

THE
SANTA FE
OPERA

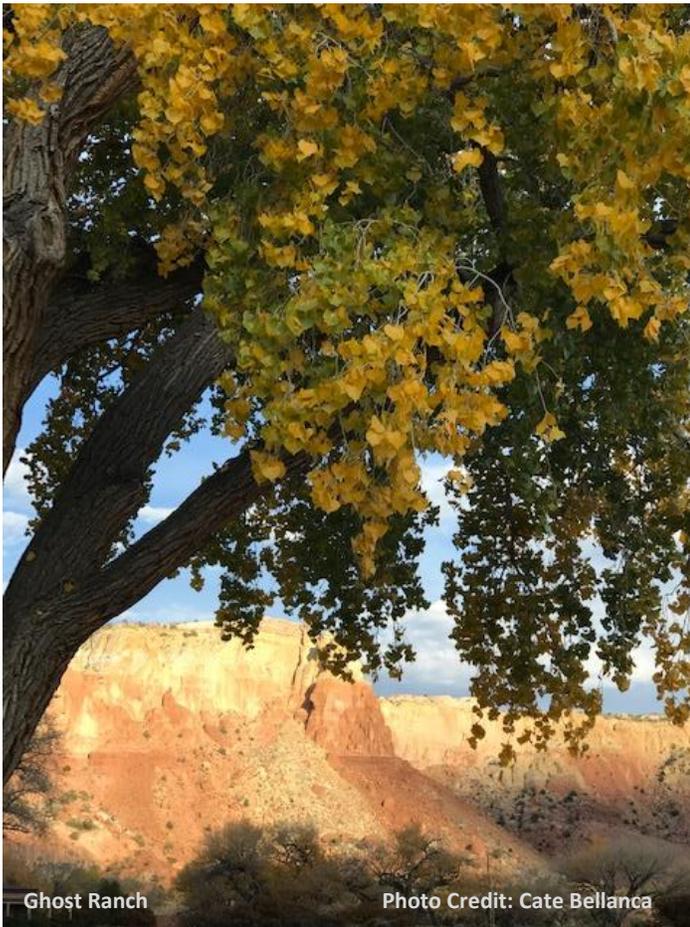


SANTA FE OPERA GUILD
THE GUILDS OF THE SANTA FE OPERA, INC

OPERAGRAM

October 2020
Volume 13, Number 1

A NEW BEGINNING



Dear Santa Fe Opera Guild Members,

What an honor it is to be elected President of the Santa Fe Opera Guild. As a guild member and outgoing Vice President of the Education Committee, I have experienced first-hand the passion of the dedicated and talented members who work to provide events and promote the opera year-round. Without the hard work of so many volunteers, these past few months would have been an endless struggle.

2020 has not been an ordinary year in any sense. While the arts were thrown into chaos, we plunged into the virtual world...feet first...with some interesting and sometimes, unintended results. I hesitantly ventured into Zoom and was forced to learn how to conduct meetings and host webinars. Not everything went smoothly, but with the help of some brave volunteers, and the unending patience of our loyal membership, we survived. I am proud of the entertaining webinars we hosted, that featured Sam Ramey and Cori Ellison, Desirée Mays, Evan Fein, and Mark Tiarks. These events attracted viewers from outside Santa Fe, including some from other countries. From day one, our Vivace Book Club has thrived in the virtual format and attracted new members to the book club and the Guild.

We have more to accomplish, and I promise that a pandemic will not keep us from providing excellent programming to you, our members. I hope that circumstances will allow us to

resume in-person events, however, I know that together we can navigate any challenges we may face in the future.

Thanks to each, and every one of you for joining us on this journey.

Warm Regards,

Shelly Brock
President, Santa Fe Opera Guild

SANTA FE OPERA: 2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

Dear Friends:

We are pleased to share the 2020 Year in Review, which in lieu of a Program Book gives us the opportunity to acknowledge you publicly for believing in the importance and value of our mission.

It is thanks to you, those who stood by us despite the loss of our season that we were able to endure this difficult time with optimism. We are honored to celebrate you in the *Year in Review* on our website:

[Year in Review](#).

The response to our 2020 Season cancellation was humbling. Individuals came forward with additional, increased and new contributions to ensure our continued operations. Others released restrictions on their gifts, allowing us to use the funds where they were most needed.

A group of generous friends issued a \$3 million challenge to encourage patrons to donate the value of their tickets. The success of the challenge made possible partial payments to all seasonal employees who had been engaged for the 2020 Season.

2020 was also a record-setting year for membership gifts, with over \$300,000 raised from donors of under \$1,500. Some of these gifts were received in direct response to *Songs from the Santa Fe Opera*, a free web series that paid tribute to our 2020 Season.

As life moved online, we crafted virtual curriculum for members of the 2020 Apprentice Program for Singers and Technicians. Our Community Engagement Department reimagined their programs for the digital environment, connecting with children and adults in New Mexico and around the country. Some activities were able to go forward with social distancing practices in place, including our Production Department's creation of PPE for CHRISTUS St. Vincent Regional Medical Center.

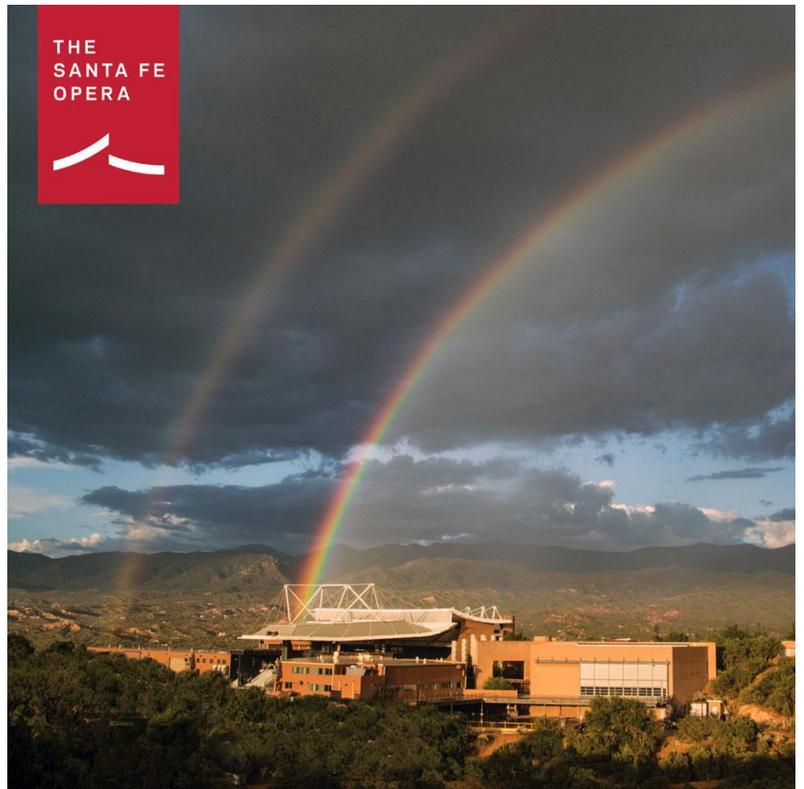
The events of the past six months have affected all of us. We are living history, and when we reflect on this time, the stories we tell will recount our diverse experiences as individuals and our shared experiences as a nation.

Ultimately, we look forward to seeing you again soon, thanking you in person and sharing with you the live experience of opera under the stars in our iconic Crosby Theatre. You have given us the confidence to believe in our future and our safe reunion, and we cannot overstate our gratitude.

With deep appreciation,

Allison Swenson

Director of Development



IN MEMORIUM | JUSTICE RUTH BADER GINSBURG | 1933-2020

The Santa Fe Opera Guild acknowledges with great sadness the passing of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Justice Ginsburg was a ferocious advocate for gender equality, who championed the disenfranchised, the marginalized, and the oppressed among us. Her legacy is embodied in every citizen whose freedom was enhanced by her courageous pursuit of justice. A life-long lover of opera, Justice Ginsburg enjoyed visiting Santa Fe, and adored the Santa Fe Opera, which she considered the best summer opera company in the world. Brava, Justice Ginsburg, for a life led in the service of others. Rest in Peace.

SANTA FE OPERA GUILD OFFICERS/BOARD MEMBERS 2020-2021

The Annual meeting of the Santa Fe Opera Guild did not convene this year due to COVID-19 restrictions. Additional information concerning the Guild will be sent directly to members via email. The following are the officers and board members for the upcoming year:

President: Shelly Brock
Treasurer: David Harrington
Recording Secretary: Rodney Cyr
VP-Communications: Jackie M
VP-Education: Martha Baker
VP-Membership & Webinar Coordinator: Leslie Veditz
VP-Social Events: Barbara Anderson-Acosta
Chair of Technology Committee: Steve Kerchoff
Bernadette Snider: *Operagram* Editor
Judy Costlow: At Large
Ann Kissinger: At Large
Benjamin Saiz: At Large

ZOOM MEETING: VIRTUAL VIVACE BOOK CLUB

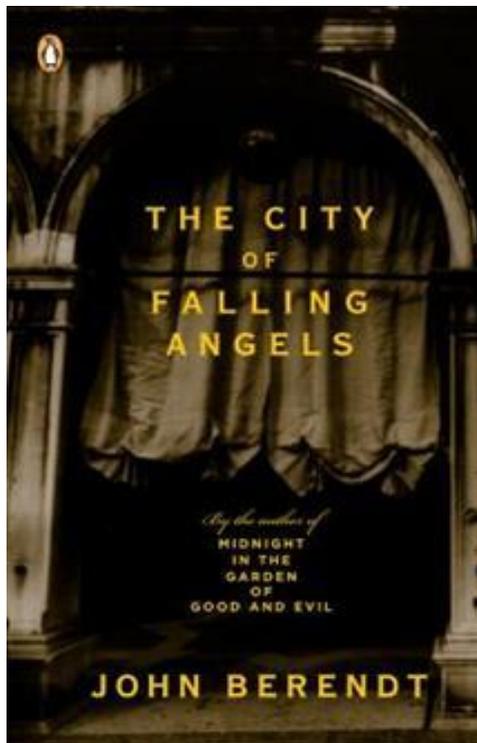
VIRTUAL VIVACE BOOK CLUB

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 6:00PM-7:30PM MST

VIRTUAL CHECK-IN, 5:50PM MDT

ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING FORMAT

COMPLIMENTARY



Monday, November 9: *City of Falling Angels* by John Berendt is the selection for the book club meeting on **Monday, November 9 at 6:00PM MST**. The author is best known for his novel that became a blockbuster movie, *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*.

The novel opens with the fire at the venerable La Fenice opera house on January 29, 1996 that destroyed the historic building. The loss is an incalculable catastrophe not only to the denizens of Venice, but to opera lovers and historians around the world. The author arrived in Venice 3 days after the fire and stayed 5 years.

The characters are pure Berendt: outsized, outrageous, and outlandish! The diversity of colorful people from landed gentry to Venetian artisans to American notables will keep you entertained as you play sleuth with the author. The story is compelling in its rich atmosphere, complex characters, and infusion of political intrigue that unfolds in one of the world's most treasured cities.

To register for the November Vivace Book Club meeting, click [here](#) to provide your email address. We will send a link in plenty of time for the virtual session on November 9. If you have questions, please email vivacebookgroup@santafeoperaguild.org.

Berendt's book can be purchased from **Collected Works**, in partnership with bookshop.org and libro.fm.

YOU BE THE JUDGE | OCTOBER 21

YOU BE THE JUDGE

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 21, 1:00PM MDT

ZOOM WEBINAR FORMAT

COMPLIMENTARY FOR GUILD MEMBERS

\$10 PER DEVICE FOR NON-MEMBERS



Photo Credit: Met Opera

NOTE NEW DATE: OCTOBER 21. Operatic greats such as Joyce DiDonato and Placido Domingo are featured in the premier of the Santa Fe Opera Guild's virtual event, **You Be The Judge, on Wednesday, October 21 at 1:00PM MDT.** Zoom will provide the stage for this fun concept, where we choose three or four outstanding renditions of a popular aria by some of the world's leading singers, play the YouTube clips back-to-back, and give the audience a chance to vote for their personal favorites. David Holloway, Director Emeritus of the Santa Fe Opera's Apprentice Singer program, will provide expert commentary after participants have voted. Martha Baker, the new Vice President of Education commented, "We think this will be fun and educational. It is always entertaining to hear great singing. This



event will have the added advantage of expert commentary from David Holloway. As a singer himself and someone who ran one of the most prestigious young artist programs in the country, David can articulate which elements contribute to an outstanding performance. His knowledge and teaching skills facilitate a better understanding of the music, even for a novice listener." The webinar runs approximately one hour. Click [here](#) to register.

THE SALON 2020

THE SALON

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15 & 22, 12:00 NOON MST

ZOOM FORMAT

COMPLIMENTARY FOR GUILD MEMBERS

\$10 PER DEVICE FOR NON-MEMBERS

The Santa Fe Opera Guild's annual Salon will be back in 2020, but with a COVID-19 twist. Instead of one, two-hour session on a Sunday afternoon in November, we will **have two, one-hour sessions on consecutive Sundays: November 15 and November 22.** Both will begin at **12:00 Noon MST** via Zoom. Shelly Brock, Guild President and resident Zoom guru said, "We will use the breakout feature on Zoom to divide people into three groups. Every 20 minutes, they will change discussion topic and moderator. We will have a total of six themes, three per week--that Salon attendees will explore." The moderators for the individual topics will be listed in the November *Operagram*.

Nov. 15 topics for discussion are as follows:

1. Folk Tales and Fairy Tales in Slavic opera.
2. The Power of Sets and Props: how great set and prop designs contribute to an opera production.
3. Black Lives Matter: a celebration of great African-American opera singers.

Nov. 22 topics are:

1. My Favorite Contemporary Composer.
2. Discussion of an Opera from the 2021 Santa Fe Opera Season; the opera will be chosen after the announcement of the 2021 SFO season.
3. The Challenges of Choosing Streamed Content.

Salon capacity is limited, so sign up now. To register for **November 15** click [here](#): **November 22** click [here](#).

THE SANTA FE OPERA DEBUTS: *IS THIS AMERICA?*



Photo: Courtesy of Alamy

On Friday, October 23 at 6:00PM MDT, the Santa Fe Opera and Center for Contemporary Arts will present a special online screening of *Is This America?*, based on the new, one-act opera *This Little Light of Mine* that portrays key events in the life of voting rights activist **Fannie Lou Hamer**. A black woman of humble origins, she spoke truth to power and her tireless efforts culminated in the passage of the **Voting Rights Act of 1965**.

The consequences of the US 2020 presidential election will be historic. Amid a global pandemic, our polarized nation will strive to mobilize millions of voters in states from coast to coast. Despite withstanding discrimination, harassment, and brutality, Fannie Lou Hamer fought earnestly to ensure that African Americans had the right to vote. This fall, the Santa Fe Opera will join with a myriad of organizations in supporting the **“Get Out the Vote”** campaign through the development and national screening of *Is This America?*

As part of the **Center for Contemporary Arts’ Living Room Series**, the national screening of *Is This America?* is followed by a panel discussion with stage director **Beth Greenberg**, composer **Chandler Carter** and librettist **Diana Solomon-Glover**. The panelists will discuss the origins of their new opera *This Little Light of Mine* and the importance of hearing the collective voices of all U.S. citizens in the November 3, 2020 presidential election. Register on the Center for Contemporary Arts site [here](#). There is no charge for the event, but donations are accepted.

The principal roles of *Is This America?* are sung by **Nicole Joy Mitchell**, **Briana Elyse Hunter** and **Heather Hill**. Ms. Mitchell is a contralto with a powerhouse sound which seems to come from deep within the Earth itself. Ms. Mitchell is a native of Brooklyn, New York and sang the world premiere of Songs from the F Train and is a frequent concert soloist with The Walt Whitman Project in Brooklyn, New York. Ms. Hunter has been hailed by Opera News as “a mesmerizing mezzo-soprano with a fiery theatrical presence and dynamic vocalism.” Ms. Hunter began her 2019-2020 season in performances of Augusta Read Thomas’ *Sweet Potato Kicks the Sun* with the Santa Fe Opera. An accomplished stage actress, Ms. Hunter has worked with the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Manhattan School of Music, and the American Musical Theater Ensemble. Ms. Hill’s career encompasses appearances in opera, oratorio, musical theater, television and film. She recently performed with the Broadway company of *The Phantom of the Opera* and the Broadway revival of Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess*. Recent performances also include the New York premiere of *Gloria* by Robert Harris at Alice Tully Hall, and *Carmina Burana* and the *Lord Nelson Mass* at Carnegie Hall.

THE WINTER TOUR RETURNS | OPERA INSIGHT AVAILABLE ONLINE

The Santa Fe Opera’s Winter Tour concerts will take a virtual format this year. Filming at northern New Mexico churches and at the Santa Fe Opera Ranch, the event will feature Young Voices of the Santa Fe Opera, celebrated opera tenor and former Santa Fe Opera apprentice singer Joshua Dennis, and rising star and former Santa Fe Opera apprentice singer Briana Elyse Hunter. Team members of the Department of Community Engagement and Kathleen Clawson are coordinating the event. We look forward to sharing the holidays with you. Look for the screening date in an upcoming issue of the *Operagram*.

The Opera InSight series is now available for online viewing on the Santa Fe Opera’s YouTube [channel](#). Dr. Don Fineberg hosts Opera InSight: On Being Human, a series of five, half-hour episodes that explores how opera integrates its music, narrative and spectacle, immersing us in a range of emotions from thoroughly amused to profoundly moved. Opera InSight is an adventure for both the newly opera curious and the experienced opera enthusiast as it focuses on opera classics as well as new works. **Viewing is free of charge.**

MEMBERSHIP SPOTLIGHT: SHELLY BROCK

Congratulations to the newly elected president of the Santa Fe Opera Guild, Shelly Brock. Prior to accepting the top job, she was Vice President of Education, spearheading all in-person and virtual events for the past two years. Shelly met the challenge of learning Zoom technology and personally led a team of volunteers in creating virtual programs for the membership. Her hands-on approach resulted in a successful launch into webinar events in the spring and summer months. The webinars filled the void left by the many in-person events sponsored by the Santa Fe Opera Guild.

Shelly was born in Sacramento, CA but like children in so many career military families, she moved many times, including to England and the Philippines; in the process she attended 13 schools. Her father was a Bomber Pilot in WWII, serving over 30 years in the Air Force. His career ended with tours in Vietnam as an advisor. He sponsored 13 Vietnamese families at the Fall of Saigon who are now all living in the United States. Sadly, he died after being exposed to Agent Orange. Shelly's family is proud to have a relative who is the first Vietnamese-born Rear Admiral in the Navy.



Shelly graduated with a BA in History from the University of Texas, Austin and joined Vista Volunteers of America for two years, before taking her first professional job in sales and account management.

Many sales positions require constant travel, which suited Shelly because travel was so much a part of her upbringing. One of her favorite positions early in her career was Office Manager and Assistant to Physicians at the King Faisal Specialist Hospital & Research Center in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. She was responsible for all administrative processes for groups of physicians from all over the world, including France, the UK, Argentina, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Canada, and the United States. One of her fondest memories was being driven by two fellow hospital employees across the desert to go diving in the Red Sea, and she was similarly awed when she experienced water skiing in an oasis in the desert.

Thereafter, Shelly embarked on a successful 30-year career in Information Technology as an account manager for key corporate accounts in diverse industries. She survived the many mergers and corporate downsizings that occurred in the technology field because of her consistent track record of exceeding sales goals, building winning teams, and gaining customer loyalty through excellent service. Her integrity, innovation, and work ethic earned her recognition throughout her career. Shelly retired from Hewlett Packard in Phoenix, AZ 10 years ago and settled in Santa Fe.

Retirement will not be sedentary for Shelly, a sports enthusiast who especially loves swimming. She follows college soccer and pro football and still has season tickets to the Arizona Cardinals. Post COVID-19, Shelly and her husband, Bud plan to resume traveling, including trips to her

favorite city, Rome, Italy. She loves her wonderful Italian family gatherings, the many friendships she has nurtured over the years, and looks forward to making more new friends. Another source of joy has been introducing Bud to the majesty of opera. Her happy family includes two beloved dogs, Bruno and Natasha: the latter is pictured above, seated by her side.

A love of history led Shelly to volunteer as a docent for eight years at the Palace of the Governors History Museum; she is currently an enthusiastic docent for the Santa Fe Opera. Shelly plans to bring the skills she honed during her corporate career, and what she has learned from volunteering with other organizations, to her role as president of the Santa Fe Opera Guild. We are fortunate to have this talented woman lead the organization forward.

WELCOME KAREN HENDERSON, PRESIDENT, GUILDS, INC.

Even a well-orchestrated transition of leadership has its challenges. However, the passing of the baton from Eileen Woodbury, former president of Guilds, Inc., and now VP of Development, to Karen Henderson represents a well-planned succession to an important position. One of Karen's goals going forward is to maintain a collegial atmosphere in which a comfortable exchange of ideas can be facilitated. Clarity and transparency of procedures, regulations, and conflicts of interest are paramount for Guilds, Inc. to remain a steady force for the sister guilds of Albuquerque, Los Alamos, Española Valley, Santa Fe, and Taos.

Karen was born in Augusta, GA to a military family. Her father was a pediatrician in the Army and a Full Colonel for over 20 years. He was accepted into a fellowship in Adolescent Medicine that moved the family to El Paso, TX. After 25 years in the Army, he retired and helped start the Residency Program for Adolescent Medicine and Pediatrics at Texas Tech Medical School in El Paso. After graduating high school in El Paso, Karen earned a BS in Civil Engineering from the University of Notre Dame. She began her career at Brown & Root Services, designing major roads and bridges in Texas for 10 years before taking a hiatus to raise her sons, Orion and Duncan. The family moved to New Mexico when her husband, Kevin, a physicist, accepted a position with Los Alamos National Laboratory. Like so many who move to New Mexico, the mountains and proximity to the Santa Fe Opera were among the deciding factors. Karen recently returned to work as a civil engineer with the Los Alamos County Public Works Department. She is an avid swimmer who spends lots of time at the Aquatic Center swimming or watching her sons compete.



So, how did a civil engineer fall in love with opera? Karen explains how it all began: “Kevin took me to my first Opera in 2001 in Santa Fe, *Wozzeck*, but then luckily we saw *Falstaff*. His mother attended the first Season in 1957 and almost all since. She let both of us find our own love of the opera, but she has been encouraging as well, by framing the season poster every year (over 15 are hanging in our house in the stairwell), plus sometimes purchasing great seats for us too. Both my boys were in the first class in 2007 of *Opera Makes Sense*.”

There is clear evidence for why Karen Henderson was awarded **Volunteer of the Year** for the Santa Fe Opera in 2016. Karen's mother-in-law encouraged her to join the Opera Guild in 2007 to meet people in the area. She quickly became active in the Los Alamos Opera Guild as membership chair and has assisted in that role for the past 13 year. Karen has held various roles on both the Guilds, Inc. board and Los Alamos Opera Guild board, including VP of Development and Corresponding Secretary for Guilds Inc. As President and Treasurer for Los Alamos, she coordinated the six famous Opera on the Rocks fundraiser events. When the Overture Program began in 2012, Karen volunteered her services, mostly on Family Nights. From her first experience at the Opera House, Karen found it to be a “welcoming, pleasant, happy place.”

The members of the Santa Fe Opera Guild congratulate Karen on her new position and know that she will perform her duties with integrity and her characteristic creativity and enthusiasm.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

With the greatest pleasure, we welcome Lydia & Herbert Garmaier, Michael & Maureen Pass, and Keith Snell to the Santa Fe Opera Guild. We look forward to meeting you at our programs and events when social distancing restrictions are lifted. Thank you so much for joining us.

OCTOBER MEMBERS: ITS TIME TO RENEW

When your renewal comes due, you will receive an email alert. Renew by clicking **RENEW NOW!** We accept four major credit cards and PayPal, or mail a check to The Santa Fe Opera Guild, Membership, P.O. Box 2371, Santa Fe, NM, 87504 -2371. Send membership questions via email to Leslie Veditz at VPMembership@santafeoperaguild.org, or telephone her at (888)666-3430 ext. 502. The Membership Committee will send your membership tax receipts and membership cards to you by email.

Those of you without email will continue to receive these communications by US mail. If you do not have a printer at home or if you still prefer a hardcopy tax letter and membership card, please let us know and we will mail them to you.

DIVERSIONS

Please Note: The Metropolitan Opera's leadership has made the difficult decision to cancel the entirety of the 2020-2021 Season. Details about the 2021-2022 season will be provided in the future. They will continue to stream free operas daily. To access these operas, click [here](#).

The Wagner Society of Santa Fe presents *For the Love of Opera* on **Saturday, October 10 at 4:00PM**. The concert is live-streamed via Zoom, and is dedicated to Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and her devotion to opera. Performing are baritone Joshua Hopkins, and pianist Robert Tweten, The concert is free. To register, contact wagnersocietyofsantafe@gmail.com.

The Russian Film Society presents a film of Mussorgsky's comedy *Sorochinsky Fair*. The opera is based on a Gogol short story and is rooted in Ukrainian folklore. The date will be announced to those on the Society's email list. To sign up, email Bill Derbyshire at wwwdcroat@aol.com.

The Santa Fe Symphony begins its new Virtual Concert Series with *Canyon Echoes*, on **Sunday, October 11 from 4:00PM – 5:00PM**. This is a free inaugural concert filmed at Ghost Ranch and featuring several ensembles of orchestra members performing works by Copland, Dvořák, Montgomery, Maudlin, and more. The second concert in the series, *Above the Winds*, is on **Sunday, October 25 from 4:00PM – 5:00PM** and will cost **\$20 per household**. Filmed on the Santa Fe rooftop of Thornburg Investment, with views of the Sangre de Cristos, this concert will include works by Bach, Bizet, Debussy, Schulhoff, Glière and others. Click [here](#) for more information.

Opera Lafayette will debut a new production of *The Blacksmith Opera* on **October 9** (performances on 10/10 and 10/11 are sold out) at the Reddert Ranch in Mancos, Colorado. This Washington DC company, founded by Ryan Brown, whose family has owned and operated the ranch for generations, is known for adaptations of historic works. This version is adapted from an 18th century French work by Philidor and is set in the American West of the late 19th century with familiar American folk songs replacing French ones. Songs are arranged for violin, guitar and fiddle and the audience can sing along. Tickets are available at mancoscreativedistrict.com.

Performance Santa Fe will present two virtual events this month as part of its **PSF@HOME** virtual series: *Piaf! the Show* on **Tuesday, October 20 at 7:00PM** and *Rob Kplow: What Makes it Great?: Cole Porter and the American Songbook* on **Saturday, October 24 at 7:00PM**. Click [here](#) for more information on access.

Opera Southwest has postponed *La Traviata* until April 2021. Instead it hopes to mount a socially distanced New Mexico premiere of Giovanni Pergolesi's *La serva parona* either indoors or outdoors, depending on Covid-safe practices at the time of the performance. Click [here](#) to track information.

Know the Score, published weekly by *The Guardian*, is a rich hybrid of print and visual offerings, each installment about one of the most famous of Western composers. Beethoven, Brahms, Verdi, and Stravinsky have been subjects. To access past and current selections, click [here](#).

Idagio continues with *Fridays with Fred Plotkin* and *Thomas Hampson's World of Songs*. Click [here](#).

Opera Wire offers a list of opera houses streaming free performances. Click [here](#).

The Theatre Lovers Club October webinar, called *Theater Next!-#2*, will take place on **Tuesday, October 13, 2020 from 6:00PM-7:00PM**. Featured panelists are Robyn Rikoon, Artistic Director of The Santa Fe Playhouse, John Flax, Artistic Director of Theater Grottesco, and Aaron Leventman, Artistic Director of Almost Adults.

To register for this webinar: Click [here](#) to RSVP for *Theater Next!-#2*.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

The *Operagram* would not be possible without the dedicated members who contribute articles each month. We are grateful for their support. This month's list of contributors are as follows:

Bernadette Snider: *Operagram* Editor, In Memorium | Ruth Bader Ginsburg | 1933-2020

Cate Bellanca: *Diversions* (recurring feature), Photographer

Martha Baker: *You Be the Judge*, Registration links for all events *Virtual Vivace* (recurring feature)

Shelly Brock: *Message from the President*

Karen Henderson *President, Guilds, Inc.*

Rebecca Jensen: *Is this America?*, *The Winter Tour Returns/Opera InSight Now Online*

Shelly Brock: *Member Spotlight*

Lucinda Surber: Web support, Guilds, Inc.

Allison Swenson: *2020 Year in Review*

Leslie Veditz: All membership-related articles (recurring features)

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