THE OPERA VOLUNTEER VOICE

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The official newsletter of *Opera Volunteers International*

Next issue:
July

Tips & Tricks for photos that connect with your Audience

*On **Friday, June 14**, **Opera Volunteers International** will host a photo workshop at the **OPERA America Conference** in San Francisco. The 9:00 a.m. session will be led by internationally acclaimed photographer **Tanya Malott**.*

Below are three tips to help make you a more persuasive photo-storyteller.

Tanya's Tips for Pics that Click

Shoot smarter, pose better: There are two sides to every photo. I will offer tips and tricks for being a better photographer and a better subject. Cameras don't take pictures, people do. Just because everyone has a camera in their pocket, does not mean that everyone is a photographer. I want to narrow that gap, teach you to see and think like a pro, and help you understand why my pictures always look better than yours. (Hint: it's not the camera)

Keep it simple: The problem with most photography courses is *overwhelm*. It is easy to get stuck in the technical talk, or get confused by all the buttons on a camera, at which point most people give up and learn nothing. I will offer simple steps to seeing better, shooting smarter, and noticing the little details that will make all your photos better, whether shot with a phone or a pro level camera. If you can remember these three words, you will always make better photos. I have some clever camera tricks you need to know as well.

Storytelling through imagery: Why take pictures anyway? Are you reporting a story? Selling a product? Informing an audience? We will talk about visual imagery and how to create compelling storytelling pictures for any purpose, whether that is a newsletter, a social media account, a fundraiser, or a friend. We will talk about how to shoot the images you need with the purpose and product in mind.

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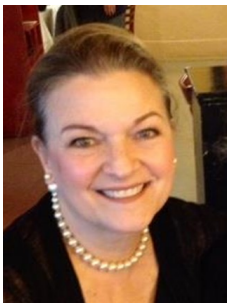
Tanya Malott

From the President: *Susan Malott*

Welcome to Opera Conference 2019



As we approach our Opera Conference June 14-16, in my City by the Bay, I cannot wait to welcome you all to San Francisco and to roll out the red carpet for you. It will be a fabulous weekend reconnecting with friends, meeting new friends and gaining new ideas and perspectives. The themes of *Examining Traditions*, *Exploring Business Innovation* and *Deepening Civic Practice* apply as well to our volunteer support groups as they do to professional companies, and there is much to learn from these conversations.

We have lots of wonderful things planned, beginning with our Grantor's Reception on Wednesday, June 13, at the home of San Francisco Opera Guild's President, Mary Poland, across the Golden Gate Bridge in beautiful Marin County. If your membership is not already at the Grantor Level or higher, please consider increasing it so you can join us for this special event. And you'll be supporting OVI's grants in the process! This year OVI awarded grants to seven organizations totaling $10,000. We are deeply appreciative to all of you who have helped make this possible.

We will begin our 2-day conference offerings on Friday in a learning session with International photographer Tanya Malott who will teach us how we can take better photographs to connect with our audiences. Everyone is invited to join the OVI board meeting following the learning session, and then it's lunch on our own.

At our Saturday Roundtable we will hear from our Partners in Excellence and our Grant Award recipients, and then on Sunday morning we will gather at the historic Westin St. Francis on Union Square to honor them at our Awards Brunch.

And, of course, we will be hosting a silent auction with lots of fabulous gifts you'll want to take home with you for yourself or for someone else. Stop by the OVI table to bid high and bid often!

I am excited to see all of you and can hardly wait for June 14 to get here. Thank you all for everything you do to support opera in your communities. You are an extraordinary group of volunteers and I am proud to work alongside you.

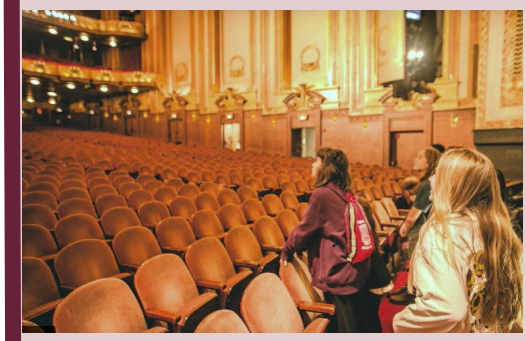
Susan Malott

Sold Out!

Conference Update: Registration Closed

Trip to the Opera

Students visit Lyric Opera of Chicago



by ***Elizabeth Narut***
Lake Geneva Chapter
Education Chair

Lake Geneva Wisconsin Volunteers Introduce Students to Opera

In a time when technology is taking entertainment into the future, experiences like opera connect people to each other rather than connecting people to things. Connections between people matter because they have the human heart at the core. Giuseppe Verdi's opera, *La Traviata,* sends a message that it is possible to experience joy out of self-sacrifice and pure love. Stories like these translate lessons to young audiences that cannot be learned from electronic devices.

Thanks to the **Lake Geneva Chapter of the Lyric Opera of Chicago**, students are being given a new realm to experience culture, song, music, art, and storytelling. Opera may not be as exciting initially to students who are used to instant gratification with technology providing social media, movies, and video games. However, the new schedule the chapter has put into place offers middle school students repeated exposure to the opera art which will enhance their knowledge and pique their curiosity for the arts in the future. Because of donations from Lake Geneva Chapter members, a new crop of 5th graders will be able to see ***Lyric Unlimited***'s operetta in fall 2019. Seventh graders will be able to see their first opera in the 2019-2020 season, and 8th graders will travel back to the Lyric Opera House for the backstage tour that had this year's 8th graders begging to see another opera! These comments from 13 year-olds are proof that the efforts of the Chapter are paying off by extending opportunities to younger generations. The Lake Geneva Chapter of Lyric Opera of Chicago has sent over 700 students to experience classic performances in this school year alone! Most recently, more than 300 Lake Geneva seventh grade students and chaperones witnessed a classic opera, *La Traviata,* in February and March, wrapping up another successful school year of trips to Lyric Opera. Students from the **Big Foot Area Consortium, (Sharon, Walworth, Fontana, and Reek Grade Schools)**, took a field trip to see their first opera on February 20, 2019, and **Lake Geneva Middle School** travelled to Chicago by train on March 7. The students are abuzz with excitement about these trips.

Thank you, to the Lake Geneva Chapter members for making this happen.

About the Lake Geneva Chapter

The **Lake Geneva Chapter** is just one of the twelve area volunteer groups supporting **Lyric Opera of Chicago** under the supervision of Lyric's **Chapters Executive Board** (an OVI group member).

The Lake Geneva Chapter's educational outreach program is especially impressive because Lake Geneva is in another state (Wisconsin) and is 90 miles from the Opera House.

Each Lyric Opera chapter has its own unique character with myriad activities, projects and events suited to its particular membership and community. Lyric Opera Chapter volunteers help fund Lyric Opera through member donations and from the profits of chapter programs and initiatives. The chapters also sponsor and staff the lobby OperaShop and serve in other volunteer capacities.

Chapters also provide an important social framework where community members can get together to mingle, learn, and share their love of opera.

2019 Partners in Excellence Awardees

The prestigious Opera Volunteers International ***Partners in Excellence Award*** program recognizes individuals who have given extraordinary volunteer service to opera in their communities or groups observing special anniversaries.

The awardees of this once-in-a-lifetime honor will be acknowledged at the Opera Volunteers International Awards Brunch held this June at Opera Conference 2019 in San Francisco, CA.

February 1, 2020 will be the deadline for next year's nominations.

Virginia "Ginny" Cover — Cincinnati Opera Guild

Ginny has been an enthusiastic leader with the **Cincinnati Opera Guild** for more than 30 years. Besides being an inspiring Guild President 2016-2018, she has chaired fund raising events, served as program chair, as an advocate for the education department and participated fully in all Guild activities . Most of all Ginny has tirelessly provided leadership and volunteer devotion to increase membership diversity and promote the value of opera in the community. She assesses the need, rolls up her sleeves, goes to work, stays until the end, and never asks for recognition.

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Calien Lewis — Opera Maine

Calien has been a volunteer extraordinaire for **Opera Maine** throughout the company's 25 year history. She has shared her invaluable legal expertise to ensure Opera Maine's policies and procedures are all inclusive and supportive of the company's best interest. Calien's willingness to take on tasks ranging from greeting and directing guests at events to researching and presenting historical pre-opera programs for 300 people show a dedication, selflessness and versatility that have been important to Opera Maine's community engagement and overall success.

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Thomas Simpson — The Glimmerglass Festival Guild

Tom has been active with **the Glimmerglass Festival** for the past 15 years, serving as Vice President, President, Treasurer, as well as the Guild's Liaison to the Board of Trustees. He has had an impressive and inspirational impact on both the Festival and the Guild. Tom helped develop the Guild's "Talking Opera" series and spearheaded an initiative to present free preview talks before Metropolitan Opera Live HD broadcasts. Tom has recorded more than 3000 volunteer hours over the past 10 years and he exemplifies an OVI Partner in Excellence.

2019 Grant Recipients

ARIZONA OPERA LEAGUE OF TUCSON **Bravo Vino**

The project invited the general public to a day of celebrating opera while enjoying wine from Arizona vineyards, ordering food from food trucks and listening to live music with performances by AZ Opera singers. About 20 League members and seniors from the **Gregory School** and AZ staff volunteered to sell "Bravo Vino" T-shirts and manned information booths to provide information to the public about **Arizona Opera** productions.

CENTRAL CITY OPERA **Audience Development for New and Underserved Communities**

The goal is to identify and develop ways to market opera to young and underserved audiences in Colorado with three successful innovative events led by an Associate Director of Audience Development. A team of eight volunteer young professionals will help identify ways to market opera to young audiences and make participation easier for them. A college intern from a community underrepresented in the arts will work with this team. These volunteers will provide an important, unique perspective on audience development, as they themselves are potential opera audience members.

CINCINNATI OPERA GUILD **The Cincinnati Guild Opera Ambassadors**

The Ambassador program is a training program for volunteers to establish a baseline of knowledge and expertise related to the programming, history and functioning of our company. The program will begin in spring of 2019 and will include, in addition to the training of volunteers, the development of a volunteer handbook and the writing of a history of the guild and the opera company.

MUSKOKA OPERA FESTIVAL **Opera Muskoka Festival Tenth Anniversary Bursary Project**

In celebration of their 10th anniversary, the **Muskoka Opera Festival** is starting a new tradition by awarding $500 to a young singer at its Our Stars of Tomorrow concert. To guide the festival committee in the selection of the recipient of the award they will engage an expert from the **Royal Conservatory** in Toronto to share his/her expertise.

OPERA MAINE **Opera Maine 25thAnniversary Exhibition / Portland Public Library Lewis Gallery**

The exhibit will be designed and installed by an **Opera Maine** volunteer with assistance from other volunteers. The exhibition will celebrate Opera Maine's 25-year history of professional opera by displaying photographs, posters, and other materials relating to all of its productions, and presenting highlights from performances on video and audio. One section will encourage visitors to discover "what is opera?" The visitor will learn what is involved in creating an opera, including musical preparation, set design and development and the work of costume and lighting designers. The exhibit will discuss the relevance of opera in our community today.

PEACH STATE OPERA **Peach State Opera turns 10**

In its 10thanniversary year, **Peach State Opera** will undertake the redesign and printing of their brochures, restructuring and updating their website, creating an updated performance trailer video and organizing targeted email lists. Volunteers will be recruited from Atlanta college campuses to work with experienced volunteers. Peach State will also seek the guidance and expertise of two design consultants.

TWIN CITIES OPERA GUILD **Creating an Enhanced New Member Drive**

The project will create a new marketing brochure, enhance the website and better utilize social media and improve communication tools to attract more members. The Guild plans to create a new committee of volunteers to help with this new member drive, create a strategy for evaluating and expanding membership, establish procedures that will attract new opera fans, create a new brochure that will help make outreach better, promote membership through our newsletter, use social media to better tell our story.

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Find us on the internet at
www.OperaVolunteers.org

OVI celebrates the hard work of volunteers and offers ways to help make more volunteer involvement possible by recognizing achievement and creativity, supporting volunteer projects, and advocating for continuing involvement of volunteers in opera. Volunteering enriches the lives of volunteers, builds bridges to the community and makes it possible for opera companies to do more.