



**General Assembly
Saturday 5th May 2007
Warsaw, Poland**

1. Presentation of the present members' activities during the past year

Stefanie Klinge

From The Opera North Ambassador Link (TONAL) in Leeds

Stefanie found out about Juvenilia in February in Paris during the European Opera Days. She thought it is a great idea and is very enthusiastic about it. She has involved with Opera North as a volunteer for 2 years, employed as Programme Co-ordinator (part-time) since May 2006. Since April 2007 she is now Programme and Ambassadors Coordinator (full-time position). She is now programme coordinator and ambassadors' coordinator (full-time position). Her job is to attract young people to Opera North.

The group is growing: 15 people attend regularly and helped organize an event on the 15th March (last year 55 people attended). This year, around 100 people attended; half of them had been to the opera before and all said they would come again. This kind of events is a chance to attract young people. The idea is to extend it to young professionals, and not limit it to under-30-year olds. So far, it had only been run on a volunteer basis.

Apart from these special TONAL events, the opera house provides a special price for young people: £10 tickets for particular nights, on-the-day tickets for £5. They also hold talks for first-time attendees. A lot of the promotion for these schemes goes through student unions and ambassadors in universities. They now want to approach companies and develop the same kind of ideas.

TONAL joined Juvenilia in April 2007.

Blaise de Lanlay

From Orfeo in Brussels

This year, Orfeo has about 500 members (a little more than last year). They have around 10 active members who change a lot between the years. This year, they've done 20 small activities like concerts or excursions abroad and 5 big activities. 100 people attended La Traviata for New Year's Eve and 600 people for Take a Note (which this year involved participating in workshops and singing). Take a Note next year will be on March 8th and it will be a Juvenilia event.

Orfeo is not a formal structure but it is linked with La Monnaie for resources. Peter de Caluwe has now replaced Bernard Focroulle as the director of La Monnaie.

The age limit used to be 28 years old for Orfeo members and 35 for Moderato members. The Moderato scheme has been cancelled.

Dorothea Wojtizka From Rheingold in Düsseldorf

Rheingold has 180 members: the past season was kind of a lost year because the opera house is undergoing renovation. They have another stage where they perform but it wasn't very well appreciated by the members so they had trouble having the members coming to the events. It is very difficult to plan anything in these conditions because the schedule has changed 3 or 4 times already during the season, which is not good for customer relations. Furthermore, they have problems finding active members. They need to find a room to meet in the opera house. So, to sum up, Rheingold is in a consolidation phase.

Anne Gerber and Anna Wendsche From Semperoper Jugendclub in Dresden

The club has existed for 3 years: it now has about 20 members. The oldest member is 20, the age limit is 26 and the youngest member is 14. There are 6 or 7 active members and many come only once or twice a year to activities. Many people are busy because of school. They did many things last year: the opera house really supports the youth club. They have a contact person, Mrs Schwab, former ballet dancer who now works as a dramaturge.

They brought some pictures of their activities to the GA: they did some ballet sessions, they can also visit parts of the opera house such as the costumes atelier. Every year, they have projects such as the Musiktheater. It is considered an honour to take part in this project and pupils from 8 schools in Dresden take part in it. The opera helps with the organisation of this. The biggest project last year was the Schauspieldirektor by Mozart: a play performed with support of a singer in the Semperoper. 6 members rehearsed with professional singers to perform the play and that was an amazing experience because they could work with the professionals, with the costumes from the opera and it was a big success to show this play in a little theatre in Dresden which belongs to the opera and they played it 5 times. Every performance was sold out. Non-performing members could work on the staging for example. Members get operas tickets for 10 euros and they try to go together. In the end, they discuss the opera. They try that everybody has the opportunity to see each opera.

Judit Valentines and Ramon Rius

From Joves Amics del Liceu in Barcelona

The youth club has 100 members and only 10 active members. The main problem is that they don't get discounted tickets so it is a bit difficult to get cheap tickets. They did a vocal composition contest that attracted high participation. The idea was to encourage the young people and composers and to enable their entry in the professional world.

They did a young singer cycle in collaboration with the Liceo conservatory. Then they did a series of recitals for the elderly, and finally the workshop for young people in difficulties: they prepared an opera each season, explained about the opera in general. The participants are around 55 people aged between 15 and 19: they took a tour of the theatre and attended rehearsals and finally they could see a performance of the opera.

The theatre recently started selling subscription packages for young people. But the subscription is not flexible at all because it contains only one opera.

Manuel Pelaez Olmo

From Asociacion de los amigos de la opera in Madrid

The theatre introduced last minute tickets for the young people: 1 hour before to get a 80 % discount on the ticket price. Next week, Manuel will have a meeting with the Teatro Real because the European Opera Days in Paris made them realise they want to promote the opera among the young people.

The age limit for young people is 26 for the moment and they want to put it up to 30 years old. The theatre was quite impressed by the young people in the European Opera Days and since then they want to help. Before Paris, the youth club only had a relationship with the senior club but not directly with the theatre.

The club has approximately 300 members and 2 active members.

Katarzyna Walkowska

From Trubadur in Warsaw

The club does not have an age limit: the members meet at the meetings organized by the club or as they wish. They have about 120 members but the number evolves, and around 7 active members. At the moment, they have a quarterly news magazine that they make themselves. In this magazine, they publish texts written by club members, e.g. reviews or interviews with artists.

They are not associated with the Grand Theatre – National Theatre in Warsaw nor with the Warsaw Chamber Opera but the club is known to the directors of the theatres. In the Grand Theatre, they have a price reduction and in the Warsaw Chamber Opera they have a facilitated access to a certain number of tickets, that they sometimes get for free. They organize meetings with singers and trips to other theatres in Poland and abroad, recently to Vilnius. This club is for all Poland and it also includes people from abroad.

Sabine Gabriele Breuer

Representing Latavra in Tbilisi

It's the youngest (although not the newest) member. Ruziko (from the Tbilisi Opera House) attended the GA in Nuremberg to prepare the creation of the youth club. Now, the youth club has been founded and Sabine represents the opera in Tbilisi. The club is called Latavra (after the name of a Georgian opera). They have around 25-30 active members working for this group but they intend to grow vastly: there's a senior and a youth club. The club has in total 238 members. They will not see it so strictly concerning the age because they want to bring people together. They meet regularly at a specific day on each month ("jour fixe"): they go to performances together and get great price reductions. They will have a big event next September to invite people in Georgia. Members of the club have privileges such as a 30 % discount, attendance of dress rehearsals...

Next season they're planning some new events for club members. We're going to create a forum, which was the most supported idea among the members. Also they will be arranging meetings with the guests artists, activities with our soloists and musicians and much more. The opera house will soon be closed for renovation.

2. Other relevant information for the past year

Verona

We have been in contact with persons from Verona, which is a festival like Salzburg. It's an association who wants to bring people together from all over Italy to spread classical culture all over the nation. They are a young association but they don't want just to go to the opera, they want to build a frame. They will probably join Juvenilia in the near future.

European Opera Days

The European Opera Days were a fantastic opportunity (thanks to the organizers, Opera Europa in collaboration with Fedora and RESEO) to make Juvenilia better known across Europe and among opera houses. Around 150 young people took part and a speech (that can be found in the appendices) was made before the whole audience of the conference about the views of young people on how to promote access to opera.

It will be a chance for us to cooperate with opera houses and the three European-level organisations dealing with opera which are Opera Europa, Fedora and RESEO.

3. Events planned for the year 2007/2008

Düsseldorf

They don't know where the opera will be next year so they can't schedule anything for the moment.

Leeds

Two main events are scheduled: for the Autumn season around Madama Butterfly. It will be Thursday November 8th, good seats in the auditorium, drinks and an oriental meal followed by a party afterwards. They are hoping to make it a big event at the beginning of the academic year and give something to do for their ambassadors.

The next event will be Thursday 24th January around the Adventures of Pinocchio, a world premiere. It won't be the fairy tale story and it's intended for all ages.

They intend to have smaller events in between. They have an exclusive partnership with the University of Leeds so there will be more opportunities for TONAL to be more active.

Brussels

Take a Note will be on March 8th: Wozzeck and a Ballet with Anna Teresa de Keersmaker.

Dresden

The club will go on with a few operas, talks with dramaturges, and they will attend rehearsals. They would be interested in hosting a Juvenilia event. There's a discussion about eventually having the event revolve around the ball but we're not sure this would attract people from abroad.

Barcelona

Just started with the second edition of the vocal composition contest and in June there will be a performance with the winners of the first edition. They'll do another 2 other recitals for suburb people and recital for young singers.

Tbilisi

Tbilisi will host Juvenilia event in September. It will start on Wednesday 5th September until the 9th. It's planned for a week because the cheapest flights make you stay for a week. The trip will include meetings with the director and members of the youth club, backstage tours, sightseeing and a few performances. The cost will be 220 USD for the participation fee includes everything but the flight. It will be the last opportunity for 3 years because they will make everything new.

4. Location of the Juvenilia General Assembly in 2008

There are 6 candidates for the GA next year:

- Leeds
- Brussels
- Genoa
- Verona
- Dresden
- Milan

After a discussion, the majority has decided that the GA will take place in **Dresden**: the 1st choice for the date is 11th and 12th April 2008, this will be confirmed in the next weeks.

5. Discussion of the structure and purpose of Juvenilia

After a discussion, it has been unanimously decided that the structure will stay it is although we will get a more formal geographical grounding with a base in the La Monnaie theatre (at least a postal box with the help of Opera Europa and La Monnaie for the time being). This is sensible since all fellow organisations such as Opera Europa, Fedora and RESEO are also located in La Monnaie.

It has also been agreed that Juvenilia should not only be an Information Centre and a means of communication between countries, but should help attracting new audiences and new young opera-goers as well. We agree that we should remove the term Information Centre from the leadership of Juvenilia. I will contact Els.

As always, the right to vote in the GA is awarded if you're a delegate of a youth club or fellow organisation.

Juvenilia has also commissioned a new logo (that you can see at the top of this document). It will be put on the website very soon (the website itself is in the process of being renovated).

One idea is brought forward by Blaise on behalf of Orfeo members: like in the European Union, we could have a different youth club president every year. This is duly noted but presents a few issues: finding clubs interested in taking care of Juvenilia every year, and this poses the problem of too much change in the leadership.

6. Election of the leadership of Juvenilia for years 2007-2009

Florian Burnat and Sabine Gabriele Breuer have been running Juvenilia together for the past two years. They are running for their re-election. No one has decided to present his candidature either by email or in person.

After a discussion without Florian and Sabine in the room, the delegates present decide to re-elect them for the next two years.

7. European Cultural Passport

During the European Opera Days, there had been discussions over a European Cultural Passport to be created to promote opera to young audiences across Europe and help find cheaper tickets to see opera performances.

Further to this, Opera Europa, the organization behind this great idea has submitted Juvenilia a few proposals so that we could give our opinion (being representative of the target of this passport). The goal is to try to introduce this scheme as soon as possible.

Four schemes (here briefly outlined) were suggested:

- Option 1 involves allowing young people to see 5 opera performances across Europe for 15 euros per ticket, with no preset list of the performances.
- Option 2 involves a list of preset performances to choose from with 5 tickets maximum per year.
- Option 3 involves a card which gives every holder the rights to use the benefits of all youth clubs across Europe (and benefiting from the other youth clubs reduced price ticket schemes under their conditions).
- Option 4 involves promoting European youth events with greater reduced price ticket possibilities and the assistance of Opera Europa

Options 3 and 4 were quickly ruled out. Option 4 resembles the Juvenilia European cultural meetings with a stronger frame, but is too close from what is already available. Option 3 is not flexible at all because it involves abiding by all the conditions set by every youth club to benefit from the card.

The discussion is therefore between options 1 and 2. We think option 1 is great in some ways because it gives young people incredible flexibility. But we fear that it will transform whoever sells the Passport too much into a ticket office.

Option 2, on the other hand, with a more limited list of performances gives a more social aspect to this Passport because it is more likely to meet other young people during these performances. There could even be a specific meeting point during each of these performances. It will also probably be less burdensome to handle.

Therefore, the majority (although no unanimity was reached on this point) decided to suggest Option 2 for the European Cultural/Opera Passport.

Some questions will need to be addressed: for example will it be possible to bring a friend?

8. Other issues

Sabine raises the issue of people that have gone beyond the age-limit for youth clubs (which the La Monnaie theatre included in a club called Moderato). Most youth clubs have existed for over 10 years and the originating members are too old, yet people do not stop to be interested in opera. What do you do for these people? They are too young for the senior people. There is no immediate solution or idea for this problem but the issue will continue to be raised.

Appendices

1. About Juvenilia

Background

In February 1998 Juvenilia, a network of young opera friends in Europe, was founded at a specially organised meeting in Milan. The initiative was a follow-up to the first European Youth Cultural Meeting which was organised at the Salzburger Festspiele during the summer of 1997. It was an astounding success. During six days young people from all over Europe participated in workshops, met artists, and attended performances. Many of the participants have stayed in close touch and as a result several new youth clubs connected to opera companies have been founded all over Europe. Most of the clubs communicate with each other through Juvenilia.

What does Juvenilia do?

Juvenilia improves the communication between clubs, opera companies and individuals all over Europe, and provides information about their activities, existence and structure. The Information Centre is a service for young opera friends all over Europe. They can meet and enjoy opera at the Youth Cultural Events that are organised by various youth clubs in Europe. Once a year a General Assembly is organised where we can meet and discuss plans for the future. At the General Assembly in Madrid in 2002, the following three main responsibilities were set for the future:

1. Participation in projects organised by

1. one or several youth clubs in the name of Juvenilia,
2. youth clubs,
3. individuals,
4. opera companies and festivals.

2. Communication towards opera companies: to help support youth activities and provide basic guidelines for youth clubs and activities.

3. Distribution of free information on: the basic guidelines for creating and running a youth club, Juvenilia, the clubs, and their history.

To this was added in 2007 during the European Opera Days and the General Assembly in Warsaw the idea of promoting opera access to young people in cooperation with opera houses and other organisations such as RESEO, Opera Europa and Fedora.

How does Juvenilia operate?

Juvenilia is not an association in the strict sense. It was decided to maintain an open structure where all youth clubs with a focus on opera can participate. Despite this fact, since 2007, Juvenilia has a postal address in Brussels.

Without looking at the official construction, the age limits, the financial situation, the number of members, or whatever may be different from the other clubs. Practically it comes down to this: all that is important is that you or your club / organisation participates and communicates. Besides, Juvenilia's service is a free one, there is no membership fee. It is run by a president. Since 2005, Florian Burnat and Sabine Gabriele Breuer have been sharing this position.

How to contact Juvenilia?

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2. Complete list of members of Juvenilia

Here is the list of all the members of Juvenilia as of May 5th, 2007; members are listed by country. Contact info for each member can be found on our website.

Austria:

Salzburg Junge Freunde der Salzburger Festspiele

Belgium:

Antwerp Cherubino
Brussels Orfeo

Czech Republic:

Prague Kruh pratel opery Narodniho divadla

France:

Paris AROP Junior

Georgia:

Tbilisi Latavra

Germany:

Berlin Apollo
Dresden Semperoper Jugendclub
Düsseldorf Rheingold
Munich Junge Opernfreunde München
Nuremberg Orpheus

Italy:

Genoa Associazione La Barcaccia
Milan Milano per la Scala - Giovani

Netherlands:

Amsterdam Fidelio

Poland:

Warsaw Trubadur

Spain:

Barcelona Joves Amics del Liceu
Madrid Jovenes Amigos de la Opera de Madrid

United Kingdom:

Leeds The Opera North Ambassador Link
London London School of Economics SU Opera Society

3. Speech made on Sunday 18th February before the European Opera Days

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I would like to thank the organisers, Opera Europa and Fedora, for allowing young people to come to this wonderful event. I would also like to thank on behalf of all the young participants to this weekend Kasper Bech Holten and Peter de Caluwe for their support and this opportunity given to us to speak and give our reactions to the different conferences that happened this weekend.

There were discussions particularly interesting to young audiences this weekend, especially the one about the European Passport for Culture. We would like to express our views about this: especially, we think that there are better ways to make young people come first to the opera and then come again and again and again...

It is often thought that cheap tickets are the answer to everything. But if it were the case, why would people between the ages of 18 and 30 still be reluctant to buy 8€ opera tickets and yet willing to pay 90€ for a football match ticket.

Perhaps it has to do with the fact that opera is seen too much as a temple, with a too rigid dress code and that young people therefore are not really welcome. Opera is not, for these young people, the same social experience that regular audiences enjoy. Really, there is no need for a pedestal for opera, no need to be educated to watch it, it is after all a form of entertainment.

And the fact that opera is entertainment, accessible to everyone needs to be known more widely. Widespread communication is important to get the message across: schemes to get cheap tickets need to be known, and this can be done through the use of media that young people are attracted to such as free newspapers or Web 2.0 tools such as MySpace or Facebook for advertising. There needs to be a clearer presence of young people activities and cheap ticket schemes on opera house websites.

But cheap tickets, albeit important, are not sufficient because as I said earlier, opera is a social event. But this is not the way opera is felt by young people. We feel that, to make young people come and come again, two things must be taken into account. As they say in the London tube: "Mind the gap".

Mind the gap between the education departments of opera houses and the 'adults' who can afford standard tickets. Opera houses attract scholars and students in cohorts through their education departments. While there is a social incentive to come with your classmate and your school, once this yearly or even once in a lifetime visit to the opera is over, there is no incentive to come again on your own, because of the aforementioned gap between the education departments and standard priced tickets.

So how do you make them come back? You need to create the social incentive. And for that to happen, you need to mind the gap between opera houses and their young audiences. Creating opportunities for young people to come is OK but there needs to be some form of follow-up. Opera houses need to create an interface between the managers and the actual and/or wannabe operagoers: a single contact person for young people and fans and/or youth

clubs. Youth clubs certainly regroup operagoers but have very limited abilities to bring new people to the opera. Managers therefore cannot rely on the pure good will of fans.

The 'interface person' would be in charge of organising events and get-togethers. This would create an incentive: opera would no longer be necessarily a lonely experience of classical music, it would be a social rendezvous.

This is why we think the European Cultural Passport is not the means to this end. This seems too much like a way for existing young operagoers to get cheap tickets. Add to this the social part.

Youth clubs, which I represent through the Juvenilia network, can of course be a help and should be expanded through the help of the opera houses. But the onus must not be on the youth clubs to create a social ambience for going to the opera, it must be on the management.

Get the activities going and do not limit any such project to young people in higher education. Do focus on your own opera house before committing to European schemes that would allow cross-border travel: the priority should be on social activities and schemes within the local opera houses first.