

**MULLIGAN'S PUB** Steve Ibach—8pm; acoustic, eclectic, n/c  
**OAKSHIRE PUBLIC HOUSE** Jerry Zybach—7pm; blues, n/c  
**O BAR** Karaoke w/Jared—9pm; n/c  
**OLD NICK'S** Cards Against Humanity—6pm; \$3. Boss's Daughter, Athiarchists—9pm; Punk, \$3-\$5  
**SHORYUKEN LEAGUE** JPower showtunes vs. Disney—9pm; \$5

**SAM BOND'S GARAGE** Bluegrass Jam—9pm; n/c  
**WHIRLED PIES DOWNTOWN** Acoustic Jam—7pm; n/c  
**WEDNESDAY 2/22**  
**5TH ST. CORNUCOPIA** Karaoke w/Slick Nick—9pm; n/c  
**AXE & FIDDLE** Comedy Open Mic—8pm; n/c  
**BLACK FOREST** Karaoke w/KJ Powers—9pm; n/c

**BREW & CUE** Crystal Harmony Karaoke—9pm; n/c  
**THE COOLER** Karaoke w/Caught in the Act—9pm; n/c  
**COWFISH** DJ Smuve—9pm; hip-hop, n/c  
**HAPPY HOURS** Mama Jan's Blues Jam w/Brian Chevalier—8pm; n/c  
**HI-FI LOUNGE** Funk Night—10pm; n/c  
**JERSEY'S** Karaoke w/Sassy Patty—8pm; n/c

**MAC'S** Gus Russell & Paul Biondi—6pm; jazz, n/c  
**MAX'S TAVERN** Lonesome Randall—7pm; n/c  
**MOHAWK TAVERN** Karaoke—9pm; n/c  
**MULLIGAN'S** Open Mic—8:30pm; variety, n/c  
**RIVER STOP RESTAURANT** Bingo—6pm; n/c  
**SAM BONDS GARAGE** The Pearls—9pm; \$3

**SHADOWFOX** Open Mic—8pm; n/c  
**SHEDD INSTITUTE** Bill Mays—7:30pm; \$24-\$32  
**STARLIGHT LOUNGE** Trivia Night w/Ty Connor—8pm; n/c  
**WILDCRAFT CIDER WORKS** Greg Nestler w/Special Guest—6pm; R&B, blues, n/c  
**WHIRLED PIES DOWNTOWN** Riff Raff—7pm; hip-hop, \$20-\$25

**CORVALLIS AND SURROUNDING AREAS**  
**1115 28TH AVE** — Albany SU Willamette Valley Symphony—7pm; \$15-\$18

**MUSIC** BY RACHAEL CARNES

# WITH NO MORE OPERA SEASON, TEEN OPERA FANS IMPROVISE

*Eugene Opera Academy keeps going as the opera itself takes a breather*

In the midst of its 40th anniversary season, Eugene Opera announced in January that a \$165,000 financial deficit would force cancelation of its spring shows — *West Side Story* and *La Tragédie de Carmen* — leaving the future of the company in doubt.

That bad news hasn't slowed down some of the opera's youngest supporters — the teenage members of the Eugene Opera Academy.

"I didn't know anything about opera until I joined the Eugene Opera Academy three years ago," says Isabel Renich, a home-schooled 11th grader. "And I would have never discovered how much I enjoy opera without the academy."

Begun in 2009, the academy offers an opera education program with more than 20 events each season, taught by staff from the Eugene Opera and other volunteers for participants ages 13-18. About 20 teens are currently enrolled at a cost of \$30 each for the entire season.

Isabel says she was hooked from her first encounter. "She saw *Elixir of Love*, and she adored it," says mom Angie Renich. "The story, the music, the performers — everything."

A lover of all things theater — especially musical theater — Isabel has been dancing since she was 5, mainly ballet, but jazz and modern as well. But she'd never seen any opera before joining the academy.

Students get a behind-the-scenes look at all aspects of production, from the score to the story, from scenic design to staging. The academy seasons have been full of lecture/demonstrations, open rehearsals, roundtable discussions, film screenings and complimentary tickets to opera performances such as Berlioz's *Much Ado About Nothing* and *An Opera Trio*, which included sections from *Aida*, *Dialogues of the Carmelites* and *Die Fledermaus*.

Academy participant Ananda Burke says she's relished the opportunity to observe the artistic journey — from idea to audience.

"Opera is an art form different from any other," the South Eugene High School junior says. "It blends the innately human desire to tell stories with our unique responses to melody and chord progressions, creating a completely immersive dramatic experience."

Burke sang soprano in the chorus for the *Opera Trio*, a powerful experience.

"Opera academy makes this art accessible to kids who might not otherwise have had any way to discover and cultivate a love of opera," she says.

In January, a week before the EO's shaky finances were disclosed to the public, academy members gathered for a pizza party at the home of Barbara Myrick, EO board member and chair of the education committee, to chat about their fall experiences and to look to the future.

But what was to be a happy occasion took a somber turn.

"We informed the students who were present that the Eugene Opera is postponing the rest of this season, due to



**EUGENE OPERA EDUCATION DIRECTOR AMY ADAMS GIVES ACADEMY STUDENTS A TOUR OF THE SILVA CONCERT HALL**

financial challenges," Myrick says. "In a nutshell, opera is expensive. Grants, donations and ticket sales have not kept pace with costs, even though we've worked bare bones for the last several years."

Snacks and socializing quickly gave way to an impromptu planning session as academy participants looked for ways to save the program they love.

"Could opera be done in a cheaper space, like the outdoors or in churches?" asked one student.

"What about using social media as a way of raising money?" asked another.

Isabel Renich was emphatic. "They should definitely continue to spend the money first on artists," she said.

Students brainstormed fundraising ideas like opera karaoke, or sponsoring a talent show through local high schools. Maybe they could sell walk-on roles at charity events? Or sell special seats on stage for a performance?

"The board and staff are united and committed to turning this around," EO board president Barbara Wheatley says. "We believe opera is part of what makes Eugene a great place to live, work and do business. We fully intend to correct our problems and be back in production next season."

And what will happen to the kids in the EO Academy?

Myrick recently arranged to have academy participants attend a recent production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* by the University of Oregon Opera Ensemble. And, in a creative

workaround, the students are planning to go as a group to see *La Traviata*, broadcast from the Met and played on movie screens, on March 11.

The students also continue to work on projects like singing opera arias, playing live music and writing their own original compositions.

Isabel Renich is working on her third project for the academy.

For her first project she wrote a synopsis for an opera, a love story with mixed-up identities and princes and peasants. Last year she wrote lyrics for the main love duet from her libretto, and she set it to music.

And this year Isabel plans to write another song for her opera, a quartet for four men.

"The students are excited about doing the projects as a ticketed fundraiser concert for the Eugene Opera," Myrick says.

Owen McCoy, an eighth-grade homeschooler who plays violin with the Eugene-Springfield Junior Orchestra, says he's appreciated the connection to this art form.

"The Opera Academy has been a very enlightening experience for me. The staff have all been so friendly and encouraging, the performances have been truly enjoyable, and it has been fun getting together with other students who are passionate about the performing arts," Owen says.

"I really appreciate this opportunity, and I hope that the Eugene Opera will continue to offer it in the future."

*Learn more about Eugene Opera Academy at [eugeneopera.com](http://eugeneopera.com).*