



High Notes

A Periodic Newsletter for Portland Opera Volunteers

January 2012

Welcome to *High Notes*! Portland Opera is pleased to launch this newsletter created especially for you, our valued volunteers. We want to periodically update you about volunteer activities and opportunities, as well as Portland Opera goings-on in general. We also want the communication to be both ways, so let us know of any news, insights, or suggestions you would like to share. Just contact **Marilyn Crilley at mcrilley@portlandopera.org**. *Bravi tutti*, Portland Opera volunteers!

Volunteer Program—Revitalized!

First and foremost, THANK YOU for your time and effort to help make Portland Opera the great organization that it is! You make it possible for us to continue to maintain our high-quality standards during these challenging financial times.

As our 2011-12 season continues, we are refreshing our volunteer program. A significant enhancement to the program is the addition of a volunteer coordinator, Marilyn Crilley, who is a volunteer herself. Marilyn began this role in May 2011. She has enjoyed meeting many of you and looks forward to getting to know more of you during upcoming volunteer events and opportunities.

Portland Opera loves our volunteers and appreciates all you do for us. Our need for your support only increases during difficult times, when at the same time our ability to provide tickets to events decreases. We know you volunteer with us because opera is important to you, and your assistance enables us to maximize our limited dollars. We hope you understand that volunteering does not guarantee you tickets to our productions. However, when tickets are available, they will be distributed to volunteers, based on your volunteer hours.

Thank you again, and we look forward to another wonderful, uplifting season of opera with your help!

Portland Opera To Go

Each year, Portland Opera To Go (POGO) takes a show on the road, sharing the power of opera, music, and theater with schools and communities throughout Oregon and SW Washington. POGO returns for 2012 with the delectable retelling of Humperdinck's classic fairy tale opera, *Hansel & Gretel*. This charming adaptation runs a fast-paced 50 minutes, just right to introduce students and novices to the magical medium of opera with a familiar story, bright sets, lively staging, and just a few surprises!



The show will be performed in schools throughout the state, as well as at eight McMenamins locations, the Elgin Opera House, Eastern Oregon University, and right here at our own Hampton Opera Center. POGO aims to challenge assumptions about opera and connect with audiences through good humor, artistry, and enthusiasm. Check out times and locations on our website.

Who knew opera was awesome?
3rd grader, St. Thomas More School, Portland

It's Not Tough Duty

by Mike Gentry

I've been volunteering for various tasks and activities with Portland Opera for over 20 years now. That far outlasts my time-in-uniform with any of the other organizations I've been involved with in this city over the last 40 years. Why do I keep re-upping, and why should you consider enlisting? Well, let me tell you. From a purely selfish angle, I love operatic repertoire, and my evenings and Sunday afternoons volunteering at the performances allow me to saturate my ears with stunning music and captivating stagings and performances. And I've enjoyed working with many friendly and enjoyable people in the numerous events over the years, as well as having a satisfying sense of pleasure at giving my time and energies to a very worthwhile cause.

Many opportunities are available for those of you who are interested in supporting Portland Opera with your volunteer efforts. The performances themselves require helpers for various activities, including light walking, boutique sales, and backstage beverage service. In the office, mailings are prepared many times each year; materials are being organized for the Opera archives; and help is needed with filing. Special events usually require coat check people and greeters. Greeters are also a new aspect at the opera performances, complete with tuxes from Mr. Formal, and the Opera's Street Fair always requires many volunteers. Several years ago we had a work crew of gardeners enjoy a beautiful summer afternoon spiffing up the flora outside the facility.

I suspect that most people who are so inclined can find a "good fit" opportunity to lend a hand from time to time. I encourage you to put your name on the volunteer list and to inquire about aspects that interest you. You won't be disappointed!



Portland Opera volunteers helping out at the Big Night gala concert on September 24, 2011

Portland Opera Needs You!

Okay, so maybe you can't really sing or you don't play an instrument. You can still play an important role in Portland Opera by helping our staff and artists: supporting productions, providing skilled assistance, and reducing costs. Here are just some of the opportunities—and you never know what might show up next.

Production:

- Supernumerary (non-singing extra)
- Light-walker
- Backstage beverage service

Education and Patron Events

- Greeting and coat check
- Decorations and flower arranging
- Photography
- Set up and take down

Behind the Scenes

- Support with mailings, photocopying, data entry, filing, proofreading, and graphic design
- Catering assistance for small events and meetings at the Hampton Opera Center
- Distributing posters, soliciting in-kind donations, and promoting ticket sales for special events.

Portland Opera's Mission

Portland Opera exists to inspire, challenge and uplift our audiences by creating productions of high artistic quality that celebrate the beauty and breadth of opera.

Figaro, Figaro, Figaro!



Introducing Figaro, Portland Opera's official new Costume Kitty who started on the job this spring! The following excerpts are from an interview conducted by Jess Crawford (our music librarian) and featured in PDX OPERAbeat, our company blog, during October 2011.

Are you a life-long opera fan, or new to the art?

Well, to be honest, I still haven't seen my first opera. I'm really more of a behind-the-scenes sort of fellow. I like to supervise the costume fittings, and sometimes I peek in on rehearsals. I figure sometimes it's just nice to pop your head in and say hello. I also spend a lot of time in the box office. I like to hear how ticket sales are going.

What's the best part about the job?

All the soft things to sleep on. Plus, it just seems like everyone is so happy to see me all the time. I think I really bring a certain something to this company.

What's the hardest part of the job?

It seems like every time I settle down on a nice scrap of fabric, somebody needs it for something. Why do they always choose to work on the thing I'm sitting on? People are always like that.

Portland Opera Studio Artists (POSA)

Portland Opera established the Portland Opera Studio program in 2005, designed to train the next generation of opera singers by providing a "bridge" from the conservatory world to the professional stage. Selected at auditions around the country, young singers fresh from some of the nation's finest vocal conservatories and music academies join the company for a rigorous two-year training program during which they are featured in their own production. Their training also includes voice, language, and movement lessons and supporting roles in Company mainstage productions.

Each Studio Artist also gives an intimate recital of Art Song at the Portland Art Museum, exploring the close relationship among composer, singer, and accompanist. André started the recital series off in impressive style in November and will be followed by Lindsay on **January 31**, Nicholas on **February 28**, and Caitlin on **April 10**. We invite you to attend these wonderful showcases of young talent and intriguing repertoire. There is a suggested \$10 donation to benefit the POSA program.



This year's artists (shown from left to right): **Nicholas Nelson** (bass baritone), **Caitlin Mathes** (mezzo soprano), Associate Music Director and Chorus Master Robert Ainsley, **Lindsay Ohse** (soprano), and **André Chiang** (baritone).

Behind the Scenes with Lindsay Ohse

When Lindsay first met her husband, Patrick McNally (also an opera singer), both were wearing goat costumes. It was 2008, and they were touring in a production of *The Billy Goats Gruff* for the Des Moines Opera outreach program. Driving through Iowa for three months in the winter is apparently more romantic than it may sound! Lindsay and Patrick were married this past August.

If she hadn't chosen an opera career, Lindsay would probably do something involving cooking. She and Patrick are both on the road a lot, so when they are home at the same time, they love to cook together. Part of cooking's appeal for Lindsay is that she likes to feed other people. Also, she says, "I really love to eat."

Another favorite pastime is playing all kinds of games: video games, board games, puzzles, and trivia. All of the POSAs play "geek trivia," with categories such as sci fi, fantasy, comic books, and Dungeons & Dragons. "Fortunately," Lindsay says, "we all know how to play roles and change our identities as part of our profession, so we can disguise our geekery when necessary."+



Madame Butterfly: One of the most emotional and unforgettable of all operas. This is Puccini at his best, with a compelling story, beautiful and powerful music, and an ending that never fails to bring tears at the fate of the hapless Cio-Cio-San and her child Dolore (Sorrow). Portland Opera's production brings together a fabulous cast, sumptuous scenery and costumes, and the renowned Portland Opera Chorus (which will break your heart with the melancholy "Humming Chorus" as Butterfly waits in vain for her beloved Pinkerton to return). Find your handkerchief and mark your calendar. Performances are February 3, 5 (matinee), 9, and 11.

Coming Up:

- **Galileo Galilei** by Philip Glass
(West Coast Premiere)
March 30, April 1, 3, 5, 7
Featuring the Portland Opera Studio Artists
in the intimate Newmark Theatre
- **Candide** by Leonard Bernstein
Keller Auditorium, May 11, 13, 17, and 19

Portland Opera Guild

Do you...

- ❖ Love opera or want to learn more about it?
- ❖ Desire to experience opera up close and personal?
- ❖ Like to attend lunches and parties with friends?
- ❖ Want to make friends who share your love of music?

Portland Opera Guild is a separate organization from Portland Opera. Guild members share an appreciation of opera and/or want to learn more about this magnificent art form. Besides sponsoring the Portland Opera Studio Artists, activities include:

- Lunch series that includes music and a preview of the upcoming mainstage opera
- Staffing the boutique at the Keller Auditorium during opera performances
- Hosting the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions for the Oregon District
- Annual opera benefit event
- Yearly holiday party

For more information about Portland Opera Guild, go to www.portlandoperaguild.com or email: info@portlandoperaguild.com

Join the Conversation!

You can find out more about the subjects in these articles, as well as much more, at:

- Portland Opera website: www.portlandopera.org
- Volunteer information: www.portlandopera.org/volunteer
- Marilyn Crilley (volunteer coordinator): mcrilley@portlandopera.org
- Laura Newton (staff volunteer liaison): newton@portlandopera.org

You can also share your thoughts with other opera lovers by going to our website and clicking on "Join the Conversation." All you have to do is register to join in.

Another way to get in the loop is to follow the blogs. Go to the "Join the Conversation" page, then click on the links after the heading "Follow Us On."

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