Opera in the Ozarks Returns to the Stage

Opera in the Ozarks will be back this summer! After taking a forced hiatus during the year 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic, Opera in the Ozarks will be performing under a strict set of coronavirus protocols. The season will feature two mainstage operas, Donizetti’s dramatic Lucia di Lammermoor and a comedy from the pen of the French composer Jules Massenet, Cendrillon (Cinderella).

Opera in the Ozarks will also be performing a family opera, The Magic Flute, in a shortened version. This opera will be available only at the Point, and will not travel to other locations due to coronavirus precautions.

The season schedule appears at right. Tickets can be ordered at (479) 253-8595 or at www.opera.org.

Coronavirus Protocols for the 2021 Season

Opera in the Ozarks has adopted a special set of coronavirus protocols for purposes of this summer’s program. Here are the basic rules:

♦ Performers will arrive on May 26 and will be quarantined for 7 to 14 days upon arrival. They will be tested for the coronavirus at the beginning and toward the end of the quarantine period.
♦ During the quarantine period, no physical contact with anyone will be permitted and social distancing will be required.
♦ Meals will be staggered to reduce contact. Coaching will be socially distanced.
♦ At the end of the quarantine period, at OIO’s discretion, normal rehearsals will begin without masking. Social distancing will still be required where practical.
♦ Performers will be required to stay on campus for the duration of the program. No trips off campus will be permitted except when absolutely necessary.
♦ Performers will not be masked during performances, but audience members must be masked and will be at least 20 feet from the stage. Airflow will move outward from the stage to protect the performers.
♦ No visitors will be allowed on the campus and no contact will be permitted between the performers and the audience members.
♦ OIO is also implementing a rigorous cleaning and disinfecting program which will be carried out regularly. This has involved the purchase of much new equipment for disinfecting and cleaning of all areas. This is a summary. All participants are receiving a much more detailed set of these protocols.
Kevin Rawlings (OIO 1982) is now retired from an interesting career as a make-up artist at the New York City Opera and later the Metropolitan Opera. He began to develop his make-up skills at Inspiration Point Fine Arts Colony and later branched into that part of the opera business, giving up his own singing career. As he has told OIO in an alumni interview (see story on page 6), he would spend hours with the singers while working on their make-up, and as a result became a confidante of many of them. He took photographs of them to record his make-up selections, and thereafter became a photographer for many Metropolitan Opera artists. He has created a pair of two decks of cards containing photographs of

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Finally the dark days of 2020 are about over! Duane and I and most of our friends have completed our vaccinations. And in fact, we celebrated our “Release from Home” with friends last week. It felt really good to get to share news and stories with those dear ones and I hope you are doing the same things.

Most exciting now however, is that our OIO Governing Board members will meet in Eureka Springs in May for their first “in person” meeting in over a year! There’s lots to discuss and learn about, and besides that, we will also have a chance to go out to the Point to see all of the exciting changes that have been taking place there.

However, nothing can compare with our upcoming opera season and opening night on July 2nd. There will be lots of changes of course, but best of all, there will be lots of great delightful young singers and LOTS of great music.

So, I hope you will join us at the Point this July as we celebrate a wonderful new year together. I look forward to seeing you there as we together help make 2021 a great year.
Opera in the Ozarks Establishes Instrumental Academy at Inspiration Point

Opera in the Ozarks at Inspiration Point has established an Instrumental Academy at Inspiration Point. This is a virtual program for the benefit of high school musicians who aspire to a college-level study of music.

The Academy will last for three weeks. It will introduce students to the diverse activities, disciplines and rigor that they might encounter in the first years of an undergraduate curriculum in performance or music education.

Academy instructors will be the musicians of our Opera in the Ozarks orchestra, young performers and educators who are enthusiastic about sharing their knowledge, experience and perspectives.

Through a selection process OIO will invite a select number of high school musicians to join OIO June 1-18, Tuesday through Friday, for two 2.5-hour online sessions daily.

The Academy will culminate with a final celebratory concert on Saturday, June 19 that will feature OIO faculty performances and student contributions. This concert will be available for viewing by students, school directors, private teachers and family members.

If you know of any music teacher who would like to offer this to students, or if you know of a young student who would like to participate, please refer them to our web site for further information. There is a dedicated page for The Instrumental Academy at Inspiration Point. An application form is available there.

Applications have been accepted since March 15. Students will be notified of their acceptance to the Academy and will be emailed no later than May 1. The cost of the Academy is $375 for approximately 60 hours of instruction and admission to Opera in the Ozarks rehearsals and concerts.

For more details, please see Tom Cockrell's column on page 4 of this issue.

How Can We Afford All of This Stuff?

You have all read about the new coronavirus pandemic protocols established at Inspiration Point for this summer (see article on page 1). That all sounds great, but what does it cost?

A great deal, as it turns out. IPFAC has had to spend tens of thousands of dollars on new disinfection equipment, protective equipment, cleaning equipment, coronavirus testing equipment and lots of new cleaning and disinfecting supplies.

Somehow we need to pay for all of this, and that is where you come in! Please join your fellow supporters of IPFAC in making a special one-time contribution to pay for these unique items of equipment and supplies to make our 2021 season possible.

You can donate online at our web site, www.opera.org, or by sending a check to our treasurer, Duane Langley, whose address appears on the last page of this newsletter. Thank you! Without your support we would have no opera at Inspiration Point this summer.
News of Our Alumni
(continued from page 3)

sang for several years with the Metropolitan Opera chorus in New York City.

Internationally known stage director Thaddeus Strassberger (OIO 1990-92 as scene fabricator and grip, technical intern and assistant technical director) has been using the downtime resulting from the coronavirus pandemic to design new productions for several theaters in Europe and acquiring computer videographer skills to assist his wife, a videographer, in connection with her work with several European companies now producing opera-related videos.

Dawn Pierce (OIO 2002, 2004), now an assistant professor of voice at Ithaca College in New York, performs in the mezzo soprano repertoire both on the opera stage and in concert and recital. She has created a video course, How to

(continued on page 5)

Inspiration Point Fine Arts Colony

A Message From the Artistic Director

The last year has presented great disruption and posed innumerable challenges to so many aspects of our lives. Many challenges have surprisingly proven to be doors of opportunity as well.

In the fall of 2020, when Opera in the Ozarks committed to a live in-person 2021 season at Inspiration Point, the three directors developed a plan for what Chris Cathcart eventually would dub the OIO Jelly Donut (see page 1 of this newsletter). The idea is that there are two “circles” of protection around our singers. They live on the inside (the “jelly”) and others visiting the campus are subject to strict protocols (the “donut”).

To proceed safely with this plan, it was agreed that the entire artistic company – singers, and orchestra – would need to arrive on May 26.

In normal years the orchestra joins us three weeks into our preparations, in mid-June, for an intense ten days of rehearsals before we open the season. This year our half-sized orchestra of thirteen players must arrive with everyone else. The challenge was how to keep them busy until they were needed in the pit.

At its inception 1950 Inspiration Point provided high-quality training not only in opera but also dance and instrumental music. The OIO directors looked at 2021 as an opportunity to look to our past for inspiration and decided that it was time to establish the Instrumental Academy at Inspiration Point.

We have shaped the Academy with the needs of high school musicians who aspire to college-level study of music. For three weeks we will introduce them to the diverse activities, disciplines and rigor that they might encounter in the first years of an undergraduate curriculum in performance or music education.

The Academy will necessarily be offered as a virtual program for the inaugural summer of 2021 and run Tuesday through Friday, June 1-18, from 9:30 to noon and 2:30 to 5:00 p.m. Tuition is $375 for more than 60 hours of instruction. What we will offer the high school students is:

♫ Private instruction in a weekly 45-minute private lesson each week but will also work with their instructors in repertoire/techniques sessions and master classes.
♫ Chamber music Students will interact with and observe faculty chamber ensembles as they rehearse masterpieces of the string, wind or brass repertoire, learning to explore scores, and apply critical listening and practical skills.
♫ Musicianship skills, music theory and history classes similar to what students might encounter as a college freshman.
♫ A weekly workshop on audio and video recording techniques and production basics will prepare them for recording successful auditions and other creative projects.
♫ Students will be introduced to the dynamic art of opera, focusing on Jules Massenet’s scintillating adaptation of the Cinderella tale, Cendrillon.

Students and their families will also be invited to join the OIO company for a streamed dress rehearsal of Cendrillon later in June and the OIO Orchestra’s Chamber Music Concert on Tuesday, July 21.

We have reached out to music educators in Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas with the hope of attracting a cohort of fifty students this summer. Interested students, teachers, parents and you should visit our Academy website, www.opera.org/instrumental-academy.

While the Academy must launch on Zoom this June, we look forward to welcoming students to be in residence at Inspiration Point in subsequent years. With great optimism we establish the Instrumental Academy of Inspiration Point, expanding the mission of the Point as we emerge from a long year of loss and uncertainty.

[Signature]
**Annual Fund Donations Exceed $100,000**

The annual fund drive of the Inspiration Point Fine Arts Colony raised just over $100,000, an outstanding result in the year of the pandemic. This year the annual fund drive featured a series of challenge grants donated by Lois Armor, Glenn and Lorie Langley Bear, Alice Conway, Don Dagenais, Duane and Carole Langley and the late Maria DeWaal Putter.

Appearing below is a list of this year’s contributors. Inspiration Point extends a hearty thank you to all of our donors for all you have done this year and in the past. Your support is crucial to our continued operations at Opera in the Ozarks. Thanks for inspiring us!

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This year, the Opera in the Ozarks family opera will not travel as it usually does to public libraries and other venues throughout the region. Instead, OIO will do four performances in its own theater of an abridged version of *The Magic Flute*.

While the music is all Mozart, stage director Robert Swedberg has taken some liberties with the text. It has an ecological theme. OIO will be filming these performances with the hope that the performances can be offered to libraries and schools for use throughout the year.

As the abridged opera will be only about an hour long, OIO will offer a second hour of programming at two performances. On Wednesday July 21, *The Magic Flute* will be paired with a program of opera and Broadway scenes. On July 17, *The Magic Flute* will be paired with a mashup up *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Cendrillon*, our two main operas. It is called *Crazy Mixed Up Opera* and promises to be funny and creative with a healthy dose of silliness.

(continued from page 4)

*News of Our Alumni*

*Sing,* for The Teaching Company as part of the Great Courses Series, available to order online or by telephone from The Teaching Company.

**Daniel Grambow**

(OIO 2008) is the managing director of the Chautauqua Opera in New York. He has spent his career as a singer, producer, director, and educator in the field of opera. He founded Floating Opera Company, an innovative opera company performing in a variety of interesting venues. He has directed and produced 27 operatic productions throughout the Midwest. He joined the Chautauqua Opera in 2018 and has been coping with the challenges of managing an opera company in the midst of the pandemic. Under his leadership the Chautauqua Opera, one of the oldest opera companies in the United States (founded in 1929),

(continued on page 6)
will produce two open-air mainstage productions in the summer of 2021. The opera company produced nine weeks of digital content this past season.

Soprano Annie Gill (OIO 2008-9) performed with Opera Camerata, London Symphonette, the Annapolis Shakespeare Company, the Loudon Lyric Opera and the Annapolis Concert Society prior to the pandemic shutdown. An accomplished voice-over artist, she has appeared vocally in commercials and on television. She portrayed an opera singer in the Netflix series *House of Cards*. She recorded the music of composers Keith Kramer (Jasmine) and Garth Baxter (her album debut is entitled *Ask the Moon*), performing “Two Last Songs” and “April Twilight,” which the composer wrote for her.

### Alumni Network Committee Compiles Alumni Interviews and Information

A group of Opera in the Ozarks board members and volunteers, under the leadership of operations director Chris Cathcart, is continuing its work of contacting alumni of Opera in the Ozarks to obtain updated information and interview them for purposes of the OIO archives.

The effort began last summer and has now resulted in an enormous amount of research into the status of hundreds of OIO alumni, many of whom we are rediscovering after years of being out of contact.

One of the results of this work is the compilation of a library of recorded video interviews with OIO alumni from the years 1957 until just a few years ago.

Over 55 of these interviews have now been recorded. Samples of some of the results can be founded on the Opera in the Ozarks website, www.opera.org, under “Alumni” and “Alumni Interviews.”

The plan is for all of the interviews, once edited, to be made available as part of the Opera in the Ozarks Archives at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, established a few years ago with the assistance of OIO board member Janet Parsch.

The committee consists of current OIO staff members Nancy Preis, Tom Cockrell and Chris Cathcart plus Don Dagenais, Ed Henson, Alice Martinson, Janet Parsch, Steve and Colleen Shogren and Jim Swiggart.

### What Are We Missing This Summer at Opera in the Ozarks?

Opera in the Ozarks will take place in a manner as close to “normal” as possible in 2021. However, due to coronavirus precautions, a few of our typical Opera in the Ozarks events will unfortunately be missing this summer.

- The annual Taste of Opera event held at the Crescent Hotel will not take place. We hope that it will return in 2022.
- As explained on page 5, the children’s opera will not be touring to community locations this summer. However, there will be four performances at the theater at Inspiration Point.
- The annual Opera in the Ozarks auction held during Federation Days will not take place this year.
- Attendees at Federation Days will not have the option of dining with the students in the dining hall prior to one of the performances, as has been the case in the past.

Did you know that the OIO Store is open online for your shopping enjoyment? Just go to our web site, www.opera.org, and click on OIO Store. Click on the picture at the top of the page, and you will have your choice of five different product types for your shopping.

Be sure to purchase your OIO gear and wear them to Federation Days when you come to the Point this summer. Of course, they are also appropriate for informal wear wherever you may be.

Other items include a selection of beautiful hand-crafted jewelry bags, potholders, and pens, plus Christmas ornaments (it is never too early to shop for next December).

Shopping at the OIO store is just another way to support Opera in the Ozarks.

Don’t forget about gifts for Mother’s Day and any upcoming birthdays or anniversaries. Your friends will enjoy dressing in the latest OIO gear!
What is the Origin of the Image on the Inspiration Point Logo?

by Janet Parsch

The image is familiar, but its origin may not be.

In *A History of Inspiration Point Fine Arts Colony 1950-1990* by David Hobart, son of founder Henry Hobart, Wenonah Williams Hampton wrote that the logo “was designed by Joan [Woodruff] Van Grove, wife of Dr. Isaac Van Grove, Director for many years following the leadership of Henry Hobart.

“It is an abstract expression of fluid movement,” Williams Hampton explained. “All lines converge and are attached, as man and every point in the universe is attached to the prime mover of the universe.

“The exact meaning which Mrs. Van Grove intended is not known,” Hampton wrote, “but we do know that our lives have been intertwined by the greatness of our leaders of the past and their greatness lives in those of us who are made richer by having known their presence.

“As the lines sweep upward and outward, so do we aspire to move toward a future at Inspiration Point Fine Arts Colony of harmonious and undying music.”

Another booklet from the early 1990s describes the logo this way:

“With closer examination all the lines seem to start from nowhere only to converge and sweep towards the future.

“That represents the history and future of Inspiration Point, a lot of diverse lines seeming to start from nowhere converging at this time and giving definite direction for the future.”

These statements seem as timely today as when they were written thirty years ago.

The Cinderella Story With a French Flair

Most of us know the Cinderella story from the 1950 animated film by Walt Disney. However, the tale of the impoverished girl who sweeps the fireplace (Cinderella, literally “girl of the cinders”) and her unlikely romance with the dashing prince Charming who rescues her from poverty dates to more than 19 centuries before the Disney film.

The first known antecedent was by the Greek writer Strabo. In his version the young woman, named Rodopha, was a Greek slave who married the King of Egypt. The first European version was published in Italy by Giambattista Basile in his *Pen-tamerone* in 1634. French writer Charles Perrault popularized the tale, however, in 1697 and named the character Cinderella. Another version was included in the collection of folk tales by the brothers Grimm in 1812.

Jules Massenet, the famed French composer, was not the first opera composer to set the Cinderella story to music. In fact, the earlier Italian master Gioacchino Rossini wrote *La Cenerentola*, also a comedy, which has been performed several times at Opera in the Ozarks. The Massenet version, however, has a distinctly French flair.

It was the Perrault telling of this tale that enticed Massenet to write his opera in 1899. Massenet was the leading composer of French operas at the time, with such classics as *Manon* and *Werther* having already achieved the status of repertoire standards.

In the words of one critic, the Perrault story “was lightly dusted by Massenet with the magic powder of sounds.”

In the Massenet opera the young girl Lucette, also called Cendrillon, has lost her mother. Her widowed father has remarried a proud countess with a dowry and two nasty daughters. They are preparing to go to the King’s ball where the two daughters will be presented to the Prince.

Fully decked out in their finery, the women depart, but a fairy godmother appears to the abandoned Lucette and summons sylphs, elves and sprits to fit out Cendrillon in splendid attire. They send her off in a tiny carriage with coachmen and she is given a magic slipper to make her unrecognizable to her stepmother and stepsisters.

While at the ball, Cinderella dazzles the King’s son, Prince Charming, and…well, you probably know the rest of the story.

Cendrillon was an immediate hit and was given 69 performances in its first two seasons in Paris. It soon traveled to Geneva, Milan and other opera capitals. It has remained a favorite today, and Opera in the Ozarks is proud to present it to Arkansas audiences for the first time in a number of years.
GOOD NEWS LETTER

Yes, Virginia, We Will Have a Federation Days Event in 2021!

Despite the inconveniences caused by the coronavirus pandemic, Federation Days will be held at the Eureka Springs Inn of the Ozarks (Best Western) from Wednesday, July 21 through Saturday, July 24.

With only a few changes, the celebration will continue much as it has in the past.

According to Jean Moffatt, the South Central Region Vice President of the National Federation of Music Clubs (NFMC), Wednesday will be an Opera in the Ozarks board meeting. The family opera *The Magic Flute* will be performed that evening at Opera in the Ozarks, along with another attraction, *Scenes: Opera and Broadway*.

Thursday, July 22 is Life Member Day. There will be a memorial service, regional meeting and luncheon with guest speaker Don Dagenais. The afternoon is free. The opera that evening is Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

Friday, July 23 activities will include state and region meetings and a luncheon with Tom Cockrell, the Opera in the Ozarks artistic director, as the guest speaker.

At the banquet that evening Dr. Ouida Keck, a former President of NFMC, is the speaker. The opera that evening is Massenet’s *Cendrillon*.

Saturday, July 24 will be Federation Day and will include a luncheon with Nancy Preis, the OIO general director, as our speaker.

OIO operations director Chris Cathcart will also address the group at some point during the meetings.

Details have yet to be finalized, but watch your email for a formal invitation and further specifics.

My tax deductible membership and/or contribution of $______ is enclosed.

Check the Appropriate Box
☐ $500 Patron
☐ $100 Sustaining
☐ $50 Contributing
☐ $25 Active
☐ $1,000 Life/Endowment

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