

Opera Columbus

Annual Report

2019-2020





Dear Opera Columbus Fans+Friends

The 2019-2020 season was full of change and challenges we couldn't have predicted a year ago, when we prepared our last annual report. There were certainly difficult days in the spring, but we cannot allow that to overshadow the wonderful things we did in the 2019-2020 season.

There were many highlights in our performances last season, including our collaboration with BalletMet, the Columbus Symphony, and CAPA for *Twisted 3*. Our commitment to inclusivity continued with the performance of *As One* and our Opera Asks Luncheon, and our dedication to engaging and artistically excellent opera was on full show in *The Barber of Seville*. (Who doesn't love a good t-shirt cannon?)

But Opera Columbus is so much more than just an opera company. We are an essential part of our community's social and emotional fabric. We invest in Columbus' future through our educational and community programming, including *The Voice of Freedom*, Opera Goes to School and the new Opera Access program.

Change is in the air as we enter Opera Columbus' 2020-2021 season. The new season features innovative productions of opera favorites *La Bohème* and *Don Giovanni*, as well as a concert by the incredibly talented Ryan Speedo Green! This entire season was thoughtfully planned by Peggy Kriha Dye, our former CEO + General Director. Her nine-year tenure at Opera Columbus shaped our company and created legions of new opera fans. We will miss her and wish her the best with her new role at Virginia Opera. We are working tirelessly to find our next leader, to continue the incredible work of Opera Columbus in creating transformative opera experiences for our community, and we are looking forward to the next stage of Opera Columbus' evolution.

I want to finish by saying THANK YOU to the incredible individuals, companies, foundations, and government agencies who stepped up this spring to rally around Opera Columbus and our entire arts community, as we canceled almost every event in our spring season. Your commitment to arts and culture in Columbus is the fuel that keeps us going every day. Please help us celebrate everything that we accomplished in 2019-2020, and all we have to look forward to in 2020-2021 and beyond.

Sincerely,



William Miller
President

2019-2020 Highlights of the Year

We opened the season with **Twisted 3**, in collaboration with BalletMet, CAPA, and the Columbus Symphony. Columbus' flagship performing arts organizations reunited for an unforgettable program in the Ohio Theatre, combining orchestral music, opera, and dance. Opera Columbus performed an abridged version of Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*.

Opera Columbus partnered with Capital University to launch the **OCCU Resident Artist Program**. Four artists (three singers and a pianist) participated in the program's first year, performing in Opera Goes to School programs, performing and covering roles in *The Barber of Seville*, and serving as voice teachers and mentors at Capital University.



The Flood, February 2019

In October 2019, *The Flood* – our February 2019 world premiere collaboration with ProMusica Chamber Orchestra – was honored by the Greater Columbus Arts Council as the 2019 winner of the **Columbus Makes Art Excellence Award** for an organization with a budget of \$1 million or more.



Twisted 3, September 2019

In association with our November 2019 production of **As One**, we hosted two events:

Opera Columbus Asks: A luncheon and panel discussion exploring the question, “How can the arts make Columbus a more inclusive community?” Our engaging panel, moderated by Dr. Frederic Bertley (COSI), featured Suzan Bradford (Lincoln Theatre Association), Dr. Melanie Corn (CCAD), Yohannan “Yogi” Terrell (Community Volunteer + Activist), and Shannon Winnubst (OSU).

As One Community Conversation: Offered in collaboration with CAPA, featuring composer Laura Kaminsky, co-librettist Mark Campbell, co-librettist and filmmaker Kimberly Reed, and special guests. The conversation also included a screening of **Visibili-T**, a new film by Columbus filmmaker Siriah Miller, which was co-commissioned by OC and CAPA.



Photo: Terry Gilliam

Opera Columbus Asks Luncheon, October 2019

In February, **The Barber of Seville** brought Rossini’s comic masterpiece to 1990s Seville, Florida, complete with neon colors, boybands, a glitter beard

contest, and a t-shirt cannon. This sold-out production featured artists from the Juilliard School’s Artist Diploma in Opera Studies (ADOS) program, Capital University Chorus, and ProMusica Chamber Orchestra.



Cooper-Bing 2020 winner Alexandra Nowakowski

The annual **Cooper-Bing Competition** in May was transformed into a virtual event using video performances by our finalists, and available to the public for free online. The winner of the competition was soprano Alexandra Nowakowski.

Opera Access is a new sponsorship program that supports donations of tickets to OC’s mainstage productions to community organizations, helping to make our performances accessible to those who may otherwise be unable to afford to buy tickets. For example, we donated 96 tickets to *As One* to 16 partner organizations, including Equitas Health, Franklin Country Office of Justice Policy & Programs, Kaleidoscope Youth Center, LifeCare Alliance, The Ohio Prison Arts Connection, and YWCA Columbus.

*As One, November 2019*

EVOLUTION OF OPERA

Opera Columbus is a leader in an industry-wide movement to make opera more inclusive and representative of our society, creating opportunities for artists to be included in our productions not as tokens or as placeholders but as true contributors to the art form and the industry. This will be manifested in our 2020-2021 season in the creation of the Director/Conductor Residency for individuals who identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color). In this past season we brought this to Columbus through our production of *As One*, which told the incredible story of one transgender woman's journey.

*The Voice of Freedom: Civil Rights, October 2019*

COMMUNITY EVENTS

The Voice of Freedom: Civil Rights, a community-based performance program celebrating Black music and culture, and highlighting gospel, jazz, and works from the Civil Rights Movement, was presented in fall 2019. We offered free performances of the program in 11 locations, including Columbus Metropolitan Library branches, King Arts Complex, Reeb Avenue Center, and OSU Wexner Medical Center.

We continued to bring opera to venues and events throughout central Ohio, with performances by OC artists at "Rhythm on the River"; Pelotonia; the Ohio Civil Rights Commission's Ohio Civil Rights induction ceremony; the City of Columbus' Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Breakfast; and the New Albany Symphony Orchestra's Holiday Spectacular.

Adapting to Change – Responding to COVID-19

COVID-19 hit Opera Columbus right between our eyes. As headlines raged and events started to cancel, our 2020 Gala was just days away. In advance of directives from community health leaders, we canceled our gala out of concern for our patrons and their health. The outpouring of support was remarkable, with more than **90% of gala tickets** converted to donations to help Opera Columbus during the challenging months ahead. And on the night of the gala, our team served the food that was intended to feed our gala guests to the YWCA Family Center, where it provided **three meals for over 50 families.**



As our community continued to adapt and change to our pandemic reality, we rolled up our sleeves to make sure every single artist who was scheduled to perform in our canceled productions (*The Journey* and *The Poppea Project*) received a check to help them weather the storm.

In an effort to stay connected to our patrons and to provide them with fun and engaging content, Opera Columbus created **Opera At Home**, bi-monthly emails featuring virtual content. Each newsletter featured opportunities to experience opera online, including links to Metropolitan Opera HD performances, streamed performances compiled by Opera America, educational resources to support at-home learning, OC-themed Zoom backgrounds, and more.

One of our biggest success stories of the end of 2019-2020 was the incredible transformation of the Cooper-Bing Competition from an in-person event to a virtual event, which resulted in a tremendous increase in the reach of the event to our community and beyond, as the competition was available to the public for free online. The reach of the competition was approximately **6,000** total, including views on Facebook, YouTube, and the OC website. The reach on Facebook alone was over **5,600**, with **1,852** unique views. **589** voted for the audience choice award, including voters as far away as Argentina, New Zealand, and Thailand. We were delighted that our judges selected soprano Alexandra Nowakowski as the 2020 Cooper-Bing Vocal Competition Winner.

In the closing months of the 2019-2020 season, it became clear that the start of the 2020-2021 season would be very different, so our season was transformed to ensure most if not all events will be able to take place in smaller venues, virtually, or later in the spring of 2021. OC will persevere and bring opera to Columbus!

2019-2020 Collaborations



EDWARD LIANG
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Artistic partner for *Twisted 3*, costuming for mainstage productions



Community programming



Artistic partner for *Twisted 3*

Juilliard

The Juilliard School ADOS program, in partnership for Opera Columbus Gala and productions



Education and Community programming



Community programming



Performed in *As One*



THE KING ARTS COMPLEX

Community programming



COLUMBUS
METROPOLITAN
LIBRARY

Education and Community programming



LIFECARE
ALLIANCE

Community programming



columbus
symphony

Artistic partner for *Twisted 3*



EquitasHealth
Care for All

Community programming



Community programming



Community programming



OHIO
Prison
Arts
Connection

Community programming

PELOTONIA®

Community programming

ProMusica
CHAMBER
ORCHESTRA

Performed in *The Barber of Seville*



Community programming

eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca
columbus ohio

Community programming



Photo: Randall L. Schieber

FINANCE

Statement of Financial Position

June 30, 2020

2020

Cash, Cash Equivalents & Investments	\$268,308
Other Current Assets	\$171,145
Total Current Assets	\$439,453
 Total Non-current Assets	 \$537,640
 TOTAL ASSETS	 \$977,093
 Total Liabilities	 \$89,643
 Without Donor Restrictions	 \$241,149
With Donor Restrictions	\$646,301
Net Assets	\$887,450
 TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	 \$977,093

Statement of Activities & Change in Net Assets

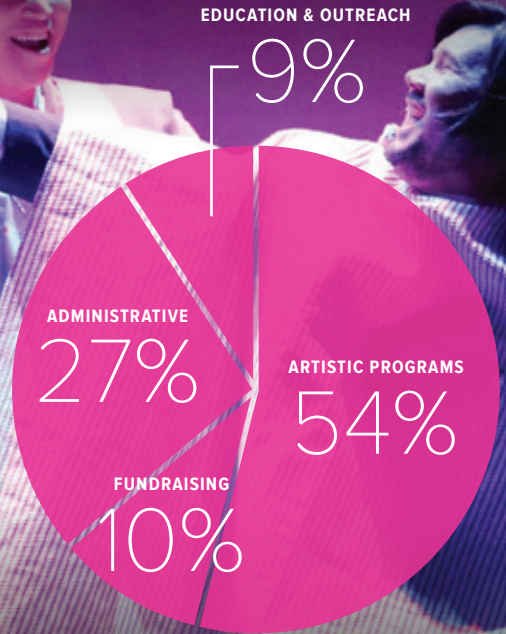
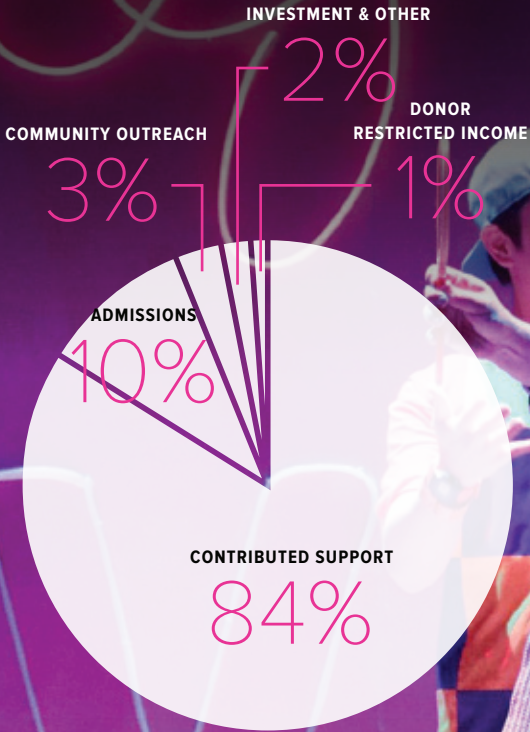
For the Year ended June 30, 2020

2020

Revenue	
Contributed Revenue	\$1,077,331
Earned Revenue	\$204,472
TOTAL REVENUE	\$1,281,803
 Expenses	
Productions	\$769,395
Education and Community Programs	\$133,996
Management and General	\$391,527
Fundraising & Special Events	\$139,265
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,434,183
 Change in Net Assets	 (\$152,380)
 Less Donor Restricted Income and Expenses	 \$159,158
 Change in Operating Net Assets	 \$6,778

Operating Revenue

\$1,281,803



Operating Expenses

\$1,434,183

Financial Highlights

The gain from operations excludes activities related to restricted contributions and investments and resulted in a gain of \$6,778 for the year ended June 30, 2020. The unrestricted net assets increased from \$231,000 to \$234,000.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Opera Columbus was able to maintain 75% of prior years total income due to its public support and contributions.

Eleventh consecutive year with a realized operating surplus.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTERS

With gratitude, Opera Columbus acknowledges all of our institutional supporters. This publication lists names for donors who made gifts, pledges, and in-kind donations in the 2020 fiscal year (July 1, 2019–June 30, 2020).

\$100,000+



\$50,000–\$99,999



\$10,000–\$49,999

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\$2,500–\$4,999

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\$5,000–\$9,999

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\$500–\$1,499

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*Every effort has been made to ensure this list is accurate and complete. If we have made an error, please contact the Development Office at 614-221-5249 with your correction. Donors indicated with an * are remembered for their generosity during their lifetime.*

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With gratitude, Opera Columbus acknowledges all of our individual donors. This publication lists names for donors who made gifts, pledges, and in-kind donations in the 2020 fiscal year (July 1, 2019–June 30, 2020).

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Bill Miller, President
KPMG LLP

I am particularly fond of comedies, especially our recent *Barber of Seville* (February 2020.) Opera Columbus has evolved in the years I've been on the board, and I'm proud of how unique each production is and the variety of what we produce. When someone asks me why I am part of Opera Columbus, I let them know that I enjoy operas because they are stories about current-day drama (love, cheating, betrayal, mistaken identity) in a historical context. It can be fun AND touch the soul. I am looking forward to this season's production of *La Bohème* because it will be a wonderful adaptation of a classic opera in an engaging location at 400 W. Rich St. Serving Opera Columbus since 2005.



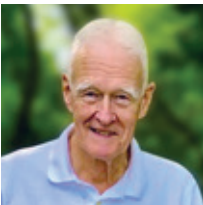
Femi Adeyanju, Vice President + Finance Chair
Ernst & Young

This season I am looking forward to seeing the performance by Ryan Speedo Green and learning more about how he became interested in and successful in opera. Although I have not been with Opera Columbus for very long, I am excited about the possibilities of the company. My first opera was OC's *Carmen* in 2017, and I was excited by this art form that combines music, drama, and dance to tell a compelling story. One thing I love about Opera Columbus is the opportunity to meet artists and to hear about their experiences. Serving Opera Columbus since 2017.



Tricia Rigel, Vice President + Development Chair
Cardinal Health, Inc.

My first experience with Opera Columbus was as part of the technical team that designed and implemented our incredible production of Gluck's *Orphée* (April 2018,) featuring dramatic projections during the performance. After getting to know OC through that experience, I was immediately drawn to the energy of the company and the board's dedication to the art form. I am looking forward to all our 20 – 21 season productions, including our return to the beautiful Southern Theatre for *Don Giovanni*. Serving Opera Columbus since 2018.



Sheldon A. Taft, Secretary
Vorys, Sater, Seymour & Pease (retired)

I started my OC activities about 40 years ago with the Opera Impresarios (OC's volunteer support group). In the late 1980's I was recruited to join the board, and in 1991 I was elected President. The first opera I ever heard was probably *Aida*, and the first I saw was probably *Madama Butterfly*. One of my favorite OC productions was *Lucia di Lammermoor* presented in the 1990's by our General Director Bill Russell. My favorite description of opera comes from my sixth-grade teacher, and it is as true today as it was when she said it over 70 years ago: Opera is a confluence of all the art forms, including orchestra, singing, dancing, acting, costumes and staging, to tell ageless stories about personal relationships and conflicts. Serving Opera Columbus since the 1980s.



Charles C. Warner
Porter, Wright, Morris & Arthur LLP

Opera Columbus has been a part of my life for nearly 30 years, giving me a great deal of enjoyment as I've served as President twice and now as a Life Trustee. Opera is special to me because it engages all the senses, including "touch" in a metaphysical sense, and it challenges you in positive ways to experience all of life's offerings, be they uplifting or the opposite. The first opera I ever saw was *Faust* at the sports arena in Cleveland, presented by the traveling Met. It was a proverbial "fat lady sings" production. *La Bohème* is my favorite opera, both because we experienced an incredible Zefferelli production with two levels of streets at the Met, and also because our second son played the role of the little boy asking for a trumpet for Christmas in the crowd scene in the OC production at the Palace. Our recent production of the brand-new opera, *The Flood*, has been my favorite Opera Columbus production. Serving Opera Columbus since 1993.

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The Voice of Freedom: Civil Rights, October 2019



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*Photo (left): Drew Bullock
Photo (middle): Terry Gilliam*



As One, November 2019



OCCU Capital Resident Artists, Fall 2019

2020-2021 SEASON



OPERACOLUMBUS.ORG

Dates accurate as of November 1, 2020.



Opera Columbus

55 EAST STATE STREET, COLUMBUS, OH 43215