



The Lyric Letter

Volume 25, Issue 9, Jan-Feb 2026

PO Box 339, Englewood, CO 80151
www.DenverLyricOperaGuild.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



With a nod of thanks to Saint Valentine, we now enjoy a light-*hearted* day in February filled with hearts, flowers, Hallmark, and most importantly, a box of chocolates! May you all enjoy a truffle (or two)!

February also marks the start of our **Competition for Colorado Singers** beginning with the **Master Class on February 28th**. 12 singers have been chosen to participate and having an audience is an important part of the coaching. I encourage you to attend, you do not have to stay for the entire class which will be held at [Wellshire Presbyterian Church](#) starting at 11:00 am.

We will pause our **Opera on Tuesday** luncheons until we welcome our Competition winners to perform for us in April. Our January luncheon featuring the Artists in Residence with Opera Colorado were terrific and the new Director of Programs and Partnerships, Dennis Robinson gave a bit of a peek into what is coming next season. I'm delighted we had an entirely full room with approximately 90 guests – and no snow!

The Grants DLOG gives to university music programs as well as young artist programs is a very important part of our mission. The Finance Committee, headed by Kevin O'Connor have met and reviewed all the grant requests for 2026. The grant awards are as follows:

Opera Colorado	\$10,000
Central City Opera	\$10,000
Denver University, Lamont School of Music	\$10,000
University of Colorado, Eklund Opera Program	\$10,000
University of Northern Colorado	\$5,000
Colorado State University	\$4,000
Opera Ft. Collins	\$3,000
Metropolitan State University	\$2,500
Opera Theater of the Rockies	\$2,500
Art Song Colorado	\$1,800

Jackie Writz manages all grant requests and awards. We owe her a big debt of thanks. It's a complex process and she makes it look easy.

Each year's distribution is calculated as a set percentage of our investment portfolio. Many thanks to **Kevin and Tom Conroy** for their careful oversight of our investments.

Please be sure to mark your calendar for the **Master Class, Preliminary** and **Finals Competition**. The Master Class and Competition slots are all filled with a few on the wait list.

The dedicated **Competition Committee** led by Karen Bruggenthies do a wonderful job – stay tuned for further announcements.

*Roses are red, violets are blue
Lucky us to have members like you!*

Gayle Landis

DLOG President 2025-2026

Our Mission

Denver Lyric Opera Guild's mission is to support and encourage young opera singers through grants to University Opera Programs and Young Artist Programs; to provide continuing education for members' appreciation and knowledge of opera; and by sponsoring an annual Competition for Colorado Opera Singers.

**February 28th is the 2026 Competition for Colorado Singers
Louise C. Conter Master Class**

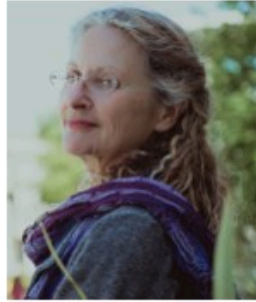
**Ever wonder how an aria goes from “good” to “goosebumps”?
Come see how the magic happens. Free, fabulous and full of fun!**

FEBRUARY 28, 2026

LOUISE C. CONTER MASTER CLASS

11:00 AM – 4:30 PM

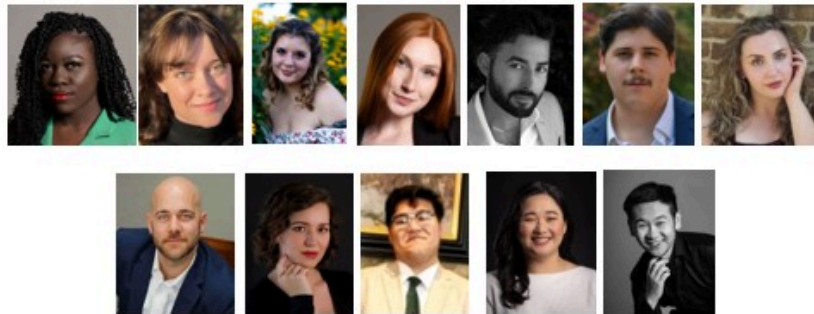
CONDUCTED BY: World renowned stage director and dramatic coach VERA CALABRIA



**WELLSHIRE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
2999 S. Colorado Blvd., Denver, CO**

Guests may come and go – or stay all day.

Step inside the rehearsal room and witness the artistry behind the aria. The Louise C. Conter Master Class offers a rare opportunity to watch some of Colorado's most promising young opera singers work one-on-one with a distinguished guest clinician. Through live coaching, technical insights, and interpretive guidance, singers refine their craft before an audience, offering a fascinating glimpse into the process of transforming talent into true operatic excellence.



FEATURING: *Danielle Brown (mezzo), Annabella Cox (soprano), Mykayla Fitzpatrick (soprano), Sidney Grimm (soprano), Dante Mireles (baritone), Davian Raggio (tenor), Briget Ravenscraft (soprano), Kevin Spooner (bass-baritone), Ashley Troester (mezzo), Luis Valencia (tenor), Jane Wee (mezzo), Maotong Yu (baritone), Yang Zhang (baritone)*

Opera on Tuesdays Recap - January 20th with the Opera Colorado Artists in Residence

Our January luncheon featured the Artists in Residence with Opera Colorado. There were terrific and the new Director of Programs and Partnerships, Dennis Robinson gave a sneak peak into what is coming next season. We had a full room with approximately 90 guests – and no snow!. See photos below for luncheon highlights!

All photos courtesy of DLOG Photographer Linda Young. Thank you, Linda!! To see more photos from this event check out the [Gallery section of the DLOG Website](#).



January 20th: Opera Colorado Artists- Oliver Poveda Zavala, Daniel Miller, Kevin Spooner, Bridget Ravenscraft, Mason O'Brien, John Morefield (collaborative pianist), Jordan McCready



Dominic Donato, Dee Raisl, Julie Johnston, Barbara Berryman, Deb Roth



Row 1- Phyllis Wicklund, Jenene Stookesberry, Sara Keitch, Hallie Schmidt,
Row 2- Karen Bruggentheil, Dennis Robinson, Jr. (Opera Colorado Director of
Programs and Partnerships)



Row 1- Deanna Leino, Carolyn Cho ,Marsha Hoehler, Row 2- Karen Saliman ,
Mary Bahde, Carolyn Wold

Met Opera Laffont Competition Rocky Mountain Region Update



Exciting news! Two DLOG favorites have received prestigious awards at the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition Colorado-Wyoming District!

On January 10th, mezzo-soprano Katiann Nelson was selected as one of four singers chosen to advance to the Rocky Mountain Region Competition on February 10th. Katiann is a 25-year-old mezzo-soprano studying at CU Boulder. She was a finalist at last year's DLOG Competition and will be competing again this year. Soprano Nisha Caiozzi, daughter of DLOG member Ian Caiozzi and Neha Patel, received an Encouragement Award.

For those of you not familiar with the Met Opera Laffont Competition, formerly known as the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions—is one of the most prestigious vocal competitions in the opera world so recognition at this competition is a true honor!

The competition is designed to discover exceptional young opera singers and assist in the development of their careers. It provides a platform for singers across North America to be heard by representatives of the Metropolitan Opera and offers feedback, coaching, and financial awards to those with the greatest potential for operatic careers. Past national winners include Renée Fleming, Susan Graham, Lawrence Brownlee, Lisette Oropesa, Jamie Barton, and Nadine Sierra. Previous Rocky Mountain Region winners include Ryan Speedo Green, Alec Schrader, and Jonah Hoskins. The 2025 Rocky Mountain Region winner, Emma Marhefka, made her triumphant Santa Fe Opera debut as Musetta in La Boheme and her Met debut as Papagena in The Magic Flute.

Come help cheer on Katiann as she competes against winners from the Colorado-Wyoming District, Arizona District, Utah District and Mexico District as they vie for a spot in the Semi-Finals at the Met in NYC, and, ultimately, to perform on the Met Stage with the full Met Orchestra in the Grand Finals Concert!

FEBRUARY 7, 2026 - 1:30 am – 5:00pm

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION
METROPOLITAN OPERA LAFFONT COMPETITION**

**WELLSHIRE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
2999 S. COLORADO BLVD.
DENVER, CO**

Open to the public with a \$15 suggested donation at the door.

It's Competition for Colorado Singers Time!



Experience the thrill of discovering Colorado's next great opera stars! This annual competition showcases the finest young vocal talent in the state, featuring singers ages 23–32 in a dazzling display of artistry, passion, and technique. Finalists perform before a panel of distinguished judges — and an enthusiastic audience — vying for prestigious awards that help launch professional careers.

Join us for a day of extraordinary music, free and open to the public. Whether you stay for one aria or the entire event, you'll witness the future of opera unfold before your eyes.

MARCH 7, 2026

PRELIMINARY COMPETITION

9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

MARCH 21, 2026

COMPETITION FINALS

1:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Both Competition events will be hosted at

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH

6500 E. GIRARD AVENUE

DENVER, CO 80224

DLOG PATRON, ENCORE AND COMPETITION DONORS - SPECIAL EVENT



YOU!...make us smile!

DLOG Patron, Encore and Competition Donors

You have graciously supported our Guild and we would like to say

THANK YOU!

Please join us for a ***Casual Brunch*** get-together to celebrate!

**FEBRUARY 28, 2026
10:00am – 11:00am**

**Wellshire Presbyterian Church
2999 South Colorado Boulevard
Denver 80222**

Immediately following the brunch, enjoy some time watching a ***Master Class*** with the singers participating in our upcoming ***Competition for Colorado Singers***. It will be conducted by world-renowned teacher **Vera Lucia Calabria**.

Gayle Landis

**Denver Lyric Opera Guild Awards Grants to Organizations
Preparing Next Generation Singers**

The Board of the Denver Lyric Opera Guild approved the Finance Committee recommendations for 2026 grants to organizations preparing individuals for a career singing in Opera. 10 organizations were awarded grants from \$1,800 to \$10,000. Grantees were required to use the proceeds to directly pay performance fees, or financial support for individuals in their programs.

Several larger organizations received increases recognizing the costs of supporting singers in a company or academic program have increased significantly.

Opportunities for scholarships are provided by Metropolitan State University (\$2,500), University of Denver Lamont School of Music (\$10,000), University of Northern Colorado (\$5,000), Colorado State University (\$4,000).

Performance Fees are paid with grant money by Opera Fort Collins (\$3,000), Art Song of Colorado (\$1800), Opera of the Rockies (\$2,500)

Performing Companies with a program for young artists received \$10,000 each (Opera Colorado and Central City Opera)

The Eklund Opera Program at the University of Colorado received \$10,000 to provide opportunities for singers to participate in their New Opera Workshop and Composers Fellows Initiative.

We wish to acknowledge the exhaustive work that DLOG volunteer Jackie Writz provides in communicating solicitation for grants and reviewing compliance with our grant guidelines!

Kevin O'Connor

A Thank You From CU NOW

Thank you to DLOG for acknowledging the impact CU NOW has on our emerging professional singers with a \$10,000 Grant!! We can't express enough how much this helps our CU NOW budget so we can focus on making this an amazing experience for everyone involved! From Leigh and I, and ALL our CU NOW singers, THANK YOU!!.

Christie Conover

Eklund Opera Program Manager
College of Music
University of Colorado Boulder

DLOG Donation Update

January is the month that individuals with a brokerage retirement account will hear from their advisors that they have an RMD - Required Minimum Distribution (age 73). This usually is distributed by an IRS formula in cash to the individual and becomes taxable income.

An easy way to reduce the impact on taxable income is to direct your broker to make a Qualified Charitable Distribution. This is a check directly from your IRA to the Denver Lyric Opera Guild and will satisfy all or a portion of your RMD.

Another way to contribute to the Lyric Opera Guild is to name it a beneficiary of a portion or all of an IRA account.

If you have any questions regarding these gifting opportunities you can contact Finance Vice President Kevin O'Connor at kevindenisoconnor@gmail.com or 303-903-1103.

Kevin O'Connor

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Denver Lyric Opera Guild relies on volunteers to run the organization. A Nominating Committee is formed in the Fall to identify candidates for Board and Committee positions for the following year. Volunteers are needed to fill Board positions, to assist with the Competition for Colorado Singers, the Summer Party and Special Events such as Head Shot Day and the recent Cynthia Lawrence Concert. Volunteering provides the opportunity to forge new friendships, become familiar with the governance of the organization and most importantly to learn and appreciate the value of our mission to support aspiring professional singers through our collegiate grants, the annual Louise Conter Masterclass, and the Competition for Colorado Singers.

If you have a particular area of interest, please email Gayle Landis, giple@comcast.net
The Nominating Committee members will soon begin making calls, please consider volunteering!

Gayle Landis

Opera Around Colorado



Opera Teaser

Feb 12, Wellshire Event Center, Denver

Join us for an elegant evening of music, mingling, and mission as we raise funds to prepare and maintain the beloved Opera House gardens for our 94th festival season!.

Information and Tickets

Faculty Recital Series: Heidi Melton, soprano & Sahar Nouri, piano

Feb 13, Newman Center, Hamilton Hall

On the eve of Valentine's Day, join soprano Heidi Melton and pianist Sahar Nouri for "Love Stories," a recital of passion, longing, and devotion. The program features Wagner's radiant *Wesendonck Lieder* alongside other works that explore the many shades of love. An unforgettable evening of music, this concert is the perfect way to celebrate the season of romance.

Event Info

Ann Logan Craft Voice Competition

Feb 21, Newman Center, Hamilton Recital Hall



The Ann Logan Craft Voice Competition seeks to financially support the growth of current Lamont students by way of enhanced opportunities to seek knowledge outside of current course offerings. This competition also seeks to bring a more national scope to the student experience. Competitors are current Lamont students enrolled in a degree (BM, BA, MM) or certificate (PC, AD) program..

[Event Info](#)



Will Liverman in Concert

Feb 27, Ellie Caulkins Opera House, Denver Performing Arts Complex

Join Opera Colorado as we celebrate 20 years at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House with a thrilling concert featuring **GRAMMY Award-winning baritone Will Liverman**. Enjoy an evening of powerful performances spanning beloved classics and contemporary gems, honoring the passion and artistry that define opera at its finest.

[Details Here](#)

COLORADO *Bach* ENSEMBLE

St. John Passion, BWV 245

Feb 27, 28, March 1, St. Timothy's, Various Venues

Composed in 1724, the *St. John Passion* is a grand and turbulent work produced at the height of Bach's creative and expressive powers. The foreboding restlessness and tension in the opening chorus propel us into the inner world of John the Evangelist and his dramatic witness of betrayal, torment, and transfiguration in the gospel narrative.

Unlike the *St. Matthew Passion's* broad themes, *St. John* explores our personal experience of suffering, anguish, fear, loss, and the enduring sustenance of hope. Amid it all, Bach's glorious orchestration, counterpoint, and harmonic language sharpen each exquisite moment, from the severe to the sublime. .

[Info and Tickets](#)



College of Music

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

Oklahoma!

March 6,7,8, Macky Auditorium, Boulder

A co-production of Eklund Opera and the Bachelor of Music in Musical Theatre Program
Music by Richard Rogers

Books and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II
Based on the play "Green Grow the Lilacs" by Lynn Riggs
Original choreography by Agnes de Mille.

[Click for Oklahoma! Tickets and Info](#)

The Cunning Little Vixen

April 16,17,18,19, Imig Music Theatre, Boulder

by Leoš Janáček

Sung in English.

[Click for Vixen Tickets and Info](#)



Art Song Colorado Competition 2026

March 28, Bethany Lutheran Church, Cherry Hills Village

The 2026 Art Song Colorado Competition Awards have been graciously provided by the Marcia Ragonetti Bel Canto Fund..

[Click for Details](#)

Gardens of Song - Colorado Springs

April 26, First United Methodist Church, Colorado Springs

An art song trip to the garden where hearts will be stolen and hearts will be broken. Experience a new art song experience curated by Bella Mallow and Eapen Leubner.

[Click for Tickets and Info](#)



BOULDER OPERA

Der Rosenkavalier by Strauss

April 16, 18, 19, Dairy Arts Center

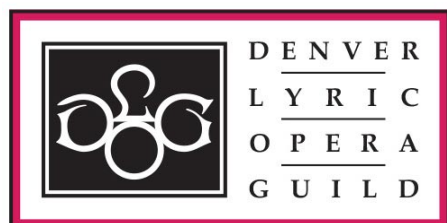
Love, laughter, and a little bit of chaos... Viennese style.

Join Boulder Opera for a fresh, intimate take on *Der Rosenkavalier*, a romantic comedy by Richard Strauss that blends heart, humor, and stunning music.

Set in the glittering world of 18th-century Vienna, the story follows a complicated love triangle: a noblewoman, her younger lover, and a sweet young bride-to-be. There's a cheeky disguise, a silver rose, and plenty of laughs along the way all with gorgeous melodies and rich emotions.

The opera is sung in German with piano accompaniment, and we'll guide you through the story with English narration, so you'll never miss a beat. Music Director Brandon Matthews leads an incredible cast in this elegant yet accessible production.

[Click for Tickets](#)



DENVER LYRIC OPERA
GUILD

P.O. Box 339
Englewood, CO 80151



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