Drama, Comedy Await Audiences at OIO This Season

The summer 2022 season of Opera in the Ozarks opens on June 24 with Puccini’s light-hearted opera La Rondine (The Swallow).

Mozart’s delicious comedy Così fan tutte opens on June 25 and Sondheim’s A Little Night Music follows suit on June 28.

The three operas are performed in alternating repertory until July 22 when the 2022 season ends the way it started, with La Rondine.

The OIO season also includes a chamber music concert by OIO orchestra members on July 18.

Tickets will be available soon on the OIO web site at opera.org, or by calling the OIO box office at (479) 253-8595.

Recital Series Continues This Spring and Summer

Opera in the Ozarks will continue its popular recital series this spring and summer with a number of performances by OIO alums and others involved with the company.

On March 20, soprano Alexandra Lang (OIO 2009) and baritone Joshua Scheid (OIO 2017) gave a joint recital with pianist Louis Menendez, a longtime OIO music staff member.

A video of this recital is available for purchase on the OIO web site.

On April 24 David Adams (OIO 1988, 1990 and 1992) and Rosie Kearin (OIO 2017) will give a joint recital with Louis Menendez at 2:30 p.m. at the First Methodist Church of Eureka Springs. This recital will also be taped for later availability on video in case you cannot make it to the recital itself.

On May 10 Dawn Pierce (OIO 2002, 2004) and Justin Burgess (OIO 2017-18) will give a joint recital, also with Louis Menendez.

OIO is also planning a recital with Catherine Coke (OIO 1984) in June during the Opera in the Ozarks season. An exact date has not yet been set.

All recitals will begin at 2:30 p.m. at locations to be announced.

Campus Renewal Project Moves Forward

by Nancy Preis

We continue to work on plans to refresh our campus buildings. After 70 years, our modest campus buildings are mostly functionally obsolete and in some cases, structurally deteriorating. Fixing the structural, mechanical and technological issues would be more expensive than starting over.

We are developing plans with nationally known theater consultants, acousticians, engineers and architects to construct facilities that reflect the quality of our programming and our artists. Replacing our theater is of primary importance. We want to retain the intimacy and sense of place of our current theater, but without the noise of motorcycles and semi trailers and without the uneven climate control. Good sight lines, great acoustics, comfortable seating, accessible restrooms, and fabulous views of our beautiful Ozarks are all high on our agenda.

Site preparation is underway. Geologists have drilled test bores, cut and fill is scheduled to make sure that our mountain is what we think it is, and a new well and new septic systems are being designed. Probably the most important aspect in this planning is that we have contracted with a cost consultant to make sure our budgetary estimates are accurate. When we get those results, we may need to make some adjustments to the plans or embark on raising some additional funds. We will certainly keep you posted on that!

We intend to create facilities that will carry us well into the future and allow us to grow our programming consistent with our vision of being a regional center for lifelong music learning. Henry Hobart had a wonderful idea back in 1950 when he created a music camp. Now it’s time to build the facilities that will support that vision and expand it into the 21st century and beyond.
News of Our Alumni

The Chautauqua Opera, which is managed by an OIO alum, Daniel Grambow (OIO 2008), will have two OIO singers on its roster this summer, Bernardo Medeiros and Felix Aguilar Tomlinson (both OIO 2017).

Soprano Tara Stafford-Spyres (OIO 2000) was a guest artist last winter at the Les Volques Festival in Nimes, France. In March of this year she performed the role of Nedda in the Ozarks Lyric Opera production of Leoncavallo’s I Pagliacci. Later this year she sings in a bel canto gala with Conductor Jérémie Rhorer and the orchestra le Cercle de l’Harmonie at the Grand Théâtre de Provence in Aix en Provence, France.

The New Amsterdam Opera of New York City is performing Boïeldieu’s little-known French opera La Dame Blanche in May. The opera stars high atop Rock Candy Mountain, a great place to study and grow!

From the General Director

Who are these paragons? Carole and Duane Langley, of course. Carole and Duane have been a big part of Opera in the Ozarks for decades now and it is gratifying that they have made us the recipients of a good chunk of their charitable giving. And they have raised their daughter in the same tradition: Lorie Langley Bear and her husband Glen are also challenge donors!

Alice Conway, a longtime Governing Board member, is another amazing supporter. Alice has made gifts from her donor advised fund and incredibly, when her fund manager made an error last year and sent us twice as much as Alice intended, Alice let us keep the extra money.

Don Dagenais, the loyal newsletter editor, interviewer extraordinaire, and opera raconteur also writes generous checks. And finally, this year Ann Lacy made a substantial multi year pledge (see next page), and the set of challenge grantors was joined by one more donor who chose to remain anonymous. These people set a high standard, but the rest of our donors are no slouches. You stepped up and met the challenge! What can I say but a huge THANK YOU! But, don’t relax yet.

Our campus renewal program and our company growth will require increased funds. So, help us spread the word about the magic that happens at The Point! The excitement for our 2022 season is starting to build. Come join us for wonderful music and be a part of our marvelous future!

A Message From the President

As I looked at a recent women’s magazine, I was struck by the thought that we OIO supporters have amazing powers! In fact, we have the power to help change the lives of fabulous young singers!

1. We can inform singers about OIO, and really all the universities in our various areas too. Have you contacted them all this year? Please do, and tell them about:
   - the opportunity for young artists to meet other amazing young singers at OIO,
   - studying and working with our outstanding OIO faculty,
   - performing a complete opera in the original language, with full orchestra, all in front of an excited audience pulling for their success. And this happens several times in a season!
   - finally, the beautiful location there

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The Inspiration Point Fine Arts Colony is proud to have as one of its Governing Board members Ann Lacy of Oklahoma City. Ann is a significant financial supporter of Opera in the Ozarks and we have enjoyed having her in Eureka Springs for many performances.

Ann is a native of Oklahoma. She attended Oklahoma City University, the University of Central Oklahoma and the University of Oklahoma.

During her business career Ann worked in the fields of finance, manufacturing and petroleum. In 1986 she founded Fashion Oklahoma. She had a long interest in the fashion industry, beginning as a model in fashion shows for club groups. She produced fashion events for conventions and taught modeling classes. Fashion Oklahoma was a networking club that attracted designers, manufacturers, jewelry makers, salespeople, models and teachers.

Ann’s Easy Dress design has been used many times in shows, demonstrations and fundraisers. In 2002 she published a book, Ann Lacy’s Easy Dress Book. She has also published two other books, a children’s book and a novel, Concorde.

Ann has long been devoted to her alma mater Oklahoma City University. Her late husband, James E. Alexander, was a former dean of OCU’s Meinders School of Business, and through his inspiration she began a series of charitable gifts to OCU that have left a major mark on the University.

Due to her donations, the Ann Lacy school of American Dance and Arts Management is an important part of OCU. She was instrumental in raising funds to renovate the Edith Kenney Gaylord Center at OCU which is considered to be one of the finest collegiate dance centers. Her efforts have led her to be enshrined in the Oklahoma Higher Education Hall of Fame.

Ann dabbled in the performing arts herself as an Oklahoma City Mummers Theatre performer.

OIO Governing Board president Carole Langley has particularly fond personal memories of Ann Lacy.

“Shortly after I graduated from high school in Jones, Oklahoma,” Carole recalls, “I applied for work with the state employment office. Shortly after applying I was contacted by a person working in a small locally owned manufacturer of window blinds in Oklahoma City, Ann Shinn (her name then). Ann was in charge of the one-woman office but needed some extra help mostly for mailing out advertising and materials to customers.

“I enjoyed the work we did and also enjoyed other times together including occasional lunches or errands together. One special treat was getting to try on some of her exotic designs in clothing!

“Ann knew I was a singer, and near the end of summer I was invited to join the Surrey Singers on their trip to New York City in conjunction with the opening of the movie Oklahoma. She was gracious in letting me off work so I could go.

“Our trip was successful and, following that, the Surrey Singers went to California for additional Oklahoma publicity.

“I was never able to go back to work for Ann, but throughout my college career she was a faithful friend. We lost touch for few years while when I was singing in Europe, but after Duane and I settled St. Louis, Ann and I were thrilled to meet at Opera in the Ozarks.

“Ann has been a special supporter, and I am fortunate to call her a very special friend.”

Did you know that at Opera in the Ozarks, you can underwrite a production of an opera for only $2,500? That’s a bargain compared with most opera companies. If that seems too much, you can sponsor a single Night of Opera for only $300.

Please let our treasurer, Duane Langley, know promptly if you wish to do this, so we can get your name in the program. Your payment can come later, but is due before the start of the season. Duane’s email address is duanelangley@sbcglobal.net.

Verdi season, performing in Rigoletto, Un Giornno di Regno and La Traviata. She has also been selected by Angels Vocal Art for its mounting of The Consul this summer. Prior to having several productions postponed during the Covid-19 pandemic, Ms. Zahn sang with Angels Vocal Art and the Pacific Opera Project. She was also a finalist in Opera Mississippi’s vocal arts competition.

Opera Saratoga will feature three OIO alums during its season this summer: Robert Hartfield (OIO 2014) and Louise Tiemann (OIO 2021). The Florentine Opera in Milwaukee recently featured a double bill of Viardot’s Cinderella and Ravel’s L’Enfant et les Sortileges (The Child...
News of Our Alumni

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and the Enchantments). Among the cast members were soprano Erin Sura.

(OIO 2007) and baritone Zachary Crowle (OIO 2016). Among Sura’s other recent credits are the title role of Tosca for the Florentine Opera and Dido and Aeneas, Der Freischutz and Arabella with the Bay Area Summer Opera Theatre Institute. She was Rosalinde in Die Fledermaus with the New York Opera Forum.

Just prior to the pandemic, the Florentine Opera of Milwaukee featured soprano Lisa Neubauer (OIO 1997) in the title role of The Coronation of Poppea, a Baroque opera by Monteverdi.

Baritone Andy Hiers (OIO 2010-11) has been cast in the St. Petersburg (Florida) Opera’s production of The Daughter of the Regiment. He appeared this spring with the Gulfshore Opera in The Bat’s Revenge.

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Annual Fund Raises Over $190,000 for OIO

Opera in the Ozarks is pleased to announce that donations to its annual fund exceeded $190,000 this year. Several OIO Governing Board members joined together to pledge $60,000 to match, dollar for dollar, other donations to the annual fund. We are pleased that all of the matching funds were raised, and all of the pledges were paid.

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! Here are the names of the generous donors to our annual fund.

$10,000 and Above

Patrons
Ann Lacy Trust
Brown Family Trust
Glenn and Lorie Langley Bear
Alice E. Conway
Richard Drapeau
Duane and Carole Langley
Alice Martinson and Carole Sturgis
Robert and Terry McRae
Jean Moffatt
Polk Stanley Wilcox
John Schmidt

$500 to $999

Soloists
Earl and Suzanne Babie
Martha Boden
Wayne Clark
Thomas Cockrell
Carolyn Green
Margaret Jones
Linda and Tim McNew
Robin and Terry McRae
Barbara Rondelli Perry
Nancy Preis
Gordon and Pat Saxon
Al and Pat Walden
Kathleen Whitmer

$5,000 to $9,999

Founders
Lois Armor
Don Dagenais
Hobart Family Trust
Stephen and Colleen Shogren
Luke and Janet Parsch

$2,500 to $4,999

Composers
Linda and Gene Vollen

$1,000 to $2,499

Fellows
Ann Marie Ardes
Mary Ann Bridges
Tim Danielson
Mary Dixon
Marcia Edwards
Michael and Phyllis Garrett
Herta Gemaehlich
Beth Harrison
William Harrison
Ed and Cathy Henson
Jill and Thomas King
Susan and Dick Luehrs
Melba Maechtlen

$150 to $499

Performers
Arlene & Jerry Bibesheimer
Janet Burgess
Ann Carter
Richard Cockrell
Donna Dover
Rita Garcia
Ed Garrison

$150 to $499

Friends
James Anderson
Anonymous
Louis and Ann Averitt
Phillip and Oteeka Baker
Thomas and Darlene Beller
M. L. Benson
Jane Betts
Ken Brown
Charles Burns and Lenore Thompson
Barbara Carlisle
Chris Catheart
Kathleen DeGrave
Ruth Dyer
Mary Early
Eugene Earsome
Linda and Ira Edwards

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The Story of *Cosi fan tutte*

Where do opera composers get their ideas for new operas? Sometimes it is from most surprising places. Consider, if you will, the example of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s *Cosi fan tutte*.

In 1786, Mozart and his librettist Lorenzo da Ponte wrote an opera for Vienna called *The Marriage of Figaro*. It was a good success in Vienna, but a certified hit when it was performed a few months later in the nearby city of Prague.

Prague was an opera-crazy city, and *The Marriage of Figaro* took the town by a storm. From Prague Mozart wrote to his father, “Here they talk about nothing but Figaro. Nothing is played, sung or whistled but Figaro. No opera is drawing like Figaro. Nothing, nothing but Figaro.”

The opera house manager in Prague, Pasquale Bondini by name, was no fool. Realizing that he had a genius on his hands, he quickly commissioned Mozart, along with da Ponte, to produce another opera, but this time for debut in Prague. Within a year Mozart wrote another work, *Don Giovanni*, which premiered in Prague in 1787. Sure enough, *Don Giovanni* was a sure-fire hit as well.

Back in Vienna, the emperor, Joseph II, realized that perhaps he should get his hometown operatic heroes back to the Vienna opera for a follow-up written for their own city. But where would they find the story?

Here is where it gets interesting. At that time, there was a report making its way around Vienna of an extraordinary event which had supposedly taken place. Whether the story is actually true or not, we don’t know. Certainly it was often repeated, and thus had gone what we would today call “viral.” In our day the story would probably be spread through Facebook and Twitter. Back then, it was repeated in newspapers and pamphlets.

The tale, improbable as it seems, is that there were two close buddies who were both engaged. They were certain that their fiancés were loyal and loving. They had an older, more jaded, friend, however, who disputed their claims.

All women are fickle, he argued. He told them that their fiancés only loved them because they were the men who happened to come along. Their lovers could just as easily have fallen for any other man.

To prove his point, their older companion suggested a wager. The two buddies should find some excuse to leave town, then return in disguise to woo each other’s lover. Within just a few days, he claimed, their fiancés would happily switch their allegiances to their new suitors.

The two men, of course, thought this was outrageous, but to prove their girlfriends’ loyalty, they agreed to the bet. The plan was carried out, and the result was….well, we don’t want to ruin the ending. The opera premiered in Vienna in 1790 and was a great hit.

Thus came to be *Cosi fan tutte*. The title in Italian is a little hard to translate, as it has a special ring that can’t really be duplicated in another language. The most common English translations are “They All Do It,” or “Thus Do They All.” The “they” of the title is in the feminine version, so some translations say “All Women Do It,” or maybe “All Women are Fickle.”

For years many companies were so scandalized by this ridiculous story that they refused to perform the opera. Some composers, including of all people Richard Wagner, actually tried to take Mozart’s music and fit it to other words and change the plot entirely. Nothing ever satisfactorily worked.

In the meantime, as social mores became a bit more lax and as Mozart’s music came to be realized as a masterpiece, the opera slowly gained the stage in its original form. Still, it took years. The Metropolitan Opera in New York, for example, did not produce *Cosi* until 1922, a good 132 years after the opera’s premiere! People now realize that, scandalous as the story is, the music is sublime.
Inspiration Point Fine Arts Colony

News of Our Alumni

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before converting to jazz a few years ago. Her debut jazz album, Too Much Fun, won acclaim. Since then she has sung in jazz performances in a variety of venues around Minnesota. She also sings Christian music.

Betsy Uschkrat (OIO 2004) has sung with a variety of opera companies including the New Orleans Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Shreveport Opera, Opera Idaho, Pensacola Opera and Opéra Louisiane in Baton Rouge, in the title roles of Manon, Susannah, Romeo et Juliette and other works. She has been a member of the voice faculty at Loyola University in New Orleans for over ten years.

The Des Moines Metro Opera’s staging of Britten’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream will include soprano

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Federation Days are Set for Eureka Springs July 20-23

Federation Days will be held at the Eureka Springs Inn of the Ozarks (Best Western) from Wednesday, July 20 through Saturday, July 23. There will be a Cabaret dinner and performance featuring Opera in the Ozarks singers on Tuesday night, July 19 for those arriving a bit early.

According to Jean Moffatt, the South Central Region Vice President for the National Federation of Music Clubs (NFMC), Wednesday will be an Opera in the Ozarks board meeting. The mainstage opera at OIO that evening is A Little Night Music.

On Thursday, July 21, there will be a memorial service, regional meeting and luncheon with guest speaker Don Dagenais. The children’s opera Pinocchio will be performed at the Inn at the Ozarks. The opera that evening is Così fan tutte.

Friday, July 22 activities will include state and region meetings and a luncheon with Tom Cockrell, OIO’s artistic director, as the guest speaker. Arkansas will host the banquet that evening where Deborah Freeman, a national guest from NFMC, will be our speaker. The opera that evening is La Rondine.

Saturday, July 23 will be Federation Day and will include a luncheon with Nancy Preis, the OIO general director, as our speaker. Operations director Chris Cathcart and our new Development Director Carol Wright will also be speaking during some of the meetings.

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

Annual Fund

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Richard Gahbauer
John and Georgette Garner
Lucilla Garrett
Mort Gitelman
Leroy and Sally Gorell
Carolyn Green
Annette Griesbach
David and Ruth Hager
Harmony Club
Ronn and Dianna Hearn
Judy Higginbottom
Steve Hofield
Kent and Barbara Holm
Thomas Hopkins
Lynn Hornsby
Chuck and Marilyn Janzen
Barrett Johnson
Bill and Joan Johnson
Owen Johnson
John and Mary Anne King
Bobbie Knapton
Linda Burkhard Kraus
Cynthia Kresse
Joseph and Starla Landers
Davie and Lyon Lawhorn
Garry and Marion Lee
Michael and Eileen Lieber
Margit Loser
Kathy McClure
Mary McKay
Linda McKown
MacDowell Club of Allied Arts
Christina Mayo
William Mills
Elaine Minden
Charlene Moon
Gary and Vicki Moore
Morning Etude Music Club, St. Louis
Charles Olson
Thomas O’Neal
Alan Orr
Lorene Patterson
Barbara Pemberton
George Pilcher
Ponca City Music Club
Carolyn Reid
Request Italy

Are you a movie buff? Opera in the Ozarks is planning two movie experiences for you this summer. OIO is planning a screening of the 1977 film version of A Little Night Music, which starred Elizabeth Taylor, Len Cariou and Diana Rigg. Also planned is a screening of Smiles of a Summer Night, the 1955 film which was the inspiration for Stephen Sondheim’s A Little Night Music. Dates and times will be announced soon. Keep an eye out for news on the OIO web site, www.opera.org.
Opera in the Ozarks Loses Two Dear Friends

Opera in the Ozarks has been saddened by the deaths of two of our important supporters in recent months.

Pam Jones, who served for many years as President of the Eureka Springs Opera Guild, died on December 12, 2021. A native of Oklahoma City and a music lover her entire life, Pam and her husband had been residents of Eureka Springs since 1978.

She was a member of the Ozarks Chorale and supported Opera in the Ozarks in many ways with her volunteer activities and financial support. Her many talents and great energy as a volunteer will be sorely missed.

Pam wanted to be remembered by a line from the opera Tosca: “I lived for art, I lived for love.” No better tribute could be devised.

Mary Shambarger, a former Governing Board member of Inspiration Point Fine Arts Colony, died on February 27, 2022. An Arkansas native, Mary was a lifelong music lover and held a bachelor’s degree in music from Louisiana State University and a master’s degree from the University of Arkansas.

Mary served on the faculty of Ouachita Baptist University from 1966 until her retirement in 1998. While there, she formed and directed The Ouachita Tones, an all-female choral ensemble, which traveled and performed extensively. It was eventually restructured as The Ouachita Sounds, an ensemble combining women and men.

She also wrote, produced and directed a number of shows for theater and music groups in Arkansas, Kentucky and Oklahoma.

Opera in the Ozarks was honored to have Mary as a Governing Board member for several years, where her wisdom assisted the board in many ways. She was a dear friend of Opera in the Ozarks, and we miss her guidance and inspiration.

Are you ready to dance and sing? Then Opera in the Ozarks is ready for you. We are sponsoring not one, but two, Cabaret evenings this summer featuring our talented singers from Opera in the Ozarks singing your favorite Broadway and show tunes.

The first Cabaret evening will be in Fayetteville, Arkansas at Mount Sequoyah on Thursday, July 14. This event will include hors d’oeuvres and a cash bar as well as the musical entertainment, including orchestra musicians.

The second Cabaret evening will be on Tuesday, July 19. This will be held at the Crescent Hotel in Eureka Springs and will feature a full dinner. It will also have a cash bar. Tickets for both of these events will be available shortly on the OIO web site, opera.org. Please join us for one or both of these, and if you are coming for Federation Days, then come in a day early for the July 19 concert!
Whitesells Leave OIO Board

Citing family and health obligations, Lavonna and Lisa Whitesell have resigned their positions on the Governing Board of the Inspiration Point Fine Arts Colony (IPFAC), which runs Opera in the Ozarks, as well as duties with the National (NFMC) and Oklahoma (OFMC) Federations of Music Clubs. The Whitesells, including Dr. Leon Whitesell, have been active in many offices for the past several years.

Dr. Whitesell, husband and father, served as artist-in-residence at the IPFAC Youth Camps which followed the opera season for a dozen years. His wife Lavonna assisted and taught voice, piano, choir and theory.

Lavonna recently completed four years as vice-president of the South Central Region of NFMC. She had been vice-president of the IPFAC Governing Board and before that served as corresponding secretary. She recently began serving NFMC as Rose Fay Thomas chair. She is a past OFMC president.

Like her parents, Lisa has spent a lifetime in music education at all levels. She most recently served as Governing Board parliamentarian and as Oklahoma trustee on the Board of Trustees. All three are Life Members of NFMC, IPFAC, and OFMC, and are Rose Fay Thomas Fellows and recipients of the Servant Leadership Award.