
HIGH NOTES

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ACADEMY OF VOCAL ARTS

2019/2020 SEASON



Timothy Renner as Alphonse XI, and Anne Marie Stanley as Léonor in *La favorite*.

Photo credit: Paul Sirochman

AVA

ACADEMY OF
VOCAL ARTS

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ACADEMY OF VOCAL ARTS

The mission of the Academy of Vocal Arts is to be the world's premier institution for training young artists as international opera soloists. With its rigorous instruction and coaching, as well as performance opportunities in concerts, recitals, and fully-staged operas, the Academy trains the most promising young singers from around the world, while also contributing to the performing arts community in the greater Philadelphia region.

Founded in 1934, the Academy of Vocal Arts is the only tuition-free institution dedicated exclusively to the study of voice. When Resident Artists graduate from AVA, they are prepared to share their gifts with audiences around the world, fulfilling not only their own hopes and dreams, but those of AVA's wise and generous founder, Helen Corning Warden.

Gifted singers come to Philadelphia from all over the world to seek the exceptional guidance and training that the Academy of Vocal Arts offers. Admission to the tuition-free program is determined yearly by competitive auditions. While hundreds of hopeful singers apply, only 8-10 are accepted into the four-year program.

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Dear Friends,

It is my pleasure to present *High Notes*, the annual report of the Academy of Vocal Arts. This report covers our most recent fiscal year, from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020. While the 2019-2020 season faced significant challenges due to Covid-19, it also featured some outstanding triumphs. AVA opened its 85th Opera Theatre season with a successful run of Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*. We also celebrated 40 years of the Giargiari Bel Canto Competition at the Kimmel Center's Perelman Theater. And for the first time in AVA's history, we presented the original French version of Donizetti's *La favorite* as one of our fully-staged productions.

Aside from working on operas and singing in frequent concerts, recitals, lectures, and informal gatherings, the Resident Artists were busy preparing for the ever-changing demands of a professional operatic career. Behind the success of each AVA Resident Artist is the outstanding AVA faculty, who continue to be supportive, forward-thinking, and even ready to participate in virtual performances and events!

Seven of our Resident Artists graduated this year: Abraham Bretón, Mackenzie Gotcher, Rebecca Gulinello, Claire de Monteil, Timothy Renner, Oliver Sewell, and Brent Michael Smith all received their Artist Diplomas. We were proud to present them in a graduation recital video, which we shared with our patrons to enjoy from home. We wish these talented singers well on their operatic journeys.

We hope that you had the opportunity to join us *in-person* at AVA before we unfortunately had to cut our 2019-2020 season short. Please consider supporting us in the upcoming year. We will continue to train our Resident Artists and provide them with performance opportunities that we look forward to sharing with our community in new and innovative ways.

By contributing to the tuition-free training of these outstanding young artists, you are helping to support the future of opera. Thank you for helping the Academy of Vocal Arts continue to enjoy great success!

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "K. James McDowell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

K. James McDowell

President and Artistic Director

THE 2019/20 SEASON

The Opera Theatre season began with a black-tie Opening Night Celebration, which featured a performance of Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*. Maestro Christofer Macatsoris conducted the AVA Opera Orchestra while director David Gately's comedic staging came to life. Opening Night guests enjoyed cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, a seated dinner by Catering By Design, and a Champagne toast to the 2019-2020 season. The beautiful evening was led by co-chairs Drs. Romeo and Emmeline Abella, and the décor was provided by Kay Bossone.

AVA's *Le nozze di Figaro* was met with great success throughout its run of

performances in Center City, as well as in Haverford and at the Zoellner Arts Center at Lehigh University. Reviewers praised the "promisingly high vocal standard" of the cast, and labeled the performance as "lively and propulsive" (Parterre Box.)

For the first time in AVA's history, Donizetti's *La favorite* was presented as one of the mainstage productions. This bel canto masterwork was conducted by Master Vocal Coach Richard A. Raub, directed by Gregory Boyle, and featured a double cast of performers, all of whom "sang with promise and panache" (Broad Street Review.)



From AVA's production of *Le nozze di Figaro*:

Top: Aubry Ballarò and Brent Michael Smith as Susanna and Figaro **Left:** Aubry Ballarò, Kara Mulder, and Pascale Spinney as Susanna, the Countess, and Cherubino, respectively **Right:** Brent Michael Smith and Pascale Spinney as Figaro and Cherubino, respectively.
Photo credit: Don Valentino



From AVA's production of *La favorite*:

Above: Ladies of the Court, Alice Chung, Alejandra Rojas, and Aubry Ballarò **RIGHT:** Titus Muzi and Zachary Rioux as Lords of the Court, Renée Richardson as Inès, Abraham Bretón as Don Gaspar, Timothy Renner as Alphonse XI, Anne Marie Stanley as Léonor, and Eric Delagrange as Balthazar.
Photo credit: Paul Sirochman



THE 2019/20 SEASON

The 2019 First Prize winner of the Giargiari Bel Canto Competition was soprano Yihan Duan, who impressed the audience and judges with her captivating rendition of “Sola, perduta, abbandonata” from Puccini’s *Manon Lescaut*. She also won the Audience Favorite Award, as well as the WRTI Listeners’ Choice Award. Bass Brent Michael Smith won Second Prize with “Sous les pieds d’une femme” from Gounod’s *La reine de Saba*. Master Vocal Coach and Music Director Danielle Orlando accompanied all singers at the piano.



AVA’s recital series continued with a program of ‘Lieder Rarities’ in the fall, which was led by Master Vocal Coach Luke Housner. Resident Artists shared rarely-performed selections by composers including Beethoven, Weber, Schubert, Berg, and Korngold. Maestro Macatsoris led the winter recital, which featured operatic duets and selections by Gershwin, Bernstein and Weill. The spring recital program, *Massenet: Les oubliés* featured forgotten opera excerpts by Jules Massenet. In this recital, Resident Artists were accompanied by AVA Vocal Coach, Audrey Saint-Gil, as well as AVA Opera Orchestra Principal Cellist, Vivian Barton.

Due to the rapid spread of Covid-19 beginning in March 2020, AVA’s annual concert of sacred music, *Jubilate!* had to be cancelled. However, conductor David Antony Lofton led the AVA Opera Orchestra with the Resident Artists in a recorded version of the full program, which was broadcast on WRTI for listeners to enjoy.

Unfortunately, the spring production of Verdi’s *Un ballo in maschera* had to be cancelled, as did AVA’s highly anticipated 85th anniversary celebration, *BrAVA Philadelphia!*, which was to take place at the Met Philadelphia.

Top Left: First and Second Prize Winners of the 2019 Giargiari Bel Canto Competition, Yihan Duan and Brent Michael Smith, respectively, with Giargiari sponsors, Walter and Alice Strine **Top right:** Brent Michael Smith, Bass, and Master Vocal Coach, Danielle Orlando at the piano **Bottom right:** Yihan Duan, Soprano. Photo credit: Don Valentino



Top left: Renée Richardson sings in the spring recital **Top right:** Claire de Monteil sings in the winter recital, accompanied by Maestro Macatsoris **Bottom left:** New Artists at the 2019 New Artist Recital: Sahel Salam, Zachary Rioux, Anne Marie Stanley, Emily Margevich, Cody Müller, Griffen Hogan Tracy **Bottom right:** Anne Marie Stanley sings in the fall recital, accompanied by Master Vocal Coach Luke Housner. All photos by Don Valentino

CLASS OF 2020

AVA bid a fond farewell to seven Resident Artists this year. In lieu of the annual AVA Graduation Recital, our graduates sang in a virtual recital, which our patrons were still able to enjoy from home. We will miss these talented singers, and we look forward to following their promising careers around the world.



ABRAHAM BRETÓN, TENOR

Memorable AVA Roles: Roberto, *Le Villi*; Benvolio, *Roméo et Juliette*; Normanno, *Lucia di Lammermoor*; Borsa, *Rigoletto*; Ruiz, *Il trovatore*; Mime, *Das Rheingold*.



TIMOTHY RENNER, BARITONE

Memorable AVA Roles: Alphonse XI, *La favorite*; Giorgio Germont, *La traviata*; Capulet, *Roméo et Juliette*; Music Master, *Ariadne auf Naxos*; Alberich, *Das Rheingold*; Count di Luna, *Il trovatore*; Title role, *The Demon*; Title role, *Rigoletto*.



MACKENZIE GOTCHER, TENOR

Memorable AVA Roles: Roberto, *Le Villi*; Manrico, *Il trovatore*; Edgardo, *Lucia di Lammermoor*.



OLIVER SEWELL, TENOR

Memorable AVA Roles: Fernand, *La favorite*; Ferrando, *Così fan tutte*; Tybalt, *Roméo et Juliette*; Alfredo, *La traviata*; Dance Master/Brighella, *Ariadne auf Naxos*; Messenger, *Il trovatore*.



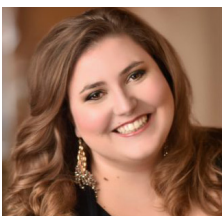
REBECCA GULINELLO, SOPRANO

Memorable AVA Roles: Una Novizia, *Suor Angelica*; Anna, *Le Villi*; Wood Sprite, *Rusalka*; Composer, *Ariadne auf Naxos*; Papagena, *Die Zauberflöte*; Tamara, *The Demon*.



BRENT MICHAEL SMITH, BASS

Memorable AVA Roles: Title role, *Le nozze di Figaro*; Frère Laurent, *Roméo et Juliette*; Don Alfonso, *Così fan tutte*; Frère Laurent, *Roméo et Juliette*; Marchese D'Obigny, *La traviata*; Truffaldino, *Ariadne auf Naxos*; Fafner, *Das Rheingold*.



CLAIRE DE MONTEIL, SOPRANO

Memorable AVA Roles: Title role, *Suor Angelica*; Foreign Princess, *Rusalka*; Fiordiligi, *Così fan tutte*; Title role, *Ariadne auf Naxos*; Leonora, *Il trovatore*; First Lady, *Die Zauberflöte*.



All photos by Don Valentino and Paul Sirochman

OPENING NIGHT OF THE 2019-2020 SEASON



1 Co-Chairs of the Opening Night celebration, Drs. Romeo and Emmeline Abella, with Opening Night décor sponsor, Kay Bossone (middle)

2 Gabi Crouchley, Charles Michael, Peter Toner, Charlotte Watts, Jennifer Toner

3 Scott Guzielek, Judith McGruther, and Mark Kerschner

4 Rick Pitcairn, Dr. Megan Sage, Susan Kane, and Bryan Hymel

5 Dr. Lamberto Bentivoglio, Barbara Donnelly Bentivoglio, and Scott Guzielek

6 Lucinda Landreth and Susan Kane

7 Charlotte MacLean, Marlene Milner, and George Milner

8 Kenneth Ahl, Dr. Diane Ahl, Stephen Parahus, and Myrna Chao

9 David Sherman, Teri Sherman, Dr. Wilma Rossi, Joseph McGuire, and Johanna Swartzentruber

10 Dr. Elias Packman, Judith Broudy, and Drs. Ruth and Steven Ryave

11 Drs. Bruce and Toby Eisenstein



All photos by Philly ChitChat and Don Valentino

NIGHT AT THE OPERA



THURSDAY NOVEMBER 14, 2019

AVA welcomed over 130 of Philadelphia's Young Professionals (ages 45 and under) into the Helen Corning Warden Theater for its second annual Young Professionals' Night at the Opera. The evening featured an exclusive performance of Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, a pre-performance lecture given by Vice President and General Manager Scott Guzielek, an intermission cocktail reception, and a post-performance Champagne toast with the performers. For the second year in a row, this sold-out event was a great success, and we look forward to engaging with Young Professionals in the 2020-2021 season!

This performance was underwritten by Neal W. Krouse.

All photos by Don Valentino



OPERA OUTREACH

The 2019-2020 Opera Outreach program began with the student matinee performance of Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* at The Haverford School's Centennial Hall on Wednesday November 22, 2019. Over 600 students attended from 16 public, private, charter and home school groups across the greater Philadelphia region. A comprehensive study guide was distributed electronically in advance of the event so that teachers and students could prepare for what they would see and hear together. Following the performance, principal cast members stayed on stage for a brief question-and-answer session.

There were 677 participants holding reservations for the matinee performance of Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera*, which was to take place on May 6, 2020. Unfortunately, this event had to be cancelled due to Covid-19. However, the study guide, along with a link to a video of a full performance of the opera was distributed to the teachers and parents, with the hope that it could be used as a resource for at-home learning.

To learn more about the Academy of Vocal Arts' Opera Outreach program, or to help offer Opera Outreach to a school near you, contact Rebecca Carr at rcarr@avaopera.org



All photos courtesy of Rebecca Carr

OUR AVA FAMILY

Please join us in welcoming our New AVA Board Members



CAROLYN SEIDLE, a Philadelphia area native, attended local schools and colleges. Her career began as a secondary school teacher and continued into technical writing and editing, technical course development, and information design. She is a trustee for Opera Philadelphia and Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center. Among her volunteer experiences are Pennsylvania Ballet and Wayne Art Center. She is a member of The Merion Cricket Club and AVA's Main Line Opera Association.



MARK KERSCHNER attended his first opera in Warsaw, Poland in 1991 and after that became a fan. A Pennsylvania Dutch farm boy, Mark grew up in the Lehigh Valley and attended Lehigh University. His forty-year career included seven years of overseas assignments in England, The Netherlands and Germany, while working for ITT and BASF. Subsequently, Mark served as CFO of CDI Corporation in Philadelphia. Today, Mark provides consulting and advisory services to middle market companies. He serves on the Finance Advisory Board of Indigo Biosciences. Mark is a licensed CPA.

IN MEMORIAM

ANN R. STEPHENSON



Top: Ann and Richard Stephenson at the 2018 *Viva la Voce!* gala

Bottom: Ann with Luciano Pavarotti

The AVA family remembers one of its most passionate friends and long-time board member, Ann R. Stephenson, who passed away in 2019. Ann served two extended terms on the AVA Board, first from 1965 to 1974, and later from 1998 to 2018. She was named Board Emeritus in 2018 and awarded the 2019 AVA Board of Directors Outstanding Service Award at the *Viva la Voce!* Gala at the Barnes Foundation.

For decades, Ann was a fixture in all things opera in Philadelphia and beyond. She served on the Opera Philadelphia Board, President of the Opera Guild, and worked with Jane Nemeth for the Luciano Pavarotti Competition. She also served on the board of Opera America, and as chair of the Northeast Region.

Ann was tireless in her support of AVA and its affiliate Bucks County Opera Association. Among many other tasks, she became indispensable in helping organize table seating at AVA galas, a herculean task as the events grew larger and more popular.

Remembering AVA Friends

Dr. William B. Carey

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Dr. Donald Chittum

•

Dr. Raymond Friday
(AVA '64)

(AVA Board Emeritus)

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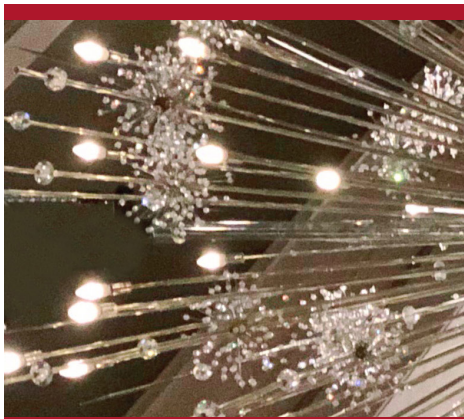
Eugene Gladston
(Bucks County Opera Association)

•

Edith A. Reinhardt
(AVA Board Emeritus)

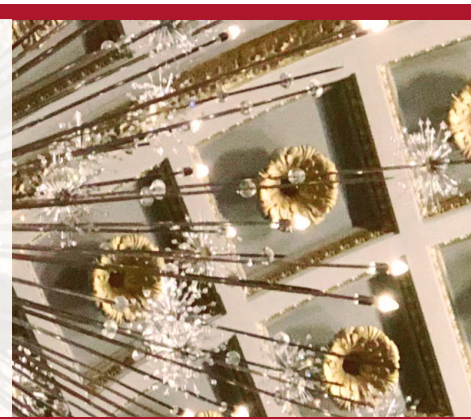
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Anna Williams
(Bucks County Opera Association)



BRAVA PHILADELPHIA!

85TH ANNIVERSARY
ACADEMY OF VOCAL ARTS



In honor of AVA's 85th anniversary, a concert extravaganza of opera stars, featuring Angela Meade, Latonia Moore, James Morris, Bryan Hymel and Taylor Stayton, among others, was planned for March 28, 2020 at the magnificent Met Philadelphia. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, it was not to be. This would have been the first time in over 80 years that opera would have been performed at Philadelphia's Metropolitan Opera House. In its heyday, The Met featured performances by operatic legends such as tenor Enrico Caruso, soprano Rosa Ponselle, and conductor Arturo Toscanini.

Every five years, the Academy of Vocal Arts celebrates its anniversaries and also the city that it has called home for over eight decades with *BrAVA Philadelphia!* As part of this celebration, AVA recognizes Philadelphia and the individuals who have helped shape the city's arts and cultural community. This past March would have been no exception.



AVA chose to honor with the AVA Distinguished Achievement in the Arts Award the three individuals who have been instrumental in saving Philadelphia's Metropolitan Opera House: **Pastor Mark A. Hatcher, Sr.** of the Holy Ghost Headquarters, **Geoff Gordon** of Live Nation, and **Eric Blumenfeld** of EB Realty Management Corporation. This triumvirate came together to rehabilitate the building and restore it to its former glory, with Pastor Hatcher initiating the project in the 1990s. In the spirit of *BrAVA*, AVA chose to honor this year these three Philadelphia trailblazers for their tireless work in restoring The Met Philadelphia.

Of this historic institution, Pastor Mark A. Hatcher, Sr. said, "The Holy Ghost Headquarters now known as 'The Met' is the heartbeat of the Tri-State area, a place of faith, restoration, unity and love where all roads lead to 'The Met'."

This year also marks the 25th anniversary of the purchase by Pastor Mark and his church of The Met to begin its restoration. Pastor Hatcher's congregation meets every Sunday at The Met to worship.

The fourth honoree to be presented with the AVA Distinguished Achievement in the Arts Award is AVA's internationally renowned voice instructor, **Bill Schuman**, who has been on AVA's faculty for 30+ years. He is one of the world's leading teachers of singing, and his students represent some of the most important names in the opera world, Broadway, film, television and popular music. His love for the classical voice is paramount.



Recently, Bill said: "You know, in great times of joy and great times of sorrow you usually have a classical voice serve the purpose. There's something in the human expression of a classical vocal instrument. I think of funerals, inaugurations. There's something different about a great classical voice."

Schuman's operatic students, many of whom are AVA alumni, are not only major stars in the great opera houses around the world, but they have won a record number of international vocal competitions and awards. Five of his students have been honored with the Richard Tucker Award, America's most prestigious award for opera singers, including an unprecedented four consecutive winners. Four of his students have been bestowed the Beverly Sills Award by the Metropolitan Opera.

"I'm excited to get see my singers on stage. There's nothing more rewarding for a teacher. That is my reason for living. I know the hard work it takes to get there and I'm just blessed and honored that I get to assist in that. To get to see my work blossom, that's what I love to do. I wouldn't be teaching if I didn't think the voice was of a divine origin and couldn't affect people."

With reference to the stars of the Gala, Rick Pitcairn, our Chairman of the Board said: "What is their secret? What do these stars have in common? When you ask them, I know at least one answer they all come up with: their beloved teacher, Bill Schuman. For over 30 years, Bill Schuman has been, as The Wall Street Journal called him, in a feature article in 2013, 'A Teacher of Note behind Opera's Stars.'"

We look forward to presenting these honors to each of our honorees in the near future.



The historic Met Philadelphia



"All of us were so very disappointed not to celebrate our 85th Anniversary at The Met but we are happy to tell you that our generous donors still made this milestone celebration a financial win for AVA. We thank you for your extraordinary support during these difficult times. We all look forward to celebrating AVA with you on April 10, 2021 at the Penn Museum. Our Resident Artists' glorious voices will be soaring midst the mummies and ancients in this fabulous venue."

Suzanne Root, Chair, *BrAVA Philadelphia!* 2020 and *Viva la Voce!* 2021

Save the date for ***Viva la Voce!*** on **April 10, 2021**

SINGING IN THE COVID-19 WORLD

BY JUDITH LOVAT

Scott, you've been in touch with the Resident Artists over the last four months including the newcomers. How are they coping? What are they saying?

Scott Guzielek:

Some days are better than others. They've watched a business collapse around them. And it's the business that they're training for and wondering if it is going to be there. I think they're thankful that they have AVA to come to because unlike some of their colleagues who don't have any work, they know that they're going to be trained next year in some form or fashion. That's starting to give them a lot of comfort as we make this plan to re-open safely.



Vice President and General Manager,
Scott Guzielek

Can you talk briefly about the preparations being made for the singers' next year? How are they going to receive their full education?

Scott Guzielek:

The amount of time that we're considering and preparing to open the school in a safe fashion is immense. Thankfully we have a Covid-19 task force with members of the Board, and also two doctors in our community, all of whom are helping us make the best decisions possible. That's the goal. We may have to go back and forth between in-person and virtual coachings and voice lessons, as well as numerous other activities through the year.

Bill, you are one of the world's premier voice teachers with vast experience. How has it been in the past few months teaching digitally?

Bill Schuman:

The one disadvantage is that it completely depends on the internet connection. I've had students in Europe and their connection is better than somebody in New Jersey or Florida. When the system is very good, I would say it's about 74 to 75 percent of what you can do in a live lesson.

When the voice is bigger, it's a little harder. When it's smaller, it's easier to work that way. But you can always work on certain things and have technical breakthroughs in online lessons. So it's not a waste of time, and 4 or 5 months at 74/75% is better than no lessons at all.

Your students range from just beginning their journeys to the fully established international vocal stars. Are there differences in how the singers at various stages are coping with the sudden halt in programs, performances, auditions?

Bill Schuman:

As far as the young singers go when they are on the school track, they have more security than the singers who are starting careers. The ones who started in the last 3 or 4 years are the ones that my heart breaks for because they had jobs, finally starting to make real money, and it's heartbreaking for them. They're making debuts. For the established ones, it's tough too because their income has just stopped. So it's not so much making their careers, it's feeding their families—that's been hard for them.

For the elite singers—and we're very lucky at AVA because most of our students are really elite talents - the business is going to be there once this is over. I don't know if a lot of our regional companies are going to survive. And a lot of our Resident Artists do things in the regionals and then go straight to international houses like the top 10 houses of the world. Those houses are going to survive some way.



Voice Instructor, Bill Schuman



Bryan Hymel sings at the 2018 Giargiari Bel Canto Competition accompanied by AVA Master Vocal Coach, Richard A. Raub.
Photo credit: Don Valentino

Bryan, what was your first reaction to this sudden close-down in mid-March?

Bryan Hymel:

Personally it was hard for me because I was looking forward to the *BrAVA* Gala and specifically to honoring Bill for his 30 years of teaching! And right after, I was going to be with Opera Philadelphia singing Lt. Pinkerton in *Madame Butterfly* so I was really looking forward to the time of just being in Philly.

What keeps me the most positive and productive is learning things that I've always wanted to but never had the time for. Now that I'm 41 I can finally sink my teeth into the Verdi *Otello* duet with the baritone, for instance. You just have to search for those silver linings. You know, it harkens back to my time at AVA, when you could learn a role a little bit more leisurely. You're not cramming it in after rehearsals or on planes and trains. This is a perfect time to explore the repertoire that's going to become my mainstay in the next 3 to 5 years as opposed to those that I'm doing now.

Bill Schuman:

To add to that, when people come to AVA, it's 4 years of a pretty controlled setting. But then they leave and get busy. Right now during Covid, my students have time to sit down and study. The downtime, from a teacher's standpoint, is healthy for the singers especially the ones who have big careers, like Bryan, Angela Meade, Ailyn Perez, Vanessa Vasquez—all of them. For AVA's Resident Artists, it's a great time to be reading singer biographies or studying a new language.

You know, I think it's wonderful that these young singers want to come to AVA and study. In this time, the Resident Artists are coming with no serious guarantees once they are finished. AVA is a really big deal - in Europe it doesn't really exist like this. We are the only advanced opera-only place to study. The faculty has immense respect for these young singers and we want to help them. These Resident Artists are gutsy.

What do you think will be the lasting impact of Covid-19 on opera?

Scott Guzilek:

I think the one thing that is going to become very clear is that this is still an art form that needs to be experienced in person, and live. I think this next year we're going to have virtual things but in the end, the reason everybody goes to the theater is because it's a live acoustic experience, in which they can entrench themselves in their love of the arts.

SUPPORTING AVA



Photo credit: Don Valentino

ANNUAL GIVING THROUGH THE FRIENDS OF AVA

The Friends of AVA are a dedicated group of supporters who, by investing in AVA's mission through annual gifts, nurture and launch the world's most promising vocal artists. Friends of AVA members have the rare opportunity of getting to know the Resident Artists and artistic team personally through intimate and exclusive parties, concerts, and opera trips.

FELLOWSHIPS

AVA is the only tuition-free school in the world devoted exclusively to operatic training. While the program has always been tuition-free, AVA now also offers fellowships to assist Resident Artists with the costs of living in Philadelphia during their training at AVA. Resident Artist fellowships can be endowed or funded on an annual basis. Our Comprehensive Scholarships start at \$350,000. Please contact the Development department for additional information.



Above: Neal Krouse and Liz Knudsen at the 2019 AVA Holiday Party. Photo credit: Don Valentino

Middle: AVA patrons outside of the Oslo Opera House. Photo courtesy of Robert Lyon

Right: Ghenady and Laura Meirson, with Lily and Peter Ferry at the 2019 AVA Holiday Party. Photo credit: Don Valentino

AVA continues to thrive thanks to the valuable support of its many donors and patrons. If you love opera, a gift to the Academy is a wonderful way to invest in this vital art form. You can take pride in knowing that you are doing your part to ensure the continued success of the art form by supporting the Resident Artists who are the voices of opera's future.

There are a number of ways that you can make an impact by supporting the AVA Resident Artists and the future of opera.

THE HELEN CORNING WARDEN SOCIETY—PLANNED GIVING

The Helen Corning Warden Society recognizes the patrons who have made a bequest or other deferred planned gift arrangement for AVA in their estate planning. Gifts can be made in a variety of ways and allow donors to make meaningful gifts that they might not otherwise be able to commit to currently. In addition to bequests, AVA accepts charitable remainder trusts, charitable lead trusts, charitable gift annuities, life insurance, and retirement plan designations. The AVA Development department will work with you to identify the best Planned Giving option for your needs.

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS

Many visibility opportunities are available to corporations through AVA opera and concert sponsorships, and through sponsorship of the annual gala, *Viva la Voce!* The AVA Development department can tailor your sponsorship package to meet the unique philanthropic and marketing objectives of your business.



Renée Richardson onstage with AVA Board member Dr. Ruth Ryave, who joined the cast of *Le nozze di Figaro* with a walk-on role! Photo credit: Don Valentino

MATCHING GIFTS

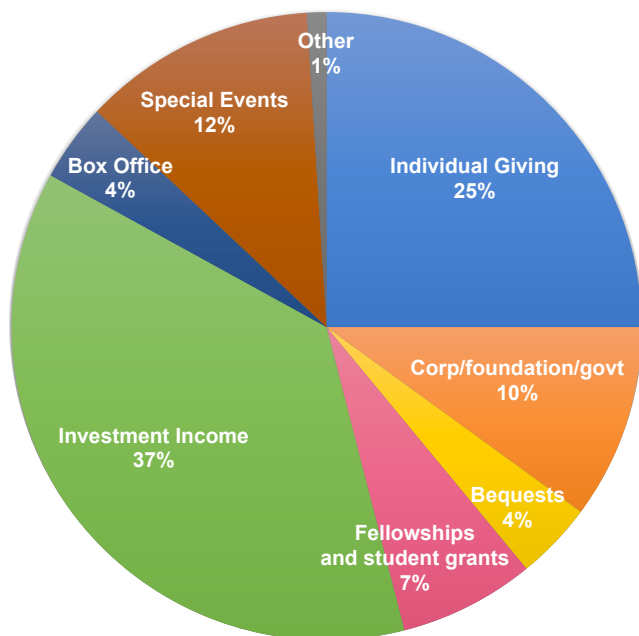
Your employer may match your gift to AVA, either entirely or in some portion. In some instances, this may double or even triple the benefit of your gift to the Academy of Vocal Arts and its Resident Artists! Please check with your employer's benefits office to determine their matching gift requirements.

THE UNITED WAY

AVA's Opera Outreach program is eligible to receive individual contributions made through the United Way Specific Care Program. All you need to do is complete the top portion of your United Way form, and then find the line for SPECIFIC CARE and enter AVA's code #3164, the amount of your gift, and the eligible agency name: Academy of Vocal Arts Opera Outreach.



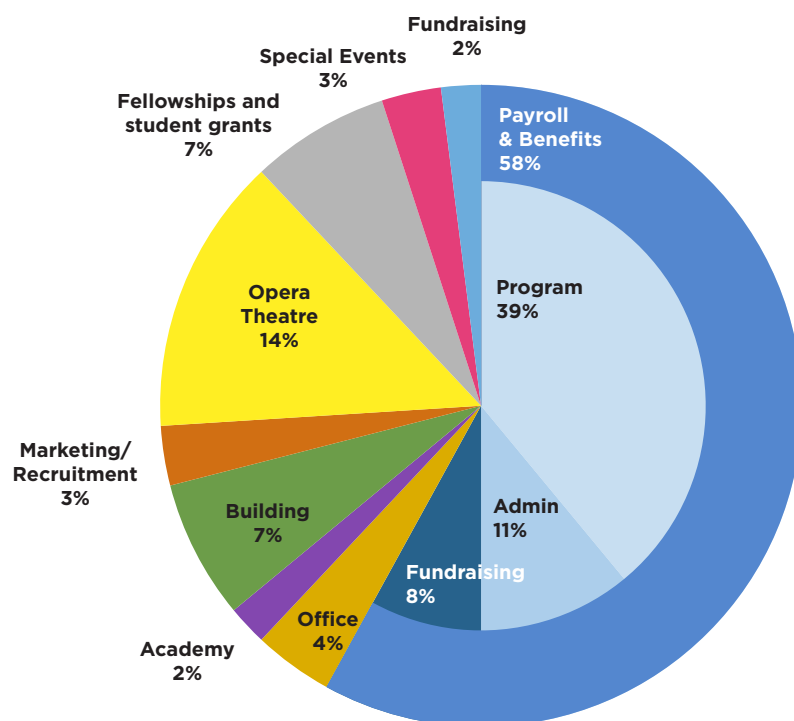
FINANCIALS



OPERATING INCOME

\$3,878,661

Operating income consists of revenue from a variety of sources. Like many schools, the largest single revenue source for AVA is the investment income from its endowment. Unlike other schools or conservatories, AVA receives no income from tuition, and therefore must rely on support from our loyal patrons. Individual, corporate, and foundation contributions, ticket sales, and special events, including the annual Gala, provide most of the remainder of our budget. In recent years, planned gifts and bequests have been providing ever more important revenue support. Thank you to all who share our love for opera and want to help us train the voices for opera's future!



UNRESTRICTED OPERATING EXPENSES

\$3,863,281

The two largest expenditures in AVA's budget, program payroll and benefits, along with opera theatre expenses, are directly related to the training program. Due to the current pandemic, only two opera productions with orchestra are included in the opera theatre expenses this year. Other costs are associated with recitals, concerts, and piano productions.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

We would like to extend our thanks to all our donors and contributors. No matter the size of the donation, you are doing your part to ensure the future of opera by donating to the Academy of Vocal Arts and supporting talented Resident Artists. We would like to extend a special thank you to our generous 2019-2020 season sponsors.

2019-2020

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PITCAIRN



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