



Opera Cleveland adds sustainability to its repertoire



In the past few years, we've all had the opportunity to consider the impact of our daily lives on the environment. Opera Cleveland is no exception. This year, the company began to consider our carbon footprint and realized we could do much better.

An opportunity arose this year that galvanized Opera Cleveland into action. We completed a purchase of a stage set that was headed to a landfill and decided that this was the time to formalize the company's commitment to the environment. The result is the [Green Opera Initiative](#). The initiative applies to all of the company's endeavors, but will be front and center in the company's May 2010 production of [Lucia di Lammermoor](#).

Strengthening Community Connections

While the primary objective is to be a better steward of the environment, the company sees potential for additional benefits. One outcome is the opportunity to create new partnerships and relationships across Northeast Ohio. For example, a partnership between Opera Cleveland and [Philips Healthcare](#) will culminate in our *Lucia* set modified with reclaimed building materials. Philips' manufacturing results in a large amount of waste that would end up in a landfill, but this partnership helps to further Philips' goal of landfill avoidance.

"The Green Opera Initiative encourages the company to think even more creatively," says Pauline Ramig, President of the Board of Directors of Opera Cleveland. "It has been exciting to watch the evolution of what were cost-saving strategies transform into a benchmarks that help us meet our mission as well as be a good citizen, of Cleveland and the earth."

Neutralizing the Impact of an Opera

Opera Cleveland is rapidly adopting the Green Opera Initiative, striving for carbon neutrality with *Lucia di Lammermoor*. The company is working to estimate its average footprint, so it can actively (and realistically) chip away at it. Opera Cleveland's marketing department is exploring the expansion of electronic media outlets and options for more eco-friendly print media vehicles-including the use of 100% post-consumer paper and soy-based inks.

The biggest outputs to neutralize comes from transportation: flying our artists in and out of Cleveland, busing students in to watch a matinee, and the audience of approximately 6,000 who will drive downtown to attend the production. We currently estimate that the audience alone generates 65 tons of carbon by attending the production.

To remedy this, Opera Cleveland is partnering with the [Cleveland Carbon Fund](#) to purchase carbon offsets, which pay for projects that absorb CO2 or help increase efficiencies. These purchases will be made possible by a fund-raising campaign that will ask donors to support this project - with 25% of those donations going directly to the Cleveland Carbon Fund to offset the carbon emissions associated with our production.

Toward a Greening of the Arts

"It's great to see Opera Cleveland pro-actively thinking about how they can decrease their environmental impact," says John Mitterholzer of the Cleveland Carbon Fund. "There is a lot of opportunity for them to demonstrate that everyone can and should make changes to the way we go about our daily lives. It will be enlightening to see how much carbon is generated by an average opera and if they are able to achieve neutrality through the initiatives they are implementing. I hope to see Opera Cleveland become a leader in greening the arts."

That is precisely for what Opera Cleveland is striving--to become a leader in greening the arts. One of the company's larger objectives is to start a trend toward reducing onstage energy consumption. Through new technologies, it would be possible to both enhance our product and decrease energy usage.

To support and advance the Green Opera Initiative, the company has created a committee of professionals in the field of sustainability who will work with staff to create a plan for implementing policies and actions that will result in a more eco-friendly opera company.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: [VISIT OUR WEBSITE.](#)

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