

THE OPERA CLUB BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, November 10, 2020

Gerri Piscitelli called the meeting to order at approximately 1:00 pm. Members in attendance were: Gerri Piscitelli, Lou Sasmor, Helga Sharp, Pearl Kosa, Mary Boczkowski, Geri Dempsey, Norm Schuster, Marty Taylor, Roy Ullrich, Marlene Croft, Rosalie Locke, Rudy Ruckert, Bill Doherty, and Ann Forrester. Dave Harrold was not in attendance. He did not attend out of consideration for our members, because a neighbor tested positive with the virus.

Gerri Piscitelli reported that the generous donation of \$3,000 by Dr. Pauline Pan will be matched by a double matching grant from Johnson & Johnson of \$6,000.

Gerri Piscitelli commented on the profiles document that Marty Taylor had created for the Opera Club. She apologized for failing to place it on the Agenda. We have never had such a profile showpiece.

AGENDA

Dave Harrold sent an item about emergency by-laws. Roy Ullrich questioned the need for that since we already had by-laws duly registered by the State. Gerri Piscitelli said she thought we should add an addendum regarding emergency measures. As an addendum to our By-Laws Lou Sasmor suggested the following: "For the duration of the COVID-19 emergency, or any other emergency that the majority of the Board of Directors may specify, the President or Vice President acting in concert with at least 2 other members of the Board of Directors may invoke any changes in procedures they deem necessary to protect the health and safety of the members". Discussion followed. Bill Doherty said he would like to make a MOTION that we add Lou Sasmor's statement to our existing by-laws. Seconded and passed unanimously. Roy Ullrich was asked and agreed to take care of it.

Treasurer's Report: Helga Sharp stated she sent a cover letter to Board members. Highlight: At the end of September 2020, \$1,613 is available for operations, \$140,042 for scholarships. Gerri Piscitelli thanked Helga Sharp and thanked Dave Harrold for his help.

Amazon information: Helga Sharp brought to our attention that we were contacted by Amazon. She asked for the information to be sent out to the membership and a copy is attached. This will be a great opportunity to gain money for our Club. Under the Amazon Smile program, Amazon will donate 0.05% of eligible purchases to the Opera Club. Lou Sasmor agreed to send out information to the Membership.

Scholarship: Gerri Piscitelli discussed the "extraordinary document" written by Marty Taylor, that tells who we are and what we do. She thanked Marty who said that the reason it was put together was because of the grants. More discussion followed this. A copy of "We Are The Opera Club" is attached. Any changes or additions would be welcomed by Marty Taylor.

Helga commented to Marty that no one has ever mentioned the \$9,000 that we gave to Fanyong Du in 2016 to stay in the US to finish college. Bill Doherty explained our relationship with Fanyong Du. Marty Taylor said she'd work on this info and see about incorporating it in her document.

Marty Taylor's scholarship presentation: The Scholarship information is updated, thanks to Roy Ullrich as well. She mentioned that there is nothing revolutionary. Some highlights: she elaborated on the different ways the schools are handling the current Covid situation. With all

the existing conditions, we don't know how many applications we will receive this year. There was discussion about problems for students. Those who were awarded scholarships last year were informed that they need to use the money this year, so if they come back to us, we have to let them know that if they don't take advantage of their scholarship in a timely fashion, they forfeit it. It was decided that we need to keep an eye on the situation and prepare to be as flexible as possible.

Auditions are back at Laurel Manor on Saturday, April 3, 2021 - Applications must be postmarked by Monday, March 1, 2021. We expect we will need to keep the audience out, have social distancing for the judges and bring the kids in when it's their time to perform.

Showcase of Winners - Thursday, April 22, 2021. - Communications to be sent to educators beginning in November by email.

Judges - 4 are confirmed: Bill Doherty, Doug Purcell, Jean Butler and Sallie Matteson. Other Judges were discussed, we would like to have 5.

The Criteria Form was reviewed - Some changes from last year: Marty Taylor wanted to review prizes first. The first one is up to \$10,000, our second prize is up to \$8,000, our third prize up to \$6,000 and our fourth prize is up to \$4,000. Encouragement Award to be determined. Under awards, Bill Doherty suggested that on the 3rd line where it mentions books, that we add books/sheet music. He informed us that books are on the way out and students are downloading the sheet music to their iPad and it is expensive.

Under Deadline: Marty Taylor mentioned that others are adding to their applications wording saying, alternate plans will be made if we are unable to host auditions in person.

Application Form - basic application has not changed except for under "to be submitted" regarding essays, this has been beefed up, to give us more information. Application deadline: must be postmarked by March 1, 2021.

There followed discussion about accompanists. After many members weighed in on this, it was decided to say "If you need an accompanist, we prefer that you bring one, if necessary we will provide one for the audition by prior arrangement - pre-recorded tracks are not allowed." Marty Taylor was applauded by the members and told she did a great job.

MAP Program: Pearl Kosa would like the Board's opinion about suspending this program until later due to the rising incidents of Covid-19. Bill Doherty moved that we postpone the MAP Program until September 2021. It was seconded followed by unanimous vote in favor.

Membership: Lou Sasmor reported that we have 98 paid members. The Google system appears to be working. What we set up is a Google account. - The issue of streaming the concert was brought up and the question was asked if this has been discussed with "The Sharon." Bill Doherty stated that it's very expensive and in their opinion they are discouraging it because it will cut down ticket sales.

Lou Sasmor brought up the issue of holding a Membership Meeting in January. Lou stated that should there be a Membership meeting in January, he would not attend. Gerri Piscitelli agreed. Her personal thought is that we should not have an in-person membership meeting until March, giving time for the vaccine to be administered and the Covid spike to decrease. Due to Covid precautions we are going to cancel meetings indefinitely. We will notify everyone when we resume. We will review our decision at every Board Meeting.

Three Tenors Plus One: Bill Doherty made some changes to the artists. We have asked

Heather Ard to be the "plus one". He said it's too risky to bring in out-of-state people such as Deborah Voight. Miguel Salas and Edward Washington have confirmed. Fernando Varela confirmed and is donating his \$1,000 fee back to the Opera Club. Bill Doherty requested clarification about the refund policy at the Sharon? It was mentioned that the ticket money would be refunded - we would lose that money but Gerri said she would rather have the exposure from hosting this event than not.

Bill Doherty made a MOTION that we postpone our regular meetings until further notice and we continue to go ahead to present the "Three Tenors + One" with the modifications we have made. There was a group second and the motion passed unanimously.

Gerri Piscitelli said that when Bill Doherty presents his next streaming, December 13th, perhaps he could speak about Three Tenors + One and he agreed. This should help us significantly. It was decided to do the streaming through our Google account.

Mary Boczkowski gave everyone a copy of the Annual letter to the membership she composed. She and her husband Len, will print, address and mail the letters. This effort was appreciated by all.

Geri Dempsey told us that the material about the Opera Club and our Scholarship Program and a variety of issues that had been printed out, was sent to Robert Mackreth, the grant writer who has reviewed it and is now ready to write the grant application. Marty Taylor was kind enough to send a list of foundations because that's where most of our efforts will be concentrated. Pearl Kosa has agreed to help with the solicitation and contact the foundations.

Gerri Piscitelli congratulated Bill Doherty for the last streaming event and told him that we have received many compliments on it. He said we'll have a beautiful one in December. On January 2nd the Entertainment Department has asked Bill to produce a show at the Savannah Center, two performances at 3 and 7 pm, the name of the show is "Raise the Curtain".

Gerri Piscitelli said that Pauline Pan has done so much over the years that she would like to propose that we have a scholarship named in her honor and was wondering what others thought of that? Everyone agreed. After much discussion, Gerri made a Motion that we establish the "Pauline Pan Music Scholarship Award." This was seconded by Geri Dempsey and passed unanimously.

Hospitality Committee: It was discussed that at the December Board meeting we will have a small holiday reception for Board members. Rosalie Locke and Marlene Croft have offered to organize this treat.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Forrester, Secretary