

**YOU METICULOUSLY TAKE NOTES AT EVERY REHEARSAL. WHAT ARE YOU NOTING?**

Essentially, stage managers are video recorders. We record all movement in the rehearsal and can call it back in detail when needed. The notes I'm taking are staging notes called blocking. Any move the director has the performers do, I write down and map it in a miniature diagram (mini). Each page of the score has a corresponding mini. Every entrance, exit, step, gesture, costume worn and prop used is noted as well as when and where those things happen in the music. The stage manager's score is often called the "prompt book".



Production Stage Manager Valerie Wheeler calls cues at the opening night performance of Opera Cleveland's *Hansel and Gretel*.

**STAGE MANAGERS "CALL THE SHOW." WHAT DOES THIS MEAN, EXACTLY?**

Stage Managers run the show. The show can consist of hundreds of cues / tasks (recorded in the prompt book) that need to be given to the singers, the props running crew, the costume running crew, wigs and make-up crew, the light operators, the rail (fly) operators and the deck hands, even the front of house (house managers and ushers). All of the crews take their cues from the stage manager. In order to give these cues to all of the departments from one location, the stage manager "calls" them over a headset and paging system to which the crews are listening.

**WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO WHEN YOU RETURN TO CLEVELAND?**

1. Seeing Carl the Opera Chicken. 2. Working with Opera Cleveland. This company is striving to do it right and succeeding. 3. Working in the State Theater. It's a beautiful theater and a wonderful space to work in. The crews are top notch.

**DO YOU HAVE ANY MEMORABLE STAGE MANAGING FOLLY STORIES YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE?**

Oh, wow! The list of follies is *loooooong*. Live theater—anything can happen and usually does. Here's a few that make me laugh:

In one show a singer portraying a nun accidentally got her wimple caught in the door as she entered because I called the cue to close the door too soon. The wimple actually jammed the door. After several attempts at discreetly getting her wimple free, she gave up and simply sang the entire scene with her head caught in the door. What else was a nun to do?

At another show, the main curtain got stuck on the way out (read: not my fault). It only got as high as the singers' waists before snagging. The music had started, the singers were singing, but all the audience could see were the singers' legs. Some of the singers actually squatted down to sing under the curtain. We had to stop the show, fix the curtain, and start over.

**GLOBAL INTEREST**

*Falstaff* intertwines 'pure theater' and 'spellbinding orchestration'

BY DEAN WILLIAMSON • ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

One of the greatest masterpieces of the opera repertory, *Falstaff* was a huge success at its world premiere in 1893. What is hard to believe is that Verdi had to be convinced by friend and librettist Boito to compose it! After *Otello*, he was ready to retire and had no interest in writing yet another opera.

The world's greatest composers clamored to be there on opening night. Puccini and Debussy, among other notable musical luminaries, joined the 20-minute standing ovation accorded Verdi. Here was a composer at the pinnacle of his talent, with a lifetime of experience distilled into one incredible musical drama. Add the poetry of the greatest playwright in history and you had pure theater. Words and music were magically blended into a dazzling beacon of what opera could be.

In our critically acclaimed production from Seattle Opera, we return to a Shakespearean Globe Theatre-style of presentation. Set in a tavern, the singers come onstage well before the musical downbeat (be sure to come early and catch the pre-curtain show!) They banter with each other and the audience while they change from modern street clothes into period Elizabethan costumes created especially for this Opera Cleveland production. The orchestra tunes up in the background, the lights drop, and the show thrusts us into Elizabethan England with no warning and no maestro bow.

*Falstaff* is a lecherous and drunken oaf of a man trying to seduce two women at the same time. Boito took the character from Shakespeare's plays *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Henry IV* and brought him to life as the guy you love to hate. You'll cheer for the women as they plot their revenge in the best comedic tradition.

In the Globe Theatre, emphasis was on the acting and the story. While we will have the same experience in Cleveland, we will also have our fair share of beautiful special effects. (I won't give away the marvelous secret of the Great Oak's appearance!) Fairies and elves abound, and the tavern is magically transformed into a forest.

I'm particularly proud that *Falstaff* showcases the brilliant playing of our wonderful orchestra. In Verdi's spellbinding orchestration, stage effects are underscored and depicted, from the fireflies glowing in the dark to Falstaff's grunts and burps. Our marvelous players set the mood for what promises to be a spectacular evening of bawdy and sublime entertainment.



1422 Euclid Ave, Suite 1052  
Cleveland, OH 44115

**MEET the CAST of Falstaff**

**Tuesday, June 2** at 7:30 pm  
Joseph-Beth Booksellers, Legacy Village



Find out more about the cast of *Falstaff* at this casual, fun event. Dean Williamson will moderate the discussion, which is FREE and open to the public.



**FALSTAFF: A Bird's Eye View**

Since Carl the opera chicken joined the Opera Cleveland staff, he has been providing a candid look at the company and our productions. Through his blog you've been invited backstage, in the costume shop, to the warehouse and on many other adventures. For *Falstaff*, Carl is taking the idea of revealing how an opera comes together to a whole new level. A live webcam will bring the evolution of the production straight to your computer.

Starting May 25, look for live video of:

- Select rehearsals
- The green room during the final dress rehearsal and all performances
- The stage manager booth during a final dress rehearsal
- Onstage during tech week
- The Meet the Cast event

VISIT OPERACLEVELAND.ORG OR OPERACHICKEN.BLOGSPOT.COM FOR LINKS TO LIVE VIDEO.

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**Discuss it with Management**

There's one voice that's super important in an opera, but it's a voice the audience will never hear. It's that of the stage manager, who is the nexus of communication for a production. Valerie Wheeler will be the Production Stage Manager for *Falstaff*, having worked previously on *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Hansel and Gretel*. Here, she discusses her role in opera.

**HOW DID YOU COME TO BE A STAGE MANAGER SPECIFICALLY FOR OPERA?**

I was dragged kicking and screaming into opera. I was an Equity stage manager right out of college, just finishing up a play. Not having any new shows lined up, I asked the director if he had any other productions coming up for which he might consider me. He told me of an opera project that he would love to have me on. I laughed and proclaimed, "I don't do opera, I'm a theater stage manager." He asked if I read music, which I did. He said, "You'll do opera."

So, begrudgingly but seeing an opportunity to do something new, I accepted the contract. The first day of rehearsal blew me away—the voices, the voices! I was hooked. The caliber of the singers and conductor left me wondering why they didn't ask me to leave the room as an impostor.

**WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB?**

There are a ton of things. I love my job, but one of my secret joys is attending the orchestra rehearsals. How many people get to sit and do paperwork with his/her own private orchestra playing in the same room? But the best thing about my job is watching my colleagues perform. Amazing.

**GRAND OPERA BALL**



Mary Boyle, Jenny Brown, Opera Cleveland Trustee Glenn Brown, Opera Cleveland Advisory Board Member Dr. Joanne Rand Schwartz, and Barbara Byrd Bennett at the Grand Opera Ball at the Intercontinental Hotel.

Opera Cleveland celebrated the start of its third season on April 18 with the Grand Opera Ball, presented by National City, now a part of PNC. Topiaries studded with oranges and strains of flamenco guitar set the scene for the 250 guests enjoying *A Night in Seville*. Laura Pedersen chaired the event and also lent her voice for part of the evening's entertainment, along with singer Fenlon Lamb. Joseph and Karen Gorman were honorary chairs of the ball, which reached its budgeted goal of raising \$180,000. *Continued on the inside.*



Opera Cleveland Trustee Richard Knoth, Patty Knoth, Anne Williams, and Dr. Steve Gordon.



Opera Cleveland Trustee Ritu Furlan with Erick Furlan.

continued on the back page

**UNDERWRITERS**





## SPRING INTO ACTION

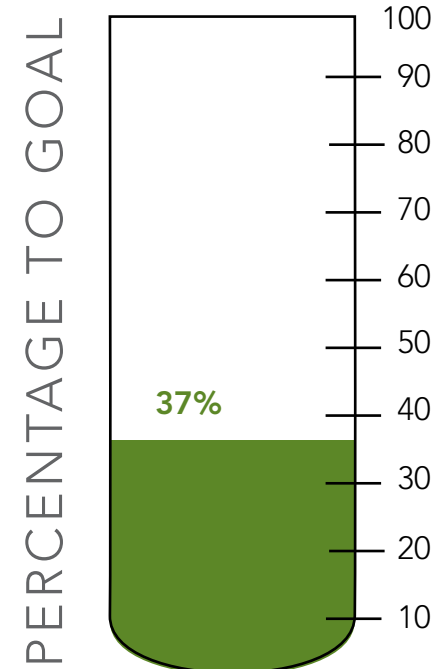
**William Cole**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It has been said that during the most trying of times great ideas spring forth. This could not be more true here at Opera Cleveland. Over the past several months we've all been riveted by the undulating global economy. It has gripped not just our attention but our psyches, too. But it has served to keenly focus us on the business at hand and also what is in store for us down the road. In the coming weeks we will be announcing our next season, which I hope you will find both enjoyable and artistically interesting.

One of the other ideas to spring forth, although not completely new, was to formalize our internship program that has gained popularity over the last few years. Interns with Opera Cleveland gain valuable experience in a fast-paced, multi-disciplinary non-profit environment. We offer internships in production, education, development, marketing and finance, and we're flexible with students' schedules and interests. Because Opera Cleveland has a small staff, it's an excellent opportunity for interns to truly apply their training and get a first-hand look at how the organization works. It's a win-win situation for all involved.

If you or someone you know would like to sign up for an internship program, please visit our website to download a PDF brochure. If you are interested in providing housing or funding for the internship program, please contact Steve Borstein at 216-575-0903, ext. 234 for details about how you can play a part.

## ANNUAL FUND



Our goal for Annual Fund donations is \$150,000, and, as of April 16, 2009, we have \$56,000 pledged. To make your pledge, contact Brett DeHaven at 216.575.0903, ext 222 or visit [www.operacleveland.org](http://www.operacleveland.org).

## Opening Night Dinner WITH THE DIRECTOR

Join us Friday, June 19 at the Wyndham Hotel for our Opening Night Dinner, where you can meet Director Peter Kazaras. Cocktails begin at 5:30 pm, with dinner at 6 pm. RSVP to Brett DeHaven at 216.575.0903, ext. 222 by June 10.

## Are you age 25-50?

Opera Cleveland will soon be launching a Professional Friends group for those between age 25 and 50. Email us at [borstein@operacleveland.org](mailto:borstein@operacleveland.org) to be notified of events and to see how you can get involved!

## GET TO KNOW soloists from *Falstaff*

### CAITLYN LYNCH



{ Alice Ford }

**I KNEW I WANTED TO BE AN OPERA SINGER WHEN:**  
I stopped singing for six months

**FIRST PIECE I EVER SANG:**  
"My Favorite

Things" from *The Sound of Music*

**IF I HADN'T BECOME A SINGER, I WOULD HAVE:**  
Gone into the funeral business with my family

**MOST DIFFICULT PIECE I SING:**  
"Sempre Libera"

**ALL-TIME FAVORITE SINGER:**  
Joni Mitchell

**FAVORITE COMPOSER:**  
Bach

**FAVORITE BOOK:**  
*The Fountainhead*

**DREAM ROLE:**  
Susannah in *Susannah* by Floyd

**FAVORITE PART ABOUT ROLE IN FALSTAFF:** Alice wins!

**WEB SITES I ALWAYS VISIT:**  
Petfinder.com, Facebook

**WHAT I HATE MOST ABOUT LIFE ON THE ROAD:**  
Saying goodbye to new friends and missing old friends

### VICTOR RYAN ROBERTSON



{ Fenton }

**FAVORITE PART ABOUT ROLE IN FALSTAFF:**  
No coloratura

**FAVORITE COMPOSER:**  
D'angelo

**FIRST PIECE I EVER SANG:**  
"More Than a Feeling" by Boston

**ALL-TIME FAVORITE SINGER:**  
Pavarotti

**THREE THINGS I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT:**  
Music, women, and tennis

**I KNEW I WANTED TO BE AN OPERA SINGER WHEN:**  
I heard "Recondita Armonia"

**LATEST CD I PURCHASED:**  
*The Passion* soundtrack by Peter Gabriel

**LEAST FAVORITE OPERA:**  
*The Magic Flute*

**DREAM ROLE:**  
Tebaldo in *Capuleti e i Montecchi*

**WEB SITES I ALWAYS VISIT:**  
Realclearpolitics.com, Huffingtonpost.com, ATPtennis.com, and Youtube

**WHAT I HATE MOST ABOUT LIFE ON THE ROAD:**  
Not hitting tennis balls consistently

### DAVID WON



{ Ford }

**ALL-TIME FAVORITE SINGERS:**  
Franco Corelli, Ettore Bastianini, and Leo Nucci

**FAVORITE COMPOSER:**  
Verdi

**THREE THINGS I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT:**  
God, Family, Music

**DREAM ROLE:**  
Rigoletto

**FIRST PIECE I EVER SANG:**  
"Non più andrai" from *Le nozze di Figaro*

**MOST DIFFICULT PIECE I SING:** Valentin's Aria "Avant de quitter ces lieux" from *Faust*

**FAVORITE MOVIE:**  
*Dances with Wolves*

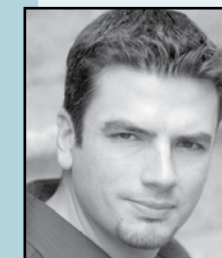
**I KNEW I WANTED TO BE AN OPERA SINGER WHEN:**  
I was 13 years old

**IF I HADN'T BECOME A SINGER, I WOULD HAVE:**  
Become a soccer player, stock broker or chef

**LATEST CD I PURCHASED:**  
*Falstaff*

**LEAST FAVORITE OPERA:**  
*Der Rosenkavalier*

### MATTHEW TREVINO



{ Pistola }

**I CAN'T GO ONSTAGE WITHOUT:**  
A piece of candy

**FIRST PIECE I EVER SANG:**  
"Bohemian Rhapsody" by Queen. The first

classical piece was "Where Ever You Walk" from *Semele*

**MOST DIFFICULT PIECE I SING:**  
"Vecchia Zimarra" from *La bohème*

**ALL-TIME FAVORITE SINGER:**  
Cesare Siepi

**FAVORITE COMPOSER:**  
Chopin

**FAVORITE PART ABOUT ROLE IN FALSTAFF:**  
Being able to participate in the amazing ensembles

**THREE THINGS I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT:**  
My wife, music, and chocolate

**I KNEW I WANTED TO BE AN OPERA SINGER WHEN:**  
I realized I could make a living doing it

**LATEST CD I PURCHASED:**  
*Speak of the Devil* by Ozzy Osbourne

**FAVORITE BOOK:**  
*The Power of Now* by Eckhart Tolle

## Thank You GRAND OPERA BALL

The 2009 Grand Opera Ball was made possible with the support of:

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William and Viia Beechler, Vice President of the Board of Directors, with Diana and Eugene Stromberg.



Pauline Ramig, President of the Board of Directors; William Cole, Executive Director; Laura Pedersen, Grand Opera Ball Chairperson; and Brad Roller, Trustee.



George Kitzberger, George Newkome, and Mary Jane Saunders.

## BEFORE

Enrich your opera-going experience with fascinating insights into *Falstaff*. Join us one hour prior to each curtain for our Pre-Opera Talk in the State Theatre. Free to all ticket holders.



## AFTER

After the curtain goes down, stick around and ask away. Following all of our performances, Dean Williamson will lead an interesting and informal discussion about the production.

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