



# 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

# OUR MISSION

Opera House Arts uses the performing arts to foster and promote excellence in all the ways we perform our lives:

**Incite Art, Create Community!**



## FROM THE BOARD



It's been another amazing year at the Opera House. We are proud to be a year-round community anchor for the arts on Deer Isle. From innovative

theater and music programming to collaborations in our schools, we remain proud to offer a steady stream of entertainment and education for our island community and beyond. The year was marked by change in leadership at the Opera House. Peter Richards did an extraordinary job as our Interim Artistic Director. Then, after a nationwide search, seasoned and visionary theater artist Per Janson took the reins in September to lead us into the future.

Under Per's direction, as Producing Executive Director, with the support of our small and hard-working staff, you can expect more original programming as well as stellar presentations of favorites like our *Live! For \$5* series, year-round movies, and *Shakespeare-in-Stonington*.

Along with the rest of our Board of Directors, we thank you, in this year of change, for your continued participation and vital support of Opera House Arts.

Debbie Weil & Ray McCaskey  
*Co-Chairs, Opera House Arts Board of Directors*

## FROM THE DIRECTOR



That a place like the Opera House exists is, to me, a kind of miracle. Just look in these pages at the variety, scope, and ambition of the programs we offered last year. Very few towns or organizations of our size can make similar claims. Yet it is not, of course, by chance that we

are able to do so. We are able to do so thanks to you, our dedicated donors, volunteers, fellow theatergoers, artists, staff, neighbors, and friends.

Because of you, our 19th year was successful, both artistically and financially. Former Producing Artistic Director Meg Taintor programmed an extraordinary season, and Interim Artistic Director Peter Richards led us adeptly through the transition year. As we look ahead to our 20th season, there is much to celebrate, and I hope you will take a moment simply to appreciate how much Opera House Arts has grown over these 20 years.

Thanks to your combined efforts, we are poised to expand and deepen our work in this truly remarkable community. What an exciting moment this is. Thank you for your continued support, and please stay tuned for what's to come.

Per Janson  
*Producing Executive Director*

# OUR COMMUNITY

*Engaging our community is at the center of all we do at Opera House Arts.*

The 2018 summer season was a celebration of place, featuring a host of Maine-focused programming. Fall, winter, and spring were humming with the usual swarm of community-driven events, residencies, workshops, dances and more. We are committed to the vitality of downtown Stonington and enriching the lives of all who pass through, no matter the season.

## ISLAND WOMEN SPEAK

2018 marked the launch of *Island Women Speak*, a live storytelling event inspired by *The Moth* and directed by Debbie Weil. In a profoundly intimate setting, eight local women, from every generation, shared their own stories for neighbors and strangers alike. Due to popular demand, we produced a second event with seven new speakers later in the year, another in January 2019, and plans are in the works for future storytelling events!

## FAMILY DAYS

Over the years, island families have come to look forward to our FREE community days throughout the season: *The Stonington Spooktacular* in October, *The Holiday Hoopla* in December, and *The Great Down-Easter Egg Hunt* in April.

These events, rooted in the legacy of the Stonington Opera House itself, offer a chance for folks to connect with the theater and one another. Marked by good cheer and family fun, we have welcomed growing numbers of participants over the years. OHA teams up with several organizations and island non-profits to engage community members of all ages, where the children of our island really shine. In addition to craft-making, storytelling, and face-painting, we now offer the opportunity for our youth to step onstage alongside Education Associate Joshua McCarey to delight in playful theater games.

*OHA is proud to partner on Family Days with Island Community Center, Deer Isle-Stonington Chamber of Commerce, Deer Isle-Stonington Schools, Edible Island, Healthy Island Project, Island Rec Board, The Reach Performing Arts Center, Stonington Public Library, and the Town of Stonington.*





## OUR COMMUNITY



### STAGED READING SERIES

*Our staged reading series keeps the conversation alive in winter by inviting community members to collaborate with professional theatre artists on a play. In 2018, our readings took on fresh forms.*

We kicked off the year with ***Play in a Day!*** featuring Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Our intergenerational community cast rehearsed, staged, and performed this magical tale of an island shipwreck in a single 24-hour period. Providing accessible opportunities to engage with classical text is central to our work here at Opera House Arts.

Next, we teamed up with our neighbors at the Stonington Public Library for a presentation of their cemetery tour, ***Gone But Not Forgotten***. An intimate evening of storytelling, complete with period costumes, projections, and live music, celebrated remarkable islanders whose contributions remain a strong presence in our daily lives.

The series closed with a reading of Duncan Macmillan's ***Every Brilliant Thing***, a participatory play about everything worth living for. This beautiful solo show invited each of us to become "a co-conspirator in the plot to hold back the darkness..."

## ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE

*Opera House Arts (OHA) serves as an oasis for artists in the developmental stages of their work. We believe time and space are crucial to the creative process and we offer these resources for artists who stand to make a critical impact, through education and engagement, on our community and on the national field.*

Threadbare Theatre Workshop joined us as part of our Harbor Residency program to workshop and produce ***The Royal Tar***. Theatremakers Kate Russell and Joshua McCarey engaged locals, ages 5-92, in "collective creation" to devise an original play from scratch. Over 450 audience members lined up at Burnt Cove Church to experience this FREE and richly spare retelling of a local legend.



Melody Bates, with director Joan Jubett, returned to OHA to workshop ***Avalon***, an original play inspired by the Arthurian legend, commissioned by OHA as part of our upcoming 2019 summer season. OHA co-founder Judith Jerome serves as dramaturg. This world premiere will be an immersive, site-specific production performed among Peter Beerits' outdoor sculptures across the beloved Nervous Nellie's landscape.

# THEATER SEASON

Our 2018 summer theater season featured stories with deep resonance for our Deer Isle-Stonington community. Taking inspiration from our own majestic rocky shores, an outdoor production of *The Tempest* reimagined Prospero's fantastical island as our own Deer Isle, while *I Have Seen Horizons* brought Ruth Moore's vibrant Downeast stories to life on the Opera House stage.



## THE TEMPEST

*"[An] unforgettable forging of nature and theater that will take up residence in [your] soul and never leave..."*

— Judy Harrison, *Bangor Daily News*

*"The shore of Deer Isle Thorofare, it turns out, is exactly where William Shakespeare's last solo play was made to be staged. Magic everywhere."*

— Ellen Booraem, *Ellsworth American*



## I HAVE SEEN HORIZONS: RUTH MOORE'S STORIES FROM MAINE

*"One has to believe that Ruth Moore...would have been thrilled with this wonderful play."*

— Nan Lincoln, *Ellsworth American*

*"Opera House Arts again has demonstrated its commitment to presenting original works that authentically reflect life in Maine's coastal communities and its islands."*

— Judy Harrison, *Bangor Daily News*





# THEATER SEASON



## THEATER SEASON BY THE NUMBERS:

**THE TEMPEST** By William Shakespeare

Directed by Peter Richards

June 29-July 15

13 performances at Ames Farm

Total Attendance: 1,032

## I HAVE SEEN HORIZONS: RUTH MOORE'S STORIES FROM MAINE

By Meg Taintor & Natalya Baldyga

Based on the writings of Ruth Moore

Directed by Natalya Baldyga

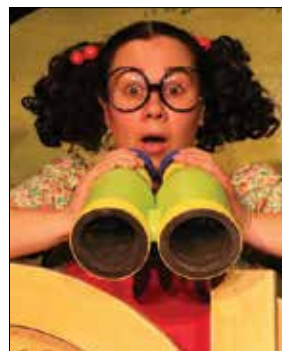
August 16-26

8 performances

Total Attendance: 972



# LIVE! FOR \$5



*Sponsored by the W. F. Whitman Family Foundation in Memory of Maia Aprahamian.*

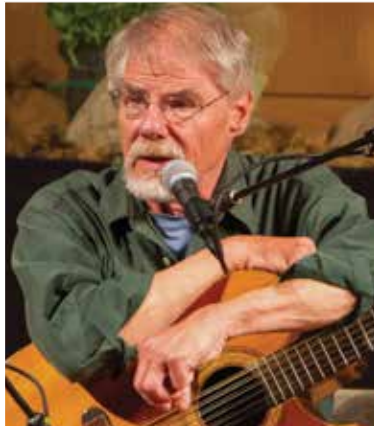
*One of Opera House Arts' oldest and most treasured programs, **Live! For \$5** welcomes audiences of all ages to family-friendly live performances for less than the price of a movie ticket.*

On Wednesdays throughout the summer, audiences gathered to enjoy performances including **I Spy, Butterfly; Half Moon Jug Band; The Norman Ng Magic Experience; Under the Umbrella, Life Is a Circus; The Happenstance Theatre Company;** and Deer Isle's very own **Sue's School of Dance.** All for just \$5 per ticket!

## LIVE! FOR \$5 BY THE NUMBERS:

Total attendance: 878

# MUSIC AT THE OPERA HOUSE



*This year featured more music than ever before at Opera House Arts. As always, there was something for everyone!*

The **Soulbenders**, a local blues and classic soul band from Brooksville, warmed us up at the annual Winterfest dance hosted by OHA.

Our **Chamber in the Church** series enchanted audiences with three beautiful concerts of classical music at the Burnt Cove Church, featuring **The Crownsville Collective**, the **Portland Piano Trio**, and **Noree Chamber Soloists**.

Broadway lovers enjoyed two delightful shows featuring **John McVeigh** and friends — one a celebration of the legendary composer Leonard Bernstein, and the other a gender-bending feast of Broadway favorites. Following our annual gala, the incomparable **Suzanne Nance** joined McVeigh for a concert of arias, standards, and show tunes.

We rounded out our musical season with four special concerts, each from a different musical genre: a sold-out evening of folk music from beloved Mainer **Gordon Bok**, a rollicking night of ragtime piano with **Bob Milne**, an evening with the sultry-voiced Vinalhaven-based indie rock band **Deep Gold**, and a multi-media exploration of the cosmos with Baroque music entitled **Perpetual Motion: Galileo and His Revolutions**.

## DEER ISLE JAZZ FESTIVAL

*The 2018 Jazz Festival featured two nights of cutting-edge jazz, curated by award-winning music critic and journalist Larry Blumenfeld.*

The festival launched with the George Stevens Academy jazz band, **Quinn and the Tuplettes**, under the direction of **Steve Orlofsky**, followed by special headliners **David Virelles** on piano and **Roman Diaz** on conga drums. Saturday night featured an opening act of **Peter Apfelbaum** and drummer **Joseph Boulet** (a former GSA student) and culminated with headliner **Myra Melford** and her quintet, **Snowy Egret**.

In total, 15 artists and over 1,000 audience members enjoyed our festival this year!



## MUSIC BY THE NUMBERS:

Individual Concerts: 11  
Tickets Sold: 1,241

# MOVIES

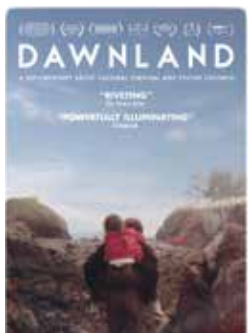
Opera House Arts remains committed to serving the populations of Deer Isle, Stonington and the Blue Hill Peninsula as a first run movie house, offering new movies, independent films and documentaries year round. Going to the movies at the Stonington Opera House is a wonderful way to gather and connect throughout the year.

In addition to blockbuster hits like *Black Panther*, OHA was thrilled to sponsor *The Maine Outdoor Film Festival*, a free evening of short films at the Stonington ball field, featuring the topical *Bailey and the Alewives* and *Anns an Fhuil*. We also hosted the *Maine Film Series*, featuring four films celebrating the life, culture, and history of our region: *The Home Road*, *J Fred Woell: An American Vision*, *The Northeast By Eastern*, and *Jon Wilson: The Restorer's Journey*.

In October, Maine Wabanaki REACH joined us for a screening of *Dawnland*, about Maine's truth and reconciliation process for Native American foster children, followed by a conversation with Dawn Neptune Adams of the Penobscot Nation.

## MOVIES BY THE NUMBERS

Adult Tickets: 3,954  
Under 17: 627  
Total Income: \$39,053



# EDUCATION



Opera House Arts' education program deepened its impact with four core programs led by Education Associate Joshua McCarey: **Voice-2-Voice**, **Young Horizon Players**, **Class Acts** and our annual **Arts Week** in partnership with Deer Isle-Stonington High School (DISHS). In total, our programs reached over 500 students in the classroom and on our stage.

**Class Acts** uses theatrical storytelling to foster creative learning in the classroom. Our *Contra Dance Residency*, with visiting artist Christie Fowler of Belfast Flying Shoes, closed with a public dance for 3rd-5th graders to share their learning here at OHA, restoring our wooden planks to one of their original functions: as a dance floor and place of fellowship for the body. *Chemistry Theatre*, a collaboration between Education Associate Joshua McCarey and chemistry teacher Jessica Talbot, engaged students with theatre as a tool to deepen comprehension of chemical reactions. High school students grades 10-12 wrote and performed an original play for fellow students grades 5-6.

*"Chemistry was never easy for me, but the actions shown in the theatre piece and the cleverness with which they evolved provide a missing link that was thoroughly enjoyable."*

— Marsha Schat, Librarian



## EDUCATION



*"My daughter just loved the whole process. I was very impressed with the growth of the actors from last year to this year. Thank you!"*

— Participating Parent

Opera House Arts' second annual **Voice-2-Voice** poetry program was produced in partnership with five area middle schools including the addition of Bucksport Middle School. The amount of participating students increased from 125 to 265. Finalists from each school went on to perform their chosen poems for audiences at OHA and the REACH Performing Arts Center.

*"For some students this is a rare opportunity to experience public speaking and to shine in a unique forum."*

— Participating Teacher

*"I learned even more this year how poetry helps a learning reader and writer.... Great for kids to be expressive and use their emotions."*

— Participating Teacher

In its second year of programming, the **Young Horizon Players** performed *The Stonecutter*, an adaptation of a Japanese tale featuring a cast of eight young actors from Deer Isle and the Blue Hill Peninsula. Final performances attracted enthusiastic audiences, including friends and family of our cast.

## EDUCATION



## INTERNSHIPS

Every summer, OHA welcomes teens from around the country into our immersive internship program, tailored to provide hands-on learning experiences in a variety of disciplines throughout the summer season. Our seven OHA interns studied acting, directing, stage management, marketing, and production, while working alongside seasoned professionals in the field.



Photos:  
Lily Felsenthal, Zillah Glory, Isaac Goss, Dan Rajter, Julia Sears,  
Meg Taintor

# SUPPORT



**We met the Challenge!** Thanks to many of you reading this report, Opera House Arts successfully met a \$50,000 Challenge gift this past year. A great friend of the Opera House pledged to match dollar-for-dollar every new and increased gift to our Annual Fund up to \$50,000. With your help, we did it!

In addition to increasing what we have to spend on operations and programming thanks to the Challenge, the Opera House was also able to pay down our mortgage by \$150,000. This will reduce the interest we pay over the life of the loan, and helps cash flow by reducing our monthly payment.

Thank you for stepping up and helping us to increase the past year's revenue in a big way. We plan to invest these dollars in capacity — both people and equipment — which is especially important as we plan to celebrate our 20th season.

Thanks to all of you for making this little theater on an island capable of big ideas and outstanding performances.

**For more information on ways to give, please contact Pamela Dewell, Director of Development 207.367.2788 ext. 14 or [development@operahousearts.org](mailto:development@operahousearts.org)**

# FINANCIALS

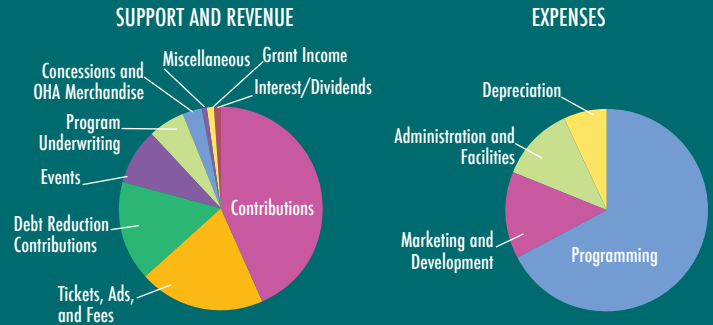
## OHA ANNUAL REPORT STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED OCTOBER 31, 2018

Support and Revenue	Total	%
Contributions (unrestricted)	\$413,154	(44%)
Tickets, Ads, and Fees	\$186,105	(20%)
Debt Reduction Contributions	\$150,000	(16%)
Events	\$84,556	(9%)
Program Underwriting	\$53,500	(6%)
Concessions and OHA Merchandise	\$30,287	(3%)
Miscellaneous	\$12,719	(1%)
Grant Income	\$8,400	1%
Interest and Dividends:	\$761	(<1%)

**TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE \$939,482**

Expenses	Total	%
Programming	\$540,179	(68%)
Marketing and Development	\$112,635	(14%)
Administration and Facilities	\$93,222	(12%)
Depreciation	\$53,414	(7%)

**TOTAL EXPENSES \$799,450**



As with most small performing arts organizations, ticket sales provide just a portion of the revenues needed to support programming. We wish to thank our contributors for making up the difference, and are especially grateful to have received \$150,000 this year toward the repayment of our mortgage debt, reducing it by half.

*The financial statements for Opera House Arts have been fully audited by Cheryl L. Boulet, CPA, Blue Hill, ME. This audit was conducted in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the U.S. The statement above is based upon the audited financial statements.*

# 2017-18 DONORS

Opera House Arts wishes to thank our many friends for supporting our Annual Fund during Fiscal Year 2017/18 with donations made during the period November 1, 2017 through October 31, 2018. Please contact us to ensure our records are accurate and your name is as you wish it to appear.

## Capital Campaign

We thank the following donors who have made donations to preserve our historic theater and expand and improve our workspaces.

### Capital Campaign Lead Gifts

Anonymous      Ray & Judy McCaskey      Joan & Paul Sorensen

### New Gifts Toward Capital Improvements

Anonymous (2)      Ray & Judy McCaskey

## The Second Century Society

Very special thanks to those who have included Opera House Arts in their estate planning. Please let us know if you would like to leave a legacy benefitting future generations.

Stanley & Suzanne Bergen      Ray & Judy McCaskey  
Patricia Donahue      John Ollman  
Charles & Annie Holland      Debra & John Piot  
Rich & Mary Howe      Mary Kay Ricks  
Bob & Macy Lasky      Ron Stegall  
Nancy Mackay      Tom & Valerie Wolzien  
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## Foundation Support

Davis Family Foundation      Maine Community Foundation  
Maine Arts Commission

## Program Underwriting

Donations in support of specific programs or productions

### THE TEMPEST

Anonymous (2)  
Ray & Judy McCaskey

### I HAVE SEEN HORIZONS: RUTH MOORE'S STORIES FROM MAINE

Anonymous

### DEER ISLE JAZZ FESTIVAL

Rich & Mary Howe

### LIVE FOR \$5

The W. F. Whitman Family  
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Maia F. Aprahamian*

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Renee Sewall & Kyra Alex

## The Founders Society

Donations of \$15,000 and above to our Annual Fund

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Annie & Chuck Holland      The Loring Wolcott & Coolidge  
Ray & Judy McCaskey      Charitable Trust-I

## The Next 10 Society

Donations of \$10,000 to \$14,999 to our Annual Fund

Debbie Weil & Sam Harrington      Mark & Susan Robinson  
Rich & Mary Howe      Frank & Denie Weil  
Macy & Bob Lasky

## 1886 Opus Society

Donations of \$5,000 to \$9,999 to our Annual Fund

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Donations of \$2,500 to \$4,999 to our Annual Fund

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David Greenham  
Sally & Arthur Gregg

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