



2011 Fact Sheet

This world-class opera company, founded in 1973, is located in Indianola, Iowa.

It is one of the largest performing arts organizations in the State.

Each June and July, DMMO's Summer Festival Season consists of

16 performances of 3 grand operas presented in the intimate

467 seat Blank Performing Arts Center on the campus of Simpson College.

Over the course of its history, Des Moines Metro Opera has become one of America's most popular and successful summer opera festivals.

- Des Moines Metro Opera's 39th Festival Season will feature Puccini's *La Bohème* (sung in Italian), Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* (sung in Italian) and Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites* (sung in English). The Summer Festival runs from June 24 – July 17, 2011, and will feature English supertitles for ALL festival productions.
- DMMO's 38th Anniversary Season in 2010 drew audience members from 37 US states and Washington DC and from 62 counties within the state of Iowa. Of these 7,289 audience members, 20% came to DMMO from other states and a third were new ticket buyers.
- DMMO's productions are reviewed each season by local, regional and national critics, including those from the *Des Moines Register* and *Opera News*.
- Des Moines Metro Opera has produced over 750 performances of 71 different operas in its 39 years, including one of the first American productions of Britten's *GLORIANA* in 2005. Repertoire consists of both traditional and contemporary operas such as Britten's *Peter Grimes* and *The Turn of the Screw*, Menotti's *The Consul* and *The Saint of Bleecker Street*, Blitzstein's *Regina*, Bernstein's *Candide*, Barber's *Vanessa*, Weill's *Street Scene* and Hoiby's *The Tempest* (a DMMO world premiere).
- The 1999 season brought the first Summer Festival opera sung in its original language with the production of *Il Trovatore* in Italian. All operas prior to 1999 had been sung in English. (The *Tosca* production at the Civic Center of Greater Des Moines in January 1998 was DMMO's first production sung in a language other than English). The English translation was projected above the stage using Digitext technology. Since 1999, all operas have featured English supertitles, regardless of the language sung onstage.
- Des Moines Metro Opera's entire 35th Anniversary Season was reviewed by Paul Horsley, a Kansas City-based critic and reviewer of the performing arts. He praised the Company highly, saying that DMMO "has grown into one of the most significant venues for up-and-coming young singers, vigorous stagings of shrewdly programmed works and top-flight vocal training for the college-age and graduate-level

singers.” He called DMMO’s Festival “a national treasure situated in the seemingly unlikely town of Indianola, Iowa.”

Recent Awards and Honors

- On March 29, 2011, DMMO’s Artistic Director Michael Egel was honored as one of the Des Moines Business Record’s *40 Under 40*.
- On October 24, 2007, DMMO was presented the Tourism and the Arts Award by the Iowa Tourism Office, for demonstrating an outstanding partnership between tourism and the arts, an outstanding economic impact and effective marketing.
- On June 23, 2005, DMMO’s former Executive Director, Jerilee M. Mace was named the outstanding business leader of the year by the Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute at the Arthur Davis Awards ceremony.
- On February 21, 2002, OPERA Iowa was the recipient of the Arts Build Communities-Arts in Education award, which was granted by the Iowa Arts Council. This award was given to recognize OPERA Iowa’s contribution to arts in education over the previous 16 years.
- In April of 2000 KCCI TV--Channel 8 honored Ms. Mace with the Leading The Way Award. She was given the award for her “outstanding effort in making a difference in our community and for caring, creating hope and inspiring others”. In 1985 Mace developed DMMO’s OPERA Iowa Touring Troupe, which has touched over 550,000 lives.
- Des Moines Metro Opera was presented with the Best Kept Secret award at the Get Wired Conference sponsored by the Greater Des Moines Partnership in November, 2000. This award was designed to identify a premiere business model which operates with a level of anonymity within the community.
- On October 2, 1999, the Pella Opera House presented Dr. Robert Larsen with an award honoring his tremendous contribution to the Arts in Iowa. This award was given in celebration of Pella Opera House’s 10th Anniversary.
- In 1999, the Des Moines Metro Opera Guild won two international awards. Opera Guilds International (OGI) presented the OGI Partners in Excellence Award to Donni Nowasell, Past-President of Des Moines Metro Opera’s Indianola Guild Chapter for her efforts in coordinating the annual Peanut Butter & Puccini event. For this award she “demonstrated extraordinary volunteer service to opera in the community”. This event also won the OGI Resource Competition Award for “outstanding project in support of our community and opera company”. Both awards were presented at the joint OGI/OPERA America annual conference in Vancouver, British Columbia in May, 1999.
- Nominated by DMMO, Pioneer Hi-Bred International won the prestigious OPERA America Bravo Award for the Midwestern Region in 1999. For this award they were recognized as an Outstanding Corporate Supporter. Their generous contributions to opera help to foster growth and awareness for local cultural organizations such as DMMO.

Des Moines Metro Opera Audiences

- Opera-goers from as many as 40 different states and several foreign countries attend each Summer Festival and are attracted by DMMO's superior artistic quality, a unique theatre, and productions performed in repertory (i.e. a different opera each night).
- Of the audience, roughly 70% are from Iowa and 30% are from elsewhere in the U.S.
- Opera subscriber retention has been consistently more than 85% in the past five years.
- According to OPERA America, opera is the fastest growing art form in the U.S. with an audience increase of over 25% in the past 10 years. The fastest growing demographic of U.S. opera audiences is 18- to 24-year-olds. Over 9 million adults attended at least one opera performance in 2002.
- With attendees from so many different states and countries represented in the audience of each Summer Festival, Des Moines Metro Opera is a major tourism force in Iowa.

Des Moines Metro Opera Venues

- Des Moines Metro Opera is headquartered in Indianola, Iowa, a rural town of 14,000, just south of Des Moines. DMMO administrative offices are located at 106 West Boston Avenue in the historic Carnegie Library building now owned by the Company.
- The Summer Festival is held at the Blank Performing Arts Center on the picturesque campus of Simpson College in Indianola. The unique "theater-in-the-half-round" possesses a half-circle forestage or "playing circle" that extends beyond the main stage; the two stages are connected with bridges that span both sides of the orchestra pit. Phase I of a two-phase expansion will be unveiled in the summer of 2011.
- The theater has 467 seats wrapped around the playing circle, offering every audience member a close-up view and leading reviewers to dub it "opera in your lap."
- Gourmet dining, prepared by Des Moines Embassy Club chef, Michael LaValle, is available in the stately newly renovated lobby of the theatre.
- Opera Weekender Packages include a different opera on Friday and Saturday nights and a Sunday matinee; three elegant meals; and lodging in an area hotel or bed & breakfast.
- DMMO periodically performs at the Civic Center of Greater Des Moines (capacity of 2,700). Performances have included *La Bohème* in January, 2001, *Tosca* in January 1998, *Hansel & Gretel* in 1991 and *Aïda* in 1984.
- DMMO's company premiere of *Amahl and the Night Visitors* in December 2003 was a showcase for the extensive renovations to Hoyt Sherman Place Theater, one of Des Moines' historic landmarks. The opera was presented again in 2005.

Professional Staff and Musicians

- Robert L. Larsen, Artistic Director, and the late Douglas Duncan, Managing Director, founded the company. Dr. Larsen served as stage director and conductor for every production in the Company's first 37 years. In 2010, he transitioned from Maestro to Artistic Director Emeritus, as he works with a talented team of conductors and stage directors.
- In September 2010, Michael Egel became the Company's second Artistic Director after serving as Artistic Administrator for eleven years.
- Over 175 professional singers, musicians, coaches, directors, technicians and staff are assembled from across the country for each Summer Festival from mid-May through mid-July.
- DMMO's principal artists are primarily American-trained and regularly perform at major companies throughout the U.S. including Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, Dallas Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, and New York City Opera.
- DMMO artists are selected from national auditions held in Chicago, New York, Baton Rouge, and Indianola each year.
- The orchestra features over 50 professional musicians assembled through national auditions.

World Premieres

- Lee Hoiby's *The Tempest*, 1986; received subsequent performances at Kansas City Lyric Opera in 1987 and Dallas Opera in 1996 (broadcast on National Public Radio).
- Stephen Paulus' *Harmonia* for OPERA Iowa, 1991.
- Amy Tate Williams' *Rumpelstiltskin* for OPERA Iowa, 1997.
- A nationwide competition during the 25th Summer Festival resulted in premieres of three one-act operas by American composers: Harold Blumenfeld's *Breakfast Waltzes*, Maurice Wright's *The Fifth String*, and Iowa composer Bryan Stanley's *The Cask of Amontillado*.
- In 2003 & 2004, the OPERA Iowa Troupe presented the World Premiere of *Beatrix PotterSM: The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Iowa Composer Michael Patterson.
- In 2009 & 2010, the OPERA Iowa Troupe presented the World Premeire performances of *A Dream Fulfilled: The Saga of George Washington Carver* by Michael Patterson. The piece was commissioned jointly with the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs.

Financial Stability

- DMMO has received two awards from the National Endowment for the Arts Challenge Grant for the Cash Reserve/Endowment Fund.
- During the 2005 season John and Doris Salsbury, two of DMMO's staunchest supporters, offered the Company a \$1,000,000 challenge with a dollar for dollar match to secure the future of Des Moines Metro Opera's Endowment Fund. The campaign raised a total of \$2.9 million, with \$1.2 million of that in cash. The endowment, directed by the Des Moines Metro Opera Foundation, currently holds more than \$9 million in assets, with nearly \$3 million in pledged funds recorded.

Apprentice Artist Program Facts

- The Apprentice Artist program is a seven-week residency during the Summer Festival for 40 to 42 young professionals selected from some 700 nationwide auditions in Chicago, New York, Baton Rouge, Indianola and those submitted via recording.
- Des Moines Metro Opera's Apprentice Artist program is one of the largest and most respected programs of its kind in the United States.
- Des Moines Metro Opera's Apprentice Artist program emphasizes individual career development and a variety of performing venues.
- The 2009 season marked the 35th anniversary of the Apprentice Artist Program.
- Tuition, housing, stipends, and a meal plan are granted to all Apprentice Artists and many are cast in cover and comprimario roles.
- Apprentices perform in eight to ten free public concerts that consist of semi-staged opera scenes and one-act operas.
- Apprentices work with 12 professional coaches and directors drawn from companies throughout the U.S. including Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Santa Fe Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Minnesota Opera and others.
- In its history, more than 1,100 singers have graduated from this program.
- Des Moines Metro Opera Apprentice Artists who have gone on to highly successful careers include baritone Kimm Julian, tenor John Osborn, soprano Marilyn Mims, tenor Theodore Green, baritone John Kuether, soprano Claudia Waite, bass-baritone Kyle Ketelson, and soprano Bev Thiele.
- Several recent winners of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Competition have been Des Moines Metro Opera Apprentice Artists, including tenor John Osborn, baritone Mark McCrory, countertenor Robert Crowe and bass-baritone Kyle Ketelsen.
- In 2007 the program was renamed the James Collier Apprentice Artist Program in honor of James M. Collier, a retired teacher and long-time supporter of DMMO's education efforts.

For more information about the Apprentice Artist Program, Des Moines Metro Opera's Summer Festival or OPERA Iowa, please call 515-961-6221.

OPERA Iowa Facts

- *OPERA Iowa*, now entering its 25th season, is Des Moines Metro Opera's educational touring program. It turns classrooms into castles, ignites young imaginations and sparks enthusiasm for opera in an entirely new generation. *OPERA Iowa* has captured the attention of over 700,000 people from ages 8-80!
- The 2011 tour will feature *OPERA Iowa*'s most requested opera, Malcolm Fox's *Sid the Serpent Who Wanted to Sing* for kindergarten through 8th grade students and Donizetti's fantasy *The Magic Flute* for 6th grade through high school students as well as evening audiences. The eight-member troupe will enthusiastically teach about 250 classroom workshops and present in some 80 school and evening opera performances between February 1 and April 15, 2011!
- In 2006, *OPERA Iowa* was selected to receive a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in conjunction with the "Great American Voices" initiative to engage in a week-long residency at Offutt Air Force Base and in the Bellevue, Nebraska public schools. The troupe will be working with and performing for the children and families of the active-duty military personnel stationed at the base.
- *OPERA Iowa* is a eight-member troupe compiled each year from nationwide auditions. Members include six singers, a music director and a technical director.
- *OPERA Iowa* presents opera performances and interactive workshops throughout Midwest schools and communities for 10 weeks every spring.
- *OPERA Iowa* has visited over 400 different communities in nine states and internationally in Yamanashi, Japan and Hebei, China as part of a sister-state exchange program.
- The *OPERA Iowa* program has been used as a national role model for opera companies wishing to introduce children and families to opera; such educational programs have led to nationwide audience growth, especially in younger age groups.

For more information about the Apprentice Artist Program, Des Moines Metro Opera's Summer Festival or OPERA Iowa, please call 515-961-6221.