A Report on an Internship with the New Orleans Opera Association

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A Report on an Internship with the New Orleans Opera Association

An Internship Report

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the University of New Orleans in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Arts Administration

By

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B.A., National Academy of Chinese Theater Arts, 2010

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ABSTRACT

This paper is based on my internship at the New Orleans Opera Association, which took place from May 16th to October 31st, 2012. The primary activity of the New Orleans Opera Association is to produce three to four mainstage operas each season. The Opera Association is a vital part of the cultural and economic life of the City. The New Orleans Opera Association is governed by a Board of Directors and a General and Artistic Director heading a staff of eight.

This report includes detailed information about the organization's history and current programs. It also includes a description of my internship, a S.W.O.T analysis, best practices and my recommendations which are based on my practical work in the organization as well as the knowledge I learned in the Arts Administration program.
CHAPTER ONE

NEW ORLEANS OPERA ASSOCIATION

**History**

New Orleans is America’s First City of Opera and New Orleans Opera Association (NOOA) is proud to be part of a rich performance tradition dating back to the 18th century. Since 1796, New Orleans has had operatic performances on almost a yearly basis.

In February 1943, a group of music lovers, led by Walter L. Loubat (1885-1945), drew up a charter creating the New Orleans Opera House Association. An inaugural summer season of open air performances, billed as “Opera under the Stars”, in City Park stadium was planned. Amelio Colantoni served as artistic director, former Metropolitan Opera conductor Louis Hasselmans was recruited from nearby Louisiana State University’s faculty to conduct; and Lilia Haller, a New Orleanian who had danced with the Paris Opera Ballet, began the training of a resident *corps de ballet*. The initial season scored a success, but the ever present threat of evening showers in semi tropical New Orleans prompted a move indoors to the Municipal Auditorium that autumn. The concert hall of the Auditorium remained home to the Opera Association until the inauguration of the Mahalia Jackson Theatre of Performing Arts in 1973. Projected titles (English translations) were introduced, beginning with the opening night *Aïda* (October 1984).¹

For many years the Association maintained its own studios for the construction and storage of props and scenery. This operation was greatly expanded in January 1984 with the dedication of the H. Lloyd Hawkins Scenic Studio in Metairie, Louisiana. It is at this location that the Opera Association maintains an inventory of sets and props, many of which have been rented to opera companies throughout North America.

In 1993, the Opera Association celebrated the 50th Anniversary of its founding, concluding that season with a new production of *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci*, the two operas with which it had begun its life so many years before. In its 1995-1996 Season the Association observed the anniversary of the first operatic performance in New Orleans, in 1796, and the completion of an almost unbroken tradition of opera in the Crescent City for the past 200 years.²

In 1998, Arthur Cosenza, who had been the General Director of the Opera, created the MetroPelican Opera, an education/outreach touring ensemble. The MetroPelican Opera won the 2000 Tribute to the Classical Arts Education Award, for its contributions in establishing a widespread presence of opera in Louisiana schools.

The New Orleans Opera Association has presented two world premieres. One was Carlisle Floyd's *Markheim* with Schuh and Norman Treigle, and Norman Treigle made his operatic debut with the New Orleans Opera Association in 1947, as the Duke of Verona in *Roméo et Juliette*. The other was Thea Musgrave's *Pontalba* (conducted by Robert Lyall, 2003).

In 2005, Hurricane Katrina flooded the Mahalia Jackson Theatre for the Performing Arts and the season was cancelled, but the New Orleans Opera has since returned. On March 4, 2006, the world famous tenor Plácido Domingo headlined a NOOA gala benefit concert at the New Orleans Arena titled "A Night for New Orleans". This was the NOOA's first performance after Hurricane Katrina. The event drew 7,400 audience members.\(^3\) In 2009, the superstar tenor headlined the Opera Association's gala concert for the second time, which concluded a week-long celebration of the reopening of the Mahalia Jackson Theater. The stage at the Mahalia Jackson Theater is named the “Plácido Domingo stage”.

The 2012-2013 Season, which is the Opera's 70\(^{\text{th}}\), has three mainstage productions including *Barber of Seville, Samson and Delilah* and *Madame Butterfly*. Additionally, a special gala concert celebrating 50 years of Plácido Domingo’s performances with the New Orleans Opera will be held during this season.

**Mission**

The mission of the New Orleans Opera Association (NOOA) as adopted by the Board of Directors in April, 1992, is to provide the finest possible operatic performances within its means to the New Orleans metropolitan area, the State of Louisiana, and the River and Gulf Regions.\(^4\)


Goals

Grand Opera comprises broad historical, social and geographical events. It is the purpose of NOOA in producing opera to provide for the cultural enrichment of people of all ages without regard to their racial or ethnic make-up, or their physical or economic circumstances.

The goals of the organization are to plan, produce and present opera of the highest musical and artistic caliber, especially by drawing on Louisiana’s abundant artistic talent to reach out to a broad public, educating them and developing in them a greater awareness of opera; to provide a statewide education program that includes live performance in schools, a local student matinee of a mainstage operatic production, free public performances, and opera education lectures; to facilitate the attendance and comfort of individuals with physical and mental impairments; and to maintain the H. Lloyd Hawkins Scenic Studio as a local, national and international opera resource.

General Management Structure

The NOOA is an important part of the cultural and economic life of New Orleans; it is governed by a Board of Directors and a General and Artistic Director heading a staff of eight. The organization employs over 275 people during the season, including carpenters, craftsmen, painters, electricians, laborers, artists, musicians, and administrative staff. NOOA has returned to full-scale performances at the Mahalia Jackson Theater following several years of displacement to a university auditorium following Hurricane Katrina. The company engages musicians from the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, almost always under the baton of General and Artistic Director Maestro Robert Lyall, and maintains a chorus roster of nearly 100 voices.
1. Board Structure

The NOOA board consists of the Board of Directors and Board of Advisors.

A) Board of Directors

The Board of Directors for the Opera has forty-four members and three Ex Officio members, with eight standing committees. Each committee works with the office staff and has its own responsibilities.

The Development Committee oversees and helps with the overall fundraising of the organization. The Education Committee oversees the education and outreach program for students and adults. The Facilities Committee oversees the income of two properties that are owned by the opera, Women’s Guild Home and the H. Lloyd Hawkins Scenic Studio. The Marketing Committee deals with all the marketing issues of the organization. The Production Committee advises Robert Lyall regarding the stage productions for the next season. The Legal Committee, comprised mostly of lawyers, is involved in legal issues including writing contracts and creating raffle rules. The Finance Committee oversees the whole budget and finance aspect of the Opera. The Nominating Committee offers suggestions for the Board through “Sector Analysis”. Sector Analysis involves research about members who are already on the Board and those being considered for membership in an effort to ensure that the Opera’s Board represents all sectors of the community.

B) Board of Advisors

The Board of Advisors consists of 62 members; most of whom are previous members of the Board of Directors. The Board of Advisors is designed for those who do not have time to
serve on the Board of Directors, but they still want to be involved in the Opera. Basically, the Board of Advisors does not have specific responsibilities for the Opera and they come to the organization for meetings twice a year.

2. Staff Structure

The NOOA has nine full-time employees and one volunteer who has assisted the organization for 20 years. The organization is led by General and Artistic Director, Robert Lyall who is responsible for planning the season and hiring singers. Executive Director Todd Simmons is responsible for the administration in the office and manages the overall running of the organization. Director of Development Jenny Windstrup handles all the fundraising programs. Chorus Master, Music Administrator and Education Director Carol Rausch coordinates all the musical preparations, including chorus, as well as planning the educational program. Director of Audience Development Nancy Watts is responsible for all the marketing, promotion and advertising of the organization. Production Director Chris Adams is in charge of all the scenic rentals, guest artists’ accommodations and creation of supertitles. Business Manager Gina Klein takes care of all the financial aspects. Box Office Manager John Fink and Box Office Assistant Devin Ernest are responsible for all tickets purchases, season subscription and overseeing the Box Office at the performance. Technical Director G. Alan Rusnak handles all the scenic designing, building and transportation of the props and oversees the technical aspects of performances.
Major Programs

1. Season Program

NOOA is currently the only producing company of Grand Opera in the region. The primary activity of NOOA is the production of three to four mainstage operas each season. The season performance begins in November and ends in April the following year (see Appendix A).

2. Education Program

A) MetroPelican Opera

MetroPelican Opera is the education/outreach wing of the New Orleans Opera Association. It was founded in 1988 by Arthur Cosenza. He chose Metro to represent the seven-parish population base of New Orleans, and Pelican for the State bird. MetroPelican has subsequently toured throughout Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. MetroPelican introduces students to the opera with in-school programming and free Student Previews.

B) In-school Program

The In-school Program includes three sections which are designed to engage different age students. The three sections are: Opera a la Carte (Grades pre-K–5), Hansel and Gretel (Grades pre-K–5/Family groups), A Celebration in Song (Grades pre-K–12/Adults).  

http://neworleansopera.org/education/
C) **Free Student Previews**

The New Orleans Opera Association has worked to develop young audiences by inviting student groups, free of charge, to the final dress rehearsals of each opera. These “Preview Performances” have been funded for the last several seasons by the Brown Foundation.

D) **“Nuts and Bolts” Lectures**

Nuts and Bolts are pre-concert lectures given by the conductor, opera singers or music experts to the audience for free. They include fun facts about the Opera and some backstage secrets. At the same time, audiences can learn more about the productions which increases their enjoyment of opera.

3. **Women’s Guild**

Founded in 1947, the Women’s Guild plays an important fundraising and marketing role in the success of opera in New Orleans. Many of the NOOA’s events were held in the Guild Home. The Guild Home is available for weddings, receptions, dinners, luncheons and social events. The rental income for these events provides support for the New Orleans Opera Association. The Women’s Guild is expected to fundraise for the opera from $120,000 to $140,000 a year.

4. **Junior Committee**

The mission of the Junior Committee is to maintain and cultivate an interest in opera and opera education, and to promote ticket sales among the young people of New Orleans. It serves as the “younger version” of the Women’s Guild, and some events are usually coproduced with
the Women’s Guild. It supports the Opera Association through educational, fundraising, and goodwill programs.

5. Taste of Opera

Taste of Opera is a “pop-up” event, so there is no advertising and it is free to the public. MetroPelican participants and chorus members sing selections from the current season at the French Market stage every Sunday during the opera season. This is an essential component of NOOA’s efforts to help people appreciate opera and to strengthen the branding of the organization.

6. Opera Club

Opera Club began as the men’s version of Women’s Guild. It directly supports the Opera’s budget through membership. It is a dinner club which offers three formal dinners with the guest artists and stars throughout the season. The membership is $750 and half of the income goes into the budget of the Opera.

7. Opera on Tap

New Orleans is the first official Opera on Tap franchise. Twelve times each season, the NOOA presents the finest young local and regional singers in casual, 90-minute concerts of opera, Broadway and more. The Rusty Nail is the Opera on Tap home base in New Orleans, and the program has been expanded to The Inn on Bourbon. This program allows opera to once again be heard in the French Quarter on the hallowed grounds of the French Opera House, which
served as the cultural center of New Orleans Creole society for 60 years until it was lost to fire in 1919. Opera on Tap is also presented on the Northshore at the Abita Brew Pub.

6 New Orleans Louisiana Hotel History – Old French Opera House

CHAPTER TWO
DISCRIPTION OF INTERNSHIP

In May, 2012, I started my internship to further my marketing experience. As a marketing intern, most of my work was assigned by Nancy Watts, Director of Audience Development. At the same time, I also served as a multipurpose intern in other departments as needed. During my internship, the organization moved from 1010 Common Street, where it had been located for over 10 years, to 616 Girod Street, an old-fashioned and cozy office. I was there to help with the packing and moving, and decorating the new office.

Marketing the Plácido Domingo Gala Concert

1. Program description

Maestro Plácido Domingo began performing with New Orleans Opera in 1962. As a celebration of 50 years of performances with the New Orleans Opera, a special Plácido Domingo Gala Concert is planned this year. On my first day at the opera, Nancy had a talk with me about my plan for the internship. During the conversation, I was told about the concert. I was so excited to hear about it, because I knew that Plácido Domingo was a great tenor who has built a great reputation and received praise around the world for decades, and now I will finally see him performing live!

2. My participation

Luckily, when I started my internship, the organization was just starting the marketing of the program, and I was able to participate from the very beginning. Various marketing tasks for this special concert became some of the most important parts of my internship. Considering Mr. Domingo’s great reputation and strong influence, the organization believes the Gala Concert not
only entertains local audiences, but also attracts people who drive in from what are called “Drive Markets”. Basically, Drive Markets are defined as areas within a maximum of an eight hour drive or a one to two hour flight to New Orleans. I was given a map and I listed all the possible drive markets in states as follows: Texas, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, Alabama, and Arkansas. I then conducted research into media outlets including magazines, newspapers and radio channels in those markets. I was given a $40,000 budget for advertising. Next, I created an Excel spreadsheet to allocate the advertising budget. The spreadsheet consisted of different states, and different columns of factors including:

- Section (the section in which the advertisement will be posted/ the time period in which the advertisement will be broadcast);
- Size (the proper size of advertisement);
- Frequency (how often is our information going to be advertised);
- Date (the date when the advertisement is published);
- Rate and cost;
- Market radiance (coverage of readers/listeners).

This spreadsheet provided very clear points of all advertising in drive markets and played a vital role in the final decision making (see Appendix B).

As an important part of the magazine for Plácido Domingo Gala Concert, I was tasked with writing a Domingo story. The story contains highlights about his past performances and philanthropy facts to provide the public with a well-balanced understanding of him. Since Mr. Maya Rodriguez. Tourism leaders work to offset visitor summer slump in city. May 20, 2012 http://newsle.com/article/0/19328155/
Domingo was originally from Mexico, about twenty days before the concert I was tasked with creating a press release to strengthen the marketing to Hispanic groups in New Orleans. I did research online and identified all the Spanish media outlets in New Orleans. By using Constant Contact, I created a press release aimed especially to Hispanic groups with emphasis on the Famous Mexican soprano Ana María Martínez and Domingo (see Appendix C). Another version of the press release targeted local New Orleanians, with an emphasis on Mayor Mitch Landrieu, actress Patricia Clarkson and local opera singers was sent to local media outlets as a final reminder of the event. From May to October 12, I was continuously assigned different tasks for the gala concert. My participation included selecting coffee shops in which to display concert posters, posting concert information online, designing gala concert brochures, writing a story for Domingo (see Appendix D), etc.

**Marketing the 70th Season**

For the 70th season anniversary of the New Orleans Opera Association, the organization will produce three main stage productions in the 2012-2013 Season. At the end of last season the organization sent out a research email to all the people who provided an email address for the database, and gave them fifty opera choices to choose their favorites. The *Barber of Seville* and *Madame Butterfly* ranked first and second; therefore, the three main stage performances are *Barber of Seville, Madame Butterfly* and *Samson and Delilah*, which is popular among board members. The main goal of the marketing is to increase ticket sales and to encourage the public to get to know opera.

Throughout the marketing of the season, I assisted Nancy with the press releases and updated all performance information online. During the moving process, I was able to dig out some valuable photos and historical documents dating back many decades. Noticing that the
organization did not have a photo library, which would be handy to use if those photos were well organized, I created a photo archive and organized these documents by different operas and year order. I also created a university marketing plan, wrote the press release for the season and researched media outlets rates for marketing the season, among other things.

**Taste of Opera**

The free opera program Taste of Opera is a very important part of the Opera’s marketing efforts every season. It helps to build the awareness of opera among public. During my internship, I participated in this program on the Farmers Stage at the French Market every Sunday afternoon. My duties included: setting up a table and making the program sheet, season brochure, gala concert flyer and other public event materials available to the public; putting up the large banners; answering questions from the public and chatting with them about the productions (see Appendix E).

**Duties in Other Departments**

As an essential part of the education programs, the Student Study Guide is given out at every free student preview. The Study Guide gives students an introduction to each opera through a detailed synopsis. It also makes opera more appealing to students with fun facts about the composer and opera. After learning the skills of using Outlook Publisher, I collected information and designed a Student Study Guide for *Barber of Seville* (see Appendix F).

During my internship, I also helped the box office continuously with ticket sales including single tickets and subscription renewal, especially in middle September which is the busiest season for the box office. I helped the box office with mass tickets packaging, double
I also participated in updating the membership database for the Women’s Guild and Board members, developing a survey about renewing subscribers, creating a demographic Excel document about different level ticket purchasers, answering phone calls and other daily office duties.
CHAPTER THREE

S.W.O.T ANALYSIS

Industry Analysis

Opera America serves the North American opera field, supporting the creation, presentation and enjoyment of opera. It divides opera organizations into different levels according to their operating budgets. Budgets for Level One organizations are over $10 million. Level Two budgets are between $3-$10 million; Level Three are $1-$3 million, and Level Four are under $1 million. Based on its budget, NOOA is a Level Three member of Opera America.  

In the United States, it counts 117 professional companies in 43 States in its membership. It also serves 19 professional companies in six provinces in Canada, which are members of Opera.ca. Over half of these companies were established after 1970, and one quarter of the total was established since 1980, making the growth of opera throughout North America a relatively new phenomenon.  

Over 6.7 million people attended live performances of Opera America’s Professional Company Members in the 2009-2010 Season, including educational and outreach programs, and festivals.


9 Opera America- Number and location of companies

10 Attendance - [http://www.operaamerica.org/content/research/quick1011.aspx](http://www.operaamerica.org/content/research/quick1011.aspx)
Competitors Analysis

Currently NOOA is the only producing company of Grand Opera in the region. The nearest organizations are in Mobile, AL, and Jackson, MS. Therefore, comparisons must be drawn from indirect competitors. The competition remains the overabundance of high quality entertainment found in New Orleans on any given night.

Audience Analysis

In 2008, the median age of opera attendees nationally was 48, one year older than in 2002. In 2008, 5.2% of adults with a Bachelor's or higher degree attended an opera performance. NOOA’s audiences are typical of opera-goers nationwide; the average ticket-buyers are Caucasians, middle-to-upper-class professionals or retirees. Most audience members reside in the metropolitan New Orleans area, but NOOA draws ticket-buyers from around the region. According to the NOOA box office, 1,609 subscriptions were sold for the 2011-2012 Season. This represents a decrease of 325 subscriptions from the previous season.

S.W.O.T Analysis

1. Strengths

NOOA's strengths are found in its resources and capabilities, including:

A) Strong casts, chorus, orchestra and imaginative artistic director.

The New Orleans Opera Association is perceived to offer high quality, talented

11 Audience demographics - http://www.operaamerica.org/content/research/quick1011.aspx
12 Interview with the Box Office Manager. Only fall subscriptions are mentioned here.
performers who sing throughout the country and world. It also provides the chance to listen to the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra as a part of the opera performance. The NOOA has a chorus roster of nearly 100 people in all voice categories; they appear on stage in costumes and sing during large group scenes. It is an all-in-one experience for audiences. The General and Artistic Director, Robert Lyall, has been working for the Opera since 1998. He is a widely known conductor, and is frequently recognized for his artistic excellence.

B) Fine reputation with strong word-of-mouth.

NOOA is the premiere producing organization for opera on the Gulf Coast. It has a loyal fan base that attends NOOA’s season performances and special events. Because of the high quality of performances, the organization has received positive feedback from audiences for decades. Word-of-mouth is always an effective marketing tool since the experiences shared by peers are much more vivid and convincing than advertising.

C) Strong supporting groups and the H. Lloyd Hawkins scenic studio

The Women’s Guild, Junior Committee and Opera Club provide strong support for the Opera. The Women’s Guild owns a property which is furnished in 18th and 19th Century European and American furniture, artworks, antiques and objets d’art. It attracts people for weddings, receptions, dinners, luncheons, coffees, teas and beautiful social events. These events provide income to support the New Orleans Opera. The Opera Club provides an insider’s view of the opera company for members, and the membership fee directly supports the Opera’s operating budget. The Junior Committee supports the Opera Association through educational, fundraising, and goodwill programs. All these groups provide regular funding for the opera.
The 30,000 square foot H. Lloyd Hawkins scenic studio, which is owned by the NOOA, is a complete fabrication and storage center containing over 36 full-sized theatrical productions and thousands of stage props. The studio contains a paint deck, metal shop, electrical equipment and sewing centers that enable the craftsmen to create custom scenery and props for the Opera and outside customers.

D) Engaged Board of Directors

The Board of NOOA covers almost every sector in the community. Each director is elected for a 3-year term. The Board’s membership includes lawyers, doctors and teachers. Members of the Board take their commitments seriously including attending meetings, sitting on committees and donating at least $1,000 annually.

E) Excellent performance facility

The Mahalia Jackson Theater serves as the home for NOOA. The theater began its life as the New Orleans Theater of the Performing Arts in January 1973. On December 1, 1993, the City Council voted to rename it the Mahalia Jackson Theater for the Performing Arts in honor of the famous and beloved New Orleans gospel singer. The theater was remodeled and reopened in January 2009, after being closed for four years due to the landfall of Hurricane Katrina. The theater, with a capacity of 2243 seats, is conveniently located to and is handicapped and hearing assistance accessible. These premiere facilities support the high quality of the Opera’s performances.

................................................................................................................

13 http://www.mahaliajacksontheater.com/history/mahalia-jackson-theater
F) Arts-centric atmosphere in New Orleans

The artistic atmosphere creates a spirit that makes New Orleans what it is. New Orleans has an almost unbroken tradition of opera that began in 1796. Indeed, the city is the birthplace of opera in the United States. “The date of the very first staging of opera in the Crescent City cannot be firmly established and seems forever lost to music historians. But it can safely be stated that since 1796, in the final decade of the Spanish colonial era, New Orleans has had operatic performances.”\(^{14}\) This artistic spirit is what makes NOOA more special than other opera organizations and it helped NOOA to survive after Hurricane Katrina.

2. Weaknesses

A) Lack of variety on the Board of Directors

Currently, seventy-five percent of the board members are lawyers. The average age of board members is over fifty-five. Through Sector Analysis, the organization found that top sectors in attracting new audiences include tourism, shipping, and history, etc.\(^{15}\) However, no one on the board represents these interests. At the same time, considering there are many African-American and Hispanic groups in New Orleans, lack of board members from these groups is an obvious weakness for the organization.

B) Financial Constraints

Financial constraints seem to be a big weakness of the New Orleans Opera Association. There were four productions in the 2011-2012 Season with a total production cost of $1,341,024.


\(^{15}\) Interview with Todd Simmons.
Unfortunately, the organization ended the season with a deficit of over $43,545. Due to these financial constraints, the Opera cannot afford to produce four operas in the 2012-2013 Season. Instead, NOOA will produce a three-opera season in 2012-2013 with a production budget of $1,190,183. The Opera Association has been cutting the marketing budget for three consecutive years. The marketing expense for fiscal year 2011 was $125,000 and $120,000 for fiscal year 2012. However, it decreased to $110,000 in fiscal year 2013. The declining trend of the marketing budget and financial constraints limit the overall running of the organization.

3. Opportunities

A) Cooperation with other New Orleans arts organizations

NOOA has a unique opportunity to develop partnerships with other local arts organizations. Strong and steady partnerships would allow NOOA and other arts organizations to work together to achieve common goals, such as increasing the number of attendees and obtaining greater support for the arts. The public would likely welcome relationships between NOOA and organizations such as the New Orleans Museum of Art, the New Orleans Ballet Association, and the Ogden Museum of Southern Art. These organizations could cross-promote in different ways through programs, advertising, email lists and their websites. NOOA can also initiate casual opera performances at local museums and arts organizations to build awareness among people who are interested in the arts but unfamiliar with opera.

B) Lack of familiarity

Lack of familiarity with the genre could be a major obstacle for audiences to attend the opera. By emphasizing this point, the goal of stimulating audiences’ interest and building a ticket
base could be realized by different means, such as utilizing the Opera on Tap and Taste of Opera programs. Through these programs people can watch a preview of upcoming opera productions and get a big picture of them. These casual opera events could help to change people’s minds about opera.

C) Need for arts education in schools

Currently, there is little music education for students in New Orleans public schools. NOOA could expand its current education program through certain kinds of cooperation with public schools. The expansion of the education program can provide students a more thorough knowledge of opera.

D) Expansion of visual media

In summer of 2012, NOOA and LSU’s Performing Arts Academy, a division of the LSU College of Music & Dramatic Arts, launched an Opera Camp to provide music programming to Louisiana’s youth (see Appendix I). Opera Camp was a new program combining visual performance and opera singing, and the week long experience introduced students to the world of opera at an early age. It was led by professional artists from the New Orleans Opera Association and the LSU Voice & Opera faculties. This expansion was a wonderful opportunity to bring together the strengths of both the New Orleans Opera Association and LSU to benefit young musicians, not only in Louisiana but also in surrounding states. This is an opportunity that will benefit the community and the organization on multiple levels.
4. Threats

A) Shifts in consumer tastes

No one can ensure audiences will continue to attend opera performances forever. Audiences’ tastes could change for any reason. For instance, older people who are fans of opera may shift their taste from classic to popular and modern arts with the influence of young people or mainstream media. Based on this point of view, NOOA may lose current subscribers in the future if they lose the interest in opera.

B) Lack of younger audience

It is a common view among younger audiences that opera is for elderly people and that it is not funny and fashionable. Most young people have no patience to sit for a couple of hours in silence just to watch a rigid and serious performance. The lack of young audiences is one of the biggest weaknesses for the NOOA.

C) Foreign language barrier

Because a lot of the operas are sung in Italian or other foreign languages, understanding the story is a big barrier for people to go to an opera. Even if the performance is in English, it is sometimes difficult for people to discern what the singers are actually singing. People would lose their interest and patience if they are lost in the whole performance.

D) Short run of each opera

The organization enjoys strong word-of-mouth, but the length of the run of each opera is not long enough for effective word-of-mouth advertising. Each opera in the season will be
performed on a single Friday and Sunday back-to-back. There is not enough time for people to share their reviews with others through internet media or face-to-face communication after they watch the performance. However, people want to hear reviews of the performance before they decide to buy tickets.

E) Decline in individual philanthropy

Other than the support from groups such as the Opera Club, Women’s Guild and Junior Committee, private donations are extremely important to NOOA’s continued success. Private support of Opera America and Opera.ca companies totaled $329 million dollars in FY2010, representing 53% of total operating income.\(^{16}\) For NOOA, it has 385 individual donors; most of them are over fifty years old. With the aging of the donors, the organization has to face a threat of fewer private donors in the near future.

F) Lack of familiarity with the Art Form

Since the opera itself is much more difficult to understand than any other art form, such as movies, TV drama, etc., lack of familiarity could be another stumbling block of deep understanding of opera. Most people had their first opera experience through watching TV or movies. The percentage of adults watching or listening to opera via broadcast and recorded media remains higher than live attendance. In 2008, 11 million adults, or 4.9% of the population, viewed or listened to an opera broadcast or recording.\(^ {17}\) Most of the time, people who lack familiarity with opera find difficulty in understanding the story line of the performance. The

\(^{16}\) [http://www.operaamerica.org/content/research/quick1011.aspx](http://www.operaamerica.org/content/research/quick1011.aspx)

\(^{17}\) [2008 NEA Survey of Public Participation of the Arts](http://www.operaamerica.org/content/research/quick1011.aspx)
feelings of struggling and boredom prompt them to give up opera and turn to other types of performances which they feel are easy to understand and enjoy.

G) Hurricane weather

Hurricane weather can be a big threat to organizations in New Orleans. In 2005-2006 Season, two full productions were scheduled for the fall, two for the spring and a gala concert for February. However, due to Katrina, both fall performances were cancelled, and the gala was bumped into March. It took many years for NOOA to recover from the damages in areas of production, fundraising and database management, among others. In 2012, the ticket system was shut down for three days because of Hurricane Isaac.

H) Changes at the Times-Picayune

In May, 2012, The Times-Picayune announced deep cuts, including a shift from daily publication to just three days a week: Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. This makes New Orleans the largest U.S. city without a daily newspaper. For arts organizations in New Orleans, this change can cause them to lose audiences who receive performance information from The Times-Picayune. It could hurt NOOA more seriously because most of the opera ticket buyers are elderly people who are likely to read newspapers more than any other media. This change may bring a decline of the number of ticket buyers for the NOOA.

I) Unstable economy

The City's arts groups are a diverse community. In 2009, More than 200 cultural non-profit organizations had total revenues of $144 million, and spent over $80 million on programs
in performing arts, visual arts, culinary arts, preservation, youth arts education and more.18 The economic recession affected them all in similar ways. Eighty percent are reducing their budgets, laying off their staffs, and postponing or canceling programs. There is a gigantic negative impact on arts organizations, because people have fewer cultural opportunities and organizations have less programming to offer. New Orleans Opera Association is no exception.

J) Competition from other non-profit organizations

Though there is no direct competitor for the NOOA in the field, there are so many other performances in New Orleans every night, and there is the possibility that current audiences would choose other events. The competitors includes: Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra; local jazz and music clubs (e.g. House of Blues, clubs on Frenchmen Street in New Orleans, Snug Harbor, Irvin Mayfield's Jazz Playhouse); New Orleans Ballet Association; New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival; New Orleans Museum of Arts; Ogden After Hours (Ogden Museum of Southern Art); Shakespeare Festival at Tulane; Southern Repertory Theatre; Le Petit Theatre; Broadway Across America; Jefferson Performing Arts Society; Lafayette Square concerts; and university productions (Tulane, Loyola, UNO).

CHAPTER FOUR

BEST PRACTICES

In this chapter, I will present an analysis of the best practices for non-profit arts organizations. Best practices help to build the ideal operational model. When applying best practice to organizations, a key talent required is to balance the unique qualities of an organization with the practices that it has in common with others.

Most arts organizations would benefit from deep and better planning. *Strategic Planning in the Arts: A Practical Guide* by Michael M. Kaiser is an excellent reference for best practices. Planning eliminates waste, especially for arts organizations that have nothing to waste. Every dollar, every minute is precious. Good planning also ensures that everyone in the organization is headed in the same direction; every staff member knows what he or she is expected to accomplish to ensure the implementation of the plan.

**Organizational Structure**

"There is powerful relationship between organizational structure and strategies developed to help the organization reach its mission. While there is no one correct organizational structure, early consideration of how an organization will grow administratively can increase the likelihood of mission success."19

One important element of the strategy that an organization should develop is that the staff should be well organized to accomplish the proposed operational strategies. If an organization fails to find a clear strategy for managing, there would be multiple problems. Most opera organizations operating today are managed under a dual leadership structure, such as the

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19 *Strategic Planning in the Arts: A Practical Guide* Chapter Thirteen: Organizational Structure
Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Madison Opera, etc. Dual leadership is most often described as “a formal arrangement in which two people have equal rank of an organizational hierarchy”\textsuperscript{20}. Most commonly in the non-profit performing arts world, the split in leadership occurs between the artistic professionals and administrative professionals. As described by Schermerhorn, “leadership is the manager’s use of power to influence the behavior of others”. He notes, “That in this usage, leadership involves the crucial functions of championing goals and values, setting direction, and inspiring, while management involves housekeeping functions, such as watching the budget and making sure that the work gets done”\textsuperscript{21}. In this model, both the artistic director and general director report to the Board of Directors. The primary function of the NOOA Board of Directors is to either financially contribute to the organization or act as a major fundraiser; the ability to fundraise should certainly be a factor when choosing board members. However, equal weight should be given with other considerations, such as experiences and education in the field.

Within non-profit arts organizations, different models exist. However, it is difficult to decide the model or organizational structure that is considered to be a best practice and to explain why. Currently, it can be inferred that the dual leadership model is most widely adopted in opera organization of all sizes, because few individuals have the qualities that are needed to manage both aspects.

In some cases, opera organizations may have one director who manages both the artistic and administrative aspects of the organization, but who comes from an arts background. The

\textsuperscript{20} Dual Leadership as a Problem-Solving Tool in Arts Organizations. \texttt{http://neumann.hec.ca/aimac2005/PDF_Text/deVoogt_Alex.pdf}
\textsuperscript{21} Management of Productivity. \textit{Schermerhorn, John R.} P 158
director is usually supported by a strong administrator. Such opera organizations include New Orleans Opera, Hawaii Opera Theater, New York City Opera and Nashville Opera. It would be ideal to find one individual with a perfect match of artistic vision and administrative skill.

The NOOA has Robert Lyall as the General and Artistic Director, and Todd Simmons as the Executive Director. Most of Robert’s responsibilities are in artistic aspects and Todd’s duties are more in the overall administration of the daily office work. Todd works as a strong support in administrative works for Robert. They work together on every project and they respect the talents and responsibilities of the other. This partnership model ensures strong advocates for both artistic mission and fiscal viability. Michael Kaiser also pointed out in the book that in any management structure, the leadership must be supported by a set of functional managers.\footnote{Strategic Planning in the Arts: A Practical Guide, P100} There are seven departments in NOOA where the staff is organized by function and a staff meeting is held every Wednesday. Every department reports to Todd, Todd reports to Robert, and Robert reports to the board. Everyone in the organization is tied together by the mission, and they communicate with each other effectively.

**Artistic Planning**

“It is essential to understand the anticipated artistic initiatives well enough to be able to secure the appropriate resources needed to support the art.”\footnote{Strategic Planning in the Arts: A Practical Guide, Chapter Five: Artistic Planning}

An organization’s success relies on the quality, imagination, and distinctiveness of its programming. Every opera organization needs to have a discussion of future artistic programs and needs from three to five years ahead. This provides the motivation for other aspects of the

\footnote{Strategic Planning in the Arts: A Practical Guide, P100}
strategic planning. Planning early increases the chances of securing the funding required for the "big hit"; it also strengthens the donor relationship, and planning enhances impact and visibility. The goal of planning is to understand the anticipated artistic initiatives well enough to be able to accrue the resources needed to support them. As Michael Kaiser detailed in the book, an artistic plan should cover many issues including repertory selection, talent selection, and facility.

Every nonprofit opera organization should develop a “brand” through its artistic planning. Creating a "brand" can build reputation and creditability. For opera organizations, the repertory of performances helps to create a brand that the public can identify and connect to the organization.24 Branding makes it easier to understand the mission and values of an organization.25

Much more than just selecting an opera, choosing a season involves sorting through hundreds of operas. Behind the decisions lie the challenging goals of selling individual tickets and subscriptions, engaging audiences and mixing lesser-known or newer works with the hits. For an opera company, it is extremely important to make current productions and future programs attractive to younger audience members as well as current patrons. Implementing new productions and developing a "festival" season for example, may help a company reach younger audiences. Cincinnati Opera has expanded its summer season for 2012 into a true festival with productions performed in repertory, accompanied by lectures, and outdoor activities in Memorial Hall and Washington Park. It also added festival performances at the School for Creative and Performing Arts for non-traditional repertoire. Another instance is the Madison Opera. Allan

24 Kim, Bo Kyung, and Michael Jensen. 2009. It is not just what you have but how you present it: How sub categorization affects opera market identities.

Kaplan, the general director, is particularly interested in attracting younger audiences. He plans to expand future seasons with more new productions, enabling the Madison Opera to use a smaller hall for more intimate chamber-style productions. Each opera organization should analyze the fit for its own situation and explore budgetary feasibility.

It is also vital to watch developing singers and celebrities with potential for future productions. The artistic directors of these organizations see hundreds of singers each year. They may hear a singer one year but not use them for four years. Artistic planning ahead allows opera organizations enough time to book future talent.

For the NOOA, usually three to four consecutive seasons are planned in advance and four events are planned each season. The New Orleans Opera Association has a wide range of fifty operas for selection every season. The following considerations were given during the planning process in the NOOA:

- Balance of languages and types of works;
- Balance of box-office appeal and variety;
- Value of family-friendly programming around the holidays;
- Reinstatement of works cancelled/delayed due to Katrina.

In planning the 2012-2013 Season, the biggest concern was whether a four-opera season would be financially viable. Galas, concert events or smaller-scale works were thought to be necessary substitutes in the season planning. Events including an all-chorus concert or a gala built around a guest star artist were also taken into consideration. Finally, the organization
decided to produce a three-opera season and a Plácido Domingo Gala Concert as a special event in the 2012-2013 Season.

Marketing Planning - Building Visibility

“In order to be successful, arts organizations must be visible. The most appropriate method for building visibility is to produce superior artist programming on a sustained basis. But this good art needs to be well marketed.”

Marketing can be divided into programmatic marketing and institutional marketing. Programmatic marketing includes strategies and tools an organization uses to build audiences, sell tickets, encourage participation in education programs, etc. The organization needs to drive demand to point of sale and build the framework of future loyalty. Effective programmatic marketing helps to develop a long-term relationship between opera and the buyer. It might be true for an organization to market itself to as large an audience as possible, the message will most likely be lost in the crowd unless the organization targets its audience. Michael Kaiser recommends that organizations identify target audiences, tailor strong messages to different groups, and promote the messages through appropriate channels to create demand. As most opera organizations have limited resources for marketing, focusing on the most influential targeted audience will take less time and money and provide better results. Through realizing that, the Pittsburgh Opera focused its efforts on better targeting of direct mail, telemarketing, e-mail marketing and advertising investments. For core audiences, the emphasis was on the quality

26 Strategic Planning in the Arts: A Practical Guide Chapter Seven: Building Visibility

27 Miller, Kivi Leroux. 2010. The Nonprofit Marketing Guide. 1st edition
of music and voices. For new audiences, the Opera emphasized accessibility, and sought to remove barriers to attendance throughout extensive marketing research. By implementing these programmatic marketing strategies, the Pittsburgh Opera has made dramatic improvements in single ticket sales and a reverse of subscription declines.

Marketing is much more than brochures and advertisements. Too few organizations spend any time or effort performing institutional marketing. Institutional marketing helps to build awareness and enthusiasm for the organization. It can also help to sell tickets. People attend the Metropolitan Opera because it is the Metropolitan. This reduces the spending on programmatic marketing, and it has a bigger role in increasing contributed income as well. Philip Kotler, a marketing authority, thinks of marketing as less about pursuing a sale than about creating a customer.\textsuperscript{28} Rather than marketing a specific performance or program, institutional marketing can be mobilized in many ways such as special gala performances, lectures, and the use of celebrities, education programming, and stories in major print outlets. There is a common situation in many non-profit arts organizations that the growth in earned income from ticket buyers does not meet an equal growth in expenses. Therefore, the competition for donations becomes more intense. Among those competitors, it is essential for organizations to build visibility and create demand among audiences. As Michael Kaiser mentioned in the book, while the importance of building visibility is indisputable, priorities must be clear. The aim of the non-profit arts organization is to achieve its artistic and educational goal. Building visibility should not require artistic directors to change visions.

\textsuperscript{28} 66 Quotes on Marketing from Philip Kotler. \url{http://www.slideshare.net/bright9977/66-quotes-on-marketing-from-philip-kotler}
The target audiences for the New Orleans Opera are adults ranging from twenty-five to over sixty-five years old, with incomes of more than $75,000 a year. The existing audiences for NOOA are mainly people from fifty-four to sixty-five years old. Basically, NOOA uses print advertisements, radio, direct mail, social media and emails for programmatic marketing. Every season, detailed performance and ticket information can be found in local publications as well as brochures that are sent out to every ticket buyer and subscriber. According to a survey by NOLA.com (see Appendix G), the amount of time people spend on TV and local cable weigh the most when compared to other media. However, television media is not being used for NOOA because of the high expense.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Director of Audience Development Nancy Watts is responsible for marketing at NOOA. Audience development is a very important part of marketing. Most people regard audiences just as those who show up at the performance. Indeed they are that, but they are more than that. Arts organizations surely rely on their audiences, not just to fill seats and bring in income, but also for long-term personal connections with volunteers and donors.

**Development Planning**

“Arts organizations must develop careful and coordinated plans for maximizing their contributed revenue from foundations, corporations, government agencies and individuals. To make the transition from small to large, arts organizations need to develop an individual giving program that will support their growth to the next level.”

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29 *Strategic Planning in the Arts: A Practical Guide* Chapter Nine: Development Planning
Fundraising is a constant and critical aspect of opera organizations. Many opera directors allocate most of their time to court potential donors. Organizations should implement an operational procedure to show appreciation to donors in order to ensure their continued support.

A potential source of fundraising is in the for-profit sector. Nonprofit organizations can seek partnerships with for-profit corporations that have similar target groups whenever possible. Target groups for nonprofit organizations are not limited to financial contributors; they also can be the community at large. These corporate partnerships can help reach an audience through the corporations' communication channels.

In addition to corporate donations, individual donors represent crucial funding. With development of technology, the use of online fundraising may become a more accepted method. Therefore, it is essential for all nonprofit organizations to be aware of the latest technology and to utilize it to the best of their abilities. Incorporating technology in fundraising is essential; social media would ultimately act as a tool that makes it easier for future patrons and donors to find information and act.\(^\text{30}\) It generates excitement about the opera organization and channels activities to further the organization's goals. This will generate financial donations.

For each non-profit arts organization, individual philanthropy is crucial. Currently, the NOOA has 385 individual donors who gave a total of over $625,000 in fiscal year 2012.\(^\text{31}\) The organization received fifteen grants. Thirteen of the grants were from foundations for a total of $275,000. The other two were government grants from the State of Louisiana Division of Arts and the Arts Council of New Orleans. The total amount of government grants was over $43,000.


\(^{31}\) Interview with the Development Director.
The NOOA believes if the program is good and marketing aggressive, the number of people who want to be part of the organization – through buying tickets, making donations and volunteering will organically grow. The organization prefers to name their audiences as “shareholders”. There are two ways to become a shareholder of NOOA: first, monetary investment, which are ticket buyers and donors; second, beneficiaries of the opera’s educational programs. The shareholders’ purchasing power provides a solid foundation of earned income, and their generosity strengthens the fundraising efforts of NOOA.

**Educational Planning**

“When developing education and outreach plans, an organization must clarify its goals. Defining purpose, target audience, and method of delivery will direct the development of educational programs that are effective in practice.”

Nonprofit opera organizations exist to serve the community through art and education; therefore, it is the organization's responsibility to inform their community about who they are, why they exist, and how they can benefit the public. It is very important for an opera organization to invest financially in its product to ensure a quality performance experience and effective community education. Education in the arts, particularly of youth, is the only reliable predictor of future participation and support - not age, race, ethnicity, or income level.

The planning of education programs relies on the mission of the organization and availability of funding. Compared to other organizations that focus exclusively on children or senior citizens, NOOA has well-balanced education programs that meet demands of different age

32 *Strategic Planning in the Arts: A Practical Guide*, Chapter Six: Educational Programming

levels and different locations. The popular opera program, Opera on Tap, has effectively helped to build an awareness of opera, promote performances and accomplish the mission of NOOA in both the Northshore and Southshore of Louisiana. For students, the MetroPelican Opera educates students through in-school programming and free student previews. The education programs exactly reflect the mission of the organization and a detailed education program calendar (see Appendix H) has provided a clear timeline for all programs.

**Similar organization**

The Kentucky Opera was founded in 1952 by Moritz von Bomhard and designated the State Opera of Kentucky in 1982. The mission of Kentucky Opera is to entertain and educate a broad, diverse audience by producing opera of the highest quality. Similar to this being the 70th anniversary season for the New Orleans Opera, the Kentucky Opera is celebrating its 60th anniversary season with three operas including *Tosca, Massenet’s Cinderella (Kentucky Opera Premiere)* and *Don Giovanni*. To celebrate Benjamin Britten’s 100th birthday, the Kentucky Opera presented *The Prodigal Son* as a 2012-2013 Season extra to launch the Contemporary Opera Series. The Kentucky Opera has forty-eight operas for selection and it usually produces three to four every season. All operas at the Kentucky Opera are accompanied by the Louisville Orchestra just as members of the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra play in all performances with NOOA. Additionally, Louisville Ballet also performs on occasions when operas require classical dance. Currently, the Brown Theater with a capacity of 1,400 patrons is the venue for the Kentucky Opera. The Kentucky Opera also has a Guild as the supporting group. The Guild of Kentucky Opera is the volunteer support outreach of the Kentucky Opera. The major purposes of the Guild are to provide volunteer help and support to the Kentucky Opera, to advocate for opera in the community, to


35 [http://www.kyopera.org/repertory.html](http://www.kyopera.org/repertory.html)

36 [http://www.kentuckycenter.org/AboutUs/BrownTheatre](http://www.kentuckycenter.org/AboutUs/BrownTheatre)
support the Kentucky Opera's education efforts, and to raise funds for the Kentucky Opera. Guild members support the Kentucky Opera by volunteering their time and talent in a variety of ways. With a dedicated and engaged board of directors, the Kentucky Opera is positioned not only to meet the economic challenges in the future, but also to expand its reach into the community.

The Kentucky Opera has eleven full-time staff and they are organized by functions. There are two people in the marketing department of the organization: Director of External Communication and Manager of Press and Media Relations. They work diligently to get coverage, not only from local but also from national resources. Besides using marketing tools including print advertisement, emails and social media as NOOA does, the Kentucky Opera has an official blog. The blog provides stories about the organization and recent performance information. Meanwhile, The Kentucky Opera collaborates more with its local media than the New Orleans Opera. The collaborations with local radio and television stations help to increase the exposure of the Kentucky Opera to the public. Lunch and Listen on each Wednesday is produced in cooperation with Classical 90.5FM WUOL and Metro TV. The program is produced in front of a live audience, featuring musical excerpts and interviews with David Roth, the General Director.

To reinforce the artistic goals and maintain the financial health of the organization, the Kentucky Opera is expanding programs while broadening its audiences. Subscriptions have grown by almost 50% in the past two seasons. In order to achieve success, the organization focuses its marketing campaign on high-visibility/high-impact strategies which attract new audiences to opera. These “boutique style” marketing strategies as well as the organization’s continued commitment to the highest artistic standard have been the major factors for the Kentucky Opera in reaching its goals.

The Kentucky Opera is financed by ticket sales, corporate, individual sponsors, the Fund for the Arts, and the Kentucky Arts Council. Local fundraising events such as an annual black-tie gala, Carnevale, have effectively brought in a significant increase in contributions in 2012.
The Kentucky Opera has several educational initiatives for both student and adult enrichment. Kentucky Opera offers educational opportunities to students of all ages. Programs offered include the School Touring Program, Final Dress Rehearsal for Students, Opera Bound, Composer Workshop, Opera Previews and more. Besides doing similar programs for students and adults as the New Orleans Opera, the Kentucky Opera also emphasizes education to young artists through VISIONS! and the Kentucky Opera Studio Artist Program. The Kentucky Opera also collaborates with local museums in order to achieve its goals. It works with the Speed Museum, and develops the *Sights and Sounds* program. The program provides an opera preview, as well as a visual art presentation pertinent to the opera. All these education efforts made by the Kentucky Opera help the organization to successfully accomplish its mission.
CHAPTER FIVE

MY RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the New Orleans Opera Association maintains a positive impression among its public. People who are familiar with watching opera performances in other cities appreciate the quality of performances that the New Orleans Opera provides. Other than producing opera in New Orleans, the New Orleans Opera also serves as a source of pride for many locals because of its long history and presence in the city. The following recommendations are based upon my internship in the organization.

Management

New Orleans Opera has effective artistic planning strategies for every season. Although most of the audiences are satisfied with NOOA’s performances and would like to recommend it to others, the learning curve may be steep for those who have never attended opera. It is important for people who have never attended an opera performance to go to the "right one." Some operas which are not suited for beginners may diminish the interest of novices. I recommend the organization provide at least one opera such as *Romeo and Juliet* or *Porgy and Bess* as more accessible introductions to the art form. Especially considering the fact that the current opera subscribers are aging, a group of younger audience members is needed to serve as the continuous patron base for the organization.

Sometimes, people feel that there are not enough activities going on during intermissions. I recommend the organization develop social events during these time periods. The organization may add social components. People would like to take the opportunity to meet new people, and they can share their interest in opera. At the same time, providing interaction can also help to
improve the communication between opera lovers and opera novices. These interactions will benefit NOOA by strengthening the opera community in New Orleans and encouraging attendees to become more involved with the organization.

Another recommendation is to cultivate younger members. Considering the fact that NOOA is lacking young audience members, replacing older board members with younger members can bring in fresh ideas for the development of the organization, and it is also helpful in attracting younger audience members.

**Marketing**

During my internship, I found that NOOA does not have much video material for marketing purposes. I recommend that the organization utilize online video previews and testimonials to familiarize people with the opera and specific performances. People often search for available arts entertainment options online prior to making a decision about attending an event. Providing video clips of upcoming performances can help people know what to expect and what they may receive from their investments of money and time. The organization can also strengthen its audiences through publishing documentary videos. These videos can be published on a quarterly basis, and it can include the artists' opinions about their performance and more behind the scene "secrets", etc.

Younger audiences would be interested in opportunities to mingle and socialize with opera attendees of all ages. Younger audiences may be more open to the idea of networking if it was organized around a specific activity. I recommend the organization develop activities, such as meeting the performers backstage, educational cocktail hours, etc. The Opera can also designate an area of seats for younger attendees and organize special activities for college
students.

Currently, NOOA sends out a large number of brochures every season. However, I recommend the organization provide consistent and frequent reminders to current and potential audiences. This would be helpful in driving awareness and demand for the New Orleans Opera. It is not necessary for NOOA to sell tickets with every message on the radio or newspaper; the organization wants the broader public to know it exists. Seeing the name of New Orleans Opera written on the side of a streetcar would remind people of what the organization does and its presence. Then people may go to the website to find out more details about the organization.

Another recommendation is to market opera performances to parents through collaborations with schools. As adults, entertainment habits and preferences may be influenced by their own childhood experiences and memories of attending opera with their parents. Some people may want their children to have the same experiences they had in their childhood. Other parents, who were not exposed to the opera as children, may feel that it is important to take their children to a performance. So, they will become accustomed to new experiences even though they may be initially uncomfortable.

**Development**

All donors like to see their efforts supporting the organization; they want to know that their donations are tied to specific expenses such as performances, educational outreach program, or other aspects within the organization. Very often, people want to know exactly how much of the costs were covered by ticket sales and donations. Therefore, I would recommend the organization provide more details about its operating budget. It is important not only for current donors to increase their donations, but for people to make an initial donation. I also recommend
that NOOA emphasize how the organization contributes to the local economy, which may resonate with some potential donors. The development department should disseminate this information through email and direct mail every year.

NOOA should also build up a strong image of local artists with audiences. For audiences, supporting local organizations and local artists are important factors when choosing an arts entertainment activity. However, audience members report a common impression that NOOA’s performers travel around the world and they are not integrated into the New Orleans community. Therefore, NOOA needs to better demonstrate to the public that many of the performers do work and live in the New Orleans area and contribute to the community in a variety of ways. Highlighting the benefits of NOOA to the community helps to support the future development of the organization.

Financial

Historically, marketing budgets are among the first to get cut in a budget crunch. The New Orleans Opera cut $22,000 for marketing this year. However, I think marketing investment is a must especially during an economic downturn. I recommend the organization should continue to keep the marketing budget the same or increase it. All the reductions can be in back office areas not seen by the public, audiences and donors. As Michael Kaiser said “we must excite the world about the work we do.”37 If the organization cuts the marketing budget, it will be more difficult to build excitement among its public which in turn will bring a reduction of earned income and possibly unearned income for the organization.

37 Arts in Crisis, Michael Kaiser
Currently, subscribers are not adequately informed about the organization’s revenue and expenses. However, it is important for them to receive more details about the extent of what is and what is not covered by ticket sales in order to justify making a donation. Therefore, I recommend the organization provide detailed financial information about NOOA's operating expenses and production costs that are not covered by ticket sales. This may motivate additional donations to strengthen the financial standing of the organization.
WORKS CITED

Personal interview, 2012. Interview with General and Artistic Director, Executive Director and Marketing Director. September 09, 2012.


The Pittsburg Opera. Website <http://www.pittsburghopera.org/>


<http://www.tccgrp.com/pdfs/per_brief_tenkeys.pdf>

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - SEASON BROCHURE
GIOACHINO ROSSINI'S

The Barber of Seville

NOVEMBER 16, 2012—8:00PM
NOVEMBER 18, 2012—2:30PM

MAHALIA JACKSON THEATER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
—IN ITALIAN WITH ENGLISH SUPER-TITLES—

You can't disguise true love!

A maiden forced into marriage, a handsome Count in disguise, star-crossed lovers, and the ingenious barber of Seville. Will everyone live happily ever after, or will the beautiful Rosina be forced to marry the grumpy old Dr. Bartolo?

Join us for all the music, mischief, and magic to find out.

Director: Matthew Lata
Conductor: Robert Lyall

Soloists: Deborah Domanski, Michele Angelini, Matthew Worth, Samuel Ramey, Thomas Hammons

Giacomo Puccini's

Madame Butterfly

APRIL 12, 2013—8:00PM
APRIL 14, 2013—2:30PM

MAHALIA JACKSON THEATER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
—IN ITALIAN WITH ENGLISH SUPER-TITLES—

Who cannot live with honor must die with honor.

The heartbreaking tale of the beautiful young Japanese maiden Cio-Cio San who gives up her heart and her heritage for an American sailor, only to be abandoned and betrayed.

Director: Torner Zvalin
Conductor: Robert Lyall

Soloists: Maria Kantova, Bryan Hymel, Margaret Thompson, Jake Gardner, Casey Canderat

Note & Bolts Lectures:
One hour prior to curtain with guest speaker David Moseley - former resident director, New Orleans Opera Association; former director, Lyrica Opera Theatre.
CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS
Samson and Delilah
MARCH 15, 2013—8:00PM
MARCH 17, 2013—2:30PM
MAHALIA JACKSON THEATER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
—IN FRENCH WITH ENGLISH SUPERTITLES—

What would you give up for love?

See the Bible come to life! Tragic hero Samson is enticed by the bewitching Delilah to give up the secret of his strength. In the end, his strong faith grants him the power to free his people.

Director/Conductor: Robert Lyell

Notes & Text Lecture: One hour prior to curtain with guest speaker George Donald — Reference Librarian, New Orleans Public Library, Music Critic, Opera News.

Singers

Samson
RICHARD COX

Delilah
EDYTA KULCZAK

High Priest
GRIER GRIMSHLEY

Old Philistines
JOSEF COLMAN
APPENDIX B - DRIVE MARKET SPREADSHEET

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Plácido Domingo 50th Anniversary Gala

New Orleans, Louisiana - New Orleans Opera Association invites you to a special non-subscription Gala Concert featuring international superstar Plácido Domingo celebrating the 50th anniversary of his first performance with the New Orleans Opera. Concert tickets begin as low as $45.

Dine with Domingo - Premium tickets including a gourmet dinner with Mr. Domingo at the recently-renovated historic Roosevelt Hotel as well as champagne during intermission.

This is your chance to hear one of the most glorious voices of the century!

DATE: Friday, October 12th, 2012
TIME: 7:00 PM
PLACE: Plácido Domingo Stage at Mahalia Jackson Theater - 1419 Basin St. NOLA
PRICE: $45 - $1000

After their huge success at the Berlin Philharmonic's Spanish Night in 2001, Legendary artist Plácido Domingo will be reunited again with the talented Ana María Martínez, a Grammy award-winning operatic soprano from Puerto Rico. Maestro Domingo will also be joined by a host of Metropolitan Opera stars including Stephanie Blythe, Mexican tenor David Lomeli (an Operalia Winner, 2006), and New Orleans' own operatic treasure, Sarah Jane McMahon. Robert Lyall conducts the 80-voice New Orleans Opera Chorus and the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra with special Masters of Ceremonies Academy Award nominated actress, Patricia Clarkson and Mayor Mitch Landrieu all performing on the Plácido Domingo Stage at Mahalia Jackson Theater.

Mark your calendar to join us for the special celebration of our 70th season with Domingo!

Co-Presenting Corporate Sponsors:

Special Thanks to: Office of the Lt. Governor, Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism.
APPENDIX D - DOMINGO STORY

Celebrating 50 years of Plácido Domingo

Plácido Domingo is a world-renowned, multifaceted artist, recognized not only as one of the finest and most influential singing actors in the history of opera, but also as a respected conductor. And during his tenure as General Director of Los Angeles Opera and Washington National Opera, he has been a major force as an opera administrator. He turned seventy in January 2011, but his gifts and energy remain undiminished.

Domingo’s vocal repertoire encompasses 140 stage roles – a number unmatched by any other celebrated tenor in history – and he has recently added the title baritone roles in Verdi’s Requiem, Boccanegra and Rigoletto to his list of achievements. In the course of the 2009-10 season he appeared as Boccanegra at the Berlin Staatsoper, La Scala, the Metropolitan Opera, Covent Garden, and Madrid’s Teatro Real, and in September 2010 he took the role of Rigoletto in a live broadcast from Milan, Italy, the city in which the opera’s story takes place. (He is planning to add three more baritone roles – Athanase in Thaïs, Francisco Puccini’s I due Foscari and Giorgio Germont in La Traviata – to his repertoire in 2012 and 2013.)

His more than 100 recordings of complete operas, compilations of arias and duets, and crossover discs include Deutsche Grammophon’s anthology of the complete Verdi arias for tenor and EMI’s album of Wagnerian roles that he has not sung on stage: Siegfried in both Siegfried and Götterdämmerung, and Tristan in a complete recording of Tristan und Isolde. His extensive work in the recording studio has earned him eleven Grammy Awards and two Latin Grammy Awards, and he has won Emmy awards for the television film “Homage to Sevilla” and for the Met’s “Silver Gala” program. He was the Latin Recording Academy’s Person of the Year in 2010. Domingo has also made more than 50 music videos in addition to four feature films of operas: Carmen, La Traviata, Otello, and Traviata, with the Munich Rigoletto forthcoming. He has conducted many opera performances with the Metropolitan Opera, Covent Garden, the Vienna State Opera, and Los Angeles Opera, among many other ensembles, and symphonic concerts with the Chicago Symphony, National Symphony, London Symphony, Berlin Philharmonic, Orchestra Symphonique de Montréal, and numerous other orchestras.

In 1990, Domingo and his colleagues José Carreras and the late Luciano Pavarotti spontaneously formed the Three Tenors, which performed from time to time and with enormous success all over the world and attracted many new fans to opera.

Born in Madrid in 1941 to parents who were ambos performers, Plácido Domingo was brought to Mexico at the age of 8. He attended Mexico City’s Conservatory of Music, where he initially studied piano and conductor but when his vocal talent was discovered he began to take voice lessons as well. At 18, he made his debut in a small role (Boris in Rigoletto) at Mexico’s National Opera, and his first performance as a leading tenor (Alfredo in La Traviata) took place in the city of Monterrey when he was 20. After having spent three seasons with the Israel National Opera in Tel Aviv, where he sang 280 performances of 12 different roles, he launched his major international career in 1969, and since then he has performed at all of the world’s most prestigious opera houses.

In 1993, Domingo founded Operalia, an annual international voice competition, which has helped to start the careers of many singers who have since become major figures on the world’s stages. In 2012, Operalia took place in Beijing. Domingo was also the prime mover behind Washington National Opera’s Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist program and Los Angeles Opera’s Domingo-Thornton Young Artist Program, both of which are designed to nurture and support the careers of opera’s future standard bearers. Domingo is also artistic director of New Orleans Opera, and in 2012 he released a CD with soprano Anna Netrebko, “Plácido Domingo and Anna Netrebko: Verdi Arias.”

2012–2013 | www.neworleansopera.org
Adolfo for the Youth Orchestra of the Americas.

In his native Spain, Plácido Domingo has been awarded the Gran Cruz de la Orden de Isabel la Católica, the Medalla de la Orden de las Artes y las Letras de España, and the Premio Príncipe de Asturias de las Artes; and in Mexico, where he grew up, he received the Aguila Azteca. He was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in the United States and the title of Commandeur de l’Ordre National du Mérite in France, Honorary Knight of the British Empire, and both Grande Officier and Chevalier de Grand Croix of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic. He has received honorary doctorates from Columbia University and New York University for his lifelong commitment and contribution to music and the arts. In October 2000, King Carl Gustaf of Sweden presented him with the first Ragnar Nilsson Prize (at $1 million, the most generous prize in the world of classical music) for his outstanding achievements in opera; in accepting the award, Domingo said that it would “greatly benefit my annual competition, Opera.” He has raised millions of dollars through benefit concerts to aid the victims of Mexico’s devastating 1985 earthquakes, of the floods caused by Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana, and in El Salvador, and of the victims of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, where, in 2005, the stage of the Mahalia Jackson Theater for the Performing Arts was named for him. In 2006, he conducted Verdi’s Requiem Mass in Warsaw to commemorate the first anniversary of Pope John Paul II’s passing.

In 2011, Domingo celebrated not only his 70th birthday but also his 50th anniversary as a singer of leading roles and the 40th anniversary of his Covent Garden debut. But there are no signs of slowing down; in 2012 he is scheduled to give more than 80 performances, between singing and conducting, in New York, Los Angeles, Valencia, Monaco, Madrid, Berlin, Lisbon, Shanghai, Vienna, London, Elche, Santiago (Chile), Hermosillo (Mexico), Zurich, Salzburg, New Orleans, Seville, Vienna, Bahrain, Stockholm, Malaga, Prague and Acapulco. Although he resigned as General Director of Washington National Opera at the end of the 2009-2010 season, after 15 years in that position, he continues as General Director of Los Angeles Opera.

Newspaper and other international publications have fittingly described Plácido Domingo as “the King of Opera,” “a true renaissance man in music,” and “the greatest opera artist of modern times.”
APPENDIX F - STUDENT STUDY GUIDE
**Giacomo Antonio Rossini**

Giacomo Antonio Rossini, the son of a printer and wool merchant, was born on February 9, 1792, in Pesaro, Italy. He showed a prodigious talent for music and by the age of seven had composed his first symphony. By the age of ten, he had composed a string quartet.

Rossini's education was cut short by his appointment as Hofkomponist to the court of the Duke of Parma in 1814, which provided him with an income and a steady flow of composition work.

By the age of 17, Rossini had completed 20 operas, and by the age of 19, he had completed 30. His fame spread quickly, and he was soon regarded as one of the most popular composers of his time. His operas were performed all over Europe, and he was commissioned to compose operas for the courts of many of the European monarchs.

Rossini's career was marked by a number of notable events, including his marriage to his first wife, Francesca Bertinelli, and his appointment as Music Director of the Paris Opéra in 1829. His last opera, Mosè in Egitto, was performed in 1829, and he retired from public life in 1832.

**Fun Facts about Rossini**

- **The Barber of Seville**
  - A witty, clever, and somewhat unorthodox opera, Rossini's Barber of Seville is a masterpiece of comic opera. The title role is traditionally sung by a tenor, and the opera is known for its hilariously comic and satirical elements. The opera was premiered in 1816, and it has been performed in nearly every major opera house around the world, with over 4,000 performances in the 19th century alone.

- **The Siamese Twins**
  - Rossini's masterpiece, released in 1867, is a complex and multi-layered work that explores themes of love, betrayal, and redemption. The opera is known for its innovative use of music and its intricate vocal lines, and it has been performed in many productions around the world.

- **The Barber of Seville**
  - Rossini's Barber of Seville is considered one of the most successful operas of all time, with over 4,000 performances worldwide. The opera is known for its witty and satirical elements, and it has been performed in nearly every major opera house around the world.
What's happening back then?

Rossini’s Life

1792

In 1792, Rossini’s family moved to Bologna, where he was born.

1812

First opera produced in 1812.

1817

Rossini moved to Paris, where he wrote his famous overtures and became a composer for the French Empire.

1829

Rossini composed his opera “William Tell” in Italy.

1830

Rossini retired from public life and returned to his home in Paris.

1843

Rossini’s last opera “William Tell” was premiered in Paris.

1845

Rossini died in Paris on November 13.

World Events

1790

Washington is inaugurated as the first President of the United States.

1812

The War of 1812 begins between the United States and Great Britain.

1857

The Indian War begins in the United States.

1871

The First World War begins.

1939

The Second World War begins.

Music Events

1784

The first public opera house opens in Paris.

1829

Rossini’s opera “William Tell” is premiered in Italy.

1845

Rossini’s last opera “William Tell” is premiered in Paris.

Vocabulary

Supreme The highest of the four musical voice ranges.

Mezzo-Soprano A voice range Intermediate between soprano and alto.

Alto or Contralto The third female voice type, the highest in range.

Tenor A male voice range.

Baritone A male voice range.

Hum The lowest range of all voices.

Librettio A type of opera in which the text is written by a librettist.

Aria A solo or duet where the singer expresses a particular emotion.

Duet An operatic work for two singers expressing a single theme.

Opera Buffo An operatic work that includes humor and parody.

Ecclesiastical A church ceremony.

Word Search for Barber and Seville

R I R Z F M K F E A
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L Q J P S R P I W F
H Q X R S B T C A
L U A D Y R I S I D
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C D T O X A B J X V
B O B A R I T O N E
G G U S O P R A N O

Rossini

Libretto

Soprano

Aria

Baritone

The New Orleans French Opera House

In 1999, the French Opera House opened on the corner of St. Louis and Tchoupitoulas Street in the French Quarter. It was the Opera’s and festival sponsor of the city, hosting many of a cultural event. In 1999, the French Opera House was lost in fire.

The Metopolitan Opera

Metropolitan Opera is one of the world’s leading opera companies, with a history dating back to 1883. The company is based in New York City and operates out of the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts.

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APPENDIX G - NOLA CHART

Media Day Analysis of Theater/Opera/Symphony Attendees

How Do People Who Purchase Theater/Opera/Symphony Tickets Spend Their Media Day-In Minutes

- RADIO: 25.2 minutes
- BROADCAST TV: 13.8 minutes
- LOCAL CABLE: 13.6 minutes
- SATELLITE TV: 6.0 minutes
- NEWSPAPER: 6.9 minutes
- BILLBOARDS: 8.3 minutes
- INTERNET (NO EMAIL): 12.4 minutes
- EMAIL: 12.8 minutes

Source: The Media Audit: Apr-May 2012 (Based on the New Orleans Population in the 6 Parish Area)

Ticket purchasers LOVE internet! 12.4 minutes per day are spent on-line!
APPENDIX H - EDUCATION YEAROUND SCHEDULE

Education-Outreach Calendar for 2012-13 – updated 9/12/12 by CR

**JUNE 2012**
Wed. 6/13/12 – 7pm OOT@Sheraton – general concert

**JULY**
Fri. 7/13/12 – 5:30-7:30pm OOT@NOMA – Bastille Day French program
Sun. 7/22/12 – Sat. 7/28/12 Opera Camp – co-sponsored by NOOA and LSU
Wed. 7/25/12 OOT@Sheraton – general concert

**AUGUST**
Sun. 8/5/12 – 4-5pm A Taste of the Opera at the French Market
Sun. 8/12/12 – 4-5pm A Taste of the Opera at the French Market
Sun. 8/19/12 – 4-5pm A Taste of the Opera at the French Market
Wed. 8/22/12 – 7pm OOT@Sheraton – general concert
Sun. 8/26/12 – 4-5pm A Taste of the Opera at the French Market

**SEPTEMBER**
Sun. 9/2/12 – 4-5pm A Taste of the Opera at the French Market
Sun. 9/9/12 – 4-5pm A Taste of the Opera at the French Market
Wed. 9/19/12 – 7pm OOT@ABP – promote Domingo Gala
Wed. 9/20/12 – 8:15am Opera à la carte – Newman School
Wed. 9/26/12 – 7pm OOT@Sheraton – promote Domingo Gala

**OCTOBER**
Wed. 10/3/12 – 7pm OOT@RN – promote Domingo Gala
Wed. 10/17/12 – 7pm OOT@ABP – promote Barber of Seville
Wed. 10/24/12 – 7pm OOT@Sheraton – promote Barber of Seville
NOVEMBER

Fri. 11/2/12 – 4:30-6:00pm Montage Master Class @Loyola – Samuel Ramey

Sun. 11/4/12 – 11am-2:30pm Women’s Guild Champagne Brunch – Audubon Tea Room

Wed. 11/7/12 – 7pm OOT@RN – promote Barber of Seville

Sat. 11/10/12 – 7:30pm Men’s Club dinner @ Guild Home – Loyola students sing

Sun. 11/11/12 – 4pm Opera Roundtable Discussion – Barber of Seville

Wed. 11/14/12 – 7pm Preview Performance – Barber of Seville

Fri. 11/16/12 – 7pm Nuts & Bolts w/Jack Belsom – Barber of Seville

Sun. 11/18/12 – 1:30pm Nuts & Bolts w/Jack Belsom – Barber of Seville

Wed. 11/21 – 7pm OOT@ Sheraton – general concert (night before Thanksgiving)

Fri. 11/30/12 Possible Churchill Society gig for Ted Martin?

DECEMBER

Fri. 12/14/12 – 2pm Concert for Betty Davidson’s Fine Arts Club – Christ Church Cath

Sat. 12/15/12 – 11am Hansel & Gretel - Junior Committee Holiday Party

Sat. 12/15/12 – noon Met HD Broadcast of Aida – KidsmART

Sun. 12/16/12 – 6pm Mastersigners’ Dinner – provide musical entertainment

Wed. 12/19/12 – 7pm OOT@Sheraton – Christmas concert

Fri. 12/21/12 – 6-8pm OOT@NOMA – Christmas concert

JANUARY 2013

Wed. 1/30/13 – 7pm OOT@Sheraton - general concert

FEBRUARY

Sat. 2/16/13 – noon Met HD Broadcast of Rigoletto - KidsmART

Mon. 2/18/13 – 2:30pm Concert for Fine Arts Club - Rayne Methodist – J. Lothschuetz

Wed. 2/20/13 – 7pm OOT@ABP – promote Samson et Dalila

Wed. 2/27/13 – 7pm OOT@Sheraton – promote Samson et Dalila
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<td>Sun. 4/14/13</td>
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<td>Nuts &amp; Bolts w/David Morelock – Madama Butterfly</td>
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APPENDIX I - LSU SUMMER CAMP POSTCARD
Concert Tickets

Tickets begin at just $45 for the performance only. Tickets at the $100 level will also receive champagne at intermission, so

Join the Toast - $300
Ancillary Orchestra (Section AA) / Balcony 101, 102, 201, 202, 301, 302, 303, 304
Loge (Sections 106, 107)

Premium Tickets

Premium tickets include a patron dinner with Mr. Domingo at the recently-restored historic Roosevelt Hotel following the concert and champagne during intermission.

Domingo Circle – $3,000
Premier Box Suite (Sections 302-304, 305-307)
The best seats in the house are reserved for the Domingo Circle.
This patron level offers the following benefits:
• Free reserved parking at performance and free valet parking at dinner
• Prominent listing in the program book as a member of the "Domingo Circle"
• An autographed commemorative photo
• A special gift at the dinner
• Lifting included on the NOOA vehicle
• Mention in the New Orleans Opera F-Newsletter

Conductor Circle – $750
Center Orchestra / Grand Loge – 1st Row
(Sections 302, 304, 306, 308)
• Free reserved parking at performance
• Free parking at dinner
• Prominent listing in the program book as a member of the "Conductor's Circle"
• A commemorative photo
• A special gift at the dinner

Arts Circle – $500
Left and Right Orchestra (Sections 306, 308, Loge 118)
• Discounted parking at dinner
• Prominent listing in the program book as a member of the "Arts Circle"
• A commemorative photo
• A special gift at the dinner

Tables of six are available at all patron levels. Call the box office for more information.
Join us for a gala concert to honor Plácido Domingo’s 50 years of performances with the New Orleans Opera. Maestro Domingo will be joined by a host of Metropolitan Opera stars including Stephanie Blythe, Ana María Martínez, and David Lomeli, New Orleans’ own operatic treasure, Sarah Jane McMahon, the 80-voice New Orleans Opera Chorus, the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, and special Masters of Ceremonies Patricia Clarkson and Mayor Mitch Landrieu all performing on the Plácido Domingo Stage at the Mahalia Jackson Theater.

Dinner with Domingo
Those purchasing a premium ticket (see ticket panel for details) will receive a special gift from Lee Michaels Fine Jewelry and enjoy a gourmet dinner with Mr. Domingo at the recently-renovated historic Roosevelt Hotel—host of presidents, royalty, and celebrities—and the perfect setting for this grand celebration.

Order Form
Plácido Domingo Gala Performance

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There are no refunds for tickets, and there is an late seating during a performance. The New Orleans Opera reserves the right to change dates, casting, and repertoire.
APPENDIX K - ACTUAL ADVERTISING PICTURE FOR DOMINGO
VITA

Danqian Liu was originally born in mainland China. She received her Bachelor’s degree in Sound Engineering from the National Academy of Chinese Theater Arts in Beijing, 2010. Currently, she is completing her Master’s degree at the University of New Orleans. She has worked as a marketing intern in the New Orleans Opera Association and the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra. She also worked as an on-site coordinator for the Fifth Seminar of DeVos Institute of Arts Management at the Kennedy Center in 2011. She has gained a wide variety of work experience throughout her study.