

2021 National Opera Association Virtual Conference Schedule



Strengthening the Foundation

January 4-6, 2021

*** Note: all times in EST ***

Sunday 1/3

2:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Board of Directors Meeting

Monday 1/4

11:00 AM - 11:50 AM

Breakout Sessions

Steps to On-line and Live Audition Success for Artists

NOA Student Involvement Initiative with Rachel Harris, J. Bradley Baker, Joshua May, Jen Stephenson

This session will serve as a workshop for young artists to learn the ins-and-outs of preparation for on-line/live auditions. Participants will be provided with an overview of what it takes to build toward a successful audition.

Presenters will share their expertise on collaborative pianist score preparations/recorded tracks, dramatic coaching for your aria, on-line video auditions, and professional expectations needed when auditioning for graduate schools, young artist programs, and professional companies. Artists are encouraged to bring their audition materials via flashdrive to this session.

Opera's Problem with the Fat Lady: Promoting Body Size Diversity Onstage and in the Classroom

Gayla Blaisdell and Natashia Lindsey

"It ain't over 'til the fat lady sings" is heard in almost all social settings, and yet, fat opera artists regularly navigate forms of oppression that devalue and demonize their bodies. Attendees will participate in a fat liberation workshop on the issues of thin privilege, fat oppression, and healthism and then the session will critically examine fatness in the operatic genre, specifically, the importance of using a historiographical lens when discussing fatness, using language that removes the demonization of fat bodies, and engaging positively with anyone concerning their body.

"Czech" It Out: Czech Opera in the Collegiate Setting

Kylie T. Gougler

In the United States, operas by Czech composers such as Janáček, Smetana, and Dvořák have been performed in major American opera houses over the course of the last decade. The Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, and Lyric Opera of Chicago, have mounted Czech productions in previous seasons, and many regional companies have delved into this new territory with positive outcomes.

Monday 1/4

12:00 PM - 12:50 PM

Opening Ceremonies & Keynote Address

Yuval Sharon

Yuval Sharon, newly-appointed artistic director of Michigan Opera Theatre and Artistic Director of The Industry in Los Angeles will give the conference Keynote Address

1:00 PM - 2:15 PM

Responding to COVID-19: Where Do We Go From Here?

Plenary

Benjamin Brecher, Moderator

We've virtually witnessed how many of you are demonstrating responsiveness, resilience, positivity and inspiration in overcoming the significant impact COVID-19 has made on our field. As a community that is creative and compassionate, how will we ultimately emerge stronger, rising above this time of hardship, to come together, and create a brighter future for our local programs and the field at large? We're pleased to welcome a panel of colleagues who are already forging forward-thinking initiatives and resources.

2:30 PM - 3:20 PM

Breakout Sessions

Staging Sexual Violence Through Trauma-Informed Pedagogy

Lauren Carlton

This session seeks to empower educators and students to create rehearsal and performance spaces that allow for safe, repeatable choreography in instances of simulated sexual violence without the threat of participant traumatization. We will establish and discuss consent, basic staging considerations, professionalism regarding director-singer and singer-singer relationships and power dynamics, and closure procedures based on trauma-informed pedagogy and Augusto Boal's (Theater of the Oppressed) de-roling technique.

First Rehearsal Jitters: How to Start Staging with Old Friends You Just Met

Wesley Lawrence

In a professional production schedule, performing artists are typically given only a few weeks to rehearse an entire opera. The first day of staging may need to focus on an intense argument or even a romantic scene. As a professional artist, it is critical to have the ability to develop a deep level of trust and communication with fellow actors from start of the first rehearsal. This session contains interactive group activities based on several adapted acting methods (including aspects of Viewpoints, Meisner, Balk, and others), intended to prepare our young artists to handle this requirement.

What She Said: Creating New Operatic Works that Pass the Bechdel Test and Give Female Characters a Relevant Voice

Jennifer Cresswell and Kathleen Kelly

Female singers today are less likely to be artistically satisfied with the limited prospects of playing the romantic ingenue, the betrayed lover, or the sultry seductress. Through the creation of new works, we have the ability to give women identities beyond the scope of male desire. As co-librettists for Interstate, a new chamber opera based on the friendship between serial killer Aileen Wuornos and Dawn Botkins, we offer two new options: the unrepentant criminal and the loyal friend.

Monday 1/4

3:30 PM - 4:45 PM Censorship, Awareness, Evolution: Programming and Practices for Sensitive Material **Plenary**

Samuel Mungo and Amy Johnson (Moderators) Audrey Chait, Brandon McShaffrey, John T. Holiday (Panelists)

Opera is often an opportunity to put a mirror up to society. Sometimes the reflection is not pretty or comfortable, or reflect only too well the limitations of its time. This can be apparent at the outset, or revealed/magnified years later. In a time of increased racial awareness, changing gender and sexuality paradigms, and political polarity, opera must evaluate its place in current culture, both with new work and re-evaluating older works. This session will be an open-ended conversation about how to reconcile issues of sensitivity, awareness, triggering, and censorship.

5:00 PM - 5:50 PM **Q&A Breakout Session Rooms**

6:00 PM - 6:50 PM **Student Fireside Chat**

7:00 PM - 8:30 PM **Robert Hansen Collegiate Opera Scenes Competition**

This annual celebration of opera scenes is an entertaining energetic evening featuring young artists from all across the United States in undergraduate and graduate opera divisions and a musical theatre division. National finalists are selected from a competitive preliminary round.

8:30 PM - 10:00 PM **Opening Night Reception Rooms**

BYOB, meetup with old friends and welcome our newcomers in our various festive zoom rooms.

Tuesday 1/5

9:00 AM - 9:00 PM **Research Corner: Poster Session, Winning Paper and Dissertation Videos**

11:00 AM - 11:50 AM **Breakout Sessions**

Photography
Robert Breault

Explore the vast and exciting world of digital photography, and be introduced to “do-it-yourself” ideas on how to capture quality production shots that can be easily distributed to cast members or used for archival and publicity purposes. We’ll discuss ways to use a digital camera for head shots, recording recitals, streaming, virtual lessons, video recording, editing, online distribution, and will also walk through what digital photography offers in the context of the current pandemic.

Tuesday 1/5

11:00 AM - 11:50 AM

Breakout Sessions

Waulking in the Glen: When Composers and Vocalists Work Together

Jennifer Margaret Barker and Isaí Jess Muñoz

Exploring and discovering the benefits of young composers and vocalists working together, this presentation will focus on the creation and production of a fifty-minute operetta for ten female singers.

Applying the Alexander Technique to Stage and Studio Training

Mark Ross Clark

How is the Alexander Technique, discovered 130 years ago, useful to us now as directors in teaching acting and voice? Dr. Mark Ross Clark brings to this question his years as a professional singing actor as well as his work as director/teacher of many successful artists, including Lawrence Brownlee, Ailyn Perez, Kyle Ketelsen, Jamie Barton. In his work he has always been fascinated by new pedagogical techniques to bring out the best in our students, but it's only recently he's immersed himself in the study of Alexander Technique, a rediscovery of how the technique can be useful in our work.

12:00 PM - 12:50 PM

NOA Annual Business Meeting

All registrants are highly encouraged to attend. We will vote in new board members, raise a glass to those who have served faithfully, and vote on essential items brought before the board.

1:00 PM - 1:50 PM

Regional Meetup Zoom Rooms

Take time to meet and network with members in your region. Regional governors will update you on plans for 2021, and you will have the opportunity to inform your local colleagues of ideas and happenings in your area.

2:00 PM - 2:50 PM

The Creative Brain: How to Foster Creative Expression in Times of Stress

Plenary

Indre Viskontas

Anxiety is often a killer of creativity, as it pushes us towards seeking out what we know, rather than taking risks. What happens in the brain when we are stressed? How do these changes affect creativity? In this talk, Dr. Viskontas will present an overview of the acute and chronic effects of stress on the brain, and will explain how different facets of creativity are affected by stress. She will then propose ways to mitigate the effects of stress and anxiety to enhance creative expression, based on the latest neuroscience research and her experience working with creative individuals.

Tuesday 1/5

3:00 PM - 3:50 PM

Breakout Sessions

Queerness, Gender and Disability: Creating Space for Diversity in Opera

Brandon McShaffrey, Spicer Carr, Rose Freeman

Opera is finally taking its place as a genre that embraces gender diversity, queerness, disability, and neurodiversity by making their spaces more inviting and inclusive. By adopting a considerate communication, professionalism, and most of all, respect. We will tackle questions and misconceptions about pronoun usage, queer life, and other aspects of a person these identities intersect and recommended best practices. We will actively address ways to be openly and visibly inclusive in your programming, casting, and hiring as well as strategies to foster creatively fruitful environments.

Virtual Vocal Pedagogy and Performance: Lessons to Keep from the Pandemic

Celeste Landeros, Christy Lee, Gerard Ortega, Giselle Rios

The COVID-19 quarantine posed many challenges for vocal pedagogy and performance with virtual lessons and juries and canceled recitals and performances. At the same time, this shift to the virtual also had unexpected benefits. Three panelists explore positive practices that emerged from their own experience with virtual vocal pedagogy as teachers and students, then open discussion for audience members to share their practices worth keeping after the pandemic.

Opera on a Shoe-String Budget

Anne Foradori, Jen Stephenson, Marc Reynolds

Small academic opera programs are often challenged by restricted resources to produce theatrically credible performances of opera. This session serves as a guide to work with limited budget, personnel, areas of expertise, or community engagement. Discussion of strategies to suggest a period, location, define characters, and transform a recital hall into a theatrical space. Included in the session will be ideas and resources for basic costume design, set design and construction, including easy and inexpensive set painting and resources for creating stage effects with borrowed materials.

4:00 PM - 5:50 PM

Master Class with Lifetime Honoree, Dorothy Danner

Plenary

Noted for her inventive staging, Dorothy Danner has directed over 200 productions of operas, operettas, musicals and plays throughout the United States, Canada and Belgium. A dedicated and inspiring teacher, she was co-founder of the Glimmerglass Young Artist Program, has served on the faculties of the Juilliard School, the Curtis Institute of Music, and the Chautauqua Institution.

6:00 PM - 6:50 PM

Q&A Breakout Session Rooms

7:00 PM - 10:30 PM

The Carolyn Bailey and Dominick Argento Vocal Competition

Watch as the finalists in the Scholarship and Artist Divisions compete for over \$8500 in prizes, and cast your vote for the Audience Favorite awards!

Wednesday 1/6

11:00 AM - 11:50 AM

Breakout Sessions

ÓPERA EN ESPAÑOL: A Manifesto Towards the Creation of a New Spanish and American Operatic Tradition

Tania Arazi Coombs

A decade after composing *Florencia en el Amazonas*, the first Spanish-language opera commissioned by major American opera houses, in 2008, Daniel Catán published *ÓPERA EN ESPAÑOL*, a manifesto which calls for the creation of a new Spanish operatic tradition, in the manner of the Mozart and Purcell. Catán's operas, based upon Latin/o American source material, are some of the first of a new trend in American opera that feature stories representative of the Latin/o experience. This session explores this new trend and shows how Catán's success paved the way for over three dozen new American operas.

Musical-Dramatic Analysis as an Integrative Teaching-Learning Tool

David Aks

This is not a traditional analysis class, but a valuable method for performers, pianist-coaches, conductors, and directors to determine the What and Why of a composer's choices, and how those define the characters, relationships, and drama. For this session, I will use Mimi's Act I entrance from *La Bohème* to examine the musical choices Puccini made in setting this scene: melodic shape, rhythm, tempo, harmony, range, articulation, and so on. As with any role preparation, the question we ask is "Why?". For example, "Why is this in major? Why is it allegro? Why is it in 6/8? Why is it staccato?"

12:00 PM - 1:30 PM

The Sacred in Opera Lifetime Achievement Award Celebration

Plenary

NOA Sacred in Opera Initiative with Michelle Louer and Kirk Severtson (Hosts);
Isaí Jess Muñoz (SIO Chair); Alice Parker (Honoree)

NOA's SACRED IN OPERA INITIATIVE celebrates the life and legacy of this year's Sacred in Opera Award Honoree, Alice Parker. This session will share insights on Parker's work as a composer, arranger, conductor and pedagogue, which continues to inspire musicians and audiences worldwide. Highlights from Parker's five operas will be performed by students from various universities. The SIO Award serves to honor and shed light on individuals whose work has been instrumental in shaping a clearer definition of what defines "sacred" in opera, providing a context for the practice to be better understood.

2:00 PM - 2:50 PM

Breakout Sessions

Why so Blue?: Issues Related to the Psychological Wellbeing Among Student Musicians and Performers

Judy O. Marchman

This presentation will outline several points concerning the psychological and emotional wellbeing of student musicians and performers. Further discussion will include the role of the music educator (applied teacher and classroom instructor) and future responsibilities regarding the mental or emotional health of a student musician and performer.

Wednesday 1/6

2:00 PM - 2:50 PM

Breakout Sessions

The Recitative Project

Darryl Cooper

Secco recitative is often a major part of the repertoire assigned to developing young artists, yet learning it quickly and effectively can be a challenge. Using a highly effective technique, as taught by Kathryn Cathcart and Willene Gunn in San Francisco Conservatory of Music's opera workshops, recitative becomes textually and musically effective by applying simple study and learning tools.

3:00 PM - 3:50 PM

Breakout Sessions

My Sister's Keeper II: More operas by African-American Women (A Performance-Panel featuring the History of Operas by African-American Women Composers)

Minnita Daniel-Cox, Alexis Davi-Hazell, Marcía Porter, Rosalyn W. Floyd

A sequel of a performance-panel presented at the 2020 National Opera Association conference in Cleveland, "My Sister's Keeper II" continues to explore the history and scope of opera compositions by African-American women. These trailblazing artists made under appreciated contributions to contemporary opera, in the face of financial and cultural barriers, and used their gifts to synthesize the techniques of Western art music with those of the African-American tradition. The session incorporates live performance, and media clips alternated with short narrative.

The Influence of Film in the Operatic Genre

Chuck Chandler

In the past 15 years, a subgenre called cinemopera by some has emerged with direct ties to film and television. There are prominent film composers writing operas, operas based on screen plays, and many other influences of film in modern opera. The use of film and television for source material has also impacted casting decisions, so staying current on the repertoire and what it requires is the focus of this session.

4:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Q&A Breakout Session Rooms

5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Closing Ceremony

We invite you to join us as we celebrate and hear the vocal competition winners Concert and present our annual awards.

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

After Party Zoom Rooms

Thursday 1/7

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Board of Directors Meeting