

OPERA OUTREACH

From *Nixon in China* to *Sweeney Todd*, Eugene Opera's low-cost ticket program connects new audiences to performances

When it comes to accessing the arts, sometimes money isn't the only obstacle. Institutions like museums, theaters and concert halls may inadvertently express an air of exclusivity, creating an invisible barricade to community members who don't fit the profile of "arts patron."

Locally, the Eugene Opera is addressing this issue through its innovative Community Tix program, which provides free and reduced tickets to its performance season, along with something less tangible: a sense of belonging.

"We've realized that it's the role of an arts organization to be part of the community development picture," says Tony Meyer, a member of the Eugene Opera Board. "Our goal is community involvement with people who would never have the opportunity, or be motivated, to attend the opera."

Over the past three years, Meyer says, the Eugene Opera has offered community organizations \$5 tickets to *Nixon in China*, *Dead Man Walking*, *The Elixir of Love*, *La Traviata* and, coming up March 13 and 15, Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*.

"The clients of social service organizations have needs, such as housing, transportation or protection," Meyer says. "But to complement that, there's access to the

arts, for people who may not have the money to participate."

The Community Tix program is primarily supported through individual donation. "We ask our donors to make a tax-deductible contribution of \$30 per ticket, and that's used for a community ticket," Meyer says, adding, "These are good seats, A and B level."

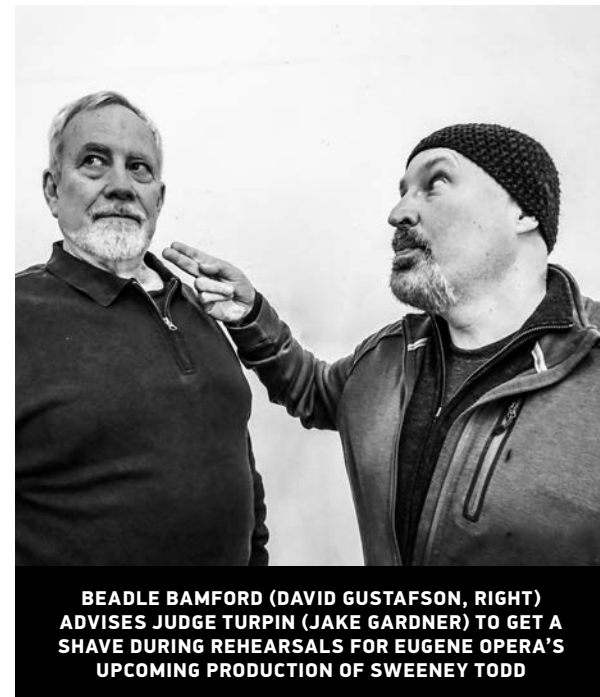
Donations earmarked for Community Tix offset the Opera's overhead while expanding audiences for the art form.

"We had 68 tickets the first year, 72 the second year and 140 in year three," Meyer says.

The Eugene Opera defers to partnering agencies to distribute free and reduced-price tickets to their own clients. Meyer and volunteers schedule regular educational outreach events, where they discuss opera informally, often at client-mentor potlucks or social service agency staff meetings.

"This is an open door," Meyer says. "We would like the demand to push us. We believe in this program, and we welcome social service organizations to contact us for more details and to ask for tickets," he says.

The Eugene Opera thus far has worked with St. Vincent de Paul, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Clubs of Emerald Valley and Catholic Community Services of Lane County, Alvord Taylor Independent Living Services, as well as Sponsors Inc., which helps



BEADLE BAMFORD (DAVID GUSTAFSON, RIGHT) ADVISES JUDGE TURPIN (JAKE GARDNER) TO GET A SHAVE DURING REHEARSALS FOR EUGENE OPERA'S UPCOMING PRODUCTION OF SWEENEY TODD

PHOTO BY ASHLEY HASTINGS

people recently released from Oregon jails and prisons to transition back into society in Lane County.

Says one Sponsors client: "My first time in the Hult Center for any event just happened to be my first operatic experience." After attending *La Traviata* with his mentor, he writes, "Opera tickets are not cheap, and an opportunity to see a major event like this is rare for an individual in my situation. Thank you for this program that helps people to adjust to life's new vistas." ■

For more information about the Eugene Opera's Community Tix program, please contact the Eugene Opera Office Manager Katie Curtis at Katie@eugeneopera.com. *Sweeney Todd* runs March 13 and 15. For ticket information and a full listing of lectures, exhibits and films associated with the performances, visit eugeneopera.com.

The SPIN

WHO'S WHO AND
WHAT'S WHAT IN
DANCE THIS MONTH

BY RACHAEL CARNES

This week, visiting London professor **Stephanie Jordan's** lecture "Rites of Spring: A Century of Tradition," looks at **Igor Stravinsky's** famous dance score, from its riotous premiere to its many creative permutations, at 1 pm Thursday, March 5, on the UO campus. And next week, **Pablo Luis Rivera** presents an interactive evening of music and dance, featuring Puerto Rican Bomba, a traditional musical style combining Spanish, African and

Taino cultures, 7:30 pm March 12; \$8-\$12. Both events take place in the UO Frohnmyer Music Building, room 178, 961 E. 18th Ave.

Also at the UO, the annual **Graduate Dance Loft** features a variety of work choreographed by graduate students in the School of Music and Dance 8 pm Friday, March 13, in the Dougherty Dance Theatre; \$3-\$5.

Local dance school favorite, **Zapp Dance Company**, performs **ZAPPland** at the Hult, 7:30 pm March 7; \$15.

Later this month, dancer and choreographer **Anna Miller** presents **The Glow Variety Show**, a benefit for the **Trauma Healing Project**, featuring "international, intergenerational and interdisciplinary performance art," 7 pm Saturday, March 28, and 3 pm Sunday, March 29, in the LCC Raggozino Hall; \$15-\$20.

The **Shen Yun Performing Arts** company explores 5,000 years of Chinese history and culture through colorful and mesmerizing dance, acrobatics and song, accompanied by a full orchestra, 7:30 pm March 31, at the Hult Center; \$60-\$120.

In the "Kudos" department, LCC's 14-member **Lane Dance Company** will perform this month at the American College Dance Festival Association conference in Greeley, Colorado.

TOMOKI SAGE AND
KIYOTA SAGE OF NANDA
PERFORM IN THE GLOW
VARIETY SHOW



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID LEVORE

And the Eugene dance community becomes more inclusive with a new **Dancing for Life/Parkinson's Dance** class. Based on the Dance for PD program developed collaboratively by the Mark Morris Dance Group and the Brooklyn Parkinson Support Group in 2001, "Dancing for Life classes bring the joy and physical benefits of dance to people with Parkinson's as well as people with other movement disorders." Offered on the first and third Sundays of every month, 1-2 pm, at **Ballet North West Academy**; free. For more information, call 343-3914.

Got a scoop on the local dance scene? Email Rachael Carnes at eugeneweeklydance@gmail.com