

### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**



I'm delighted to introduce myself as the new President of the Denver Lyric Opera Guild. As a former opera singer and someone who has long been inspired by the magic of this art form, I believe in the power of opera to transform its audience and be transformed by it. I share your devotion to this vibrant community, and I'm honored to serve as its President.

I've been thinking lately about how classically trained voices are crossing musical genres. What happens when classically trained singers step outside opera and into other musical styles?

For some, it can seem like an acquired taste. For others, it is exactly what makes the performance so interesting. These cross-genre moments raise a tantalizing question: just how flexible can a great musician be?

- "Nessun Dorma", so closely linked with Luciano Pavarotti, has even been taken on by gospel icon [Aretha Franklin](#).
- [Renée Fleming and Béla Fleck](#) showed just how naturally opera and bluegrass can meet at the Grand Ole Opry.
- [Marina Viotti](#), Swiss Mezzo-Soprano, has moved audiences of both the Vienna Opera and of heavy metal band Gojira.
- [Yo-Yo Ma](#) has shown how a classical background can open the door to new, surprising kinds of musical collaborations.

Does stepping outside opera strengthen a singer's artistry, or put it at risk? You could think of it as the difference between being a specialist and being an all-around athlete. Some singers may benefit from staying closely focused on one tradition, while others seem to grow by exploring many. Either way, these crossover performances can invite curiosity, debate, and maybe even a few new audience members.

### **Norelee Bush**

DLOG President 2026-2027

Pictured: Norelee Bush and Sir Geraint Evans San Francisco Opera Master Class during Norelee's second term as a Merola Artist, 1983.



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## **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.

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## **Registration is Now Open for the DLOG 2026 Summer Party: Americana!**

Get ready for an unforgettable afternoon! Join us for "Americana"—the Denver Lyric Opera Guild's lively Summer Party, celebrating the special anniversaries of both our State and our Nation. Enjoy a laid-back, festive atmosphere with performances by three of our most popular singers—**Michael Hoffman**, **Christie Conover**, and **Kira Dills-DeSurra**—accompanied by the talented **Jeremy Reger**. Mark your calendar—this is one summer celebration you won't want to miss!

[Click Here to Register Now](#)

★ DENVER LYRIC OPERA GUILD PRESENTS ★

# AMERICANA MUSIC



LIVE AT THE  
**COLUMBINE COUNTRY CLUB** ★

— ★ **JULY 19, 2026** ★ —

Registration deadline: Tuesday, July 14, 2026

Columbine Country Club  
17 Fairway Lane  
Columbine Valley, CO 80123

11:00 AM - Social Hour  
11:30 AM - Performance  
12:30 PM - Luncheon

Cost per person - \$75

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## May 5, 2026, the conclusion of the Opera on Tuesday season with Central City Opera

The May 5th Opera on Tuesday marked the end of another wonderful season of the celebration of this art form we can't get enough of. It was time for Central City Opera to put on a grand show for DLOG. Make sure to attend their wonderful upcoming season beginning with *Marriage of Figaro* on Saturday, June 27. You just may see some familiar faces from our Competition on stage.

All photos courtesy of Linda Young.



Natasha Condor, Teresa Crane, Daniela Guzman-Eguez



Megan Quilliam, Scott Finlay



Dennis Jackson, Lisa Curtis, Marty Hill, Marcia Hoehler



Jeremy Reger, Margaret Ozaki-Graves



Wendy Wenkstern. Karen Ritz, Rebecca McAllister, Karen Bruggentheis, Valerie Wassill

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## It's Membership Renewal Time!

It is that time of year to renew your membership!

Please go online at any time to renew. You can save time by going to the website and renewing now. Please give some consideration to taking it to the next level and increasing your membership amount.

Let's all try to find one friend to invite to join DLOG. We are more than just a few luncheons. We encourage young opera singers and award many grants to universities and opera programs all over the state of Colorado. We are proud to say that our Annual Competition awards the highest prizes in the US.

[Click Here to Renew Your Membership Now!](#)

**Deb Roth**  
Membership Vice-President

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## Introducing the new DLOG Board for 2026-2027



Introducing the 2026-27 DLOG Board: row 1 - Valerie Wassill (1st Vice President), Deb Roth (Membership), Norelee Bush (President), Rebecca McAllister (Education), Phyllis Wicklund (Parliamentarian), Linda Bjelland (Secretary)  
row 2 - Laurie Barnes (Development), Kevin O'Connor (Finance), Karen Bruggenthies (Competition)

The DLOG Board for the 2026-2027 season was nominated and approved at the DLOG Annual Meeting held May 5, 2026. Best of luck to our new board members!

## 2026-2027 DLOG Officers

**Norelee Bush**  
President

**Gayle Landis**  
Immediate Past President

**Valerie Wassill**  
President Elect

**Karen Bruggenthies**  
Competition Vice President

**Laurie Barnes**  
Development Vice President

**Rebecca McAlister**  
Education Vice President

**Kevin O'Connor**  
Finance Vice President

**Deb Roth**  
Membership Vice President

**Gayle Landis**  
Public Relations Vice President

**Linda Bjelland**  
Recording Secretary

## Appointed Positions

**Phyllis Wicklund**  
Parliamentarian

**Linda Young**  
Photographer

**(Open) – Ian T. Caiozzi (Interim)**  
Communications Chair

## Board Meeting Dates 2026-2027

**September 14, 2026**

**November 2, 2026**

**January 4, 2027**

**April 5, 2027**

**May 3, 2027**

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## **Willie Stemmer**

**October 1, 1923 - November 7, 2025**

Denver Lyric Opera Guild wishes to extend our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Willie Stemmer. She was a longtime active member of DLOG almost from its inception and in to the the 2010s, attending the luncheons, the Competition, and playing in the Liverpool Card Group.

Wilhelmina M. Stemmer ("Willie") was born October 1, 1923 to Wayne & Rose Stemmer in Denver, Colorado. She attended Emmaus Lutheran Church and School, Denver West High School, and the University of Denver where she graduated in 1953 with a bachelor's degree in finance. Willie worked for the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation at the Denver Federal Center for many years before her retirement from government service.



Having grown up during the depression years of the 1930s, Ms. Stemmer was keenly aware of the need for assistance in promoting the welfare of others in the areas of health, education and the basic necessities of life. She was very charitable to others with many gifts of financial assistance to worthy organizations and individuals. She was a long-time member of Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Wheatridge, Colorado.

Willie enjoyed spending time with her long-time friend, the late Adele P. Nelson, going to plays at the Buell Theatre and the Arvada Center. She participated in various groups at Holy Cross Lutheran Church including, "Forever Young" and "God's work, Our hands." Prior to her 2024 admission to the Covenant Living Skilled Nursing facility, she resided for 30 years at Morning Side Apartments in Wheatridge, Colorado.

**Deanna Leino**

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## **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, [gjple@comcast.net](mailto:gjple@comcast.net)  
The Nominating Committee members will soon begin making calls, please consider volunteering!

**Gayle Landis**

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## **Opera Around Colorado**



### **Announcing the 2026 CMAC Season!**

All summer beginning June 15, Creede, CO

Founded by DLOG Competition finalist Megan Marino and Baritone Michael Mayes the Creede Musical Arts Collective marks their fifth year of programming this summer. Since their inaugural 2022 season, CMAC has grown from a small festival concept into a dynamic, year-round organization. What began with two festival weekends and a handful of guest artists has expanded into a full season of programming that includes multi-day festivals, pop-up concerts, educational offerings, community collaborations, and interdisciplinary events.

[See the 2026 Season Here](#)

### **2026 Festival**

Begins June 27, Central City Opera House, Central City

CENTRAL CITY  
**OPERA**

Discover the perfect harmony of comedy, drama, and musical brilliance at Central City Opera's 2026 Festival.

Experience Mozart's effervescent masterpiece *The Marriage of Figaro*, which sets a hilarious and heartfelt comedic story to the backdrop of opera's most exquisite music.

Celebrate the 70th anniversary of *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, a quintessentially American opera returning to the stage where it premiered. Finally, step into *Master Class*, Terrence McNally's Tony Award-winning play set in the studio of legendary Maria Callas as she challenges young singers and confronts her own turbulent past.

From the height of classical opera to authentic Americana to gripping drama, this season promises an extraordinary experience for opera lovers and first-timers alike.

[Information and Tickets](#)



**Opera Cowgirls**

July 3, Branham Strawberry Park Amphitheatre, Steamboat Springs

The Opera Cowgirls are anything but a traditional opera ensemble. Blending powerful operatic voices with Western charm, humor, and storytelling, they create performances that are both artistically exceptional and deeply entertaining.

Their programs move seamlessly between beloved opera favorites, Broadway classics, folk-inspired selections, and audience-friendly surprises, all delivered with warmth, personality, and a spirit of fun. Whether you're a lifelong opera lover or attending your very first performance, the Opera Cowgirls offer an accessible and engaging musical experience that appeals to audiences of all ages.

Set against the stunning backdrop of the new Branham Strawberry Park Amphitheatre, this special performance promises an evening of beautiful music, laughter, and community celebration under the Colorado sky.

[Click for Tickets and Info](#)



**Summer Concert - Wild West Song Fest**

July 19, Grimm Brothers Brewing, Loveland

The Wild West Song Fest reimagines the American frontier through the lens of classical music, creating a one-of-a-kind cultural experience that is both innovative and approachable. Presented by Loveland Opera Theatre, this event blends opera, choral music, guitar, and art song with themes inspired by Western landscapes, folklore, and storytelling traditions.

[Details Here](#)



**2026 Vocal Arts Festival**

July 19 - 31st, Colorado Springs

Come see the stars of tomorrow! The 2026 Vocal Arts Festival showcases vocal artists through opera scenes, musical theatre, and a spectacular finale concert at Packard Hall in Colorado Springs.

[Details Here](#)

**Mozart vs. Salieri: A summer Opera Rivalry Concert**

Aug 23, Boulder Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Boulder

Step into the world of rivalry, genius, and unforgettable music with Boulder Opera's summer concert, Mozart vs.

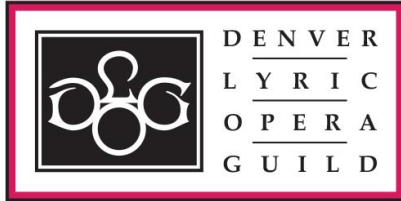


alike.

Salieri. Inspired by the legendary artistic tension between two of Vienna's most celebrated composers, this dynamic evening features beloved arias, ensembles, and dramatic scenes by both Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Antonio Salieri. Performed by a cast of exceptional singers, chamber chorus, and orchestra under the musical direction of José Arturo González, the concert brings humor, passion, intrigue, and dazzling virtuosity to the stage in a lively celebration of opera's Golden Age. Perfect for both opera lovers and newcomers

[Click for Info](#)

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DENVER LYRIC OPERA  
GUILD

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