

<b>Juvenilia General Assembly Dresden May 17, 2008</b>
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**Groups in Attendance:**

Apollo-Junge Freunde, Berlin Germany  
Fidelio, Amsterdam, Holland  
Joves Amics del Liceu, Barcelona, Spain  
Scottish Opera, Edinburgh, UK  
Semperoper Jugendclub, Dresden, Germany  
Tonal, Opera North, Leeds, UK

**1) Discussion of the structure/mission of Juvenilia**

The meeting opened with a discussion about how many people are accessing information, articles, etc on the Juvenilia website. Stefanie from Opera North was the only one out of all of the attendees that checks the Juvenilia website regularly but admittedly hasn't posted anything.

Sabine used this point to demonstrate that Juvenilia is not serving its purpose as an "Information Centre" when its members are not treating it as such.

Every club should be placing information about performances, youth events, international opera days etc. on to the Juvenilia website. Heads of opera clubs also have a responsibility to let their club members know about events that have been posted to the website.

This is important for two reasons 1) it opens up the network, informing club members of events. 2) it opens up the discussion of ideas and therefore could become quite a valuable resource (Joves Amics del Liceu was used as an example: they are currently running an initiative for underprivileged children. This information could be incredibly helpful to other organizations thinking of starting a similar programme or could inspire groups to do so.)

It is important to bring together all ideas from all opera companies and Sabine recommends that even if it is just one post at the beginning of the season announcing all events/productions for the year, it is a step in the right direction. All clubs should start posting events on the website effective immediately.

Stefanie from Opera North raised that perhaps an additional way of encouraging involvement would be for Florian and/or Sabine to send frequent updates on Juvenilia activities or to have regular check-ins as a way of keeping members in the loop.

Sabine and Florian have opted not to do this in the past as they felt that it places the emphasis on them as figureheads and takes away from Juvenilia's role as an "Information Centre". Sabine and Florian would rather not serve as go-betweens instead they would like to encourage all club heads to obtain a login and post information on their own.

However after much discussion it was decided that Sabine and Florian would send an email blast to all Juvenilia members when an event or an activity with one of the groups is announced as this will then encourage heads of the clubs to pass on this information to their members.

This should not take away though from members posting on the website, visiting the website and passing on information to their members.

## **2) Presentation of members activities over the past year**

### *The Opera North Ambassador Link (TONAL) in Leeds*

TONAL is still holding one event per season. The most recent event was around “The Adventures of Pinocchio” with 120 group members attending.

TONAL offers a group discount that young people up to the age of 26 get £10 tickets (£5 on the day). The ticket includes a pre-show talk, and a post-show drink.

Participants are encouraged to come as they are “dress up or dress down”

TONAL is now celebrating its 3rd year.

### *Orfeo in Brussels*

no information

### *Rheingold*

At the moment this group is existing only on paper due to numerous problems. The opera house is being renovated. Performances are currently being held in a Shakespearean theatre which doesn't yield itself well to the artform. There is no administrative office from which to conduct Rheingold activities. During this time of renovation Rheingold really feel as if they have lost touch with members of the opera house. They are no longer creating or marketing events and 50% of the Rheingold board has left during the course of the past year. Regular Saturday board meetings were being held but have been suspended for the foreseeable future.

In order to keep Rheingold afloat, Sabine will be calling all its 180 members to encourage attendance.

### *Semperoper-Jugendclub, Dresden*

The club is 4 years old and it aims to provide members with the possibility to look behind the scenes. Past activities include taking a tour of the wardrobe department and having a workshop with the staff photographer.

It also is part of a scheme that offers discount subscriptions to students for a variety of local arts events (ballets, concerts etc.) students have the option of purchasing 4 tickets for €15. This can be renewed every 6 months offering a total of 8 productions a year.

The club would like to continue to hold workshops and to increase its level of activity however with people leaving for school getting a commitment and retaining members is proving difficult.

Plans to increase the level of uptake over the next year include: improving the internet site, sending frequent information on events via email and continuing its music theatre project. The music theatre project is made up of students that were nominated by a faculty members and provides them with a behind the scenes look at putting on an opera. In addition they receive training in the artform through a series of workshops based on their particular area of interest (signing lessons, ballet dancing etc.)

The heads of the club are a bit discouraged as they 1) find getting people to RSVP for events is proving quite difficult. 2) the staff of the opera house has minimal awareness about the club and is not being as supportive as they could 3) club members are not given enough access to the opera house, cafes, intellectual property of the organization etc.

#### *Joves Amics del Liceu in Barcelona*

Have focused efforts on working with students from new neighborhoods. Recently they provided participants with the chance to attend rehearsals and a performance of Elektra.

They have also launched a highly successful vocal composition contest and have secured a major sponsor that will continue to fund this project. The competition aims to prove that anyone has the ability to compose something of value. A sheet music compilation is printed that include the entries of all the participants. The project has garnered international attention and has launched the career of at least one contestant.

#### *Jóvenes Amigos de la Ópera de Madrid*

No News

#### *Ogolnopolski Klub Milosnikow Opery-Warsaw*

The club has yet to obtain support and backing from the opera house. But since the Juvenilia GA last year, members find that the attitude towards the club is changing with opera administrators becoming much more receptive and looking for ways to support these activities.

#### *Latavra, Tblisi*

Continues to offer activities including dress rehearsal invites to club members, and 2-3 times a year also offers tickets to concerts or other non-opera performances. Guided tours of the Opera House are also provided and Universities students are their primary target audience.

Latavra hopes to have another International Opera Days event if people are interested and would like the representatives of the individual clubs to pass word on to their members. Sabine believes that cheap flights could be obtained through German Express or Air Baltic and this will be looked into over the next few weeks.

#### *Fondazione Milano per la Scala*

The group currently has 200 members and provides reduced ticket prices to many local venues as well as invitations to dress rehearsals. They also provide a printed guide about the opera house to all new members. They are experiencing a few difficulties at the moment

including the fact that the administrative office for the club has changed location, the club has lost their secretary and the website has been taken offline. However, they are holding elections for a new administrative council and are hoping to be back on track soon. This being said, they acknowledge that they have not hosted an International Opera Day event since 2003 and hope to remedy this very soon.

### *Scottish Opera-Glasgow*

This is Scottish Opera's first GA. They are currently developing a youth club which has grown out of their Under 26 ticket offer which provides £10 tickets for any seat in the house to anyone under the age of 26 which can be purchased in advance.

Scottish Opera are currently developing an infrastructure to support the youth club which includes the creation of a website, setting up an email list, as well as dinner and opera discount packages which they are trialing in Edinburgh. They plan on hosting two special events for their club members the first being a Season Launch in September of 2008 to celebrate students returning to university after the summer holiday and to promote their October opera. They also hope to organize another event around their operas in May of 2009.

They hope to develop the club in all of their mainscale cities (Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Inverness). They currently have over 3000 U26 ticket buyers from which they hope to form the foundation for an active youth club.

### *Apollo-Berlin*

Apollo is set up as a division of the Friends of the Opera and therefore falls into the Fundraising/Sponsorship category. They currently have 35 members and they find this figure to be quite constant throughout the years. Participants graduate out of the scheme when they increase their level of financial contribution. It currently costs €40 to join the club. Members of Apollo do not receive a cheap discount on tickets as the student ticket price offers discount enough. Apollo members are given the option of attending rehearsals as well as invitations to special events .

Apollo has a close relationship with the Seniors club (over 1200 members) who are always invited to Apollo events. Apollo also works closely with the education department. There is no official board of the club and administration is handled by the Seniors club with the occasional additional assistance of an intern.

Special events include: Tours of the opera house, Opera for everybody which places a big screen in front of the opera house broadcasting the opera going on inside so people can watch without paying (only offered for one performance per opera production).

The primary area of focus for the club at the moment is working on raising funds for the renovation of the opera house. The renovation is set to take place from 2010-2013. The opera will be moving to another location during this interval.

Apollo hosted an International Opera Weekend last Autumn offering a 3 day programme. They hope to offer something similar this year but are waiting until the official season is launched before going ahead with the planning.

Alexander was looking for suggestions on how to organise the international event for this year. It was decided that Opera should still be the central component. However acting classes could be introduced as well as the option of attending an alternate artform such as ballet or a concert.

Those present thought it might also be ideal to spend some time sightseeing with a focus on Berlin's lesser known tourist attractions-organising tours that might be a bit more off the beaten path.

Apollo's current activities were not discussed too much except to mention that the club currently gets space in the Senior newsletter to write about their activities.

Looking to the future, Apollo realizes the current internal structure could be improved in a way that might increase the number of new members. The creation of a board of at least 3 people would be incredibly helpful in working toward this goal. Currently they are concerned about attendance at Apollo events and therefore feel the need to scale down the number of Apollo activities.

### *Fidelio, Amsterdam*

Currently has 224 members. Fidelio attributes the high number of participants to the fact the opera house has a very busy opera schedule and Fidelio plans over 6 activities a year for its members including pre-show talks and question and answer sessions with cast members. Fidelio only offers a substantial discount for members if you take out a Junior subscription. This deal offers 3 or 4 productions for €60-€100. Student tickets exist but only as a rush on the day of the performance.

They do a lot of flyering during the interval of opera performances to invite young attendees to spontaneous post-show events and find this to be a great success.

The next Fidelio event will be in July around their production of Die Frau ohne Schatten.

Fidelio hopes to host an International Opera Weekend 11,12,13 June 2009. Friday will include the world premiere of Adam in ballingschap which is Dutch Opera with a Dutch cast. Saturday will be a production De zaak Makropulos and Sunday participants will have the option of attending a rehearsal of Carmen.

### **3) A Discussion of the European Opera Passport**

Sabine was curious as to how many Juvenilia members had taken part in the European Opera Passport Discount. Amsterdam, Glasgow and Barcelona said they had. Opera North in Leeds made the point that the rate to take out an Opass was incredibly high and that therefore the company did not think it was worthwhile to participate. When asked the majority of attendees felt that the cost was too high. To their knowledge, none of those participating in the scheme are aware of anyone taking advantage of the Opass ticket discount for recent productions.

Sabine said that she will be meeting with Audrey soon to discuss the Opass scheme in greater detail and find out how the programme is doing. They will discuss cost and ways to increase the "value for money" that this provides. All findings from this meeting will be relayed back to the heads of the clubs.

#### **4) Juvenilia Events**

The following Juvenilia activities have been set up by Sabine and Florian for the 2008-2009 year.

August 2008: International Meeting in Salzburg (dates TBC) but should be from end of July to 2nd of August.

October 2008: Fri 24-Sun 26th in Genova, Italy. Friday will be a meet and greet at the opera house, and will include tickets to the production of (Bellini: NOT SURE WHICH ONE!?). Saturday will be a meeting and there will be free time for sightseeing. Sunday morning attendees will have the option of going to a matinee or visiting a museum. The weekend will be open to all members of the individual clubs 18-35 and Juvenilia will aim to keep things low budget.

November 2008: 7-9 in (CITY) Switzerland. Florian will be there to host this event. Friday there will be a meet and greet followed by a guided tour of the Opera house. Saturday there will be sightseeing activities organized. More details of activities to follow:

December 2008: Something is to be set up in Milan around the Christmas Market. Attendees can attend two opera performances on Friday and Saturday. A concert will be organized on Sunday morning. Programme to be officially announced soon.

January 2009: Weekend in Dresden around Ball. Events TBD

June 2009: To be hosted by Fidelio in Amsterdam (see Fidelio minutes above).

In addition Sabine is looking into the possibility of Juvenilia attending festivals in Verona and Salzburg.

#### **5) Where to hold the next GA**

Three options were given as potential locations for the 2009 GA.

- 1) Scotland
- 2) Leeds
- 3) Barcelona

Leeds was decided on as the location for the next GA. Stefanie Klinge will be in touch with members about the programme once the 2009 operas have been announced.

Sabine was reluctant to hold the GA in Barcelona given that Juvenilia had been there in the past. Glasgow was a potential location but with the youth club there still being in the early stages of development it was decided that it might be best to wait a year or two.

## **6) Obtaining Sponsorship/Funding for Juvenilia**

Sabine mentioned to the group that she would like to pursue finding a source of funding for Juvenilia and did members have any objections to this idea. The heads of the clubs in attendance were unanimously in favor of her doing so. She specifically has a philanthropist in mind that she hopes to approach over the next few weeks.

The main question/problem that arises with this is who then holds the money as Juvenilia is not officially set up as a company, do not have a bank account etc. It was decided that as an initial plan she speak with Opera Europa to see if they would be happy to hold onto and allocate funds to Juvenilia. An additional option would be to contact Fedora to see if they would be willing to assist.

If funding is obtained it would be primarily used to help heads of clubs that cannot currently afford to attend events, providing them with airfare and other travel costs. The goal is that it will increase the amount of attendance at Juvenilia events and enable companies such as Prague and Tbilisi to participate.

## **7) Questions**

The meeting concluded by addressing general issues/concerns.

The Semperoper club was seeking advice on tactics that could be employed to increase the number of active club members.

Amsterdam recommended that they provide a discount to existing members that wanted to bring a friend along.

Sabine mentioned that in Dusseldorf they would hold a meeting one Saturday of every month in a pub. The meeting was incredibly informal more like a meeting of friends and would bring in 20-25 club members on average.

Sabine also pointed out that with running any youth club it is important to acknowledge that there will always be lapses in attendance as this is customary with people's busy lives, exam schedules etc.

Scottish Opera mentioned that a possible way to increase numbers is to develop and nurture contacts with University staff and professors. Often times they have access to large databases so they can inform a large number of students quickly and efficiently.

Stephanie agreed that University contacts were key particularly with setting up the TONAL group in Leeds and that she even arranges with professors to go to into the classrooms at the beginning of the semester and give a brief speech to students letting them know about the club, what events will be happening over the next few months and ticket discounts.

It was also mentioned by Sabine, Amsterdam, and Berlin that youth clubs in different cities should work harder to collaborate with one another to boost attendance in the individual locations. Amsterdam collaborates with Brussels, Dresden and Berlin should work more to often with one another as should Leeds and Glasgow. This could be a healthy way of generating new interest.

## **8) Conclusion**

Meeting closed with Sabine reminding everyone that her and Florian would start to send out email reminders of Juvenilia events. It then becomes the responsibility of the heads of the clubs to pass this information on to its members.

Sabine also requested that those in attendance check the Juvenilia website to update our contact information. It is important to delete any information that is no longer accurate as Juvenilia is finding that when they do try to email people many of the addresses are no longer valid and that a large number of emails are bouncing back.