

Minnesota OPERA

Minnesota Opera's BRAVO! Volunteer Program

Volunteer Handbook
September, 2014

WELCOME

Welcome to Minnesota Opera. You are volunteering for an organization of dedicated artists, craftspeople and administrators all working together to produce opera and opera education programs that inspire and entertain our audiences and enrich the cultural life of our community.

This handbook will serve as an introduction and guide as you assume the role of a volunteer. If you have any questions that are not answered by this handbook, please consult the Volunteer Chair or Volunteer Coordinator.

Please read through this handbook with care. You will learn about our volunteer opportunities, policies, benefits, and some general information about the Opera. The Opera has the reputation of being an innovative and exciting arts organization. We welcome you and look forward to your creative contributions to Minnesota Opera.

Should you ever have any questions or comments concerning your volunteerism or the Opera, please feel free to ask the Volunteer Chair or the Staff Volunteer Coordinator.

Welcome to the Opera family!

Kevin Ramach
President and General Director
Minnesota Opera

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HISTORY

Minnesota Opera was founded as Center Opera in 1963 when the Walker Art Center commissioned Dominick Argento to compose an opera for its performing arts program. Known as a progressive, “alternative” opera company through the early 1970s, the Minnesota Opera merged with the St. Paul Opera in 1975, and through the 1980s, began to shift its focus to include more “traditional” repertoire.

In 1985, Minnesota Opera became a founding tenant of St. Paul’s Ordway Center, and in 1990, opened its own Opera Center in Minneapolis, combining scenic and costume shops, rehearsal facilities and administrative offices into three renovated warehouses on the Mississippi riverfront.

At the start of the 21st century, Minnesota Opera is recognized for its world-class artistic quality and community service; its progressive and far-reaching educational program; its highly competitive Resident Artist Program and for its artistic vision based on the Bel Canto philosophy.

ARTISTIC VISION

Minnesota Opera's artistic philosophy is inspired by Bel Canto, the ideal upon which Italian opera is based. Bel Canto values, which emphasize intense emotional expression supported by exquisite technique, inform every aspect of the company's programs, from repertoire selection, casting and visual design to education and artist training.

"Bel Canto," Italian for "beautiful singing," was both a period of operatic composition in Italy from 1800-1850 and a philosophy of vocal production that centered on the capacity of the human voice to convey emotion beautifully. The tenets of the philosophy are threefold: the effortless and expressive delivery of music, the mastery of appropriate musical style, and the natural beauty of the voice.

Beginning in 2000 with Rossini's *Semiramide*, Minnesota Opera committed to producing one Bel Canto-period opera in each subscription season. Over time, these Bel Canto operas have focused the Opera’s energy on becoming a specialist in this period (in addition to the Opera’s continuing commitment to the broader repertoire). Setting the standard for this neglected body of work, Minnesota Opera is becoming a destination point for audiences and artists interested in Bel Canto-period operas and the Bel Canto style of singing.

VOLUNTEER COMMITTEE

BRAVO! is administrated by Minnesota Opera. It is not a separate entity and does not initiate its own programs. No money is raised directly by volunteers. BRAVO! is led by a volunteer committee that consists of the Volunteer Chair, department leads and staff volunteer coordinator.

The Volunteer Chair is a volunteer who serves at the discretion of the President. The chair acts as a liaison to the staff and serves a leadership function to BRAVO!

Volunteer department leads manage projects within the department they serve and work directly with department staff delegates to better meet their needs. Volunteer department leads work with the Volunteer Chair to develop training and recognition for volunteers within each department.

The membership of the volunteer committee is administrated by Minnesota Opera. If you are interested in serving on the committee, contact the Volunteer Chair.

OPPORTUNITIES

Participation as a volunteer is open to anyone age 16 or older, regardless of prior volunteer experience. Prospective volunteers may contact Minnesota Opera by phone 612-342-9569, e-mail volunteering@mnopera.org or fill out the form at our website mnopera.org/Volunteer. Volunteers become active after completing their first volunteer assignment. Each volunteer may select the level of participation appropriate for his/her own availability and goals.

Volunteer opportunities may occur on a regular (corresponding to every production), periodic (one or more times throughout the year) or one-time basis. Volunteer committee positions and select other activities may require a season-long or annual commitment. The majority of opportunities occur between September and April.

Detailed descriptions of our current volunteer opportunities are listed by department below. Opportunities that become available will be announced via e-mail or phone. Volunteer opportunities are available in the following departments:

Department	Regular Opportunity	Periodic/Limited Opportunity	Data-entry & Clerical	Mailings
Marketing	<i>Gift Shop</i>	<i>Community events</i>	<i>Clerical</i>	<i>Mailings</i>
Development		<i>Gala and other events</i>	<i>Clerical</i>	<i>Mailings</i>
Finance/ Admin			<i>Clerical</i>	<i>Mailings</i>
Education	<i>Behind the Curtain Docents</i>	<i>Opera Center Docents</i>	<i>Clerical</i>	
Artistic	<i>Twin Cities Host</i>		<i>Clerical</i>	
Production	<i>Lightwalking</i>		<i>Clerical</i>	

Marketing

Opera Gift Shop

Volunteers staff the Opera Gift Shop in Ordway's lobby during each performance. For each performance a managing volunteer and 1-2 assisting volunteers are scheduled. The managing volunteer provides on-the-job training for any new assisting volunteers. A typical evening shift begins at 5:30 PM and ends after the first intermission (a Sunday matinee shift begins at 12 PM.) As an additional benefit, Gift Shop volunteers are usually allowed to attend the performance. Periodically, there are Opera Gift Shop shifts available for special events at the Opera Center or at other locations.

Development

Gala

The Opening Night Gala is the opera's annual fundraiser. One-time volunteers and regular volunteers are sometimes needed for this event. Contact Emily Skoblik (612-342-9553 or eskoblik@mnopera.org) for details.

Education

Behind the Curtain

Volunteers assist the Education Director and Artistic department with preparations and hosting activities at *Behind the Curtain* events at the Opera Center.

Opera Center Docents

Volunteers facilitate guided tours of the opera center for civic groups, clubs, students and individuals. Individual tours will be assigned according to guide availability. Training is required for this position.

Artistic

Twin Cities Hosts

Assist the artistic team in picking up artists at the airport upon arrival and transporting artists to rehearsals, engagements and events. Volunteers commit to the season, but schedule and artist assignments vary by production and needs. An orientation is required.

Production

Lightwalking

Volunteers "walk the lights" on the Ordway Center stage during light-cue setting sessions in order to establish the lighting design for a production. Lightwalking opportunities are daytime activities and occur during tech week, the week before a production opens. No training is required for this opportunity. Lightwalking opportunities are posted prior to each production.

Additional benefits of Lightwalking opportunities:

- 1) Great opportunity to meet stage and lighting directors
- 2) Visit the sets prior to the production (a true “behind the scenes” experience!)
- 3) Increased understanding and appreciation of stagehand activities prior to production

The protocol for Lightwalking volunteer opportunities is as follows:

- Choose a time slot to sign up for and respond to the request via e-mail, mail, fax or phone.
- Check the Lightwalking Hotline at (612) 370-1442 for changes and updates to the schedule 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Note: If the hotline is not up to date when you call to check the schedule on the date of your time slot, you are not expected to show up at the Ordway. When in doubt, do not go.
- Sign in at the back stage door of the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts on the date and time of your time slot.
- Report to Stage Management and wait for further instructions. Alex Farino, Production Stage Manager, can be reached on his cell phone at (612) 201-2106.
- When your time slot is finished, sign out and exit at the back stage door.

Additional Opportunities

Data-Entry & Clerical

Periodic assistance is also required for communications, archival, clerical and computer projects for various departments. Opportunities will be announced as needs arise.

Mailings

Periodic assistance in mailings is also required for various departments. Mailings are a daytime activity. Opportunities will be announced as needs arise.

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

It is anticipated that a volunteer as well as all personnel will act in an ethical, honest and professional manner to reflect a positive image of Minnesota Opera. Displaying good judgment, diplomacy, and courtesy when dealing with Opera audiences, board members, volunteers and others outside the organization is a positive reflection on the company. It is expected that you will be courteous, gracious, and cooperative, both in person and on the telephone. Administrative expectations made of Minnesota Opera staff are also those made of volunteers.

Attendance

Volunteers who have agreed to a volunteer assignment are responsible for fulfilling all requirements of the agreed upon assignment. Volunteers who must cancel an assignment are asked to call the substitute on call. Volunteers who will be late for an assignment are asked to notify the staff delegate, the Volunteer Chair or department lead. Last minute replacements are difficult and sometimes impossible to find. Attendance record will be given serious consideration as part of a volunteer’s future involvement.

Personal Appearance

Establishing a good impression is important. Sweat/track pants, leisure T-shirts, and ripped/torn items are considered unacceptable attire. Beyond not wearing those items, we ask only that you use your own good judgment and err on the side of professional dress. A volunteer badge is to be worn during volunteer activities, especially when dealing with the public. If the Opera, in its sole discretion, determines that your attire is inappropriate, you may be required to leave and return with appropriate attire.

The Opera Center

The Opera Center is a secured building. During regular business hours use the intercom system just inside the front door for entry. After hours, appropriate staff will admit members or provide alternative instructions for using the intercom. When reporting for an assignment, proceed to the assignment area. Please sign in if instructed to do so.

Ordway Center

When on assignment at Ordway, volunteers enter at the stage door. Please sign in upon arrival.

Expense Reimbursement

Expenses incurred while volunteering are not reimbursed (except for Opera Gift Shop and Lightwalking parking). For other cases, speak with your staff department delegate.

BENEFITS

BRAVO! is designed to allow each volunteer to find the commitment level most appropriate for his/her availability and goals. Volunteers are encouraged to communicate their goals with the Volunteer Chair.

In a non-profit organization, the number of volunteer hours contributed impacts the company's potential to attract and retain funding. Whenever you volunteer please report your hours to the Benefits and Hour Tracking Department Lead (you may e-mail hours to volunteering@mnopera.org). Once you accrue the number of hours for a participation level, you immediately receive the associated benefits for the remainder of the season and the season following. The volunteer season runs from July 1 to June 30. Should you choose to change your level of participation within a particular season, your benefits will change to reflect the new participation level at the end of the current volunteer season. You must complete at least one opportunity per season to remain active. If an opportunity worked is less than 3 hours, you will be credited for 3 hours (rounded-up) for benefits reporting.

If you wish to verify the number of hours you have served in a given year, or to correct your recorded hours, please email the Benefits and Hour Tracking Department Lead.

A separate attachment outlines the various participation levels and associated benefits available to volunteers. Please reference the attached document to determine your preferred participation level.

GENERAL POLICIES

Handbook

The policies and practices set forth in this handbook have been developed to carry out the purposes of Minnesota Opera in accordance with sound administrative and legal practices. The purpose of these policies is to provide guidance and direction to BRAVO! volunteers. Adherence to these policies is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers.

The President and HR Manager shall be responsible for carrying out these policies and practices and for implementing appropriate changes. Minnesota Opera reserves the right to interpret the policies as it deems appropriate and to depart from the stated policies and practices in its discretion. Minnesota Opera's interpretation or application of a provision may vary from time to time if appropriate, as determined by Minnesota Opera, under the circumstances.

The policies, practices, and benefits contained in this handbook supersede any past practices and any prior written or oral representations or statements regarding the terms or conditions of volunteering with the Opera. All previous Volunteer Handbooks are hereby revoked.

Confidential Information

Much of the information that you work with regarding individuals, members, finances, and Minnesota Opera programs should be considered confidential and treated with discretion. It is your responsibility to keep this information confidential. If you are in doubt about the confidentiality of any material, you should consult your department staff delegate or the President before divulging any information. Under rare circumstances when dealing with confidential personal or financial information, you may be asked to sign a further confidentiality agreement.

Affirmative Action Policy Statement

This statement is to reaffirm Minnesota Opera's policy on providing equal opportunity to all volunteers, employees and applicants for employment, in accordance with all applicable equal employment opportunity affirmative action laws, directives, and regulations of federal, state, and local governing bodies or agencies thereof, including Minnesota Statutes 363A and Chapter 139.50 and 141 of the Minneapolis Civil Rights Ordinance and all applicable rules and regulations.

The Opera will not discriminate against or harass any volunteer, employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, veteran status, or status with regard to public assistance or other legally protected status.

The Opera will take affirmative action to ensure that all volunteer and employment practices including, but not limited to, hiring, upgrading, demotion, transfer, recruitment or recruitment advertising, selection, layoff, disciplinary action, termination, rate of pay or other forms of compensation, selection for training, and apprenticeship, will be conducted without regard to race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, or other legally protected status.

The Opera prohibits the harassment of any volunteer, employee or job applicant on the basis of his or her protected class status.

The Opera will commit the necessary time and resources, both financial and human, to achieve the goals of Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action.

The Opera fully supports incorporation of non-discrimination and affirmative action rules and regulations into contracts.

The Opera will evaluate the performance of its management and supervisory personnel on the basis of their involvement in achieving these Affirmative Action objectives as well as other established criteria. Any volunteer, employee of this organization or a subcontractor who does not comply with the equal employment opportunity policies and procedures as set forth in this Statement and Minnesota Opera's Affirmative Action Plan will be subject to disciplinary action. Any subcontractor not complying with all applicable equal employment opportunity/affirmative action laws, directives and regulations of the Federal, State, and Local governing bodies or agencies thereof, including Minnesota Statutes 363A and Chapter 139.50 of the Minneapolis Civil Rights Ordinance, will be subject to appropriate legal sanctions.

The Opera has appointed the HR Manager to manage the Equal Employment Opportunity Program. The responsibilities will include monitoring all equal employment opportunity activities and reporting the effectiveness of this Affirmative Action Program, as required by federal, state, and local agencies. The President of the Opera will receive and review reports on the progress of this program. Any employee or applicant for employment believing that he/she has been discriminated against, is encouraged to contact the HR Manager, 620 North First Street, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401 or call (612) 333-2700.

Discrimination, Harassment, and Inappropriate Behavior Policy

Minnesota Opera prohibits harassment, including, but not limited to, sexual harassment, discrimination and inappropriate behavior by volunteers or employees. Any volunteer or employee found to have violated this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspension without pay or termination.

This policy and its procedures for reporting complaints apply to all types of harassment, discrimination, and inappropriate conduct and should be utilized for any complaints of that nature. Volunteer or Employment decisions must be made without regard to race, religion, national origin, gender (including pregnancy), marital status, disability, age, sexual orientation, or other protected status. Requests to engage in illegal or unethical conduct or retaliation for the making of a good faith complaint about such conduct is prohibited as inappropriate conduct. This policy applies to every aspect of the volunteer or employment relationship, including recruitment, selection, placement, training, compensation, advancement, discipline, terms and conditions of employment, and termination. The policy applies to all volunteers and employees of Minnesota Opera as well as third parties with whom employees have work-related contact, such as contractors, visitors, members, vendors, and suppliers.

“Sexual harassment” includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical contact or other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to the conduct or communication is made a term or condition, either explicitly or implicitly, of an individual's employment; or
- Submission to or rejection of the conduct or communication by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting that individual's employment; or
- The conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's employment or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment

“Sexual harassment” may include, but is not limited to, unwanted sexual comments, compliments, flirtations, advances or jokes in verbal, written, or electronic form; sexual suggestions or remarks about a person’s clothing, body or sexual activity; unwanted and unnecessary touching, brushing against, patting, or pinching; requests for sexual favors; unwelcome and repeated invitations to social engagements or other activities; display in the workplace of sexually suggestive pictures, cartoons, websites, or objects; sexually oriented gestures; an indication or threat, express or implied, that an employee's job security, job assignment, conditions of employment, or opportunities for advancement may depend on the granting of sexual favors. “Sexual harassment” includes harassment of a sexual or degrading nature between individuals of the same gender if such conduct occurs because of the gender of the individual harassed regardless of the sexual orientation of the people involved.

Unwanted offensive comments or actions based on a person's race, religion, national origin, marital status, age, disability, sexual orientation, or other status protected by law constitute harassment and violate this policy. Other inappropriate or offensive conduct that is disruptive to the workplace also is prohibited by this policy.

Importance of Communication

The workplace is composed of individuals who have varying levels of sensitivity. Individuals often are not aware of the offensive nature of their behavior and will change their behavior if told it is offensive. Respect for volunteers and employees and effective communication are necessary to achieving the goal of a workplace free from harassment.

Reporting and Investigating

Any knowledge about or claims of a violation of this policy must be reported to the volunteer’s staff delegate or employee's supervisor immediately. If for any reason a volunteer or employee is not comfortable making a report to the staff delegate or employee's supervisor, the volunteer or employee should make a report to the HR Manager or the President of Minnesota Opera. All allegations of harassment will be investigated promptly, fairly, and completely. Reports made pursuant to this policy will be handled as confidentially as possible consistent with the needs of any investigation and appropriate remedial action.

All volunteers and employees are required to cooperate with Minnesota Opera's investigation of complaints under this policy. Any volunteer or employee found to have knowingly or intentionally made a false complaint of a violation of the policy or found to have knowingly given false information during an investigation of such a complaint may be subject to disciplinary action. Volunteers or employees who refuse to cooperate with an investigation also may be subject to disciplinary action.

If the facts support an allegation of a violation of this policy, appropriate action will be taken. Resolutions of complaints of violations of this policy can include, but are not limited to, direction to stop the behavior, counseling and/or training, warning, suspension with or without pay, transfer, or termination of employment. Minnesota Opera will work with contractors, visitors, members, vendors, suppliers, and other third parties if it determines that a volunteer or employee has been subjected to harassing or inappropriate behavior from outside Minnesota Opera.

Retaliation Prohibited

Minnesota Opera prohibits retaliation against volunteers or employees who bring complaints about violations of this policy or assist in investigating such complaints. Retaliation should be reported and will be investigated in the same manner as complaints of discrimination or harassment.

Supervisory Responsibility

Employees with supervisory responsibilities will be evaluated on their adherence to this policy and the monitoring of employees under their supervision. Any supervisor who receives a report of suspected violation of this policy must report the information to the HR Manager or President.

Consensual Relationships

A report of sexual harassment arising out of a consensual relationship will be investigated under this policy in the same manner as any other report.

Drug-Free Workplace

Consistent with the applicable state and federal law, Minnesota Opera prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance (except as authorized by a physician) or alcohol on Minnesota Opera property or while engaged in Minnesota Opera business.

Minnesota Opera intends to establish and maintain a work environment that is free from the effects of alcohol and controlled substances. All volunteers are expected to report ready to perform their duties safely and efficiently. They are also expected to obey the law and observe Opera prohibitions against the presence of drugs, unless medically necessary, on the premises. Where the involvement with drugs interferes with such expectations, individuals may be offered appropriate assistance as with any health problem, or be subject to disciplinary action as the circumstances require. Volunteers violating this policy will be subject to discipline up to termination of the BRAVO! Volunteer Program.

The possession, transfer, sale, purchase, or use of illegal drugs or alcohol or involvement in any such activity engaged in by others, while volunteering for Minnesota Opera or on Opera premises, at any time, is covered by this policy, including referral for legal prosecution as appropriate.

This policy will not be construed to prohibit the reasonable use of alcohol at company social events. Moderate consumption of alcoholic beverages may be acceptable at certain Minnesota Opera events (e.g., annual luncheon, Holiday party, fundraising events, etc) as determined and approved in advance. However, volunteers must remember to conduct themselves in a business appropriate manner at all times. Unprofessional or unruly conduct as a result of drinking alcohol at any Opera function is unacceptable and may result in

disciplinary action. Minnesota Opera will not knowingly permit the use of alcoholic beverages to any volunteer under the Minnesota legal drinking age of 21 years old. Any volunteer under the age of 21 consuming alcoholic beverages at a company social event will be subject to discipline.

Smoking

Minnesota Opera Center has been designated as a non-smoking area.

Computer Network System Privacy

Minnesota Opera respects the individual privacy of its volunteers. However, a volunteer cannot expect privacy rights to extend to work-related conduct or the use of Opera owned equipment or supplies. You should be aware of the following policies.

Systems use restricted to Opera business: Volunteers use of computer network systems, including access to the Internet services, is for Opera business only and not for personal purposes, except for short informational messages. Personal purposes include, but are not limited to, entertainment, soliciting or proselytizing for commercial ventures, religious or political causes, outside organizations, or other non-job-related solicitation or purposes.

Forbidden content: Volunteers are prohibited from using the Opera's information system in any way that may be disruptive or offensive to others, including, but not limited to, the transmission of sexually explicit messages, cartoons, ethnic or racial slurs, or anything that may be construed as harassment or disparagement of others.

Volunteers violating this policy will be subject to discipline up to termination of the BRAVO! Volunteer Program.

Safety

Minnesota Opera policy is to comply with all federal, state, and local requirements as they apply to the safety of employees and the protection of all properties and property of others.

For emergency procedure explanations, please refer to the Emergency Procedures Guide, available from the HR Manager.

Personal Property

Minnesota Opera is not responsible for the loss of personal property nor is it able to reimburse you for any such loss. You should take precautions to protect your personal property.

Work Interruption/Building Closure

In the event that Minnesota Opera will close on other than a scheduled holiday due to some type of emergency or work interruption, your staff delegate will notify you in a timely manner via phone. This applies primarily to a snow emergency; however, this will be the standard procedure regardless of the type of work interruption.

Emergencies & Accidents

Any emergency, accident, or fire should be reported immediately to your department staff delegate and the HR Manager or the Operations/Systems Manager.

Personal Injuries

Immediately report all injuries, no matter how minor, to your department staff delegate and the HR Manager, so as to fill out a first report of injury form. Minnesota Opera will do its best to ensure that you receive prompt and attentive care for your injury.

You may treat minor injuries yourself (first-aid boxes are located throughout the building). Serious injuries should be treated by paramedics. Call 911 immediately.

Emergency Evacuation Plan

When a fire has been sighted or detected by our security equipment, we will immediately evacuate the building. We will do this by turning on the evacuation horn for 10 seconds. After hearing the horn, evacuate the building immediately:

- Do not run. Be sure to close your office door as you leave.
- Do not use the elevators.
- Do not re-enter until told to do so.

Remember:

1. The loud horn tells you to evacuate.
2. Know where all the exits and the emergency exits in the building are located.

Thank you for your dedication to Minnesota Opera! If you have any questions about the BRAVO! Volunteer Organization; please contact the Staff Volunteer Coordinator or the Volunteer Chair.

