June 23 is Opening Date for 2023 Season

Friday, June 23 is the opening night of the 2023 Opera in the Ozarks season. Featured that night is a performance of Donizetti’s delightful Italian comedy, The Elixir of Love. The season continues the following evening with the first performance of America composer Aaron Copland’s The Tender Land.

The third opera of the 2023 season, Offenbach’s hilarious Orpheus in the Underworld, first takes the stage on Tuesday, June 27. The three operas are thereafter performed on a rotating basis through Friday, July 21, when the season ends with The Elixir of Love.

Also scheduled during the 2023 season are a Broadway Cabaret concert on Thursday, July 13 at Mt. Sequoyah in Fayetteville and a concert of chamber music by Opera in the Ozarks orchestra musicians on Monday, July 17. Another Broadway Cabaret will be held on Tuesday, July 18 at the Crescent Hotel in Eureka Springs.

Each Sunday during the summer will be an Ice Cream Sundae where an ice cream truck will be dispensing frozen treats during intermissions of the operas.

Tickets for the 2023 performances will be on sale later this spring at the company web site, opera.org, or by calling the box office at (479) 253-8595. All opera performance curtain times are 7:30 p.m. except for the Sunday matinees, which are at 3:00 p.m.

This comic scene from Puccini’s La Rondine (The Swallow) was one of many crowd-pleasing moments at Opera in the Ozarks last summer.

Look for more of the same this summer as OIO features three light operas, including its first performances of a work by famed American composer Aaron Copland.

Preliminary Work for New Theater to Begin This Spring

The construction of a new theater at Inspiration Point for Opera in the Ozarks is gathering steam. Crossland Construction of Rogers, Arkansas, has been hired to be the general contractor.

The company will begin preliminary utility and infrastructure work this spring. Some of this may be ongoing during the 2023 Opera in the Ozarks season, but will be away from the main location of our summer activities and should not disrupt any of the OIO activities, rehearsals or performances.

The hope is that the new theater will be available for the summer 2024 season, although construction projects always have uncertain schedules.

The construction plans also include related facilities such as faculty housing and practice rooms, one new rehearsal space and a costume shop.

Not included in this new construction is new housing for the young artists or a scenic shop, offices, or storage spaces. OIO hopes to raise additional funds to construct additional structures to complement the other new facilities.

The new facility, once constructed, will house a number of activities. The main one, of course, will be Opera in the Ozarks, which runs from about the middle of May until the third week of July each year.

However, the facility will also be used for other purposes during the balance of the year. Those uses may include, for example, performances by other groups, holiday programs, music and training camps for other music organizations, and making the facilities available for business meetings and retreats.

A number of new programs, all dedicated to lifelong learning of music and allied arts, are under development by our staff.

A new nonprofit corporation is being set up to run the facility during the other times of the year, and that new corporation will be the one primarily responsible for fund raising for additional improvements.

The current Inspiration Point Fine Arts Colony nonprofit corporation will continue to run the Opera in the Ozarks program.

A separate article on page 3 of this issue details the work of a new Nominating and Governance Committee which is coordinating all of the details.
Goodbye to our Faculty Housing

by Nancy Preis

As you can see from these photographs of our faculty housing, the Point has seen some rough weather this winter, including tornadoes and floods. But don’t let the pictures fool you. They are not the result of a natural disaster, but the result of “unnatural” generosity.

Yes, construction is about to begin on our new, state-of-the-art opera theater and faculty housing! And the first step is demolition. We are saying goodbye to the faculty housing that has served us well for so many years.

Our first order of business was to remove all of the furniture, beds, refrigerators, air conditioning units, hot water heaters and fixtures. Our East rehearsal hall is stuffed to the rafters! After we cleared all of the furnishings out, we repurposed anything we could from the cabins and trailers: sinks, toilets, windows, doors, showers, faucets, etc. -- all of it came out. We believe that whatever could be used elsewhere was worth removing. We wanted to keep it out of a landfill.

Our contractor began the demolition/terraforming at the end of January. We are hoping to bring the new theater online by May 2024 but unfortunately our faculty housing will not be completed by our 2023 Season. This is presenting numerous challenges, both in planning and financing, but we will face the challenges of the 2023 season head on.

And that is where the “unnatural” generosity comes in to play. Our incredibly generous donors have always stepped up to ensure that opera is alive in these beautiful hills, and it is through their efforts that we can celebrate our 72nd year, the beginning of a new era and (we hope) the last season in our old theater.

We hope you are as excited as we are, and ready to tackle whatever comes our way this season by generously supporting us. OIO has always been about the passion we have to support young artists in opera performance and provide professional entertainment experiences for our patrons.

Though we say goodbye to our old housing, we are really saying hello to our bright future-a future we share, together!

A Message From the President

It's time for all of us to think about Opera in the Ozarks again -- that delightful place out on our favorite mountain top!

Duane and I were actually there last week to take a special computer to the Point that a friend had just donated. Things actually looked pretty good even in the cold, “off season.” It was fun to get to visit a little with the staff, but frankly it is not at all the same in the middle of January! But it still looked pretty nice, and we got a little tour of where everything new is going to be!

Now, we can hardly wait for the new OIO season to start when we can finally see how the Point will “really look” and hear and see those wonderful new productions that we all enjoy every summer.

This year’s operas hold great promise for fun evenings and beautiful singing so we’re anxious to get our tickets in preparation for them all. I love Donizetti’s The Elixir of Love (and really enjoyed getting to sing it in Germany lots of years ago, of course in German), but I don’t really know the other two operas, so that will be a delightful new adventure for me.

Duane and I look forward to seeing you next summer at the Point and hearing all about what you have been up to during the year. Be sure to invite a new friend to join you at the Point and we'll do the same. We hope to see all of you there!

Carole Langley
From the Artistic Director

I write this column as I prepare to leave for my first live, in-person auditions in three years. This occasion leads me to reflect on how acclimated we have become to living online. Opera in the Ozarks now schedules all auditions and manages the selection of artists using the online service YAP Tracker.

I no longer handle artists’ résumés or headshots; I only review them from the glare of my laptop screen. So, I eagerly look forward to greeting the first gussied-up soprano who has her nervous young heart set on singing at Inspiration Point this summer. After introducing the accompanist, I will say, “What would you like to sing first?” Only then will arrive the long-awaited moment as I settle back to hear the voices of young artists pursuing their dreams.

As we prepare for a new theater, we are also laying groundwork for an expanding educational and artistic mission at The Point. This season we are launching apprenticeships for two coach apprentices and a young conductor who seek careers in opera.

Apprentices need masters to mentor them, so we have engaged three dynamic new members of the artistic staff. Maestro Anthony Barrese, artistic director of Albuquerque’s Opera Southwest and music director of Opera Delaware, will conduct The Elixir of Love and partner with me to mentor the apprentice conductor. We welcome back Valerie Trujillo (Florida State University) to the Point where she began her distinguished coaching career in the 1990s. Valerie and Joel Ayau (New England Conservatory) will expertly guide and nurture the coach accompanist apprentices and our 2023 vocal artists.

Returning to direct The Tender Land is Kansas City director Linda Ade Brand, who last staged Suor Angelica/Gianni Schicchi and Into the Woods in our theater. Linda will also teach the daily stage skills class. Directing Orpheus in the Underworld will be new Eureka Springs resident Lisa Tricomi, who enjoys a varied career as an actor, director and drama therapist including pioneering work with Florida students traumatized by gun violence. Our stage will once again be adorned with sets by scenic designer and technical director Spencer Musser.

My excitement grows as I assemble our cast of young artists, orchestra and staff. See you at the Point for our 72nd season to share in that excitement. Zoom just doesn’t capture the magic.

IPFAC Board Committee Working on Restructuring Required by New Construction

In November the Inspiration Point Fine Arts Colony (IPFAC) board appointed a Nominating and Governance Committee to coordinate all of the many tasks which must be accomplished as part of the overall project for the construction of a new theater at Inspiration Point. More details about the upcoming construction appear on page 1 of this issue and have been covered in past issues of this newsletter.

On the advice of lawyers familiar with the tax implications, we will be establishing a new nonprofit corporation to actually own and operate the new facility. IPFAC will become the major tenant of the new facility and will continue to operate Opera in the Ozarks as it has been operated for over 70 years.

The Committee has hired an Arkansas lawyer who has filed the papers to establish the new nonprofit theater ownership corporation, to be called Inspiration Point Center for the Arts (IPCA). The Committee has established Bylaws for the new corporation. The new entity will hold its first Board of Directors meeting right around the time this newsletter is published. Serving on the Board will be Ed Henson and Janet Parsch of the IPFAC Board. Additional board members will be added soon.

The Nominating and Governance Committee is now in the process of creating the legal documents to effect a transition of the facility to IPCA and to create a long-term lease at nominal cost on behalf of Opera in the Ozarks. These documents will be intended to ensure that the Opera in the Ozarks summer season can continue for many years into the future without interruption.

Also, the Committee is working on revising the IPFAC Bylaws to accommodate the new structure and incorporate other updates to reflect current board practices. It is likely that the name of IPFAC will be simplified to just Opera in the Ozarks, to reflect the present company’s new focused purpose and to avoid any confusion with the new IPCA.

The Committee will also be nominating new officers for IPFAC (Opera in the Ozarks) as we expect to make a transition as part of taking on this new role.

Don Dagenais and Janet Parsch of the IPFAC Board are heading the Nominating and Governance Committee. Other members of the Committee are Alice Conway, Brenda Ford, Ed Henson and Janis Saket. Nancy Preis serves as the staff representative on the Committee.

You will be hearing much more about these changes in the future, but the key thing to remember is that the Opera in the Ozarks operation will continue without change, but in a newer and nicer facility once the construction is complete!

News of Our Alumni

(continued from page 2)

been performing in the Broadway production of Phantom of the Opera, singing occasional performances as Christine. She also sings in the chorus.

Susanne Burgess (OIO 1995-16) made her Metropolitan Opera debut this year as part of the chorus, and also had a small part in the company’s production of Rigoletto.

A new recording of the works of African-American composer George Walker features soprano Latonia Moore (OIO 1995) performing with the Cleveland Orchestra.

According to a review in BBC Music Magazine, Moore “occupies the often-atonal melismatic phrases with drama...”. The recording, released in No-
**Required Minimum Distributions**

Have you reached the age of 72?
We aren’t trying to be personal, but if you are retired and have reached that age, then you are required to make certain minimum distributions from any retirement savings you have accumulated in tax-deferred retirement accounts such as individual retirement accounts (IRAs) and 401(k) plans. (Note: for those born before July 1, 1949, the age is 70-1/2).

What “required minimum distribution” (RMD) means is that if you do not make distributions in at least a certain amount, you may have to pay a 50 percent excise tax on the amount you failed to distribute, according to the IRS.

So, it is important to make the distribution rather than be taxed.

These distributions must be made by April 1 of the year after you turn 72.

What is the minimum amount of distribution that you must make from your retirement savings? This is calculated differently for each taxpayer, and is based on your age and your account balance. There are a number of calculators available online which can do the calculation for you after you input your own information.

What does this have to do with IPFAC?
One way to satisfy the minimum distribution amount, if you don’t need the money for your own personal expenses, is to make a distribution to charity.

We already know that IPFAC is one of your favorite charities, so why not consider making IPFAC the beneficiary of a distribution you make from your retirement funds?

The company that handles your retirement investments will be able to help you do this; usually all that is involved is for you to fill out a form (often available online) with the appropriate instructions. Remember that the proper legal name is Inspiration Point Fine Arts Colony, and the address is shown on the back page of this newsletter.
You can direct the mailing to go to Carol Wright, Director of Development.

Thank you for continuing to keep IPFAC in mind when making your charitable donation decisions!

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**Sue Breuer 1931-2022**

Sue Breuer, 91, passed away on September 29, 2022 at her residence near Austin, Texas. Sue was a longtime member of the Governing Board of IPFAC and most recently served as the Vice President and Membership Chair of the Board.

Sue was a past president of the Texas Federation of Music Clubs and a former member of the National Federation of Music Clubs Board of Directors. She was also a longtime member and past president of the Wednesday Morning Music Club of Austin.

Sue grew up in the Rio Grande Valley and was active in Federated Music Clubs there before she and her family retired to Austin. She served as a church organist and often played the piano as an accompanist for church groups.

She held leadership roles at both the club and district level for the National Federation of Music Clubs. The Texas Federation of Music Clubs presented her with a Distinguished Service Award. She was also honored with a Servant Leadership Award at Opera in the Ozarks.

Sue’s survivors include four children, five grandchildren and one great-granddaughter. Memorial services were conducted on October 29, 2022 at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Austin.

Carole Langley reports that she first met Sue at a national NFMC meeting. “Sue was a true believer in OIO and in the great things that happen there for our students. She was anxious to support these wonderful young musicians and of course she loved OIO and was willing to help it grow in every way possible. Sue was devoted to helping wonderful young musicians grow at OIO and to share her love of music with all of us.”
Thanks to Our Annual Fund Donors

IPFAC gives its heartfelt thanks to those below who have joined IPFAC as members or donated to the IPFAC Annual Fund so far this year. Your memberships and contributions are what make Opera in the Ozarks possible, and we all owe you a deep debt of gratitude. We regret that space does not permit us to list in this newsletter memberships and contributions below $50, but please be assured that any donation of any amount is important to us and is very much appreciated.

The Annual Fund raised a total of just over $140,000.

We are on our way, but not there yet. We have a long way to reach our goal. We increased our goal substantially this year as we are developing new programs and expanding the Opera in the Ozarks experience for promising young singers. We have hired new faculty and added internship positions in the music department. We are doing everything we can think of to make our program the best in class.

If you have not yet given your stretch gift, please consider mailing us a check or going to www.Opera.org to make a safe, easy contribution. Auditions have begun and this summer’s extra activities are starting to come together. Your gift will make all the difference and help us sustain our wonderful program and launch our artists into a bright future.

$10,000 and above

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Carole and Duane Langley
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(continued on page 6)
its opera program. Christina Ray (OIO 2015) is an instructor of voice at the University of Missouri. The opera company they founded, Landlocked Opera, will be performing in both Columbia and the Kansas City area in the coming year. Last summer the couple sang in Copland’s *The Tender Land* at the Utah Festival Opera. Their young daughter Lucy also appeared in the production.


Did you now that Carole Frederick Langley, who has been the President of the Governing Board of the Inspiration Point Fine Arts Colony since 2006, was a singer at Opera in the Ozarks in 1958? She sang the role of Nedda in *I Pagliacci* that year and also performed as Sheila in Cadman’s opera *The Witch of Salem*.

Carole served on the IPFAC Governing Board as Vice President for ten years from 1995 to 2005 and became the President in 2005. She has served a total of 26 years on the Governing Board. Thank you, Carole!

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**Thanks to Our Annual Fund Donors**

(continued from page 5)

Steve Holifield and Michael Carey
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(continued from page 5)

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Phyllis Winn
Alice Witterman
Dee and Michael Woodrum
The Magical Elixir

by Stu Lewis

“When it all comes true/Just the way you’d planned/It’s funny but the bells don’t ring/It’s a quiet thing.”

Fred Ebb’s words, written in an entirely different context, might just as well apply to the climactic moment in Donizetti and Romani’s The Elixir of Love. Our hero, Nemorino, suddenly realizes that Adina, the woman whose affection seemed hopeless out of his reach, does indeed love him.

At such a moment we might expect a spectacular coloratura expression of pure joy, but Donizetti instead gives us the opposite—a moment of silence.

This leads to a plaintive bassoon solo, which introduces the equally quiet aria “Una furtiva lagrima,” which concludes with Nemorino’s declaration that he could die from love at that moment. Rarely has the principle that “less is more” been applied so brilliantly on the operatic stage.

Donizetti is generally associated with the bel canto style of composing, which emphasized florid singing and displays of vocal acrobatics, and many operas featuring this technique still lay in his future.

The aria “Ah mes amis” from The Daughter of the Regiment is considered by many tenors to be the ultimate challenge in the standard repertoire. Yet in “Una furtiva lagrima” critic Frank Merkling sees a dramatic shift from the Classic to the Romantic era: “It portends a coming world of twilight trysts at fountains, of lovers who die for each other, indeed of all the notions that crowd Adina’s girlish head as she devours her medieval romances.”

In a way, this scene typifies the entire opera, which is a gentle romantic comedy. There are no real villains—just a pompous male chauvinist, a foolish sergeant who believes that he can have any woman whom he wants, and a travelling salesman of bogus medicines, who is capable of charming the audience as much as he does the people of the village, who sing his praises as he hustles on to the next village.

Were he to ask for our approval, as does Gianni Schicchi in the opera which bears his name, we would certainly grant it.

In constructing his libretto, Felice Romani created the perfect story line, in which all of the complications are perfectly worked out.

The elixir that the salesman, Dulcamara, sells Nemorino may be simply a bottle of cheap Bordeaux, but in a sense it is truly magical. Had Nemorino not heard the story of the elixir, had he not mortgaged his freedom to purchase it, had he or Adina not been the only residents of the village not to learn of Nemorino’s sudden acquisition of wealth due to the death of his uncle, Adina never would have realized the depth of his love for her—and of her feelings for him.

By the end of the opera, even Dulcamara has come to suspect that the love potion has worked, just as Fred Gailey (in The Miracle on 34th Street) is left to wonder if the man he has “proved” to be Santa Claus really is who he claims to be.

Yet it is not only the plot and the marvelous music that attract us to this opera. In Elixir Donizetti and Romani have created one of opera’s greatest heroines. Adina, unlike most of her operatic counterparts, is a truly liberated woman. She is apparently the only literate person in the village, as we can see when she reads the story of Tristan and Isolde to her compatriots.

In fact, as Nemorino tells us in his opening aria, he is attracted to her mind as much as he is to her physical appearance—a rarity, if not a unique occurrence, in opera. Unlike the typical opera heroine, who needs to overcome family restraints to follow her heart in pursuing a husband or lover, she is free to choose the man she wants.

We may be puzzled by her apparent willingness to marry the boorish Belcore, but it appears that we are not meant to believe that she would actually go through with it.

In short, though this opera was written nearly two centuries ago, The Elixir of Love is very much an opera for our times.

And don’t be surprised if, like Adina, you shed a furtive tear when, before the final curtain, love finally conquers all.
New Life Members

IPFAC is pleased to announce the addition of two new Life Members, Catherine Coke and Lori Earnest. Both of these ladies are alums of Inspiration Point and gave master classes to the young singers in 2022. They were made Life Members through generous donations of long-time IPFAC supporter Alice Martinson.

Thank you, Alice, and congratulations to Catherine and Lori for being our newest Life Members!

In December four aficionados of Opera in the Ozarks traveled to New York City with a group from the Kansas City Lyric Opera Guild to see four performances at the Metropolitan Opera in three days (!). The main object of the journey was to see OIO alum Latonia Moore sing the title role of Aida. Her magnificent performance earned a well-deserved standing ovation.

Shown here are (left to right) Don and Pat Dagenais and Janet and Luke Parsch.

Please make checks payable to IPFAC and mail to:
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Your membership gift is important to IPFAC. Thank you so much!