SEASON OF ONLINE LEARNING

OPERA America's multimedia online courses offer an opportunity to explore the many dimensions of opera — literature, music, visual art — as well as learn more about the artists who make a night at the opera truly unforgettable. The four-week courses consider such topics as the world of the composer, the opera's source material and musical analysis. An interactive bulletin board feature allows participants to discuss important points with each other and the instructor.

La traviata — August 2008

Verdi's *La traviata* is based on the novel *La Dame aux Camélias* by Alexandre Dumas, *fils*. The opera, considered controversial at the time of its premiere for its contemporary setting, is one of the most-produced operas of all time.

Madama Butterfly — September 2008

David Belasco's *Madame Butterfly: A Tragedy of Japan* was innovative in his use of light in storytelling, particularly in the geisha's long vigil as she awaits the return of her American husband. When Puccini saw the play, he was inspired by the story and the stagecraft.

The Marriage of Figaro — February 2009

This opera, based on a play by Beaumarchais, depicts a single "crazy day" in the life of an aristocratic household. A tumble of events, including comedy, intrigue, class warfare, gives way to one of the most touching reconciliation scenes in all opera.

Brief Encounter — April 2009

André Previn, an award-winning conductor and pianist, made his mark in opera with *A Streetcar Named Desire* in 1998. In 2009, Houston Grand Opera will premiere Previn's newest work, *Brief Encounter*, based on the play *Still Life* and the screenplay to the 1945 film *Brief Encounter*, both by Noël Coward.

For more information about Online Learning, contact OPERA America at 212-796-8620, ext. 206, or e-mail Education@operaamerica.org. 

Nixon in China course designed by Matthew Trefz.





Baritone Keith Phares as Elmer Gantry and mezzo-soprano Jennifer Rivera as Sharon Falconer in Nashville Opera's production of Aldridge's *Elmer Gantry*. Photo by Reed Hummell, Nashville Opera.

OPERA AMERICA LAUNCHES FIRST ARTIST DEVELOPMENT COMPONENT OF *THE OPERA FUND*

The Opera Fund is designed to enhance the quality, quantity and creativity of new opera and music-theater. Since 2002 OPERA America has awarded approximately \$1.4 million to member companies to support repertoire development and audience development around the production of North American works.

This year, OPERA America will offer its first awards to individual artists under the auspices of *The Opera Fund*. A biannual **Director-Designer Showcase** will offer direct benefit to promising stage directors and designers by introducing them to opera company decision-makers at *Opera Conference 2009*. Artists will be invited to submit preliminary concepts and designs for adjudication by a panel of opera experts; winning teams will receive funds for further development of their ideas, as well as a trip to the conference.

"It's completely fitting that OPERA America launches its first funding program for individual artists with the Director-Designer Showcase — an initiative that encourages and supports the key collaborating artists in opera production, stage directors and designers," says Diane Wondisford, chair of OPERA America's Artistic Initiatives Committee and producing director of Music-Theatre Group.

Professional Company Members of OPERA America are invited to apply for grants in the **Audience Development** category of *The Opera Fund*. These awards support efforts that develop new audiences for American opera and music-theater; create more diverse audiences for opera and music-theater; deepen current audiences' understanding and appreciation of new and existing American works; and increase the participation of audiences in a company's activities.

Intent-to-Apply Deadline: September 5
Application Deadline: October 6

Guidelines and applications for both the Director-Designer Showcase and Audience Development Awards will be available at www.operaamerica.org this summer. 🌐



Panelists Kris Stewart, Sarah Schlesinger, Richard Danielpour and Diane Wondisford speak at OPERA America's April 30, 2008 *Making Connections* panel discussion, *Pushing the Boundaries Between Opera and Musical Theater*. Photo by Katherine Ehle/OPERA America.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

OPERA America is pleased to announce its third season of *Making Connections* — professional development and networking events in New York City. These events bring together artists and influential professionals in the field for panel discussions, followed by receptions where participants can enjoy refreshments and networking opportunities.

Many of the sessions planned for 2008-2009 are designed to provide artists across disciplines with useful career advice, including Meeting People and Making a Good Impression, Public Speaking, Marketing and Media, Fundraising Basics, Finding Artist Mentors and Performing in Your Community.

While other sessions are planned with particular specialties in mind, these learning and networking events are open to all.

- Composers and librettists will be particularly interested in: The Opera Commissioning Process, Workshopping Your Opera and Finding Opportunities with Music Schools.
- Directors and designers won't want to miss: Crossing from Directing Theater to Opera, Working with the Stage Manager and Crew, Designing for New Opera and Staging Opera for the Auditorium and the Camera.
- Finally, singers can choose from an array of topics: Career Transitions, Choosing a Training Program, Putting Your Best Foot Forward in an Audition, Maintaining Your Health Despite a Hectic Schedule, Beginning a Career without a Young Artist Program, Learning a Role Inside and Out and Making the Most of Your Time in School.

Making Connections events will take place in the early evening on the last Tuesday and Wednesday of the month from September 2008 through April 2009, and are convenient after-work or pre-performance activities. Each event is held in the OPERA America office, located at 330 Seventh Avenue (near Penn Station). The events are \$5 per session for members and \$10 per session for nonmembers.

A full schedule of 2008-2009 events will be available at www.operaamerica.org in mid-July. 


TELECONFERENCING AT OPERA AMERICA

Last year, Syracuse Opera asked OPERA America President/CEO Marc A. Scorca to lead the company's board through a benchmarking analysis and organizational structure review — from New York City!

"Syracuse Opera's board of directors wanted to consult with Marc, and we were having trouble finding a date," says General Director Catherine Wolff. "One of my board members suggested that we try to teleconference, and with the aid of his contacts at Syracuse University, we were able to make that happen. I and my board were in Syracuse, seeing and hearing Marc in New York City. We liked it so much, we scheduled a second teleconference. It saves time and money and is like seeing opera at the movie theater — it's the next best thing to hearing Marc live and in person!"

Thanks to Dr. and Mrs. Joseph DeLeese, OPERA America can now offer teleconferencing from its New York offices. When Dr. DeLeese, a trustee of Knoxville Opera and a member of OPERA America's National Trustee Forum, learned the of the potential for increased member service, he stepped forward with a most generous gift.

OPERA America members already make regular use of the organization's conference room for production presentations and other New York business. The new system allows stakeholders from across North America to participate in these meetings. Companies wishing to include far-flung colleagues in their New York City meetings should notify Sabrina Nielsen via e-mail at SNielsen@operaamerica.org when scheduling meetings.

In addition, companies that wish to arrange a consultation with OPERA America staff around issues of search, structure or financial benchmarking can arrange to have this kind of meeting via video conference. To arrange a video consultation, contact Traci Schanke at TSchanke@operaamerica.org. 

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Opera Omaha's 2008 production of Verdi's *Aida*. Photos by Jim Scholz.

Aida

Opera Omaha marked its 50th anniversary this season with a new production of Verdi's *Aida*, designed by local sculptor and installation artist Catherine Ferguson. This is the second time the company has worked with an Omaha visual artist — the sculptor Jun Kaneko created the designs for an acclaimed 2006 production of *Madama Butterfly*.

Sculptor and installation artist Catherine Ferguson creates multi-faceted work that reflects on profound personal transformation, and she uses art as a means to prompt reflections and change perceptions. She has contributed to Omaha's public art spaces through numerous public commissions, and her work is featured in public and private collections, including the Sheldon Memorial Art Museum in Lincoln, the University of Nebraska at Omaha, the Museum of Nebraska Art and the Landmarks building.

Opera Omaha's 2008 production of *Aida* was directed by Sam Helfrich; Robert Wierzel was the lighting designer. The cast included Elizabeth Blancke-Biggs (*Aida*), Arnold Rawls (*Radames*), Kevin Short (*Ramfis*), Grant Youngblood (*Amonasro*), Valerian Ruminski (*King of Egypt*) and Guang Yang (*Amneris*).



Set model for Opera Omaha's 2008 production of Verdi's *Aida*.

Catherine Ferguson, set and costume designer: “In my installations I’ve worked with a composer who responds to my work. This is the first time I’ve reacted to a score — it’s the reverse of how I usually work. When Opera Omaha’s Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Stewart Robertson approached me about designing the sets and costumes for *Aida*, his request was to think beyond the lavish productions typically staged for this opera. We all wanted to create a new production that would be less about the spectacle and more about the story.

“On a visit to New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art, while in the Ancient Egyptian collection, I overheard a docent telling her group about the importance of the lotus, particularly the blue lotus, within this civilization. The Egyptians believed their gods traveled in the watery underworld by night and in a heavenly boat during the day. The cycle of the blue lotus begins in the morning, when dawn first coaxes the tight bud to rise slowly from murky water. The lotus opens to reveal a yellow, round center, and in the evening, it closes and returns beneath the surface. In the morning, this process begins anew. To the ancient Egyptians, this continuous cycle of opening and closing perfectly symbolized the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. (Catherine Ferguson’s remarks are continued on the next page.)

“Before hearing the docent’s account, I had been listening to *Aida* over and over, and I had been studying every aspect of the opera’s four acts. When I learned about the cycle of the lotus, I recognized the parallel between the flower and the structure of *Aida*. The day/night cycle of the lotus was the precise visual motif I had been seeking to complement the different music motifs Verdi had created for his principal singers. Acts I and II are about military power, the gold of the Ethiopians and the absolute will of the King, who is destined to become a “sun god” in his next life. In contrast, opera scholars have described Acts III and IV as *Aida*’s lunar acts. They begin at night in the flora of the Nile, away from the power of the palace, and reveal a myriad of personal struggles related to love, family allegiance and loyalty, all underscored by painful self-awareness. In the final moments, doomed lovers Aida and Radames sing about their rebirth into the next life, while Amneris faces a new life of her own, one she realizes she has created through her own deceptions.”

Opera Omaha’s 2008 production of Verdi’s *Aida*. Photo by Jim Scholz.



Sam Helfrich, director: "I spent a lot of time getting to know Catherine and her art. I flew to Omaha once a month for the last two years, thinking "How can I take this artwork and make it into *Aida*?"

"One thing we associate with Egypt is a sense of outsized scale. The monuments are so huge in relation to human beings. Catherine works with large-scale public sculpture, which offered a way to reference Egypt without being literally Egyptian.

"When I was introduced to people in Omaha, the first thing they asked was: 'Are there going to be elephants?' They were always disappointed when I said no. Our Triumphal Scene was not about spectacle. Although there was no procession, we did have a fantastic ballet, choreographed by Seán Curran. Instead of a kind of war dance, there were nine dancers who played out the love triangle in three separate trios. I think even audiences who expected a different kind of production were won over by the ballet." 🌟



Set model for Opera Omaha's 2008 production of Verdi's *Aida*.

- European Opera-directing Prize 2009 -



Camerata Nuova and Opera Europa jointly announce the European Opera-directing Prize 2009 for newcomer opera directors up to the age of 35 years for the staging of *La finta giardiniera* by W. A. Mozart hosted by Stadttheater Bern during the 2009-2010 season.

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— impressions from a young first-timer at The Dallas Opera

The Operatic Evolution of John Adams: Remaking Opera for Our Time

By Thomas May



Nixon in China was an unlikely success when it premiered over two decades ago. But John Adams has continued forging new paths for American opera with his subsequent stage works and, in the process, evolving his own language as a composer.



UNITY



San Francisco Opera's 1992 production of Adams's *Death of Klinghoffer*. Photo by Marty Sohl and courtesy of San Francisco Opera.

This fall — 21 years after launching his career as an opera composer with *Nixon in China* — John Adams will be taking bows for the first time from the stage of the Metropolitan Opera. The company will present a new production of his 2005 work, *Doctor Atomic*. And two seasons down the road, the Met plans to mount its first *Nixon*, using the original Peter Sellars staging. The latter is where it all began, when Houston Grand Opera took a bold risk on a novice team of operatic collaborators back in 1987.

Adams's arrival at the Met is just the latest in a new wave of productions validating his significance as an opera composer. Following a lull in the later 1990s, Adams returned to writing for the stage with a sequence of powerful works — each utterly unlike its successor — which have prodded the overall evolution of his musical language. Adams's presence in the concert hall has held steady throughout his career, but in recent years there's been a boom of interest from a wide range of American opera companies (with parallel developments in Europe). San Francisco Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago were co-commissioners of *Doctor Atomic*, while James Robinson's revisionist production of *Nixon in China* has made the rounds at the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, The Minnesota Opera, Portland Opera, Chicago Opera Theater and — this summer — Opera Colorado.

When the New England-born and -bred Adams left the East Coast establishment in the early 1970s and headed West to relocate in the San Francisco Bay Area, he could hardly have foreseen the prominent role he would come to play in revitalizing American opera. For all the grim and gloomy refrains we hear about the future of classical music today, the operatic landscape back then was *truly* bleak. Adams struggled like any other young composer and eventually began to carve out a viable career in the concert hall through his special rapport with the San Francisco Symphony. But he seemed an unlikely candidate for the opera

stage. Not only were commissions by opera houses a rarity at the time; Adams himself evinced no particular interest in the genre, *per se*.

And yet, through the intuition of an outside observer, Adams found himself inevitably drawn in the direction of opera. In 1983, at a summer musical festival, a chance meeting occurred between Adams and Peter Sellars — then an upstart director in his 20s and a fellow Harvard alum 10 years younger than Adams who was just beginning to make a mark with his signature theatrical iconoclasm. Sellars planted the seed by suggesting an opera to be called *Nixon in China*: a seemingly preposterous tag with its ironic play on grandiose mythological titles like *Iphigénie en Tauride* or *Ariadne auf Naxos*.

What Sellars had homed in on was the inherent dramatic nature of Adams's musical aesthetic. Sellars's epiphany came with a 1978 work for string septet (later refashioned for string orchestra), *Shaker Loops*. Sellars recalls his excitement on hearing this piece for the first time: "Here was music that was genuinely dramatic. *Shaker Loops* builds up these incredible sweeps of tension and then goes into astonishing release and then adrenaline-inspired visionary states: that is absolutely what you hope for in theater. I realized that this is theater music, which has the

ability to build and sustain tension." Here, Sellars goes on to observe, was a harmonic language that "actually took you into areas of right and wrong, where not just anything goes. That was very powerful because drama is *always* about a moral imperative. There is a right action and wrong action — or there are actions that are doomed to be both simultaneously."

Adams at first had balked at the idea of an opera on "Nixon in China," assuming it would be limited to the sort of predictable political satire that had long since grown stale from *Saturday Night Live* routines. *Schadentfreude* over America's disgraced president was no longer exactly cutting edge. But Adams ruminated on Sellars's invitation to collaborate and eventually came to see a much larger set of concerns at work in the historic visit to China: in fact, nothing less than a story with present-day mythic resonance and an iconic representation of the Cold War. When Sellars enlisted Alice Goodman as librettist — a poet he had befriended while they were both students at Harvard — things began to fall into place. "I defy anyone to come up with other librettos written in English that are as brilliant, subtle, funny and profound as what Alice Goodman wrote for me," says Adams.

From the start then, Adams perceived opera as a far-reaching form. "One of the magical things about opera," the composer has observed, "is that it is fundamentally unreal. And because of its fundamental unreality, one can treat the largest issues in life and really tackle the biggest subjects." Despite some differences with Sellars on the issue of drama as a vehicle for social change, Adams shares the director's unwavering vision of an ambitious scope for opera. This is at least one of the essential ingredients that has sustained their ongoing creative partnership — one of the most intriguing and significant operatic pairings of our generation — in every one of Adams's works for the stage since *Nixon in China*.

Both Adams and Sellars find inspiration in the mythic potential of contemporary iconic figures or events. "I'm not interested in lecturing my audience, in teaching a social parable in the manner of a Brechtian *Lehrstück*," Adams points out. "What appeals to me in subjects like the Nixon-Mao meeting, or the *Achille Lauro* incident [from *The Death of Klinghoffer*], or the atomic bomb, is their power as archetypes, their ability to summon up in a few choice symbols the collective psyche of our time."

But these are archetypes refracted through the art of opera. Adams long ago grew resigned to the shortsightedness that invented the trendy term "CNN opera" to pigeonhole the earlier works. "It's going to take another few decades for the whole 'CNN opera' reference to be laid to rest. It's

a pain in the butt, but its cuteness will eventually have no meaning." Also annoying for Adams is the idea that his operas are obsessively "political." "All life is political. Does one say the same thing about Mozart or Verdi, who wrote operas about the struggle of one person's will against another's?"

Sellars emphasizes the irony of the "CNN" moniker. "One of the most important reasons to do these operas was to say precisely that we *aren't* getting the actual history of our times. In the Age of Information we are strangely *underinformed* about what is going on and what is at stake — exactly because there's a historical blank for so many Americans. [As artists] we have to make a structure which is context rich. Opera is able to go inside to a place where the headlines aren't going. It creates something that is layered, multi-vocal, and intricate and doesn't just produce flat statements. Exactly to find what was not in the news, what was *missing* from the news: that's why we worked in this genre."

Nixon in China faces the history of grand opera and its forms head on with a pungent mixture of humor, irony, and, ultimately, movingly poetic meditation. Already in Nixon's famous aria delivered shortly upon his arrival ("News"), for example, we get an extraordinarily multidimensional portrait in which both music and text convey a large amount of information about his character. Simultaneously, the aria lays the groundwork for the opera's larger theme of the relation between public poses and private, interior worlds.

At the time, Adams was known primarily as part of the triumvirate of leading American minimalists (along with Philip Glass and Steve Reich), thanks largely to Michael Walsh's influential *Time* magazine profile from September 1982, "The Heart Is Back in the Game." Walsh made several mentions of Adams as he praised this "hypnotic and infectious" style for restoring the emotional appeal of new music.

Yet even Adams's earliest works in this vein approached minimalism not as an end in itself, a dogma to be followed, but as one element within a larger musical vision. The composer found himself attracted to aspects of minimalism because it offered an idiom that could mesh "with my kind of incessant rhythmic energy." Yet he also notes, "I could detect right off that minimalism in its classic embodiment was too chaste and pure for me, that I would have to find a way to make it more expressive and less bound to procedures."

Adams's last major work before embarking on the score of *Nixon in China* — *Harmonielehre*, a major symphonic

commission by the San Francisco Symphony in 1985 — helped pave the ground musically for *Nixon's* landscape. *Harmonielehre*, Adams recalls, is a work where he “mixed minimalist procedures with a lot of artifacts from the Romantic era, tropes such as big, swelling melodies and high energy climaxes.” Similarly, *Nixon* goes on to mine the operatic past for a wide diversity of its gestures — from Mozart and Wagner all the way up to Glass’s 1980 opera *Satyagraha*, which Adams lists as part of his field of influences.

Sellars immediately recalls the excitement of this first collaboration as it began to take shape two decades ago: “We had such a good time shaping [*Nixon*] because we put in everything you ever wanted to put into an opera. I was obsessed with the complete history of Western opera in the first two acts and then, in the third act, moving into a new place. As Mozart re-imagined what opera could be by inventing the ensemble, [we wanted] to reinvent the ensemble on our terms and find the basis of equality and exchange.”

Thus, while *Nixon in China* proved groundbreaking in what it brought to the opera stage, it is also rooted in a profound sense of operatic history — one possible reason for its longevity. Marin Alsop, a champion of Adams in both the concert hall and opera house (she will be conducting the James Robinson production of *Nixon* at Opera Colorado this June), finds that Adams “goes back to the original art form of opera in *Nixon*. He’s reinventing the original for our time rather than trying to change the nature of it.” The result is to give opera “relevance and access for people today.”

Yet Adams is hardly interested in writing pastiche for the stage. On the contrary, his operatic work has been a significant catalyst in the overall evolution of his musical imagination. “One of the great things about writing for the stage is that you’re prodded to come up with new ways of saying or picturing something,” Adams notes. “For example, in *Doctor Atomic*, I think of how I had to find a musical way of describing a desert scene with an atomic bomb waiting to explode. I came up with a kind of music that I’m sure I never would have thought of if it were just a symphony I was writing. Or take the landing of Air Force One in *Nixon in China*, with its superinflated, pompous, triumphal music. That’s something I had a great deal of fun with, but I probably never would have done something like that if I had sat down to write a purely instrumental piece.”

Adams’s second opera, *The Death of Klinghoffer*, proved especially pivotal in opening up new musical horizons for the composer. *Klinghoffer* remains the most controversial opera by far of Adams’s career — and arguably of the past half century. Its dramatization of a real-life terrorist

hijacking and murder of a handicapped Jewish man incited outrage from the moment of its premiere in 1991. But the ongoing controversy over the opera’s subject matter has distracted from its musical significance.

Yet, as with *Nixon*, *Klinghoffer* has begun to show its durability as a work which can sustain multiple interpretations. In his original staging, Sellars took an abstract approach with choreography by Mark Morris and a set designed by George Tsypin. Penny Woolcock, by contrast, brought her trademark documentary naturalism to the 2003 film version. (Woolcock will be directing the Met’s new production of *Doctor Atomic* in October.)

In addressing the intense emotions of *Klinghoffer*, Adams was compelled to deepen and enrich his musical palette. But the viciousness of the *Klinghoffer* debates turned him away from opera for a while. Instead, Adams explored these new musical impulses in a series of important orchestral works. He also indulged what he’s called a “lighter side” of his interest in the lyrical stage in his 1995 “songplay” — a collaboration with the late poet June Jordan — called *I Was Looking at the Ceiling and Then I Saw the Sky*. Here, the 1994 Northridge earthquake provided the backdrop for a series of characters seeking to make sense of their lives as they search for love. The score is a hybrid of Broadway and pop music idioms. Again, Adams was tapping into roots — this time, the connections to popular vernaculars that are a recurrent feature of his music (Adams likes to point out that his mother was a performer in musicals; one of his earliest memories of the stage is appearing with her as a child in *South Pacific*).

By the turn of the millennium, Adams was ready to amalgamate recent advances in his musical language — above all, a new sense of lyricism in his writing for the voice — in his next stage work. *El Niño* juxtaposed young motherhood in the L.A. barrio with the Nativity story of birth and rebirth. *El Niño* also represented the first of Adams’s “multiple purpose” stage works, meaning it was written to have life either as a fully-staged opera or as a concert oratorio.

For a composer concerned with archetypes, *El Niño* explores the most essential archetype of all: the miracle and transformation of birth — but from the point of view of women rather than men. In the earlier operas, Adams reveals a tendency to move from the very specific — the Nixon summit and the terrorist hijacking of a ship in 1985 — into a kind of mythological universal (the same is true of his succeeding opera, *Doctor Atomic*, centered on the Trinity atomic bomb test in 1945). *El Niño* entails a reversal of direction. The work begins with a layer of myth and folktale — the story of the Nativity — and eventually weaves into its tapestry transhistorical layers of reference,

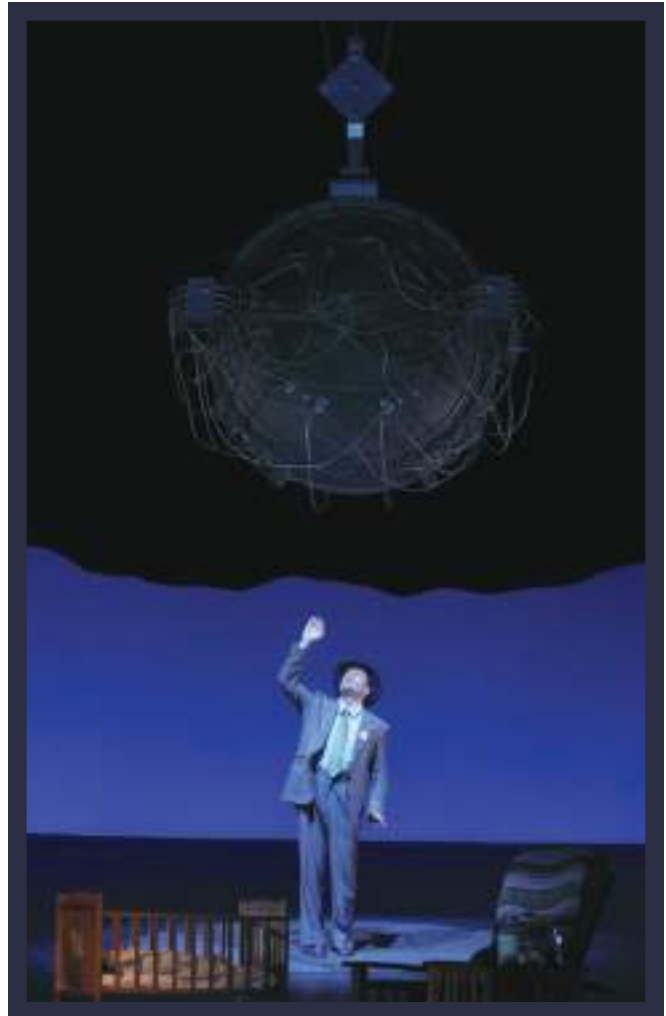
from the mystical vision of Hildegard of Bingen to the 1968 student massacres in Mexico City.

"John's musical language isn't just contemporary," Sellars observes. "It moves back, across and through time. The beauty of *El Niño* was John's discovery of early music — Hildegard and so on — and the unfettered voice, and singers he could write for. So it's the first piece of his that is vocally driven, where the vocal line is determining everything else. Before, John wrote these instrumental structures which the voices fit into, [finding] their place in the puzzle. With *El Niño* it's the voice that is leading."

Dawn Upshaw, who was cast in the original production of *El Niño* and sings on the Nonesuch recording, has also noted the extraordinary quality of Adams's prosody in writing for the voice. The Magnificat, she observes, "is set so well. Where there is stress or a word that he wants to highlight, it's very clear by way of rhythm or range and pitch — he shapes things so clearly." Singing the large intervallic leaps of the Magnificat "is one of the most gratifying things I've ever done. With those big leaps, I feel as though I'm using every part of my being."

This sense of physicality pervades *El Niño* and is essential to the visceral impact its music has on listeners. Adams's work in general has been a primary source for leading choreographers of our era, from Lucinda Childs to Mark Morris. Sellars finds this a natural connection, "because his work *is* music of action as well as contemplation. The rhythmic impulse and physical motor under way in John's music is another thing that lifts it from university-composed academic art music into a field of thought and action in the world. That worldly imagery of John's music coupled with its otherworldly, transcendental side generates the tension that makes these pieces have long lives."

A driving force behind the change of direction represented by *El Niño* may have been the need for a change of focus following the harrowing aftermath of *The Death of Klinghoffer's* reception. Similarly, Adams's most recent work for the stage, *A Flowering Tree* — which was premiered in 2006 in Vienna and was recently given a new production by Chicago Opera Theater (conducted by Adams himself, who also led the U.S. premiere with the San Francisco Symphony in 2007) — involves a return to more traditional archetypes after the intensity of *Doctor Atomic*. Adam's score for the latter weaves an alien soundscape together with his signature pulsating rhythms (given a newly anxious instability) and dark, clashing harmonies. Much of *Doctor Atomic* is about waiting — not for Godot, but for the "Gadget" (code for the bomb) to be tested, as if its characters expect to learn some sort of cosmic answer from the result.



Gerald Finley stars as J. Robert Oppenheimer in Lyric Opera of Chicago's 2007-2008 production of John Adams's *Doctor Atomic*. Photo by Dan Rest/Lyric Opera of Chicago.

A Flowering Tree, by contrast, finds Adams turning to the realm of ancient folklore. Here, the archetypal story of transformation is presented directly, as in a fairytale, without being refracted through an additional layer of contemporary history.

A Flowering Tree is based on an ancient Tamil folktale from southern India about a young couple who endure a painful test of their love. Adams wrote it as a personal response to *The Magic Flute*, much as *El Niño* takes Handel's *Messiah* as its model for a contemporary, millennial approach to the Nativity story.

Adams himself eloquently sums up the hidden potential of the folktale's seeming naiveté: "Folk stories can be like that: they appear unremarkable on casual encounter, but once we immerse ourselves in their imagery and their magic, we can find ourselves in very deep waters." From *Nixon in China* to his latest work of musical theater, Adams continues to find ideal subjects for his own art of musical metamorphosis. 🌸



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Summer Festivals: Finding a Way to Shine During the Dark Months

By Kelley Rourke

Summer opera festivals have a special allure for the cultural tourist — people travel hundreds, even thousands, of miles to see three or four performances in as many days. While an out-of-town audience is a source of justifiable pride, local support remains essential. With their brief mainstage seasons — eight weeks at most — how do these companies remain part of the fabric of the community during the long “dark” months?

A similar challenge is felt by opera companies across North America, of course; all but a handful offer fewer than 50 mainstage performances each year. Compared with other cultural organizations that welcome the public five or six days a week, such as museums or libraries, opera companies can seem somewhat inaccessible.

Summer festivals, with their concentrated seasons, are acutely aware of this problem. Many have responded with a concerted effort to think outside the theater — and to demonstrate that an opera company can deliver continuing value in a variety of ways. Their creative and varied approaches to community-building can serve as an inspiration to all companies, regardless of performance schedule.

Off-Season? What Off-Season?

Not surprisingly, one of the primary ways opera festivals stay visible through the year is by producing opera. The productions are often on a different scale and in different venues than summer offerings, but that can be a good thing.

“We are actually in Indianola, which qualifies as a suburb community

of Des Moines, but with 12 miles of farmland between us, we’re not always perceived that way,” says **Des Moines Metro Opera’s** Michael Egel, who serves as artistic administrator and director of education. Egel notes that for nine months of the year, “we’re trying to get ourselves into Des Moines proper as much as possible.” In addition to small-scale community events and performances, the company offers occasional full-scale productions in the Des Moines Civic Center. “It is nice because it is an almost 3,000-seat house, much bigger than our summer performance space,” says Egel. This allows the company to perform works, like *Aida*, that would not be appropriate for its intimate summer home. They are also able to access a different pool of artists, because artists only need to commit to a couple of performances.

“For years we have done peripheral programming outside our season, and we almost never do it in Music Hall,” says **Cincinnati Opera** General Director Patty Beggs, who feels it is valuable for the company to be seen in different neighborhoods and to reach diverse audiences around Cincinnati. For

the past 10 years, the company has drawn enthusiastic crowds for its family operas, which have included *Different Fields*, by former all-pro football player Mike Reid; *Rise for Freedom: The John P. Parker Story*, which focuses on a local hero of the Underground Railroad; and a new version of Hans Krása’s *Brundibár*.

Events for families are popular attractions in many communities.

Fort Worth Opera scheduled a holiday performance of *Amahl and the Night Visitors* last year, and all five performances — presented in a local Hispanic neighborhood — sold out. According to General Director Darren Keith Woods, the production got more press than anything the company has ever done. Just before **The Santa Fe Opera** opens its summer season, the company offers a month-long run of a one-hour opera in downtown venues, using both young artists and local talent. “People just flock to them,” says Joyce Idema, the company’s director of press and public relations. “They get something very clever and very funny for only \$10.”

Many summer festivals, including Cincinnati Opera, The Santa Fe Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera



The Santa Fe Opera's student-produced performance of *Palimpsest* performed in spring 2007 at the Scottish Rite Masonic Center. Photo by Robert Godwin.

and **Berkshire Opera**, put together a small touring company that performs in community venues and schools throughout the region. Most years, **Opera North's** (Lebanon, NH) education program tours for seven weeks and plays to an audience of 25,000 — more people than the company otherwise reaches all year.

The off-season allows opera companies to diversify their programming. **Lake George Opera at Saratoga** has a regular program at Caffè Lena, a well-established Saratoga Springs coffeehouse that was recently named best small venue in North America by the International Folk Alliance. While the opera's coffeehouse programs have some connection to mainstage offerings, they are also planned with the regular Caffè Lena audience in mind. For instance, the summer 2008 season will include Michael Ching's *Buoso's Ghost*. The composer, who resides in Memphis, is also an active songwriter, and he will present a program of folk and country music.

A significant portion of **Glimmerglass Opera's** (Cooperstown, NY) patron base lives outside the Cooperstown area.

For these individuals, the company plans eight to 10 programmed events each year, many in Albany or New York City. Typically hosted by members of the company's National Council, the programs usually feature alumni of the Young American Artists Program. "Many of these singers already have a following," says Director of Institutional Advancement Joan Desens, "and a lot of the attendees enjoy greeting and talking with them." The company also began presenting regular programs at Manhattan's Morgan Library & Museum in 2006.

Young artists frequently play a starring role in off-season events, ranging from holiday concerts to sporting events. The Santa Fe Opera packs the house for its annual free holiday concert at St. Francis Cathedral, a large church in downtown Santa Fe. **PORTopera** (Portland, ME) offers three "Sunset Serenades" each year, usually in private homes. The programs feature successful former young artists such as Ashley Emerson, who began in PORTopera's chorus, moved up to Young Artist, and is now a member of the Metropolitan

Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program. Two years ago, when Maine native Kate Aldrich returned for a recital, the company rented a theater and hired a string quartet for a sold-out concert featuring the fast-rising star.

Summer festivals are not the only ones producing performances and events outside the regular subscription season, of course. According to the *Professional Opera Survey*, OPERA America members saw nearly \$20 million in income from non-mainstage performances — which are typically offered at low cost or even free — in 2006. However, the income — and even the effect on the box office — is a secondary concern: "Some of these people don't ever go to the mainstage," says Beggs. "We think that's OK. The mandate is for more opera."

Please, Put Your Daughter on the Stage!

Noël Coward famously cautioned against it, but opera companies find that by creating opportunities for young performers, they not only give back to the community, they gain considerable press attention.

“Our area is very fragmented — there are tons of little suburban communities of 5,000 to 8,000 people, and many of them have their own newspapers,” says Steve Kelley, director of marketing at **Opera Theatre of Saint Louis** (OTSL). In many cases, he finds that it’s not the international star on the mainstage who sells papers, it’s the talented local high school student.

These performances draw an audience, too — OTSL’s youth opera typically plays to about 5,000 people. According to Director of Education and Outreach Allison Felter, the production is fully professional: “Our approach is very much patterned after the mainstage.” The company puts out a “cattle call” through music teachers at schools within a 100-mile radius of the company, and the students are joined by a few professional adult singers and a chamber orchestra. The youth operas are performed in a variety of venues, which Felter says is “a kind of advantage, because showing up in a new neighborhood is a good thing.” In addition to providing important learning experiences for the young performers, the opera allows the company to reach new audiences — according to Felter, 60 percent of the adults in attendance are new to the company.

For many summer companies, educational programming is an important focus during the school year. Every company mentioned in this article makes an effort in this area, ranging from brief presentations to in-depth residencies. Both OTSL and **Central City Opera** bring *Music!Words!Opera!* (M!W!O!) into local schools. M!W!O! is a curriculum, developed by OPERA America, that connects opera with other subject areas and culminates



Kate Crandall watches Rebecca Saslow portraying Pinocchio in John Davies children’s opera, *Pinocchio*. Photo by Elizabeth Giblin.

in the creation of an original opera. Felter says community response has been tremendous: “At some independent schools, parents have demanded that M!W!O! be part of the curriculum. It has become such a tradition, and viewed as such an important experience, that they insist.”

The Santa Fe Opera works with public schools on a similar opera creation program called Student-Produced Operas. The company employs 27 artists in residence, drawn from an extensive community of Santa Fe artists, to work with the children to write and produce original operas that are performed for the larger community.

Long Leaf Opera’s (Chapel Hill, NC) festival season repertory is

dominated by contemporary work; likewise, the company’s education activities focus on connecting students with living composers and their work. Last year, students at an elementary school, under the tutelage of resident composer Caroline Mallonée, composed and produced their own opera, accompanied by student performers playing recorders and Orff instruments. The opera, based on an award-winning book written by students at the school, was an important community event that played to an audience of 1,500 people. This year, composer-in-residence Justine Chen is writing an original opera for teenagers to perform. General Director Jim Schaeffer sees such programs as not only beneficial to the community, but to the composers: “We try to

select young composers with career potential and give them additional experience writing opera." Next year, Amy Scurria will work with elementary students to create an original opera.

Berkshire Opera collaborates with the Berkshire Music School for "Behind the Velvet Curtain," a week-long immersion in one opera from the company's season. The children study the music, visit a museum to explore the period of an opera, then design and build mock sets and costumes for the show. Late in the week, they meet the singers and other company personnel. The experience culminates with a family opera festival on the Sunday after opening night; the students go to the theater, have their makeup done, and have pictures taken in costume on the set. The next day, they attend the matinee performance, and are "probably our most enthusiastic audience," according to General Director Ryan Taylor.

At OTSL, Monsanto's Artists-in-Training (AIT) program sets out to identify, coach and encourage

talented students from high schools across St. Louis. This program has had a positive impact on many levels, sometimes providing an entry point to opera for an entire family. "My daughter Julie was involved in the Artists-in-Training Program for four years and is currently at Northwestern University studying vocal performance," says Mary Tabash. "The opera has really become a family event around our house." Despite a musical background, Tabash had never attended a full opera performance prior to her daughter's participation in AIT. Now, she is a regular attender and volunteer. "Julie's training exceeded our expectations. They are supporting our kids, not in a passive way, but in an active way, and I wanted to meet the people who made it happen."

Lifelong Learning

Many people have their first experience with opera as adults, and opera companies across the country are working to provide diverse entry points. Opera North offers a lecture series called "Sherry and Sopranos" in private homes.

The company engages singers and speakers from across the country on a variety of opera-related topics, from an architect's perspective on the original set for *The Magic Flute* to a psychiatrist's view of operatic mad scenes.

Cincinnati Opera plans a broad range of community activities under the umbrella of "Opera Innovation," a collaboration between the education, marketing and artistic departments. One of the most popular initiatives is "Opera Raps," a year-round, traveling lecture series — generally free to the public — featuring a guest speaker leading conversation on a topic related to the upcoming season.

In conjunction with its Shakespeare-themed season, Glimmerglass Opera has created an online book club to discuss books such as Bill Bryson's *Shakespeare: The World as Stage* and Nigel Cliff's *The Shakespeare Riots: Revenge, Drama and Death in Nineteenth Century America*.

Many companies partner with other local organizations for adult



Opera Theatre of Saint Louis General Director Charles MacKay, 2007 Monsanto Prize Winner Julie Tabash and adjudicator Doris Yarick-Cross at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis's 2007 Artists-In-Training Spring Recital. Photo by Maurice Meredith.

education: Berkshire Opera holds moderated discussions with the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Opera North offers three-week courses at the Institute for Lifelong Education at Dartmouth, and Glimmerglass Opera offers a course through SUNY-Oneonta's Center for Continued Adult Learning. None of these companies has a full-time staff member devoted to education and outreach, but by partnering with organizations with an established format and consumer base, each company is able to extend its reach.

Guilds and Volunteers

For some local opera supporters, the question in the off-season is not "What can my opera company do for me?" but "What can I do for my opera company?" Volunteers and guild members do extraordinary work to create and extend community connections. At companies like Glimmerglass and Ash Lawn, guild members take a leading role in planning and staffing the company's education and outreach activities. At other companies, activities may focus on fundraising or awareness. Des Moines Metro Opera has guild chapters in Ames, Des Moines and Indianola, and each chapter has 10 or more events annually.

Emma Dunch, vice president of Arts Consulting Group, is currently acting as interim executive director of Opera North. When she began working with the company, she learned that the company has engaged 6,500 local volunteers over the last 25 years. "The company has always enjoyed widespread community support. I would say that one of the things that has distinguished Opera North is its ability to be community-run and community-driven. It began that way, and it retains that spirit."

For small companies without a full-time public relations professional,

community members serve as important ambassadors for opera. Says PORTopera Artistic Director Dona Vaughn: "Most of our board members live in our community, and any time there is an event — at the country club, for instance — they are there chatting up PORTopera. We are pretty brazen about putting ourselves out there."

Broader Collaborations

"These days, collaboration is assumed," says Felter. "It used to be such a big effort; now it is pro forma." In many communities, there are formal mechanisms for cultural organizations to work together. Opera North is part of the Upper Valley Arts Alliance, which includes all the arts organizations in a 50-mile radius; they meet regularly to talk about how they can collaborate to make the Upper Valley more attractive to young professionals.

Colorado's Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD) provides funding for cultural facilities throughout the seven-county

Denver metropolitan area. "Because of the SCFD, all of the performing arts institutions get together on a semi-regular basis to discuss common matters," says Central City Opera General Director Pat Pearce. "There is a real sense of collaboration, unlike any place I'd ever been before." The company has planned events with organizations ranging from the Mizel Museum of Judaica to the Denver Botanic Gardens, as well as the symphony and art museum. "If there is a large common issue we want to tackle, we pool our money. It provides an opportunity for exactly the kind of thinking we hope will happen at the National Performing Arts Convention. It allows you to pull away from your own little vantage point."

Central City Opera also has a relationship with **Opera Colorado** (which performs in Denver from November through May) that serves area opera lovers better than either company could do alone. Both companies offer K-12



Photo courtesy of Ash Lawn Opera Festival.

programming, so together they reach a greater number of schools. The two companies cross-promote their seasons with e-mail blasts offering discounted season tickets. The two companies also collaborate on season preview events: in April, \$20 bought opera lovers wine and appetizers from a local hot spot, followed by an introductory presentation on Central City Opera and Opera Colorado, a look at the theme of false accusation and mob rule, soprano Emily Pulley's whimsical limerick "Oy, Susannah!" and live sound bytes from *Susannah*.

Several summer festivals seek to connect their audiences with other local opera-related events. OTSL's Steve Kelley says, "We promote activities of interest in our newsletter — as the market leader, we want to be seen as *the* source of information for vocal performance." These activities range from master classes at Webster University to movie broadcasts by the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera or La Scala.

Cincinnati Opera keeps its patrons informed about opera performances throughout the region — at Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, Dayton Opera, Opera Columbus, Indianapolis Opera and Indiana University. Rather than view these companies as competition, Beggs sees the multiple offerings as an opportunity. "What we've found, in embracing all the regional offerings, is that it helps our audience develop a sophisticated palate. The more our audiences see other things — including the Met movies — the more they want to support us in producing opera at the highest possible level."

The explosion of opera offerings on the big screen has been seen as tremendously beneficial. Like other opera companies around the country, festivals often have a staff

or volunteer presence. "Every time they produce something, I'm there, and I bring a guest artist," says Schaeffer, who hosts local screenings from La Scala. "At *Tristan*, we brought Christine Weidinger, who will be our Regina and who has sung at La Scala for many years." Schaeffer always comes armed with opera trivia questions and gives away Long Leaf Opera t-shirts as prizes. Schaeffer uses his platform to promote all live opera in the area. "If Opera Company of North Carolina (OCNC) or one of the other companies has something going on, I'll be sure to announce that." (OCNC hosts the Met broadcasts in Raleigh, and similarly promotes Long Leaf Opera.)

"The Met broadcasts have been a real gift for us," says Kelley. "So many singers started their careers here at Opera Theatre, we nearly always have a nice story to tell about someone in the cast." The company produces handouts that include synopses and cast lists, and highlights OTSL alumni in the performance.

By working with other arts organizations — and other opera providers — opera companies greatly increase their contact with potential audience members. During the months when the community is not able to go to the opera, the opera can — and must — go to the community.

Re-imagining the Opera Company's Place in the Cultural Marketplace

The challenge of keeping in touch is not just a concern for festival companies; every opera producer must put considerable effort into establishing and maintaining a presence in the local landscape. These efforts can range from the extravagant to the extremely modest: "I'm very careful to attend as many meetings of the Chamber

of Commerce and other civic groups as I can," says Long Leaf Opera's Schaeffer. "It's easy to do and it doesn't cost any money."

Some have addressed the issue of visibility literally: Ash Lawn Opera's offices were once located in the basement of a building, but the company recently relocated to a downtown storefront, thanks to an in-kind donation by Coran Capshaw: "We're right off the downtown mall on the street that's open to traffic," says General Manager Judy Walker. "People walk in all the time off the street and want to know what we're doing."

Companies today have more options than ever for delivering opera and information. Electronic newsletters have become an important mechanism for keeping in touch with patrons throughout the year, whether sharing company news, promoting other local opera offerings or highlighting the achievements of artists who have appeared in past seasons. Some companies use their electronic newsletters to drive subscribers to increasingly sophisticated Web site content, including educational materials, podcasts and even performance videos.

Still, there is no substitute for person-to-person contact, whether at Rotary Club meetings, neighborhood concerts or gala events that pull out all the stops. Viewed from one angle, summer festivals have an advantage over year-round companies: for nine months out of the year, they can focus on new, creative ways to become part of the fabric of their communities — without the interruption of mainstage productions. Their ongoing experimentation can offer new ideas for all opera companies as they re-imagine their place in the cultural marketplace. 🍷

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San Francisco Opera's 2008 world premiere production of Glass's *Appomattox*, directed by Robert Woodruff and designed by Riccardo Hernandez (sets), Gabriel Berry (costumes) and Christopher Akerlind (lighting). Photo by Terrence McCarthy.

By Rebecca Winzenreid

Will anyone really pay \$20 to see an opera in a movie theater?

The question so many people were asking a little more than a year ago seems almost quaint now as operacasts to movie theaters have skyrocketed in number. San Francisco Opera introduced its digital opera programs to movie theaters nationwide in March; La Scala and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden began offering transmissions to U.S. locations this spring; and the Metropolitan Opera finished off a second season of Live in HD transmissions by expanding its global reach to New Zealand.

The Met continues to add to its list of electronic media projects with the expected launch this fall of an online service, via its own Web site, that will offer the company's audio and video content, by subscription or on-demand. (The Met's multi-pronged initiatives also include a weekly live stream from its Web site, a Sirius satellite radio channel and on-demand streaming via Rhapsody.) But the Live in HD transmissions that launched in December 2006 remain the crown jewels of the Met's new-media efforts. Simulcasts have been attended by a million people in 17 countries, with more locations expected next season. And the high-definition transmissions have acquired something of an event status among opera fans, including those who attend performances at both the Metropolitan Opera House and in movie theaters in order to compare and contrast the viewing experiences.

Julie Borchard-Young, director of worldwide HD distribution, notes that the digital transmissions were always viewed as a 21st-century extension of the Met's traditional radio broadcasts. "There was an insurance card there," she says. "Millions of people every Saturday have already devoted their time to listen to the Met on the radio. It was a natural step to take with that audience of radio faithful, to say, come to your local movie theater on occasion and not only enjoy the music but see what's going on, participate as an extended member of the Met Opera family."

Field research has taken her to theaters across the country, often incognito, to scout audience reactions. She's discovered a level of communal experience that seems to have surpassed even her own expectations. "There is this energy and connectedness in the movie theaters. I don't often feel that when I go to a typical movie, but this crowd wants to talk about their experience, they want to share insights they have picked up, during intermission. People are congregating by the popcorn stand talking about vocal achievements or costumes." Visual cues to the full Met experience add to the familial aspect; the screen is focused on the house prior to curtain, showing audience members meeting and greeting; cameras follow the conductor into the orchestra pit; and singers are interviewed just moments after they've completed a big scene. Simulcasts also include a direct appeal by hosts, the likes of Susan Graham, Natalie Dessay and Renée Fleming, to experience an opera live in the viewers' own area.

Metropolitan Opera General Manager Peter Gelb has heard lots of comments about how the Met's initiatives affect the field. He says the majority of opera companies see a win-win situation. "In general it's getting opera more in the news, which is critical for local as well as national companies — to have awareness at a high level.

And I think the more entrepreneurial opera companies have been taking advantage of these transmissions to create their own kind of promotional events." He cites as a good example of synergy The Santa Fe Opera's efforts to equip that city's historic Lentic Performing Arts Center with the high-definition projection system needed for Live in HD transmissions. "It's a great opportunity for opera lovers to get their fix from the Met during the off-season of The Santa Fe Opera."

The lack of digitally-equipped movie theaters in urban areas is an odd kink in digital distribution plans, as the San Francisco Opera (SFO) found out in the run-up to its launch last winter. Because digital projection systems tend to be found in newer suburban theater chains, the list of more than 120 theaters offering the performances includes just one location in San Francisco proper, albeit a glorious one — the 1920s-era Castro Theater.

San Francisco Opera cinemacasts are digitally captured from live performances, using up to 10 cameras for varying angles and closeups, which are edited in-house. Digital feeds of the finished programs are then transmitted to movie theaters that have the discretion to schedule screenings. Most theaters in the Bigger Picture distribution network, with which SFO has partnered, offered multiple showings over a three- or four-day run for the first season's offerings: *La rondine*, *Samson and Delilah*, *Don Giovanni* and *Madama Butterfly*.

While the company is cognizant of the event status of a live simulcast, General Director David Gockley says the option of longer runs acquaints theater owners with the concept of presenting an ongoing SFO series. Additionally, he says, "Theater owners in different locations perhaps know that they can attract more of an opera audience at certain times or on certain days."

Audience comments following the first cinemacast, of *La rondine*, on March 8 echoed that sentiment, according to Director of Electronic Media Jessica Koplos. "We've gotten numerous e-mails from people who said, 'I went not really knowing what to expect and I went back for every showing.' They literally went four days in a row." (Attendance figures were still being gathered as of early April.)

Koplos took charge of the newly-minted electronic media position last October. With a background in film and television production, she carries the title of producer for the cinemacasts. However, Koplos describes her role as being more about communications, involving production matters, rehearsal schedules, meetings with marketing, communications and public relations personnel, and discussions with distributions partners. "I just have to be aware of what's happening when, and make sure everyone is comfortable with what's happening on the fifth floor to capture it."

The fifth floor of San Francisco's War Memorial Opera House houses the company's new Koret-Taube Media Suite. The high-definition digital video and audio production facility (named for lead funders, the Koret Foundation, with support from Tad and Diane Taube) is the first permanent installation of its kind in a U.S. opera house. It's equipped with controls for robotic cameras situated in the theater, plus post-production equipment to edit, color correct and adjust audio. The \$3.5 million media suite was installed in the spring of 2007

and was first used to support the Opera Vision system that Gockley had imported from his tenure at the Houston Grand Opera. Opera Vision projects video onto screens in the balcony to give standing room patrons closeups of the action.

Once the media suite was up and running and the company saw the quality of video it was capturing, the next logical step, according to Koplos, was to ask, "Where else can we go with this?" She views the cinemacasts as a foundation on which the company can build its new-media framework, producing content for DVDs, video on-demand and other technologies on the horizon, whether they involve delivery to movie theaters, home entertainment systems or even cell phones. "Any performing arts organization is, day after day, offering content. It just happens to be content that's in the moment. Being able to capture that content, retool it and re-expose it is interesting ground," she says.

SFO has already begun building on its in-house capabilities to produce supplementary content for the cinemacasts. Intermissions have included interviews with the director, singers and, in the case of *Samson and Delilah*, time-lapse video showing the complex dance of manpower and technical adjustments involved in a scenery change. Koplos envisions expanding into such Web-based offerings as build-your-own-edits of operas, allowing dedicated fans to customize performances through their choice of multiple camera angles and film clips. "I don't know how far off that is, but it isn't five years. It's pretty close to being an area where we can be highly creative with our content," she says.

In the meantime, the company's investment in equipment for in-house production allowed revenue from the cinemacasts to be generated from the start. Under a revenue-sharing agreement with the American Guild of Musical Artists, the American Federation of Musicians and the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees — a first for SFO — the company takes a 20 percent distribution and administrative fee, with the remaining split among the unions, conductor and the designers.

"What is going to be the extent of this, how much of this material the market will bear, is yet to be determined," says Gockley. "We wanted to make sure we were getting a footprint, getting our brand out there." In 2006, he took over a company that had mounted artistically successful productions but hadn't been on the airwaves on a regular basis in 25 years or television in nearly a decade. "The world didn't hear much from the San Francisco Opera," Gockley recalls. "We want to be open and available, and that means bringing opera to where people are, whether it be in a park, a public plaza, a ballpark, a community center or a school."

Gockley jumped in with free outdoor simulcasts of *Madama Butterfly* and *Rigoletto* in 2006, and expanded a free simulcast of *Don Giovanni* the next year to include performing arts venues in San Francisco, Berkeley, Santa Rosa and the University of California-Davis. A free Opera at the Ballpark night last September drew 15,000 for a simulcast of *Samson and Delilah* shown on the 103-foot-wide scoreboard of AT&T Park, home of the San Francisco Giants. This June, San Franciscans will have another chance to grab a hot dog and a mad scene with the simulcast of *Lucia di Lammermoor* starring Natalie Dessay. The company also returned to the radio airwaves this past season with new broadcast agreements locally and nationally, through the WFMT network.

Washington National Opera (WNO) has taken a similar approach with free annual HD simulcasts, dating back to a 2005 production of *Porgy and Bess* that was beamed to an estimated 15,000 people on the National Mall in Washington,

| | |
|---|------|
| Paris Opera uses electric light in <i>Le Prophete</i> | 1849 |
| <i>Don Pasquale</i> delivered via telephone lines in Bellinzona, Switzerland | 1878 |
| Stereo sound demonstrated for the first time in history from the Paris Opera | 1881 |
| Opening of Massenet's <i>Le Mage</i> in Paris transmitted to London via telephone | 1891 |
| Sound movies of opera arias demonstrated | 1900 |
| Radio broadcast of operas from the Met | 1910 |
| >91,000 subscribers to Telefon Hírmondó, an electronic opera delivery service in Budapest | 1930 |
| Opera on TV in London | 1936 |
| <i>Cinderella</i> opera commissioned for TV by the BBC | 1938 |
| <i>Don Giovanni</i> broadcast on TV from the Cambridge Theatre stage | 1947 |
| Met <i>Carmen</i> cinemacast live to 31 theaters in 27 cities | 1952 |
| NBC broadcasts <i>Carmen</i> in color | 1953 |
| Met Opera radio network goes stereo | 1973 |
| Digital recording of <i>The Mother of Us All</i> at The Santa Fe Opera | 1976 |
| NYCO <i>Barber</i> is first live telecast with subtitles (LFLC) | 1976 |
| <i>Lucia</i> plazacast in Basel | 1986 |
| Seattle Opera <i>War & Peace</i> – first opera in HDTV | 1990 |
| NYCO <i>Butterfly</i> HDTV image-magnification in the opera house | 1991 |
| Met channel on Sirius Satellite Radio | 2006 |
| Met <i>Butterfly</i> (HD plazacast) | 2006 |
| Met <i>Flute</i> (HD global cinemacast) | 2006 |
| Met live multi-language subtitling for cinemacasts | 2007 |

1879 First Edison light bulb demonstration

1876 Bell Telephone patent

1887 First radio transmission

1927 First sound movie

1920 First licensed radio station

1934 First demonstration of an all-electronic television system

1954 First coast-to-coast color television broadcast

1981 First stereo television

early 1970's First standard digital audio recordings created by Thomas Stockham

1981 First HDTV demonstration in the United States

Opera on the Small Screen

For more than a century, opera was often on the cutting edge of new technology — electric light, sound movies, color TV. The recent explosion of electronic media opportunities has left many opera companies bewildered. Where to begin?

A tour of OPERA America member sites turns up all kinds of video content — trailers for season productions, discussions with artists and interviews with audience members. But the opera company's home page is not the only source of information for the opera-curious — more than two-thirds of OPERA America member companies have some kind of presence on YouTube. In some cases, companies post videos created for their own Web sites, while in others they create materials specifically for the online video-sharing site. One company sponsored a contest, inviting students to create original videos to accompany a rock-and-roll rendition of Puccini's "Nessun Dorma." Users who search for a specific opera company will find anything from behind-the-scenes documentaries to clips of mainstage performances to education tours. And not all material is posted by the company in question — one aspiring singer taped his chorus audition, complete with an opening exchange: "Is that a bomb?" "No, it's recording device ... that is, unless the auditions don't go well." One young video diarist, inspired by a simulcast of *La bohème*, detailed her obsession with tenor Vittorio Grigolo.

With so much content available, does it even matter if opera companies add theirs to the mix? It matters if they don't, says one of the younger participants in OPERA America's recent meeting of the Electronic Media Forum (EMF): "I may not want to watch opera on my computer, but I want to learn about it before I go see it. If you put something up there, I am going to find it. If I can't find you, it's your loss." According to a recent study by the Pew Internet and American Life Project, 57 percent of Internet users have watched videos online, and most of them share what they find with others.

Online video is just one of the platforms for electronic media experimentation. At the EMF meeting, members shared their experiences with podcasts, local radio broadcasts, live recordings of new works and more. While big-screen activities represent an exciting step forward in bringing opera to the masses, only a handful of companies can justify such a large-scale undertaking. However, with the growing number of electronic media delivery options, there are opportunities for companies of every size.

— Kelley Rourke

D.C. WNO expanded its range last September with a simulcast of *La bohème* that was seen outdoors at the Washington Monument and offered free of charge at two movie theaters in the D.C. area, plus 38 colleges and universities across the country. WNO also partnered with the Department of Housing and Urban Development to simulcast the opera to seven HUD sites around the country. *La bohème's* story of young, struggling artists in the city seemed a natural choice

Timeline courtesy of Mark Schubin.

for WNO to begin introducing college-level and young urban audiences to opera, according to former Director of Public Relations Bruce Loving. The production, staged by Mariusz Trelinski, was updated to 1980 and included references to such pop culture icons as Elvis and Playboy Bunnies. “It was not your father’s Puccini,” says Loving. He recalls a question-and-answer session after the simulcast in which one of the older audience members remarked that it was the most thing she’d ever seen. “But the last comment was from a 14-year-old who said she’d never been to an opera before, and she loved it.” Audience members interested in learning more about the company’s productions can download podcasts from the WNO Web site or iTunes.

Big-screen initiatives aren’t limited to large companies; in May 2007, Chicago Opera Theater’s production of *Don Giovanni* played to an audience of 1,500 in Millennium Park, despite temperatures in the 40s — the first outdoor, large screen, live simulcast presentation of an opera in the city’s history.

Stories of packed houses for simulcasts and movie theater transmissions have been wonderful for raising opera’s profile, but they also leave many companies wondering what the digital future might hold. Seattle Opera Executive Director Kelly Tweeddale has been hearing the questions from board members since the Met’s HD simulcasts began: How do we interpret this? What does it mean for us? Being located in the technology hub of the Pacific Northwest added subtle pressure for the Seattle Opera to be in the thick of new-media developments.

But the company decided to take a different tack. “Because we are in such a highly wired, tech-savvy area, we wanted to be strategic about it,” says Tweeddale. “We also have the advantage of having a lot of resources in our own backyard. We wanted to take advantage of some of that knowledge to really take a look at what the trends are, how people are using technology, with the goal of being able to issue some recommendations on what projects we want to invest in.”

Beginning at the first of the year, a technology task force consisting of staff, board members and individuals from the community who’ve worked with companies such as Google, RealNetworks and SecondLife started exploring a wide range of electronic media topics. Their six-month agenda was designed to follow an arc from open-ended discussion of online music distribution to specific economic analysis of potential Seattle Opera projects, with stops along the way to consider analogies between sports and the arts in community building, intellectual property issues, opera demographics and psychographics. Community members with expertise in the various subject areas were brought in to offer perspective.

Some of the most surprising information was about how different audiences engage with technology. A recent Seattle Opera audience survey found that for the first time last year, the Internet outranked traditional media outlets as a source of information among core users. “That’s the 45-plus group,” says Tweeddale. “We tend to think that older people are technophobic and don’t use the Internet. We’ve found that they actually spend more time online, doing discretionary planning, looking for travel ideas, where to go for dinner, that sort of thing. Younger people use it more as a two-way street, to build a community and a dialogue. So there are very different approaches. How do we serve both masters when their expectations are so different?”

While the task force tackled such big-picture issues, the company also partnered with KING FM on the January launch of a channel on the Seattle radio station’s Web site. The dedicated Seattle Opera channel offers on-demand streams that pair a full opera performance with segments on various backstage topics.





It's part of a larger initiative to gather content for KING's possible HD radio use. That high-definition digital radio format allows stations to bundle signals and broadcast more than one channel of content on the same frequency. For example, a public radio station could offer news and music on one channel, with a secondary channel devoted to symphonic music or opera.

Tweeddale notes that Seattle Opera is exploring how to organize the content into user-friendly packets. The Web channel currently offers five-hour streams that must be listened to all in one sitting, without the option to pause and restart along the way. "Maybe someone driving in their car can't spend the time they need to listen, as someone online can. Maybe they want an MP3 they can download to their iPod or want to be able to skip around. Some of those things are limited right now. We haven't quite got the sweet spot yet," says Tweeddale.

Experimentation also revolves around how to best pull together the creative team needed to produce engaging, informative content. Like most opera companies, Seattle has no technology guru on staff. KING FM opera channel content has been created by the education and marketing departments, Tweeddale says. "The education department is great at putting together a 45-minute presentation, but how does that translate to a 10-minute radio segment? It's a learning curve." And one that may very well lead to the addition of dedicated electronic media staff. "I would say that in the future, most opera companies will probably be looking at bringing on someone who has specific knowledge," says Tweeddale.

Seattle's technology task force hopes to capture its findings in a study that can be widely disseminated to organizations that are considering their own digital futures. Tweeddale advises: "Approach it the same way you would any other initiative. Don't be so shy that you don't do anything. Try something at a very low level. Bring in a college intern or someone who can offer services at low cost. Give them a matrix: Here are some things we would like to do. What will have the most impact? Then do that really well. Opera companies tend to be slow, but you won't be left behind. Look at things like online ticketing. We started out slow, but now everyone's got it."

All the talk may be of technology projects, but even at the Met, Gelb says, "It doesn't have to be all about media." He points to the company's collaborations with museums and schools, and the forging of civic connections through events such as a free open house/dress rehearsal. "New media is one quiver in our bow of arrows to reconnect the Met to the public. The point is that every opera company, every theater company, should be thinking about ways to reach out to a larger audience. The key to it, as least as far as I'm concerned, is making these connections without diminishing or undermining the artistic integrity of what we're presenting." 🍷

This is the first of two articles looking back on recent innovations in delivering opera to audiences. In this issue, Rebecca Winzenreid speaks to company representatives about what they have initiated, as well as their plans for the future. Next, we'll turn our attention to the audience: OPERA America worked with member companies to survey audiences nationwide and learn more about their reasons for attending the Met HD Broadcasts, as well as their experience of live opera. Shugoll Research will provide a complete analysis of the data, which will be reported in the September issue of *Opera America*.

Photo credits: All black and white photos this page are courtesy of The Metropolitan Opera Archives. The color photos this page are of San Francisco Opera's AT&T Ballpark simulcast of *Samson and Delilah*; photos by Terrance McCarthy and courtesy of San Francisco Opera.

G. Schirmer Opera Highlights 2008

Mark Adamo
Little Women

Delaware Opera – May

Daniel Catán
Florencia en el Amazonas

Cincinnati Opera – July

La Hija de Rappaccini

NEW CHAMBER VERSION

Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music – May, June

Richard Danielpour
Margaret Garner

Michigan Opera Theatre –

Detroit: October

Chicago: November

Anthony Davis
Amistad

REVISED AND REDUCED

Spoletto Festival USA – May, June

Grigory Frid
The Diary of Anne Frank

Long Beach Opera – April, May, June

Philip Glass
Satyagraha

Metropolitan Opera – April, May

Hans Werner Henze
Phaedra

Ensemble Modern –

Vienna, Austria: May, June

Frankfurt, Germany: June

Copenhagen, Denmark: November

Cologne and Berlin, Germany: January 2009

NEW PRODUCTION

Maggio Musicale Fiorentino – June

NEW PRODUCTION

Theater Heidelberg – November

Lee Hoiby
The Tempest

REVISED AND SHORTENED

Purchase Opera – April

Kirke Mechem
John Brown

WORLD PREMIERE

Lyric Opera of Kansas City – May

Sergei Prokofiev
War and Peace

Canadian Opera Company – October, November

Robert X. Rodríguez
La Curandera

Opera Colorado – May

Kaija Saariaho
Adriana Mater

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

Santa Fe Opera – July, August

Tan Dun
The First Emperor

Metropolitan Opera – May

Marco Polo

NEW PRODUCTION

Netherlands Opera – November

John Tavener
Mary of Egypt

NEW CHAMBER VERSION

Carinthian Summer Festival – July

New in 2009

Daniel Catán
Il Postino

WORLD PREMIERE

Los Angeles Opera – September 2009

André Previn
Brief Encounter

WORLD PREMIERE

Houston Grand Opera – May 2009



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OPERA AMERICA'S ACTION-ORIENTED THINK TANKS

BY KELLEY ROURKE

OPERA America's conference is the largest and most visible annual gathering of the opera community — but it is not the only time opera stakeholders come together. Throughout the year, OPERA America convenes meetings of industry leaders around specific topics. Although the discussions vary in size, scope and regularity, they share a common commitment — a commitment to action. Participants not only discuss challenges, they identify steps they can take, from the incremental to the profound, to advance the field.

OPERA America's New York location — along with its new teleconferencing capacity (see page 19) — makes it easier than ever to bring people together around important topics. The 2007-2008 season brought a number of opportunities for OPERA America members to discuss, plan and act.

NATIONAL TRUSTEE FORUM

The National Trustee Forum convenes twice each year and consists of 15-25 trustees who meet to discuss company developments from the governance perspective. These meetings not only allow trustees to learn from each other, OPERA America and invited guests, they also help OPERA America understand issues facing trustees and consider how the organization might address these issues through programs such as Field Services, board consultations (in person or via teleconference) and regional meetings. In January 2008, the group met in conjunction with the OPERA America winter board meeting and the inaugural National Opera Trustee Recognition Awards.

As part of the meeting, John Borstel, humanities director for Liz Lerman Dance Exchange and co-author and illustrator of *Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process: A Guide for Getting Feedback on Anything You Make from Dance to Dessert*, introduced the Critical Response Process, which seeks to provide a format for stakeholders to share ideas and reactions in a way that gives everyone ownership. Borstel led the group in exercises designed to show how the technique might be applied to the governance and management of an opera company.

During the meeting, several topics arose that would benefit from further exploration and broader dissemination via OPERA America publications such as *Opera America* magazine or *TrusteeLink*. OPERA America will commission articles on three topics, detailed below. In addition to drawing from points raised and examples cited at the meeting, writers will interview other experts, learn more about field-wide trends and best practices regarding the topic in question and/or schedule follow-up interviews with members of the National Trustee Forum who were vocal around the topics.

Artistic Policy / Repertoire Policy / Quality Assessments

Who has formal policies? What is the appropriate and effective role of the board in articulating and assessing vision and quality? How is the board's role balanced with the expertise of the staff?

Governance as an Art / Casting the Board
A producer keeps an eye out for promising new talent, nurtures inexperienced artists over time and ultimately puts together

the best possible team of creative and performing artists for each production. How does a governance committee think about identifying, casting and coaching trustees to put together the best board for a company?

Critical Response Process

How might we think about the work of a board as a work of art? How might the Critical Response Process apply to the work of trustees as they assess their own work and the work of their opera company?

The next meeting of the National Trustee Forum will take place at Opera Conference 2008. For more information about the National Trustee Forum, contact Bill Higgins at BHiggins@operaamerica.org.

SINGER TRAINING FORUM

The Singer Training Forum is a group of stakeholders in singer training — voice teachers, coaches, artist managers and leaders from programs housed in both educational institutions and opera companies. The objective of the Forum is to strengthen mutual understanding, improve practices across the field and encourage collaboration among the network of professionals who share a devotion to the art form.

In 2007, two distinct events grew out of the Singer Training Forum:

- A summer 2007 workshop for voice teachers was presented jointly by Des Moines Metro Opera and the National Association of Teachers of Singing. The workshop was designed to foster collaboration and cooperation among

academic and opera company training programs. It included seminars and opportunities to see what singers go through in a professional young artist program. Members of the Forum were enthusiastic about this effort, and many expressed an interest in designing similar workshops in their areas.

- Forum members presented two panel discussions at the annual conference of the National Association of Schools of Music in November 2007. The topics, identified at the spring 2007 meeting of the Forum, were *Preparing Singers for a Career Beyond the Studio* and *Assessing Ability and Hiring Voice Teachers*. This was the first time opera professionals were able to meet with deans of music schools (many of whom are not familiar with the specific needs of singers vs. instrumentalists) to ask questions and share concerns.

The Singer Training Forum meets twice each year. At the fall 2007 and spring 2008 meetings, the group identified several areas of concern and specific actions to be taken over the course of the next year.

Recommendations: Many young artist program applications require recommendations. This puts a tremendous burden on those who work with young singers. It was noted that most colleges use a common online application now. The recommendation form is neutral in terms of particular recommendations but specific in description of the person. There was enthusiastic support for the development of a standard online form for young artist program applications and recommendations. OPERA America will learn more about online application and recommendation forms used by colleges and consider ways in which similar mechanisms might be adopted by opera training programs.

Dramatic Voices: It is difficult to provide appropriate performing opportunities for these singers while they are students. Although many of today's universities and conservatories make every effort to choose repertoire based on the singers in the program, young singers often do

not have the stamina for an entire role in heavier repertoire. Once they leave school, these singers have difficulty finding placement in young artist programs, most of which are looking for singers who can perform chorus and a few small roles in the mainstage season, and/or participate in an outreach tour of a children's work. Opera professionals need to work together to create a safe place — or series of places — for these singers to develop. Through regular communication, some are already finding ways to “share” singers, allowing them to participate in appropriate opportunities (concerts, covers) as available. It was suggested that OPERA America work with members of the Forum and others to create resources to assist those who work with young singers with large voices. Ideas included:

- Create a list of prominent singers with dramatic voices, what they sang and when they sang it.
- Put together a panel of singers with dramatic voices and have a master class with singers at various stages of development.
- Make a list of well-known dramatic singers who also teach.
- Have an online chat with a large voiced-singer — perhaps a “personality of the month” for *ArtistLink*, OPERA America's e-newsletter for singers and other opera artists.

NATS Survey: Industry professionals continue to seek a closer association with the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS). To this end, the Forum is developing a survey of NATS members to learn more about them, encourage them to self-assess, learn more about the resources they currently use and identify resources that OPERA America may be able to provide.

The next meeting of the Singer Training Forum will take place in October 2008. For more information, contact Anne Choe at AChoe@operaamerica.org.


ELECTRONIC MEDIA FORUM

The Electronic Media Forum is for members interested in increasing their use of new media to enrich the opera experience for current and prospective audiences. It offers an opportunity to learn from national experts and each other about ever-changing technologies and their application to the world of opera.

OPERA America has identified and engaged consultants Michael Bronson and Joseph H. Kluger — each of whom has over 25 years of experience as an internationally recognized expert in the classical music industry on recordings, broadcasts, the Internet and other electronic media activities — to offer advice and assistance to OPERA America Professional Company Members in the creation and delivery of services to support opera companies in their electronic media activities.

The first meeting of the Electronic Media Forum, which was held on February 25 and 26, 2008, in New York City, drew nearly 50 people. Topics included: opera companies and electronic media activities; a technological overview; strategic planning for electronic media, production and business issues; rights issues; and how-to hypothetical case studies. The meeting provided an opportunity for participants to learn more about some of the ways that companies are using electronic media, and to begin to familiarize themselves with the vocabulary associated with these activities. OPERA America Professional Company Members are encouraged to send electronic media questions directly to Bronson and Kluger at ElectronicMedia@operaamerica.org.

At the suggestion of members of the Forum, OPERA America is working to create an Electronic Media Handbook. A pre-conference Electronic Media Forum seminar will be held on Wednesday, June 11, 2008, in Denver, in association with the National Performing Arts Convention.

For more information on the Electronic Media Forum, contact Megan Young at MYoung@operaamerica.org. 

ARTS ADVOCACY: FOUR EASY STEPS

BY HALEY GORDON

Hundreds of arts advocates traveled to Washington, D.C. at the end of March to lobby Congress to support federal policies that would benefit the arts. As part of Arts Advocacy Day 2008, OPERA America members expressed their concerns in House and Senate offices about the President's FY09 budget request, which proposes significant cuts to arts and cultural programs. They also described the multitude of issues that affect the opera field — from federal funding and visa processing for foreign guests artists to international cultural exchange and charitable giving incentives.

Advocates also responded to recent press accounts and public comments that have questioned the value of the arts in comparison to other parts of the nonprofit sector in America. While there is no direct legislative proposal under consideration in Congress, it is clear there is a lack of understanding both among the general public and on Capitol Hill of the value of our field.

Arts Advocacy Day is a wonderful opportunity for the performing arts sector to gather and demonstrate the importance of arts in their lives. However, truly effective advocacy requires year-round efforts from stakeholders across the country — artists, administrators, trustees and volunteers. ☺

WHAT YOU CAN DO: FOUR EASY STEPS

1. Learn about the federal policies that affect the performing arts. Visit the American Arts Alliance (www.americanartsalliance.org) for advocacy tools and resources.

2. Connect with your local and state arts advocacy organizations. Your voice is stronger in coalition.

3. Learn about the Presidential candidates' arts policy platforms. Visit the ArtsVote2008 Web site at www.artsactionfund.org/artsvote.

4. Communicate the public benefit of the arts:

- Nonprofit arts organizations improve the quality of life by contributing to lifelong learning, preserving our cultural heritage and fostering the creative expression that tells the story of our personal and collective histories.

- In communities large and small across the country, nonprofit arts organizations engage the public in a diverse array of cultural and artistic experiences. Arts organizations offer communities a significant number of free events and provide public access to the arts through online resources and distance learning opportunities.

- Ticket sales and admission fees alone do not come close to subsidizing the artistic presentations, educational offerings and community-based programming of nonprofit arts organizations. A significant percentage of direct financial support for nonprofit arts organizations is derived from charitable giving. Without this support, public access to the arts would be greatly diminished.

- Diverse types of charitable giving comprise support for arts organizations large and small: individual contributions; planned giving; family, business and corporate foundation grants; in-kind contributions; and gifts of art.

- Nationally, the nonprofit arts and culture industry generates \$166.2 billion in economic activity every year — \$63.1 billion in spending by organizations and an additional \$103.1 billion in related spending by their audiences.

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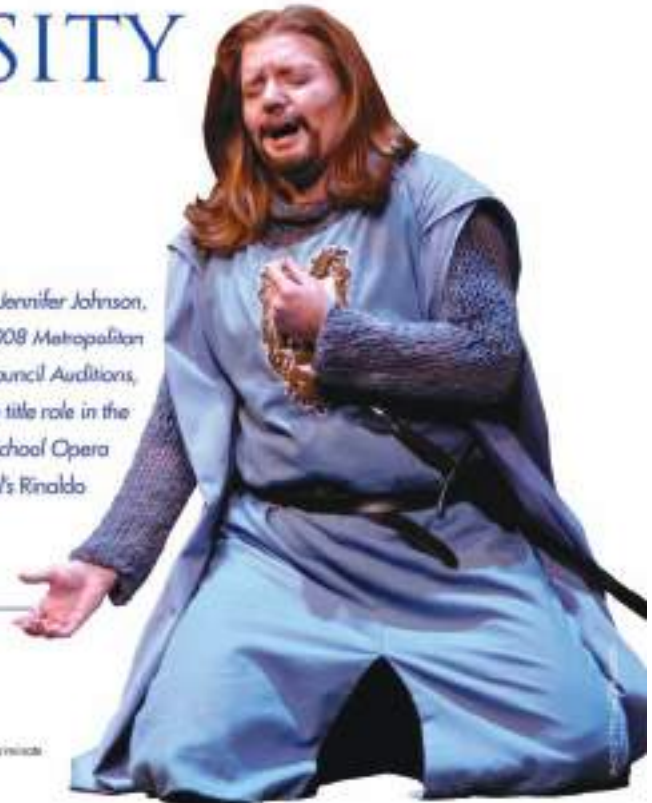
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Oxford University Press
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In this volume, available for the first time in softcover, Elliott Antokoletz explores the means by which two early 20th-century operas — Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1902) and Bartók's *Duke Bluebeard's Castle* (1911) — transformed the harmonic structures of the traditional major/minor scale system into a new musical language and how this language reflects the psychodramatic symbolism of the Franco-Belgian poet, Maurice Maeterlinck, and his Hungarian disciple, Béla Balázs. These two operas represent the first significant attempts to establish more profound correspondences between the symbolist dramatic conception and the new musical language. The book also explores the new musico-dramatic relations within their larger historical, social-psychological, philosophical and aesthetic contexts. Antokoletz is author of several books and co-editor of the *International Journal of Musicology*. He received his Ph.D. in musicology from The City University of New York in 1975.

Workplace Chemistry: Promoting Diversity through Organizational Change
Meg A. Bond
University Press of New England
ISBN 10: 1584656522, hardcover

In 1995, Meg A. Bond began working as a researcher, consultant and trainer at a New England manufacturing firm. For seven years Bond enjoyed open access to the organization's change process and to all the individuals

involved in the company's efforts to create an equitable, efficient and diverse workplace. Using ecological theory, Bond delineates the stages of this process as it unfolded, drawing out lessons for workers, managers and consultants from the dynamics that emerged as the organization underwent change. Bond addresses such issues as privilege, multiple realities, intent versus impact, interdependence and reactions — both positive and negative — to diversity interventions. Emphasizing messy dilemmas as well as successful strategies, she offers an energetic and honest appraisal of a long-term diversity effort, with lessons that apply to other institutions and organizations. In a society of growing heterogeneity, supporting a diverse workplace is a central challenge that is increasingly affecting most workplaces. Bond is a professor of psychology and the director of the Center for Women and Work at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell. She is also a resident scholar at the Brandeis University Women's Studies Research Center.

People to People Fundraising: Social Networking and Web 2.0 for Charities
Ted Hart, James M. Greenfield and Sheeraz D. Haji
John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
ISBN 13: 9780470120774, hardcover

This book is a new tool to help nonprofits drive more philanthropy by tapping into opportunities through social networking on the Web. Practical, hands-on techniques and case studies are detailed by a group of internationally-respected names in the field — Ted Hart, James M. Greenfield and Sheeraz D. Haji — who highlight examples of ePhilanthropy. How-to instructions will help you to leverage the power of the Internet and Web 2.0 for your organization. Hart,

ACFRE, is an Internet and fundraising strategist with tedhart.com; he is founder of the international ePhilanthropy Foundation. He has over 20 years of experience in communications, fundraising and nonprofit management. Greenfield, ACFRE, FAHP, has been a fundraising professional for 40 years, and has written and edited eight books on fundraising management. Haji is the president of Convio, Inc., a leading provider of constituent relationship management software for nonprofit organizations and associations.

Beyond Price: Value in Culture, Economics, and the Arts
Michael Hutter and David Throsby (Ed.s)
Cambridge University Press
ISBN 13: 9780521862233, hardcover

Recent discussion surrounding valuation of the arts and culture, particularly in the policy arena, has been dominated by a concern to identify an economic and financial basis for valuation of art works, arts and activities. This book moves beyond the limitations implicit in a narrow economic approach, bringing different disciplinary viewpoints together, opening up a dialogue between scholars about the processes of valuation that they use, and exploring differences and identifying common ground between the various viewpoints. The book's common theme — the tension between economic and cultural modes of evaluation — unites the chapters, making it a coherent and unified volume that provides a new and unique perspective on how we value art. Michael Hutter is a professor of economics and chair for economic theory at Witten/Herdecke University in Germany. David Throsby is a professor of economics at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia.

Never Sang for Hitler: The Life and Times of Lotte Lehmann, 1888-1976
Michael H. Kater
Cambridge University Press
ISBN 13: 9780521873925, hardcover

Rather than a traditional biography, this book is both a descriptive narrative of Lehmann's life and a critical analysis of the interconnections of the artist and society. Michael H. Kater describes the varying phases of Lehmann's life, as well as the sociocultural settings in which she finds herself — whether in the Wilhemine Empire, First Austrian Republic, Nazi Germany or the United States. Kater's use of Lehmann's personal and other papers reshapes much of what is known about her life and career. Kater is Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus of History (York University) and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada (FRSC). He has published 200 articles and nine monographs.

Opera and the Morbidity of Music
Joseph Kerman
New York Review Books
ISBN 10: 1590172655, hardcover

Is classical music dying, or does the recent upsurge of interest in opera — writing new ones, performing long-forgotten old ones — prove that the death of classical music is highly exaggerated? Musicologist Joseph Kerman argues that rumors of the impending death of classical music are not a new development but a story that has long been with us. While alert to historical changes in listening, he suggests that one place to look for renewal of the classical music tradition today is opera, where we have seen not only a flood of new works and rediscovered works from the past, but also an expanded interest in innovative stagings by companies large and small across America. In this collection of essays and reviews from the past 30 years, most of them first published in *The New York Review of Books*, he examines the ongoing vitality of the classical music tradition, from the days of John Taverner and William Byrd to recent operas by composers such as Philip Glass and John Adams. Kerman is professor emeritus of music at University

of California, Berkeley. He is the author of *Write All These Down*, *Opera as Drama* and *Contemplating Music*, among others.

An Introduction to the Dramatic Works of Giacomo Meyerbeer: Operas, Ballets, Cantatas, Plays
Robert Ignatius Letellier
Ashgate Publishing
ISBN 10: 0754660397, hardcover

The fame of Meyerbeer's operas rests on his treatment of form, his development of scenic complexes and plasticity of structure and melody, his dynamic use of the orchestra and close attention to all aspects of presentation and production, all of which set new standards in Romantic opera and dramaturgy. This book rediscovers and reassesses Meyerbeer's operas by placing them in the context of his entire dramatic oeuvre, including ballets, oratorios, cantatas and incidental music; although the four grand operas live on in the public consciousness, the other works remain largely unknown. The works have been divided into their generic types and placed within the context of the composer's life and artistic development. Each section unfolds a brief history of the work's origins, an account of the plot, a critical survey of some of its musical characteristics and a record of its performance history. Robert Letellier examines each work from a dramaturgical viewpoint, including the philosophical and historical elements in the scenarios and how these concepts were translated musically onto the stage. Letellier is a member of Trinity College, University of Cambridge, and the Maryvale Institute, Birmingham.

The Opera Companion
George Martin
Amadeus Press
ISBN 13: 9781574671681, softcover

Back in print in a new edition, *The Opera Companion* is a comprehensive reference book for opera lovers, both devoted and casual. The book is divided into three sections: a guide for the casual operagoer, a glossary of terms and detailed synopses of 47 of the most frequently performed operas. Additionally, techniques of opera

are detailed in chapters on the overture, melody, aria and recitative, with a description of the human voice as both an artistic and mechanical instrument, and the book also includes a short history of opera, told chiefly in terms of the audience and its behavior. George Martin practiced law for five years and has written histories, biographies and guides to opera, New York and U.S. legal history.

Twentieth-Century British Authors and the Rise of Opera in Britain
Irene Morra
Ashgate Publishing
ISBN 13: 9780754660637, hardcover

This book examines the contributions of major British authors such as W.H. Auden and E.M. Forster, as critics and librettists, to the rise of British opera in the 20th century. The perceived literary values of British authors, as much as the musical innovations of British composers, informed the development of British opera as a simultaneously literary and musical project. Operatic adaptations are often compared superficially to their original sources; this is a particular problem for British opera, which has become increasingly defined artistically by the literary sophistication of its narrative sources. The resulting collaborations between literary figures and composers have crucial implications for the development of both opera and literature. Irene Morra is lecturer in the departments of English and critical and cultural theory at Cardiff University.

ROI for Nonprofits: The New Key to Sustainability
Tom Rasler
John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
ISBN 13: 9780470168875, hardcover

Tom Rasler explores methods and processes to help nonprofits raise money in an environment that increasingly demands accountability, transparency and results. Today's economic environment requires that nonprofits, and those who raise money for them, make their case for support as explicitly as possible. Warm and fuzzy appeals that tug at heartstrings have met with limited

success — assuming that funding targets intuitively know the value of the good work being done is unrealistic. This book offers an abundance of pragmatic tips, tools, case studies and techniques to make the process easy to understand and implement. Ralser, founder of Capital Strategists Group, LLC, and a chartered financial analyst has worked with hundreds of nonprofit organizations across the U.S. over 18 years.

**Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice:
The Creation of a Genre**

Ellen Rosand

University of California Press

ISBN 13: 9780520254268, softcover

Ellen Rosand shows how the courtly entertainment of opera took root in the social and economic environment of 17th-century Venice and developed stylistic and aesthetic characteristics we recognize today. Rosand examines the literary and musical documentation left by the Venetian makers of opera, determines how the pioneers viewed their art and explains the mechanics of the proliferation of opera, within only four decades, to stages across Europe. She isolates two features of particular importance: the emergence of conventions that facilitated replication and the self-consciousness of the creators who have left us a running commentary on the origins of a genre in their scores, librettos, letters and other documents. This study, originally published in 1990 and now available in softcover, is aimed at all students of opera, amateur and professional, as well as students of European cultural history. Rosand is George A. Saden Professor of Music at Yale and author of *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy*.

Enchantment: The Seductress in Opera

Jean Starobinski, translated by C. Jon Delogu

Columbia University Press

ISBN 13: 9780231140904, hardcover

Jean Starobinski considers the allure of several seducers and seductresses from 19th-century operas — Monteverdi's

Poppea, Handel's *Alcina* and Massenet's *Manon*, among others — and how their stories both affect and are a part of Western culture. The focus moves from musical analysis and textual exegesis to an investigation of the political, social and aesthetic scene of Europe at that time. With critical breadth and depth, as well as his eclectic taste and keen observation, he shows how opera's use of narrative genres, especially the fairy tale, in turn influenced many important short stories, novels and other works — how major writers such as Rousseau, Stendhal, Hoffmann, Balzac and Nietzsche were influenced by operatic themes. Starobinski is a critic of French and comparative literature, and of music, and has taught at Johns Hopkins University, the University of Basel, and the University of Geneva. C. Jon Delogu is a professor of English at the Université Jean Moulin-Lyon III in France.

**Music Education: Cultural Values,
Social Change and Innovation**

Robert Walker

Charles C. Thomas Publisher, Ltd.

ISBN 13: 9780398077266, hardcover

This work addresses the issues surrounding musical meaning and experience, and the justification for including music in education. The chapters in this volume examine the subjects of tradition and innovation, social change, music curriculum and education, music in the 20th century, social strata and psychology. The rise of studies of musical behavior by social psychologists has been an important feature for the last two decades, and the relevance of this development to music education is explored. Robert Walker stresses that music is a product of specific culturally-infused ways of thinking and doing, and its inclusion in education can only be justified in terms of the importance a particular culture places on its music as a valued art form. The implications are that music educators should focus on the ways musicians employ cognitive diversity in their compositions and performance practices, whatever the genre. 🎵



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