Opera Sustainability

Through Multilevel-Apprenticeship Programs at Opera Companies

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Abstract

Opera is a cultural common that benefits humanity at multiple levels. However, its practice has become almost inaccessible to certain populations making the Opera audiences less connected to the art form every day. The Opera is in need of sustainable solutions for its survival. To understand the challenges and possible solutions, the present research is divided into three main components. First, the paper analyzes and describes Opera as an art and as an industry, clarifying its actors/stakeholders, some of their interactions, and the current business model of the Opera. Second, the text describes the problems of the current business and governance models and the hypothesis of the death spiral of the current Opera field. Third, the research explains the solutions that the multilevel-apprenticeship programs could offer to the Opera field and the possibility of implementing them in multiple local arenas with a multidisciplinary approach that involves full Opera actors. Furthermore, the paper enumerates the next steps that could be followed to continue the study in Opera sustainability.

About the Author:

Colombian Maestro Barbosa-Vásquez has been consolidating a prolific international career as Opera, Orchestra, and Ballet Conductor. He is Music Director of The Americas Chamber Orchestra at Bloomington, Indiana, USA; Music Director of the Opera Summer Camp (CASC) at Los Angeles, California, USA; Assistant and Cover Conductor of IU Opera and Ballet Theater and Indiana University Symphony Orchestras. He is a Doctoral Student of Opera, Orchestra, and Ballet Conducting at Jacobs School of Music from Indiana University (USA) as a Scholarship holder of Graduate Tuition Award and Artistic Excellence Award. In addition, Maestro Barbosa-Vasquez is a proud Research Awardee of the Ostrom Workshop doing research on Opera Sustainability.

Other outstanding international achievements are his 1st. International Opera Conducting Competition in Belgium (Opera Royal de Wallonie) (2017), the III International Conducting Competition Nino Rota in Italy (2018) (in both cases representing Latin America), Guest Conductor for the 70th anniversary of the concert of UNICEF, Assistant Conductor of the Nashville Symphony Orchestra (Jan 2022), Indianapolis Symphony Conducting Fellow (Jan 2022), special guest speaker at the 11th European Orchestra Festival (EOFed) and WFAO General Assembly (2018 - Norway), and special guest speaker at the WFAO General Assembly (2019 - Singapore).

More information and videos at: www.barbosavasquez.com
Preface

"Why a Conductor is analyzing things outside art and is at the Ostrom Workshop?"

Many people now that my main career focus is conducting (Opera, Orchestra, Choir and Ballet). However, multiple reasons had let me to constantly focus into the arts administration and with it; the socio-economic dimensions of the arts become fundamental for my profession too.

From one side, my mom is economist, lawyer and entrepreneur. That combination of course influences my career path in addition with the opportunities she gave me. For instance naming me, with only 18 years as the CEO of an education company founded by my mom. Despite the fact I was already into the professional music career (bachelor degree) since my fourteen's looking to be a conductor, this experience helped me to understand that lead a company goes far more away than only the ability to perform an specific job or the expertise you have in certain area. A leader has to be a multitasking, and interdisciplinary highly skilled person with the ability to evaluate multiple knowledge and be able to implement them, as the company requires. It addition, it help me to understand that human interactions are one of the most important elements a leader must understand. At the end in a company, in an orchestra, or at the Opera, the CEO or conductor is not the hand creating the product, is the person that leads people that actually do the job. Probably this was the reason that for my Bachelor’s in Music\(^1\) thesis I did a research to understand the clues to motivate an orchestra in a rehearsal\(^2\). An interdisciplinary analysis of motivational theories, complexity theory, multiple intelligence theory, and rehearsal techniques theories. Again, more than only do another music analysis\(^3\), I wanted to learn more from other areas to be sure that in the future, as Music Director and leader of different artistic companies I will be able to lead them properly.

On the other hand, my international conducting profession has also led me to be involved in the arts administration side. The Music Director position goes far more than only leading musicians from the podium. It implies be a community leader, respectful and fluent board interaction, and a clear vision for musicians/orchestra or musicians/singers/opera development\(^4\). Therefore, the interdisciplinary approach is required to perform a good job in that position because of the multiple actors involved.

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\(^1\) Majoring in Opera, Choir, and Orchestra Conducting and minoring in Viola and Chamber Music after 9 years of highly devoted studies doing basically two bachelor degrees: One in Viola, other in conducting.

\(^2\) Diego Barbosa-Vasquez, “Reflexiones Sobre los Elementos Motivacionales de las Técnicas de Ensayo”. Bogotá, Colombia: MONOGRAFÍA DE GRADO Fundación Universitaria Juan N.

\(^3\) That I already was doing in a daily bases, as part of my Music studies. Also doing even 2 hours colloquiums about a piece as part of my semester conducting exams.

\(^4\) For more information about the Music Director role please refer to: Diego Barbosa-Vasquez, Successful Leadership of Orchestras and/or Opera Companies Barbosa-Vasquez/Academic (Apr 2019), February 21, 2022. [https://www.barbosavasquez.com/single-post/the-music-director-role](https://www.barbosavasquez.com/single-post/the-music-director-role)

Specifically about Opera, I started to study Opera Conducting around 2009 while I was doing my second Bachelor in Conducting. However, it was only until 2014 that I conducted my first Opera as an invitation of the Corpas Opera Workshop in Colombia and as a part of my Graduate Recital as Maestro (Bachelor degree). It was a great and challenging program of Elgar, Mozart, Romero, and Passatieri. The Passatieri Opera was a small Operetta of around 40 minutes, it was a great way to start conducting opera. Because of its musical and artistic construction, it allows new approaches to perform opera in an “easier” way. This “easier way” was the term I used to described it by 2014 moment, but after the path that this paper is going to describe, a better wording for that would be a more “sustainable” way.

My first Opera conducting experience as Music Director, came with astonishing artistic success. The outstanding artistic product we developed in that production of Passatieri’s Signor Deluso Opera put me immediately in the heads of many people that wanted to do Opera in Colombia in “sustainable” way. I met with small regional Opera companies, Symphonic Orchestras, Universities and even with the most powerful Opera company in Colombia by this moment, Opera de Colombia, to evaluate possible productions around the country with me as Conductor. However, during the next two years after this performance, the projects never arrived to a point where we actually signed a contract. I was named Music Director of a Musical Theater Company “Pronartes”, but specifically in Opera I didn’t conduct anyone after it.

Why during the next two years I was in the country (then I flew to Los Angeles to do my Master’s degree) I was not able to conduct another full production of Opera as Music Director in Colombia? The musical and artistic level was good enough. Not many people in the world could conduct Opera by memory as me, and we got not only great critics (see note number 6), we actually sit down with multiple organizations to make that happen because they wanted me, but the project never become a reality. What was happening?

Well, it took me time and perspective (be at my Master Degree in Los Angeles) to understand that was not the music or artistic element, was the Opera field ecosystem that was not ready to allow sustainable opera practices. In general, because as a country the “pedestrian population” is not really connected to the Opera, at least by this moment in Colombia, the opportunities to do opera were very limited. The field therefore only wanted to do the same big operatic titles and be managed in the same old way by few people. Only few more sustainable productions were possible, but again only under very unique conditions and managed by certain powerful actors. I knew that this will not be sustainable in the long run, because as me, there were more amazing opera performers graduated from great Colombian schools. Where will they work if the opportunities are limited and only available for certain actors?

I traveled to Los Angeles with a full scholarship in 2017 I got at Azusa Pacific University to do a Master’s degree in Opera, Orchestra and Choral Conducting. There, while I was Music Director of the World Music Symphony Orchestra and in alliance with the Azusa Conservatory of Music, we co-founded the Collaborative Arts Opera Summer Camp in 2018. (See video here) A multilevel and interdisciplinary experience where communities (kids,)

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5 Orchestra, Opera, and Choral conducting
6 See the critics for this production at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cRvgQw0Exhg
youth and adults), students (undergrads, and grads) and professionals collaborate to produce and perform Opera all together. Again, I started to conduct Opera as Music Director in a sustainable way.

The community's outstanding response allowed the camp to be a reality that later became supported by government entities at the city, state level and now is looking for national support. That made me think if these kind of models could be one of the clues for Opera sustainability. Therefore, later when I came to Bloomington as scholarship holder of Graduate Tuition Award and Artistic Excellence Award to do my Doctoral Studies in Opera, Orchestra, and Ballet conducting, I focused my doctoral dissertation research in Opera Summer Camps. A research to understand how the Opera field should be governed to create sustainability and how the Opera Summer Camps could be a solution. In addition, I understood that this research will require an interdisciplinary approach to solve problems and a place with the proper resources to develop it.

Therefore, my first goal was to clarify the Music, Artistic, and Pedagogic models to develop multilevel Opera Camps as a sustainable Opera Experience. This process was done with the help of my Music and Opera Doctoral Advisors from Jacobs School of Music, and an incredible collaboration of multiple international Opera actors that shared with me very valuable information about their profession and their Opera Companies. This process ended on Summer 2021 with the first to chapters of my dissertation. However, again this research showed me that the sustainability also has to contemplate the full spectrum of actors and their full complexity relations to be sustainable. And that means that the administrative, business, and community models are important to clarify too.

After sharing with friends of different disciplines, I was connected to the Ostrom Workshop. Their way of thinking welcoming the complexities of different fields, open my mind in a totally new level. This was the perfect place to be able to complete my original research goal: find the clues for sustainability for the Opera field. During this year (2021-2022) as Research Awardee I have been able to understand from a more organized and academic perspective, multiple connections that I could not make previously. I started to understand the Opera field and its actors in a more holistically way. I now understand that my first experiences in Colombia trying to conduct Opera after graduated from my bachelor were only taken into account certain artistic factors, and because of the very scarce Opera ecosystem, and my impossibility to see it, the projects never arrived to a reality.

This paper is the result of almost 18 years of Music training, almost 14 years of interdisciplinary thinking, almost 8 years since my first production of Opera as Music Director, almost 3 years since I started my doctoral dissertation research, and more than one year of sharing and learning from the Ostrom Workshop scholars/mentors who had helped me to catalyst the ideas and present them to you in an “organized” way. It will describe some of the Opera field actors (still some non artistic actors to be identified), the problematics of the current business and governance models, and possible solutions offered by multidisciplinary apprenticeship programs (Opera Camps). Also, the paper share some research advances, and some practical limitations on the field (as availability of valuable data) that created new research questions that I plan to start resolve in the coming years.
Thank you so much to my Ostrom Workshop mentors/advisors: Angie Raymond, Scott Shackelford, Michael McGinnis, Insa Theesfeld for your support, help and encouragement during these research. Moreover, a special thank you to my Ostrom Workshop Mentor Gustavo Torrens for all your help and mentorship during this year as Ostrom Research Awardee.

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The Opera Sustainability Problem

Arts practice is a cultural common that benefits humanity at multiple levels. It contributes to health\textsuperscript{7}, cognition\textsuperscript{8}, language, logic, mathematic and inter-intrapersonal skills\textsuperscript{9}. At the social level, arts have demonstrated to be a perfect tool for conflict resolutions, being a channel of communication between people and cultures at different mediums more than just the usual language\textsuperscript{10}. In addition, and because it’s powerful introspective element of the artistic process, arts become tremendously valuable resource for societies and humans to evaluate their goals, motivations, and necessities\textsuperscript{11}. Furthermore, at the economic level, arts generate richness in communities and regions\textsuperscript{12}.

The specific benefits that each art practice creates into society change from Art to Art. Music, fine arts, acting, or dancing target different elements of the human development\textsuperscript{13}, and therefore each art has different actors involved into its practice and their corresponding action arenas. However, as the art where all arts collaborate and with a broader spectrum of actors involved as explained in the present paper, Opera creates, or at least from the theoretical perspective should create, more holistic and powerful benefits to the full society.

However, despite the benefits that Opera could create for humanity and the fact that it works with a subsidized model (public money: donations or government support), its practice has become almost inaccessible to certain populations. As an empirical example, just a simple asking to families and close friends, “how many operas they have seen?” could clarify the access rates for this art\textsuperscript{14}.

Different reasons could be attributed to this inaccessibility of Opera to the general society. From outdated repertoires and stories, “expensive” tickets\textsuperscript{15}, not welcoming performance halls, etc. However, preliminary research has concluded that these problems are only the tip of the iceberg and the inaccessibility reality finds its core at obsolete governance

\textsuperscript{7} Gene D - MD, PhD Cohen et al., “The Impact of Professionally Conducted Cultural Programs On the Physical Health, Mental Health, and Social Functioning of Older Adults,” The Gerontologist 46, no. 6 (December 2006): 726-34.
\textsuperscript{10} Frédéric Ramel, “Teaching International Relations through Arts: Some Lessons Learned,” International Studies Perspectives 19, no. 4 (August 2018): 360–374
\textsuperscript{11} Diego Barbosa-Vasquez, “Reflexiones Sobre los Elementos Motivacionales de las Técnicas de Ensayo”. Bogotá, Colombia: MONOGRAFIA DE GRADO Fundación Universitaria Juan N.
\textsuperscript{14} Another exciting possible Opera study could be clarify the rates of people that had or have access to this art practice either as a performer, creator, or even as an audience member.
\textsuperscript{15} Even that in some cases Opera tickets are even cheaper than movie theater, concerts, or musicals tickets (events with similar characteristics).
models in the Opera field. On one side, the artistic developments that have not been correlated with clear updated financial and community sustainability goals. And on the other, the lack of inclusion of communities in the decision-making process for the governance of their cultural commons. Both elements create that, from a global perspective, Opera organizations are having fewer shows per season, having declining audiences every day, and even some opera companies are going to bankruptcy. Also, different studies show that Opera field actors are shifting to new professions due to a lack of sustainable financial support.

To understand the core problem about the Opera as a field, and contribute to its solution, there are multiple steps that must be followed. First, the identification of all the actors involved in the Opera field and clarify their relations. Second, clarify the financial and business model and how this allows or not allows a proper sustainable interaction between actors. Third, as a highly skilled art, understand the human resources development. And fourth, learn from the institutional developments that the field has established to evaluate future advances.

**Opera**

*What is Opera*

The first element that has to be clarified is what the term *Opera* refers to. This artistic term is the concept of music, sung drama, and spectacle as a combined type of art. In it, different kinds of arts collaborate to create a unified artistic product. This worldwide broad accepted definition of the art opens the door for multiple possibilities to define what is Opera.

One of the solutions to understand and clarify the boundaries of this artistic proposal (Opera) is by analyzing the specific relation of the arts used in an Opera and how they work together. This analysis results in the clarification of sub-genres or “types” of Opera. For example, a Singspiel (a particular sub-genre of Opera) strongly emphasizes the spoken/acting art. It also has some musical numbers that the composer places in some parts of the whole

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16 Barbosa-Vasquez, Model For Creation And Leadership Of Sustainable Opera Camps, Chapter 2, Doctoral Dissertation
18 Diego Barbosa-Vásquez, “Model for Creation and Leadership of Sustainable Opera Camps,” abstract (DM diss., Jacobs School of Music - Indiana University, 2021 In process), Chapter 2
19 Ibid.
21 Understanding the Opera field as the combination of the Opera as an Art, and the Operational elements, companies, and business related with the performance of this art.
23 Ibid.
Opera. Another example is the Opera Seria of the 18th and 19th centuries that uses a strong story focused on the dramatic component. It is usually full music composed, giving the audience a constant interaction of music and drama. Or Opera Buffa is similar to Opera Seria in terms of using music in its full length, but its story emphasizes the comic component of the drama.

Opera theorists have identified multiple Opera’s sub-genres as a way to define what is Opera. However, no matter the amount of a specific art in the spectacle or its sub-genre, the research shows that concept of Opera always refers to a piece of art that carefully crafted a combination of drama, music, and spectacle. A successful recipe that, since the first attempts to create the genre, has given the artists and its sponsors tremendous amount of possibilities to convey and broadcast their messages and ideas.

Because of this tremendous flexibility of the art, allowing multiple other arts to interact, meaning multiple artists from different fields interacting; Opera enjoys the powerful advantage of being a very unique and diverse artistic action arena. An opera becomes the place that allows and encourages multiple collaborations between artists. This creates multiple questions about their governance and in that sense, a list of artistic actors is crucial to start the understanding of this art and industry.

The Opera Artistic Actors

The Creators

The librettist

One of the opera's principal actor(s) as an artistic action arena is/are the librettist(s). By writing the libretto, this actor is in charge of defining the drama and storyline that the Opera is going to broadcast. From a totally new piece of art known as “original libretto”, to summaries or excerpts of books, or even theatrical showcase of common life experiences or ideas, the librettist defines the words in conjunction with the composer(s) that are going to be performed in the Opera. That, in addition, creates strong path ideas for the Stage Director about how the opera is going to be performed and produced. That creates for the librettists a strong power over the full artistic actors around the opera.

24 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
28 Diego Barbosa-Vásquez, “Model for Creation and Leadership of Sustainable Opera Camps,” abstract (DM diss., Jacobs School of Music - Indiana University, 2021 In process), Chapter 1
29 Ibid.
30 Identified until Feb 2022 in the moment of the writing of this paper.
The Composer

Similarly, the composer(s) is/are also a powerful actor(s) in the Opera artistic action arena. Its role is to define the Music elements that are going to be performed in conjunction with the drama/storyline defined by the librettists. Usually, both actors, librettist(s) and composer(s), work together back and forward to develop the final drama/music unique idea to be sure it is perfectly integrated and becomes a unique piece of art ready to be performed.

The Performers

Singers:

As can be expected from the definition of Opera as a sung art, one of the most relevant actors of the art is the singer. This person or people will carry the singing element of the Opera and, in many cases, the dramatic element of it too. However, because of the influence of the dramatic element of the Opera (and the roles and characters treatments that it implies), a Singer could perform different roles in the artistic action arena depending on the specific Opera.

Starting from the most visible or “influencer” actor(s), a singer can act(s) as the principal character(s) of the Opera. In that sense, a great amount of the time on stage is granted for this/these singer(s), and therefore it/they influence the artistic result in a greater way than other singers do.

The second layer or level of singers is the secondary characters. Continuing with the dramatic element, they are the ones that are going to help the development of the story supporting the principal characters either by similar or interconnected stories or by contrast to create perspective in the storyline. This “category” of secondary singers could be divided into the cast members and the choir members. The cast members are singers who will perform as soloists (singing alone as the principal character(s) but with less stage time) or in small ensembles with other cast members. And the chorus singers that are going to sing together with other singers in bigger ensembles31.

Literature shows that the singers per level varied from one up to four principal character(s), two to ten secondary cast singers, and up to hundreds of singers in the case of the choir. This subdivision of singer roles per level is present in the full literature of the Opera in different ways32. In fact, it has influenced tremendously the way the operatic music is written and developed33.

Orchestra Players:

Other very important actor for the Opera “Action Arena”, are the people that produce the sounds and, in conjunction with the singers, create the music of the Opera. These people are the orchestra players. The size of this group vary according with multiple factors. The

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31 For the choir, there is also another actor called, Choir Director who is in charge of lead these multiple singers to become a unique entity.


33 Ibid.
composer orchestration\textsuperscript{34}, the size of the pit\textsuperscript{35}, and even the budget of the company. But in general, it goes from 15 players in the most conservative orchestrations, up to around one hundred numbers in the case of Wagnerian type Operas. As stated previously, the orchestra collaborates with the singers in the music-making process creating a polycentric governance structure. In addition, the orchestra by itself has its own polycentric governance structure, with leaders, assistants to leaders, and section players that interact in specific set of formal and informal rules.

**Collaborative Pianists:**
As could be easily imagined, having a full orchestra waiting to the singers to rehearse their acting or learn their music is a great way to burn a lot of budget with no purpose. In that sense, the Opera has developed the role of Collaborative Pianists. These are the people that help the singers during the full learning and rehearsals process before their encounter with the orchestra. Similar to an orchestra, the collaborative pianists are the people in charge of carrying the music element of the Opera in conjunction with the singers, but during rehearsals. In addition, the collaborative pianists could perform the role of coach, helping the singer to prepare their role from scratch and sharpening them even up to the last performance. And/or perform the usual collaborative pianists\textsuperscript{36} role of playing the orchestra part while the staging or technical rehearsals are being done to help the singers understand the music line that goes with and underneath the storyline they are performing.

**The Spectacle Creators:**

*The lights*
As a visual spectacle, light becomes a crucial element of the Opera and with it, the lighting team becomes other important actors in the artistic action arena. Here, the light designer develops the lights' artistic concept in conjunction with the Set Designer, the Stage Director, and the lighting crew that makes this concept logistically possible.

*The costumes*
Similarly, the costumes at an Opera are a crucial element to convey the drama. Here, the costume designer develops the costumes concept with the Set Designer and the Stage Director becoming a fundamental actor. In addition, all the costume team that develops these concepts are other relevant actors, making the Opera possible to exist as art.

*The Set*
Furthermore, the set where the singers are going to act is a fundamental element to allow the audience to picture the story properly. In that sense, the Set Designer and its crew members (carpentry, fabrics, props, etc.) are fundamental actors to be taken into account in the equation.

\textsuperscript{34} The clarification of what instrument plays what.  
\textsuperscript{35} The place where the orchestra is placed in the opera performance.  
\textsuperscript{36} From the academic standpoint, the term of collaborative pianists as the one that plays the orchestra part and differs from the coach that help singers should come from a bigger name different from collaborative pianists. However, these are the most often used names for the role in the field. In addition, Opera Repetiteur is another term used to describe this main role but again is associated with both roles.
The Directors:

*Stage Director, Music Director, Stage Manager*

Because of the enormous amount of artists involved until this point\(^{37}\) and its enormous possibilities of interactions, the Opera has performed multiple institutional developments to be effective from the perspective of budget and rehearsal time. One of the developments is to define people in charge of the three main areas involved in the Opera: Drama in charge of the Stage Director, Music in charge of the Music Director, and spectacle (and all logistics involving the other areas) in charge of the Stage Manager. The crucial element here is that these directors are considered good ones when they encourage, nurture, and facilitate the polycentric governance of the Opera. They have to generate an artistic collaborative working environment within their own areas and teams and be sure their area and teams collaborate with the other areas and teams too.

How an Opera Company Works

Because of the big number of actors involved in the artistic side of the opera, performing actual Opera also requires big administrative, logistics, and business actors to make that artistic enterprise possible. In that sense and to organize these people, usually all actors become organized in an Opera Company as the entity, institution or action arena that allows this huge pull of actors to collaborate and be able to perform Opera\(^{38}\).

The Opera Companies human recourses and administrative structures vary a lot depending on the local, regional, national, and even international arenas\(^{39}\). However, some actors and structures have been present in most of them.

The first element that is found is the board. This is the highest government entity that the Opera Company has. The research has shown that if a person wants to be part of these boards, his/her/their admission is based, in almost 99% of the cases, in the money this person is willing to give to the Opera Company\(^{40}\). While this monetary compromise could be consider useful for the sustainability of the company, it’s also creates the impossibility to “pedestrian” community members to be part of crucial decisions about the governance of the Opera Company and with it the governance of the Opera as a Cultural Common.

Some Opera Companies has tried to compensate this lack of community participation, with the creation of “advisory” boards\(^{41}\). There the monetary “entry fee” is changed for a more “working” or “contacts” “entry fee\(^{42}\). However, this type of boards usually has voice

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\(^{37}\) And perhaps there are more actors that the present research hasn’t identified yet.

\(^{38}\) Despite the fact of some smaller productions of operas where around 20 people could be performing and an actual Opera Company is not required, because of the multidisciplinary of the art, usually these actors are organized also into small opera companies settings, Opera Camps, or Opera Studios.

\(^{39}\) Diego Barbosa-Vásquez,” Model for Creation and Leadership of Sustainable Opera Camps,” abstract (DM diss., Jacobs School of Music - Indiana University, 2021 In process), Chapter 2

\(^{40}\) Ibid.

\(^{41}\) Ibid.

\(^{42}\) Ibid.
but not vote, creating again the impossibility for the community to be included in the decisions.

A recurrent question that is still without response is if this board structure and monetary “entry fee” is also the reason why there is a strong disconnection of the Opera and the community it should serve. In that sense, there is some arts administration literature that could be used to define better protocols for this board selection\textsuperscript{43}. But its full implementation is still a process that requires more work and clear interconnected Opera Governance models that could prove, from the theoretical and practical perspective, that community inclusion could recompose the relation of Opera and the community\textsuperscript{44}.

Under the Board, the Opera Company is lead usually by two actors. The CEO/GeneralManager/President/Intendant\textsuperscript{45} who is going to oversee all the administrative, logistics, and business elements and human resources of the Company. And the Artistic Director who is in charge of all the Artistic side of the Company. Ideally both actors have the same power within the company and collaborate to be sure their areas are coordinated and collaborate with each other as if the Opera Company had just one head. A difficult task that leads some companies as Nashville Opera, Indianapolis Opera, and Santa Fe Opera to merge these roles into a unique actor. However, there are also successful cases with these double heads model had proved to be successful if the power is correctly balanced between both.

**The Administrative Staff\textsuperscript{46}**

Continuing with the administrative, logistics, and business side of the Company, the current research has been able to identify some actors that are going to be under the supervision of the CEO. The numbers of people in this area change considerably according to the size and budget of the Company. The bigger the available budget, the bigger the administrative staff\textsuperscript{47}. However, in general Opera Companies tend to involve at least five actors sometimes with some teams behind their supervision:

**Director of Finances and Administration**

This actor is the one in charge of the budget and oversees with the CEO the full administrative team. Usually depending on the size of the Opera Company, this actor collaborates with other actors to perform the duties under his/her/their supervision.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{44} This is one of the crucial elements to be solved in the: Diego Barbosa-Vásquez,” Model for Creation and Leadership of Sustainable Opera Camps,” abstract (DM diss., Jacobs School of Music - Indiana University, 2021 In process), Chapter 2
\textsuperscript{45} Names change from Opera Companies to others but all of them have the same role
\textsuperscript{46} Despite the fact this staff is focused in the Administrative and logistic aspects of the Company, because it is an Artistic company usually it collaborates with the Artistic Staff and also responds to the other head of the organization: The Artistic Director
\textsuperscript{47} See for example the Administrative Staff of Houston Grand Opera (https://www.houstongrandopera.org/about-us/people/) with a yearly revenue of: $24,459,115 compare to Nashville Opera (https://www.nashvilleopera.org/leadership-staff) with a yearly revenue of: $1,740,899
**Director of Development/Philanthropy**
This actor oversees the company efforts to secure the funding necessities for the seasons or seasons. As could be explained with more detail later in the paper, this actor and its team(s) have been crucial elements for the Opera Company current business model.

**Director of Marketing PR, & Engagement**
This actor and its team(s) have the role of broadcast all the messages and value proposals that the Opera Company wants to share. Its principal role is to make the Opera company visible to the public.

**Director of Education**
This actor and its team(s) are one of the institutional developments of the Company looking to engage more people into the Opera. Its role is to develop “educational” proposals to the public outside the Opera Company welcoming them to the hall and the Opera as an art form. Questions about the results of this institutional development are still in progress because of lack of data that could support real engagement of people in the long run. However, this actor is a powerful element in the business model of opera companies because allows the access to more grants and government support because of the community efforts behind the role.

**Operations Manager**
This actor is in charge of the daily operations of the facilities of the Company securing all activities are handled efficiently and completely.

**The Artistic Staff**
From the administrative perspective, and because the highly artistic element of the company, other administrative but artistically focused staff is required to make possible the opera company. In that sense the next list of actors are going to be under the supervision of the Artistic Director. Again, as explained before, the bigger the company the bigger the list of actors involved usually with teams working under the supervision of the actors. However, in general the opera companies usually have at least these actors.

**Music Director**
This actor is a Conductor (the artistic actor described previously), that from the administrative perspective of the company is in charge of the full musical development of the company in the long run. Usually it has contracts of at least three to five years allowing the actor to plan a development for the people under his/her/their supervision.

**Chorus Master**
This actor is a Choral conductor that is in charge of the choir for the Opera. (S)he/they has the responsibility of develop the group of choral singers from the season(s) perspective, being sure the group is ready for all the productions as requested by the Artistic Director, and with the advises from the Music Director.

**Head of Artistic Staff / Director of Coaching**
The title of this actor changes a lot comparing different Opera Companies, but in general this actor is in charge of the artistic and musical development of the singers that will act as soloists during the Company productions. This actor and its team, help the singers to
prepare the roles to be ready for the staging and musical rehearsals. In addition, works with
the singers during the production to help them to develop their voice and techniques
according with the requirements of the Stage Director and the Music Director.

**Director of Artistic Administration**
This actor has the role to secure the full administrative aspects of the Artistic team. It
is the center of the artistic information and works with the Artistic Director and the CEO to
implement and facilitate the Artistic plans for the company.

**Director of Production**
This actor is the responsible for managing each Opera production in the Company in
coordination with the CEO and the Director of Artistic Administration. This actor develops
production calendars, define the timelines for each production and determines labor and
budgets required for each production. Usually this actor is involved in the agreements
developments with the production unions.

**Orchestra Personnel Manager**
This actor is responsible for the human resource management of the Orchestra group.
That includes oversees the payroll, contracts of the musicians, hiring substitutes and extra
musicians. This actor address all the musicians’ personnel issues by being the liaison between
the orchestra musicians and the Conductor or the administrative staff.

**Librarian**
This actor and its team are responsible of share with all the artistic actors the parts
and scores\(^{48}\) of the Opera. Because of the amount of performers involved in the Opera,
librarians have the enormous responsibility to secure all materials are coordinated properly
and have similar information. That includes from defining the editions that are going to be
used (collaborating with the Conductor and Stage Director to select one), to re-arrange and
clarify specific performance notes for the specific Opera production the company is doing.

**The Ballet or Dancing groups**

Some Operas (as the art), have requested dancers to support the dramatic/storyline
development, in this aspect, different groups could be also considered part of the artistic
ecosystem that the Opera as a field could be related with. In that sense similar to the Orchestra
case, a totally new and unique action arena could be consider here. However, as a general
view, the number of productions that involve this type of artists is very small, therefore, for
the present research only its mention is necessary instead of its full actor’s description.

**The External Actors**

**Communities**
The communities, and audiences are crucial actors to the Opera, at the end as an art,
Opera is for the humanity. However, the clarification of these actors and their roles into the
Opera field ecosystem are still in process and are going to be part of future researches with

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\(^{48}\) These are the musical and libretto instructions that the composer(s) and librettist(s) created to be sure all
the artistic actors understand the basics of their roles in the Opera they are performing.
the help of the Ostrom Workshop scholars and the future Opera Camp/Laboratory its Opera Sustainability Working Group\textsuperscript{49}.

\textit{Artistic Managers}

One of the most powerful actors in the Opera industry is the Manager or Artistic Manager. This actor is usually outside the Opera Company\textsuperscript{50} and works as a booking-agent/artists-developer. This actor is the responsible to negotiate contract terms in the name of the artists (usually solo singers, stage directors, and conductors\textsuperscript{51}). Its role is usually merely connected to the financial and business side of the artists’ hiring transaction. However, depending on the Manager, some of these actors also influence the artistic product because of their focus in the specific development of the artists their represent. This element also influences the Opera governance\textsuperscript{52}.

\textit{Unions}

Similar to Artistic Managers but more focused on larger groups, these entities represent from stage crews to choir members.

\textit{Editors}

The editor(s) and its company are another center of decision-making/associated-business that is part of the puzzle of the Opera field. Being the written communication between the creators and the performers (by editing the vocal scores\textsuperscript{53}, full scores\textsuperscript{54}, and parts\textsuperscript{55}), editors have enormous power in the artistic result of the Opera. They have influence not only in the unique performance that an Opera Company is producing (that will be coordinated with the Librarian), but also in the productions worldwide because their written product of the opera is going to be the basic artistic govern rules that will allow the performers to interact.

\textit{Donors}

These actors are the people, corporations, or governments that patronage the Opera field. As will be explained later in the paper, they are very important actors to consider in the Opera field puzzle because they come with strong power to the action arena.

\*Possible Applicability of Polycentric Governance analysis for the Opera

As can be inferred until here, this enormous number of actors\textsuperscript{56} interacting together in multiple arenas and centers of decision making, open the possibility to develop interesting Polycentric governance analysis. On one side, only from the performance perspective, the

\textsuperscript{49} See conclusions and next steps
\textsuperscript{50} Research has been able to identify occasions that the actor is also inside the Opera Company giving to its interaction an even more powerful relation and position into the field or opera ecosystem.
\textsuperscript{51} Also, there are other managers that work representing groups or touring shows.
\textsuperscript{52} As an example, a manager could negotiate with an Opera Company that an specific conductor, singer, or stage director could work with the Company if specific repertoires, rehearsal times, or soloist are involved in the production.
\textsuperscript{53} Music Sheet with Vocal lines and a piano reduction of the orchestra lines.
\textsuperscript{54} Music Sheet with all the orchestra and singers lines.
\textsuperscript{55} Music Sheet that only contains one part (example violin 1, or flute).
\textsuperscript{56} That tend to increase in numbers and titles if the Opera Company is well established
Opera as an art is highly complex artistic action arena, with multiple centers of decisions at different levels and with governance rules that vary from formal and informal settings.

Similarly, the way the Opera Company is crafted as an institution and their actors interactions with internal and external actors are also a very fruitful area of research. In addition, the Opera Company as a unique actor in relation to other Opera Companies as other actors in the Opera field is also a very interesting topic to review. However, despite the fact of some preliminary research in that logic, presented in the previous list, a more compressive research using Bloomington Economic School frameworks is necessary. The idea is to develop it with the help of the Ostrom Workshop scholars, the future Opera Camp/Laboratory and its Opera Sustainability Working Group57.

The Opera Business Model

To allow the multiple actors interact around the Opera as an art, the field has developed a business model based on the patronage or subsidized model. This has been the same in its core since the Opera field creation back in the renaissance. In general, the research has shown that modern Opera Companies have develop their business model around the element of private, government or mixture donations58. These donations support compensates the fact of Opera production almost duplicate ticket sales and associated business revenue. In general, the research shows that Opera companies tend to have a relation of 35% - 50% of production costs covered by the ticket sales revenue, and a 50% - 65% covered by fundraising activities or educations models59. One example is the Indianapolis Opera with productions costs of $150,000 USD per opera while the tickets sales revenue only brings around $67,00060.

In the case of United States of America, the patronage comes primarily from private and corporate donors. This is the result of four main aspects. First the tax deductions that these donations allow. Second, the “prestige” that comes with be part of the Opera guild. An aspect that could be used for multiple goals depending on each donor included and not limited to marketing tools, lobbying, etc. And third, a true personal desire to support the art. An element that is usually connected with a specific connection that the art or the Opera Company was able to develop with this actor (that is the reason why the fundraising departments are nowadays called “development” departments)61.

In addition, as a secondary and in smaller numbers related to private and corporate donations, USA Opera Companies have been receiving government support usually associated with their education and outreach programs. Because those programs are associated more to the learning of the opera as an art or to giving access to Opera experiences to different communities; the Opera companies have been able to access government funds.

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57 See conclusions and next steps
58 Diego Barbosa-Vásquez, “Model for Creation and Leadership of Sustainable Opera Camps,” abstract (DM diss., Jacobs School of Music - Indiana University, 2021 In process)
59 Please review some 990 Forms for more detailed information about these percentages.
60 Interview with the author, David Starkey General Manager of Indianapolis Opera, Sep 24, 2021
61 In that sense, experts in fundraising I guess could have more information about these elements.
from local, state, and national educations programs\textsuperscript{62}. However, here is important to add in general, more than allowing people to experience opera in the doing (allowing communities to become performers) the educational programs of opera companies usually seen the receivers of the educational programs only as other audiences\textsuperscript{63}.

In the case of Europe, the most powerful patronage comes from the government support. Because of the Opera as an art is highly connected with the cultural background of the European citizens, Opera Companies have been receiving substantial public funding. Private and corporate funding could be also seen in the European system, however, is not very common and has smaller numbers in comparison to the public support. Some questions around this European patronage also target issues as old fortunes coming from past eras associated with powerful rich people called “royalty” and how there are influencing the current government funding decisions in the Opera. Therefore it means a “royalty” controlling in many ways the decision-making arenas making the Opera as an art and as an industry to move in a specific way.

In terms of the Latin-American Opera Companies, in general the patronage comes from the government like the European models. There are some enterprises that look for private and/or corporate donations, but these initiatives become more the exception than the rule. However, because of the highly colonialism thinking still present in the Latin-american Opera Company boards, in general the Opera has been tried to be presented and broadcasted in similar structures and with similar stories as Europe. Or as a Bloomington School Economic scholar will called, the governance system has been tried to be replicated in a different arena without the understanding of the local action arena and all the components that could create potential impossibilities for the model.

A simple example is the Opera de Colombia project of programing Il Barbero di Sevilla from Sterbini and Rossini as the tool for do outreach for the Opera because the music used in the Opera is commonly known. However, known by whom? Probably it could be a good idea if this is done in Italy where the uses of traditional Italian music in the score is by itself a very good point of connection between the Opera and the Italian community. Is great to see the music that you use to dance with your friends in a party now used in the Opera. However, in a Colombian context, the music did not offer any kind of connection or at least not without a more “thinking/analyzing guided experience”. Therefore the concept by itself of showing that the Opera is very close to the community because of the music does not work in a different action arena\textsuperscript{64}.

This governance decisions put the Opera in Latinamerica in a disadvantage (compared to Europe) because the “pedestrian” community is not connected to the art, and that means that from the government perspective, supporting this Operatic artistic endeavor is not as important as supporting other types of art expression. A sadly situation giving the

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{63} Diego Barbosa-Vásquez, “Model for Creation and Leadership of Sustainable Opera Camps,” abstract (DM diss., Jacobs School of Music - Indiana University, 2021 In process), Chapter 1
\textsuperscript{64} The Opera de Colombia project is very interesting, but from my perspective does not target the correct connection elements.
enormous potential of the Opera for community building giving its multidisciplinary characteristics explained at the beginning.

In terms of comparisons of the patronage models in a global perspective, and only taken into account these three regional arenas (USA, Europe, and Latin-American), the biggest patronage support could be found in Europe. In comparison, while a USA big Opera Company as the Houston Grand Opera has an average budget of around 35 million per year (in 2017), big usual opera companies in Europe manage yearly budgets of 200 to 250 millions. Only the Metropolitan Opera in New York (consider by many experts as the most powerful opera company in US) has been able to compete with operative budgets of around 320 millions figures. Similar situation is expected in Latin-American having even lower support. However until now there is not sufficient available financial data to create an average of yearly budgets in the case of Latin America. Again, data hubs are a crucial element to be developed in that area and the Opera Camp/Laboratory has to work on it.

Is important to add that during the research, the access to complete financial data has been a difficult task. Usually the financial reports does not specify the full production budgets per each opera and how much they are paying to every actor involved in it. In addition, the opera productions and the full Opera Company yearly administrative budget are presented together in gross numbers making the task more difficult. There are situations as the Metropolitan Opera tax forms where even the Music Director compensation has not been taken into account. In addition, these gross numbers does not allow the evaluation of which are the fees for the Opera starts or leading roles. This is a usual behavior that could happen with other artistic actors where their complete or part of their compensations are covered by a third party organization in alliance with the Opera Company. These elements difficult the clarification of specific numbers and their relation with the final artistic product. There is not a clear picture where the money is being used and therefore which are the elements of the business model that could be solved to create a more sustainable practice. Despite this data access and analysis difficulties that are going to be solved with the creation of Data hubs with the help of the Ostrom Workshop in subsequent years, this subsidized Opera Business model is present in at least all the Opera Companies analyzed until today.

**Reduction of the Opera field**

**Problems with the current Business Model**

It is clear that if a company is suffering of red numbers in its balance sheets this is a number one issue to be solved. But what about the companies that has their numbers in black because of the subsidized model?

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65 More than rigorous and holistic research in 15 Opera Companies at US and Mexico, plus around 20 in a more preliminary research status.
66 See conclusions and next steps
67 Please review the Metropolitan Opera Tax 990 forms for reference.
68 Ibid.
69 Rigorous and holistic research in 15 Opera Companies at US and Mexico, plus around 20 in a more preliminary research status.
“If something is working, why you are going to move it?” is an idiom commonly used in Latin-America that refers to do not try to solve what in the surface seems to be working. And this is the approach that multiple Opera Companies and leaders across the three regional arenas (USA, Europe, and Latin America) have been following during decades. “If the revenue (of tickets and related business) plus donations and grants equals my total yearly expenses, this is a good year, and the model is working” is the usual quote of multiple CEO interviewed during the research. However, from my perspective be on black numbers is not enough to consider the model is working for multiple reasons. The first one is that this approach does not take into account the long-term development of the organization and dificults the task of analyze it.

Metropolitan Opera offers a good example of this approach if their 990 Tax forms from 2013 to 2018 are analyzed. The Metropolitan Opera ticket sales, media broadcast revenue and even the revenue from programs services have been reduced continually every year from 2013 to 2018 (see table 1.1.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Revenue</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tickets</td>
<td>95,229,230</td>
<td>94,976,277</td>
<td>91,653,424</td>
<td>92,794,047</td>
<td>90,880,485</td>
<td>89,118,874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Broadcast</td>
<td>31,422,707</td>
<td>31,778,423</td>
<td>30,293,351</td>
<td>28,718,848</td>
<td>28,131,586</td>
<td>28,244,678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td>129,344,874</td>
<td>135,408,516</td>
<td>130,386,693</td>
<td>129,578,814</td>
<td>128,270,835</td>
<td>125,756,489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>255,996,811</strong></td>
<td><strong>262,163,216</strong></td>
<td><strong>252,333,468</strong></td>
<td><strong>251,091,709</strong></td>
<td><strong>247,282,906</strong></td>
<td><strong>243,120,041</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1.

In addition, if the inflation and the buying power relation is applied to this data we can see that the organization has lost in revenue more than 6 million in a period of 5 years. It is around 2.5 % of its total revenue that seems to do not be so much. But, as the New York City Opera experience shows, if not corrected properly it could become a powerful snow ball that will arrive to dangerous routes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rate of buying power compared to 2013</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.98446</td>
<td>0.98534</td>
<td>0.97199</td>
<td>0.94828</td>
<td>0.92905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total adjusted Revenue</td>
<td>255,996,811,00</td>
<td>258,089,199,62</td>
<td>248,634,259,36</td>
<td>244,058,630,23</td>
<td>234,493,434,10</td>
<td>225,870,674,09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference per year?</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>-2,092,388,62</td>
<td>9,454,940,26</td>
<td>4,575,629,13</td>
<td>-9,565,196,13</td>
<td>-8,622,760,01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total general difference of</strong></td>
<td><strong>-6,249,775,37</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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70 The present research does not use the data of 2019, 2020, or 2021 because the Covid 19 negative influences that were presents in all the industries and that will require a different analysis.

71 Please review Metropolitan Opera 990 Tax Forms

Table 1.2.73

However, if the total winnings or losses includes patronage the picture is very different. Numbers only show a little bit more of 610 thousand dollars of losing in the 5 years period. See table 1.3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revenue (including patronage) less Expenses</td>
<td>24.741.182,00</td>
<td>26.203.708,00</td>
<td>24.804.461,00</td>
<td>10.997.274,00</td>
<td>17.673.885,00</td>
<td>5.939.773,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Yearly comparison</td>
<td>-610.549,00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.3.74

Nevertheless, this approach is a very dangerous path as the New York City Opera experience shows75. An analysis of the total Net assets and fund balances of the Metropolitan Opera over the 5 year period shows that the company has lost almost a 35% of its assets and fund balances from 2013 to 2018.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net assets and Fund Balances</td>
<td>156.152.909</td>
<td>169.525.454</td>
<td>94.028.801</td>
<td>136.197.852</td>
<td>147.938.422</td>
<td>102.908.471</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.4.76

Net assets and Fund Balances Metropolitan Opera

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73 Please review Metropolitan Opera 990 Tax Forms
74 Please review Metropolitan Opera 990 Tax Forms
75 Heidi Waleson, Mad Scenes and Exit Arias: The Death of the New York City Opera and the Future of Opera in America (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2018)
76 Please review Metropolitan Opera 990 Tax Forms
Therefore, even that the subsidized model could seem a good solution from the year frame perspective, in the long run is a dangerous path for the Opera field.

This is because three main aspects. First balancing a budget is only an administrative decision that does not takes into account the artistic product and how this will be translated into future revenue and brand. Second, relay in donors to balance a budget is a hazardous procedure because the donors are not obliged to donate in a constant way year by year (as can be seen in table 1.3 where the years are very different one to another because of the donations). And third, because these donations, usually in big amounts of money, come with board pressures to move the company in a way that is serving only some board interest (probably for this specific year) instead the long run development of the company.

First, balance a yearly operative budget in an Opera Company is a governance decision usually done by the main leaders (General Director, Artistic Director) and their close collaborators, in alliance and with the approval of the board. This is an administrative element that could contemplate things as: “In order to balance the budget, this year I am going to pay secondary singers of the Metropolitan Opera only $3000 per show (60 USD hour rate when you contemplate the amount of rehearsals and personal preparation) instead of the usual $5000 (100 USD hour rate)”77. Yes by “magic” you are saving thousands of dollars per year if you multiply that for the yearly productions. However, this goes against the soloists that have to over work themselves to pay their bills until it is not more sustainable for them 78. Sooner than later, this administrative decision will be translated in losing valuable singers in the short, midterm. A fact that in the midterm and long term will be translated in a degraded artistic product. And therefore, less ticket sales and less revenue for the business associated with the artistic product. As table 1.1. is proving.

“30 years before, finding a ticket for the Metropolitan Opera was very difficult even if you have the money... currently, the organization is even giving free tickets to performers as gift to be able to have enough audiences in the theater.”79

Similarly, but on the other direction, the sale or mortgages of Opera Company assets or the private board donations to the organization as part of the possible solutions to balance the budget is also very dangerous path. As carefully described by Waleson in her book about the New York City Opera case80, and is also seen in other companies, this is not solving the real program of the institution: The artistic product and how this is consumed or supported

77 Interview with an Opera actor. The name of the source is protected because of professional courtesy.
78 Let’s remember that receive $5000 for a performance night also means 5 to 6 weeks of 6 hours rehearsals 6 days a week. Therefore, if the show has only 4 performances (the usual in the professional environment) we are talking about 100 USD hourly rate for a performer that dedicated more than 15 years and very expensive training to craft their artistry until this professional level. Lowering their income such drastically is very dangerous. In addition, depending on the singer experience their preparation time for the role could go up to other 50 or 100 hours of personal time that has to be taken into account.
79 Interview with an Opera actor. The name of the source is protected because of professional courtesy.
by the community. This procedure only adds yearly cash flow but is not solving the real necessity of good and updated business model to current necessities. Selling or mortgaging the assets is only a finite possibility because if the company arrives to appoint where it does not have more assets to sell or mortgage the cash flow stops. And chart 1.1. already shows that the Metropolitan Opera, the most powerful Opera Company in US, has lost 35% of their assets in just 5 years.

Second, the full donations system is very random in terms of securing funds for future years. Without taking into account programed donations or endowment agreements, there is not any legal or formal rules that secures that an organization is going to continue receiving certain amount of donations over the long run from a donor. If a person is interested, willing, and in capacity to donate (s)he will do it. However, if the donor does not want to support the Opera Company on year, the full budget is highly affected as seen in table 1.3.

This creates a lot of uncertainties about the possibilities of the Opera Company development in the future because is not possible to predict patterns of donations. This could be seen with more detail in the following charts doing a comparison between donations, grants and gifts chart of different opera companies (Chart 1.2.), VS their charts with tickets (Chart 1.4.), and tickets and program services revenues (Chart 1.3.). The charts show that the donations amounts came in more random amounts year to year comparing them to tickets sales or tickets and service. Showing both last ones a more stable growth or decline over the year and creating the possibility for better planning for mid- and long-term development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributions, Grant, Gifts and Related &quot;Income&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco Opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyric Opera of Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston Grand Opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Fe Opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indianapolis Opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nashville Opera</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.4.

---

81 Experts in fundraising, please correct me if I am wrong in this.
82 Or at least not from my standpoint. Not sure if the fundraising experts have tools to predict that.
83 From the Opera Companies 990 Tax Forms
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Opera</td>
<td>129,344,874</td>
<td>175,194,504</td>
<td>121,677,012</td>
<td>147,370,359</td>
<td>141,291,365</td>
<td>161,949,102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco Opera</td>
<td>41,085,156</td>
<td>46,117,792</td>
<td>39,152,135</td>
<td>68,674,891</td>
<td>51,968,846</td>
<td>51,987,169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyric Opera of Chicago</td>
<td>54,895,389</td>
<td>53,354,793</td>
<td>37,040,429</td>
<td>25,467,989</td>
<td>26,018,960</td>
<td>36,344,845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston Grand Opera</td>
<td>20,009,870</td>
<td>21,287,732</td>
<td>21,614,038</td>
<td>20,463,026</td>
<td>25,674,570</td>
<td>16,508,126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Fe Opera</td>
<td>29,854,154</td>
<td>11,461,991</td>
<td>13,121,289</td>
<td>9,984,734</td>
<td>12,911,283</td>
<td>15,420,653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indianapolis Opera</td>
<td>804,421</td>
<td>540,685</td>
<td>540,018</td>
<td>861,276</td>
<td>472,234</td>
<td>574,725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nashville Opera</td>
<td>1,581,291</td>
<td>1,524,127</td>
<td>2,624,875</td>
<td>1,432,770</td>
<td>1,283,671</td>
<td>3,349,748</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Opera</td>
<td>134,678,179</td>
<td>135,408,516</td>
<td>130,386,693</td>
<td>129,578,814</td>
<td>128,270,835</td>
<td>125,756,489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco Opera</td>
<td>26,637,705</td>
<td>26,649,232</td>
<td>24,844,771</td>
<td>23,866,406</td>
<td>23,693,774</td>
<td>19,733,754</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 1.6.85

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opera</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
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### Table 1.7.86

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85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
Chart 1.3.

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Table 1.8.87

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<th>2015</th>
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87 Ibid.
The third dangerous aspect of the subsidizing model for the opera company is that big donations usually create stronger decision power actors that move the Opera field in the way that these powerful actors are interested usually focused only in their interests.

“*I give you X amount of money, but I want that your Opera Company produce Y opera and I want Z and AI as the main characters, and I want this specific conductor, and this specific stage director*” Are quotes that the research interviews were able to gather in with different CEOs, Music Directors, and Artistic Administrators when referring how sometimes the decision of titles and characters is done even without taken into account the inside actors (artistic, or administrative). “*At the end, if your full budget is composed by 65% of donations, you have to move with what the donors want even knowing that is not the best for the Opera Company and is not helping the development of the Opera field*”

This is a very dangerous approach to Opera governance because, as is more carefully explained in my Doctoral Dissertation, the repertoire and principal actors (soloists, conductor, stage director) have impact in 100% of the full Opera ecosystem. Both will define

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88 Ibid.
89 There is not an actual Non-Disclosure agreement. However because of professional courtesy the producers of these quotes could not be cited.
which elements will be developed, which actors are going to be affected (in good on bad way) and is going to define a lot of the budget destinations. Therefore, having the pressure from an external donor to do things in a way this actor wants has proven to be very dangerous. Not only on the audiences declining numbers, but also in cases as New York City Opera going to bankruptcy\textsuperscript{90}.

One theory about the reason why the Opera governance has been having difficulties to update its approach according to the cultural aesthetics (but honoring the artistic tradition of the piece with a deep reflection of performance practices\textsuperscript{91}), is precisely the asymmetric decision power that external actors (usually people with non-formal and deep artistic training) have in the Opera governance.

Opera de Colombia, Filarmonica de Bogota, and Teatro Julio Mario Santo Domingo offer a great example with their program of Strauss' Salome Opera in Bogota. Until today, the reasons to program this complex piece is are not clear, at least for me. Why to program it when people does not usually come to opera and this is a complex opera to start with. The fact of using public funding will not require to be more community focus? Is this programing helping to follow the wishes of a rich and powerful actors to fulfill its desires without taking others actors into account? This programing really help to develop the Opera ecosystem of Bogota and Colombia? The expensive resources used to produce this kind of Opera are really serving all the actors as they claim? Or they must be used in produce more approachable operas?

These questions probably could be solve by the understanding that there are powerful actors taking these programing decisions. However, the really question is not how the decision was taken, but which results these kind of decisions produce in the opera field and how they affect the actors. At the end, an Opera field governed by these “rules” is not really connected with the general cultural aesthetics and needs of the community, and only is creating a lot of disconnection between the art and the people. And again, as the New York City Opera proved, this path is a very dangerous one\textsuperscript{92}.

**Average shift of donor behaviors\textsuperscript{93}:**

“Well but still, if at the end the budget is balanced because there are always donors, which is the problem”? Someone can argue. The problem with this approach is that the public

\textsuperscript{90} Heidi Waleson, Mad Scenes and Exit Arias: The Death of the New York City Opera and the Future of Opera in America (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2018)

\textsuperscript{91} One full area of study is the performance traditions and how the cultural aesthetics of an specific time influence them. As an example is trying to clarify if the 5 minutes after the first movement of the Mahler’s 2\textsuperscript{nd} symphony should be done in the 2022 theaters. The sense of time on the 1900 was very different of today because of the speed of technology and other elements of our current world. Therefore, should we “respect” the 5 minutes way to allow the music as asked by the composer? Or we update this marking to a shorter silence?

\textsuperscript{92} Heidi Waleson, Mad Scenes and Exit Arias: The Death of the New York City Opera and the Future of Opera in America (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2018)

\textsuperscript{93} This part should be confirmed with more bibliography and studies.
interest in Opera is declining\textsuperscript{94}, ad therefore there is less people interested in become Opera donor or supporter.

In addition of the previous explanations of non-continual secured income, and pressures to do not evolve, there is a reality that there is less public interest in the Operatic art. As explained in table 1.9., and chart 1.4., where the tickets revenue is decreasing in general only in a 5-year analysis period, we can arrive to some conclusions. Also, the quote on page 21 about differences 30 years before in tickets availability makes us to think that an longer historical analysis could prove also this empirical assumption of less audiences. Perhaps aiming for a 20 years frame and including more Opera companies in the equation to see a more general picture could be a way to prove it. This could be possible research under the umbrella of the Ostrom Opera Camp/Laboratory\textsuperscript{95}.

In general, the fact of govern\textsuperscript{96} the Opera field in the old models as some powerful donors want, does not consider two important elements of the fundraising ecosystem. There are new generations of patrons and there are new generation of societies, an element that will influence the patronage behaviors. From one side, because societies generations are changing, if the Opera as a field does not connect to new generations’ needs, there will be no patrons in the future. On one side because the donors will not be directly connected to the Opera field. And on the other because the less people interested in the field, the Opera loss the “prestige” associated to it. Therefore it loss the marketing and power showcase aspect for the donors than were donating only because of the associated “assets” its donations will produce.

Similarly, because of less interest in the art in the “pedestrian” community, the government funding could be affected. This situation is clear comparing the funding of Opera in Europe (a regional arena with more people interested in Opera), and Latin-America where less people is interested and therefore less funding is available.

One case that exemplifies both cases is the New York City Opera that was losing private and government funding over the years until went to bankruptcy. On one side the donors of the Opera Company shifted from European Opera lovers to their first-generation descendants. The last ones were not interested in this type of art and started to shift their contributions to other places\textsuperscript{97}. And in terms of the government funding, because the Opera started to lose connection with the community their support started to be reduced until it disappear\textsuperscript{98}.

\textit{Some thoughts about research in Opera donors’ patterns}

Specifically in donation patterns. The collaboration with fundraising and philanthropy experts and current bibliography could give the research some clues about the

\textsuperscript{94} The paper aims to explain that is not because of the Opera itself, is because the governance models.

\textsuperscript{95} See conclusions for more information.

\textsuperscript{96} Or performing? Not sure the correct word here.

\textsuperscript{97} Heidi Waleson, Mad Scenes and Exit Arias: The Death of the New York City Opera and the Future of Opera in America (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2018), 1.

\textsuperscript{98} Ibid.
general patterns. However, to be specific in how this is affecting the Opera field a more in-depth analysis should be done following some criteria:

First, the study has to be taken account at least three or four decades to be sure the generational shift is properly analyzed. One of the problematics with this is that until now, 990 Tax forms are available only from 1998 at least in GuideStarPro. Other sources has to be contemplated.

Second, the study has to contemplate a sufficient number of opera companies to see the growth or fall-off of donors in a National or reginal contexts. The preliminary research has shown that donors are not only focused on their local areas, and instead the people that donate specifically to opera could donate to multiple Opera Companies across US or shift to between companies over the years. This is for instance the case of Santa Fe Opera donors, that also donate to big Opera companies, the case of New York City Opera that saw its donors going from their house to the Metropolitan Opera.

Probably this shifting of recipients of donations could explains the case of the higher fundraising income that the some big Opera companies are having, despite the fact their decreasing tickets. It could also explain why different smaller companies are disappearing. Perhaps there is a migration of donors from small companies that now are not interested in support them and shifted to support only the big ones. And this could be the reasons why there are educational projects of the Metropolitan Opera (who is based on New York) now in different parts of the country.

To solve this possible hypothesis about a real decrease on the full market, a more extensive data analysis must be done. And to do that a data hub has to be developed to be able to access and analyze the information properly, one of the goals for the Opera Sustainability working group of the Opera Camp/Laboratory at the Ostrom Workshop99.

### The Cycle of Opera “Hypothesis”

There are multiple elements to understand possible solutions that could develop a better Opera field governance (including a better business model). One path to evaluate solutions is to try to understand how the Opera as a field works (which is its cycle) and that way analyze which element of its cycle is the easiest to move or change.

In that sense, and as hypothesis, the research shows that there are four elements to consider. The funding, the human resources, the opera experience, and the community receiving the art. In other words, the money, the people that make the artistic product possible, the art itself, and the community around it. The next chart tries to explain the interactions.

99 More information at conclusions and next steps.
Chart 1.5.

The first element is the money, the current budget that an Opera Company has to develop its projects and productions. The money influences three aspects in this chart. The first is the human resources because the budget will determine the level and number of artists and staff members that the Opera Company could have. In addition, by a governance decision it determines which specific actors are going to be allowed to be part of the Opera field. The second is the Opera experience because depending on the budget the opera experiences will vary. These elements are connected by a governance decision at General Director, Artistic Director, and Board level who will define which experiences the Opera Company will develop. The third influence the money has targets the community, on one side because of the Opera experiences, and second through marketing strategies that aim to develop audiences.

The second element is the Community. In this aspect, the public interest that the people have in the art is crucial for the understanding of the field. It influences primarily the money element\(^{100}\), by either the tickets, donations, sponsorships or government support. The more people interested in the field, the more funding available for the Opera and similar in the opposite way. In theory, in a healthy environment, the community should also influence the Opera Experience, however it does not happen actually\(^{101}\).

The third element is the Opera Experience as the specific product or service that the Opera field could offer to the people. In that sense, there are three different ways the product is seen. One side as the Opera as an art, usually seen like that by the artists. The Opera as an entertainment activity for the “pedestrian” citizens. And the artistic experience for the more “lovers” of the art.

\(^{100}\) At least in the current subsidized governance model where only some wealthy actors define the Opera Experiences.

\(^{101}\) Ibid.
In addition, this Opera experience includes the multiple programs Opera Companies very cleverly have been developed to increase their revenue. It includes outreach activities, “educational” programs, and other business around the Opera as a brand or art. Because of that, the Opera experience influence the Community Relation with Opera. The better crafted the experience, the more connection. This “Opera Experience” is precisely the result of the governance of the Opera. This is the place that requires carefully analysis about how has been crafted and designed, because for centuries is serving only certain actors as explained previously. Necessary changes have to be done in that element to allow the multiple actors to interact in a sustainable environment.

The fourth element is the Human resources. As a very well know saying in the Opera field says: “you don’t study opera, you know opera”. Translated to “vernacular” terms, it means that the Opera has an enormous element of tradition. Therefore, the human resource for Opera is a highly skilled people trained in a very specific way to “know” the traditions. That means that, from an International perspective, the human recourses for the Opera field is also a finite element.

In terms of the human resources, this element influences two elements of the Opera field. The first is the Opera experience. Of course, the better the singer the better the experience is going to be. Similarly, the better the conductor, the better the orchestra, the technicians, etc., the better the show as a whole. In addition, every artist will develop a unique artistic experience:

As an example for the reader, I invite you to do a very simple exercise. Write in a paper a short phrase, for instance: “Let's drink, let's drink from the joyous chalices that beauty blossoms.” Now ask three or four different people to read aloud it without giving to them additional information, only: Please read what is written on the page. Try to recall, which are the differences in pronunciation, intonation, rhythm, emphases, emotional state, volume, etc. Now try to recall the movements they did, the corporal language they used, and the energy they used. Do they “perform in the same way”? There is a 99.9% chance everyone did it differently. Perhaps some more similar than other, but still different.

In addition, everyone had a different “artistic effectiveness” because every person is very different. There were some people that created a sense of “something is happening”, and others perhaps did not arrive to a point where a person could be interested in see or listen to the line or message performed by him/her/they. Performers train during decades to understand the clues and be able to create this “something is happening” and call the attention of communities to broadcast a message. Therefore, this human resource also influences the community element through the Opera Experience. The better the human resource, the more people could be interested on Opera.

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102 I am very careful about calling these “educational” programs because as an Artists, I am not sure this is the correct way to call a program that is teaching someone something because “(s)he/they need to learn about the artists perspective and my code of values. Education should be both ways not only one way.

103 If not trained well, only few people is able to perform demanding roles of the Operatic repertoires

104 Translation of “Libiamo” from Verdi’s Opera La Traviata.
As the chart and the previous explanations clarify, the circle shows that the main governance decisions, under the current subsidized model\textsuperscript{105}, are connected with the human resources and the Opera experience. These ones influence the full circle of events in a good or a bad way. If the correct Human Resources are selected and the Opera Company produces correct Opera Experiences, a better community could be developed and more funds could be reached.\textsuperscript{106}

**The apprenticeship programs at Opera and the case of Santa Fe Opera**

There are multiple examples of how the Opera as a field has been evolved to create better Opera Experiences and prepare its human resources. One that combines both is the case Apprenticeship programs.

As explained before, the develop of human resources in the Opera field is a complex task. Continuing with the “read the phrase” previous example, the usual academic “text-focused” training does not help. Only by reading and/or analyzing elements of the artistry a person does not become an artist in the Opera field\textsuperscript{107}. There is an impossibility of put all the information in a text or electronic mediums and wait that the performers will now how to make art with that. In addition, the “phrase example” only described the lyrics. Now imagine the case of the opera adding music, an orchestra, the stage, and the other actors/singers, etc. That is why the performance tradition and the training people in it is so important.

The tradition is the reason why people in the art say: “You learn art by doing art, you learn music by doing music, or your learn Opera by doing Opera”. The task of trying to share and transmit the Opera knowledge by a text or set of recordings is nearly impossible. Opera as an art, no matter if is written in a full score, vocal score, parts, and libretto, is in many ways more an Oral Cultural Tradition. A Common knowledge that has been transmitted between generations by doing and learning from the masters. Therefore, the sustainability of this human tradition and oral connection is fundamental for the field.

This element is the base for the apprentice model at the Opera field. If anyone wants to learn of Opera, (s)he/they need to do it by doing Opera. Multiple Opera companies had developed their apprenticeship programs to train their human resources and balances their budgets by benefiting from the educational model they create\textsuperscript{108}.

\textsuperscript{105} That is not allowing communities to be part of the conversation.
\textsuperscript{106} However, to create a better Opera Experiences and allow more holistic human resources to participate into the Opera it is also important to understand what the community is asking for. Is not it? This is a fact that is not happening usually at the Opera current governance model as explained before. Perhaps creating a new Opera Experience that allows a communication between Community, Opera Experience, and Human Resources is a good idea? It seems to be totally on the control of the Opera Company. It is only a matter of clarifying governance models (Administrative Model) that could allow better development of the Human Resources (Music, Artistic, and Pedagogic models), a be more connected company with the community (Community Model), in a sustainable financial way (Business Model).
\textsuperscript{107} This is not also the artisanship approach of the Ostrom Workshop?
\textsuperscript{108} Diego Barbosa-Vásquez, “Model for Creation and Leadership of Sustainable Opera Camps,” abstract (DM diss., Jacobs School of Music - Indiana University, 2021 In process), Chapter 1
During the writing of the first two chapters of my doctoral dissertation I was able to identify and analyze in deep 11 different programs around US and Mexico. In general, most apprenticeship programs tend to focus only on the singers. There are cases as the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra that offer training in Orchestra, the case of Ravenna that also offer training for collaborative pianists (but only from recitals perspective\textsuperscript{109}), and the CASC the more holistic one that offers opportunities for Singers, Orchestra, Stage Directors, Stage Crews, and Collaborative pianists.

In addition, there is the case of Santa Fe Opera where that offers training for singers and technicians but with a unique approach. The full company was built on 1956 by the New York Conductor John O. Crosby under apprenticeship model\textsuperscript{110}. But how exactly this program works, which is the relation with the Opera Company, and how it develops sustainability?

From the marketing perspective the Santa Fe Opera Apprentice Singers Program is a three-month Opera Summer professional training for advanced singers\textsuperscript{111}. Participants receive career counseling and coaching with visiting opera singers, directors, and conductors in seminars and master classes for the apprentice singers.\textsuperscript{112} The apprentices are part of the main stage productions as chorus, smaller roles cast, and covers for principal roles\textsuperscript{113}. They also work side-by-side with internationally renowned artists and performing concerts and scenes for artistic managers and opera houses leaders\textsuperscript{114}. In synthesis, singers learn how to do Opera by doing Opera.

But what are the elements on the apprenticeship program that make the Santa Fe Opera more sustainable? These integrated programs solve principally two elements. First balance the budget, and second secure and develop highly trained human resources.

On the budget side the apprentice program benefits the Opera Company in two main aspects. First it allows the company to hire with a “discounted rate”, great level singers for their chorus and cover roles. According with the interviews\textsuperscript{115}, because of the training element singers are receiving, the Opera company has been able to pay singers a quarter or a sixth part of the average rate from an international perspective. Despite the fact it could seem not totally good from the singer perspective, research shows that singers are applying and performing there because they know they are receiving things that a better payment in other

\textsuperscript{109} Not full Opera production
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{113} Andrea Fellows Fineberg (Community Engagement Director at The Santa Fe Opera) video conference with author, Santa Fe, NM, February 11, 2021.
\textsuperscript{114} Santa Fe Opera, Docent Training Manual 2019 (Santa Fe: Santa Fe Opera, 2019), Page 83
\textsuperscript{115} David Lomeli (Chief Artistic Officer at The Santa Fe Opera) video conference with author, Santa Fe, NM, February 3, 2022.
company could not offer for a choir or cover role. At the end this is the application of game theory and Nash Equilibrium, finding the best for the actors.

The second element that these programs can offer for the company, is the element of bringing new donors to cover some of the expenses associated with the program. Each singer at the apprentice is consider a student not a worker, and that creates the possibility to “offer” them a full scholarship that comes with a full fee remission, accommodation, and a small stipend\textsuperscript{116}. Santa Fe Opera has valued each apprentice scholarship at USD 12,500\textsuperscript{117}. The program looks for donors that can sponsor one or multiple apprentices\textsuperscript{118}. Each apprentice’s donor will receive program book recognition on the apprentice sponsorship page, their name on the apprentices' showcase scenes banner, and lunch at the Opera with your sponsored apprentice\textsuperscript{119}.

In addition, Santa Fe Opera has developed similar programs for younger singers called \textit{Young Voices Program} with a yearly operative budget is $52,000\textsuperscript{120}. In the case of this program singer do not receive any kind of payment, only the training, therefore the 52,000 goes directly to cover the program leadership, professors, and Opera Company expenses (logistics and administrative human resources) related with this program\textsuperscript{121}. This program, and the yearly activities (concerts, conferences, etc.), are funded in a combination of private donors, public funding, and local actors from Santa Fe and Albuquerque.

Therefore, instead of fundraising money for payroll, what Santa Fe Opera was able to develop with these assistantship programs is ask for support to train new generations. A model that has been working according to their 990 Tax Forms.

The second important advantage the apprenticeship programs development offers for the Opera Company is the access and very affordable training of their human resources. As explained before, the better the human resource in an Opera Company, the better artistic product. Therefore, in many ways Opera companies compete to get and train the best possible artist. Usually, this competition is only done by a monetary aspect, who pays more gets the best people. However, the development of this apprenticeship program, where the singer is not only singer in the choir or covering a role, but also trained in a holistic way, and have opportunities to show their talents gives non-monetary power to the Opera Company at the moment of have access to human resources for its chorus and cover roles.

This element of human resource development is also very important from a multilevel or polycentric field, meaning local, regional, national, an international perspective. Having


\textsuperscript{117} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{119} Santa Fe Opera, “Sponsorships,” Santa Fe Opera, accessed February 17, 2021, \url{https://www.santafeopera.org/sponsorships}.

\textsuperscript{120} Andrea Fellows Fineberg (Community Engagement Director at The Santa Fe Opera) email to the author, Santa Fe, NM, March 23, 2021.

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid.
good human resource highly trained in the Opera is difficult for the field and requires multiple faces. From the places that give the first artistic experiences for a kid to the highly developed international opera companies, there has to be bridges. Similarly, the aspect of being the connection between university training and real professional life is crucial for an artist. Therefore, when an Opera Company is taking this role, it is supported by other Opera Companies. This is the reason why there are multiple “informal” interactions between the Santa Fe Opera and other Opera Companies and Opera training programs around the world. Santa Fe Opera has developed a system of finding highly trained human resources for its program from different Opera training companies, universities, or conservatories; and being a source for highly trained human resources for bigger Opera Companies.

This governance approach to opera have proved to be successful for Santa Fe Opera since its creation and is the reason why they have expanded this concept to the technicians too. Therefore, some additional questions appear. Which elements of this institutional development called Apprenticeship Programs could be implemented in other action arenas? Which elements are not possible to be implemented? And there is still room for development in this apprenticeship area?

As is seen in other programs, the concept of apprenticeship is present in the governance models. That is because as explained previously it helps the budget and the human resources elements. In addition, one of the main reasons for this successful rate is the fact that Opera as an art benefits from the concept of multilevel. As explained with greater detail in the paper “Multilevel Music Construction at Different Renowned Operas”, opera is an action arena that allows that a singer in first stages of career interacts with an experience singer side by side in the stage. Therefore, from the Music, Artistic, and Pedagogic models, in essence the apprenticeship program could be developed in multiple local arenas because the Opera as an artistic area is going to be the same.

However, some elements found in Santa Fe are unique to this action area and influence the Santa Fe Opera program successful rates. A fact that difficult the implementation in other local arenas at least in a short term. In Santa Fe Opera we can find that in terms of context there is a wealthy city where multiple art lovers of the US and some internationals select to spend their summers. Therefore, it creates a need for great artistic products and a surplus of money willing to sponsor, support, or patronage different initiatives. In addition, there is the biophysical element of be a dessert and no other Opera Company around. Once an artist is at the “Opera Ranch” as they call it, there is no more possibilities to do more and opera artists focused only on do Opera with Santa Fe Opera. Also, from the audience perspective, once an opera lover arrives there, there is only Santa Fe Opera to listen to this level of Opera shows.

122 Barbosa-Vasquez, “Multilevel Music Construction at Different Renowned Operas”. Barbosa-Vásquez Academic, Dec 2021

123 An interesting analysis in that sense will be, because the artistic action arena could be managed, could be possible to develop a better local arena for the Opera Company using the IAD analysis to clarify the ways of develop the institution to secure better context conditions?
In terms of institutional arrangements, Santa Fe Opera has become the place to listen to good Opera in the summer with multiple super-opera-fans supporting the organization. In addition, with the years singers’ unions at Santa Fe Opera have accepted working hours that are not usually allowed at other companies, allowing the possibility of bring the operatic training to the apprentices without affecting the rehearsal time they need for their choir and cover duties. Therefore, these conditions are very unique and create a perfect environment for the Opera Company model.

On the other hand Santa Fe Opera has enjoyed powerful actors to highlight. Starting from its founder, John Crosby, Santa Fe Opera had a highly skilled Opera Conductor and General Manager who had good money and the place to fund the Company. He was very connected to the city and his family too. In addition, he had a powerful mind that was able to know how to develop a singer and balance the orchestra, as the same time that could know and balance the budget of the rented houses for the performers and the amount of water required for the bathrooms in the pauses. This actor generated an institutional arrangement (or culture as the Santa Fe Opera call it) of “the company has to be always in black numbers”. A way of do things that is still in the company and explains why the company could grow and develop their proposal consistently.

A second very powerful actor is Matthew Epstein, who worked as Artistic Advisor at the Santa Fe Opera. He is/was a powerful artistic manager who worked for Columbia Artistic Management (CAMI) as head of their Vocal Division. He also worked as artistic advisor and artist manager throughout the U.S. and Europe, as counselor and mentor to numerous singers and Opera Companies. His presence in the Santa Fe Opera has a huge impact, because his connections with multiple Opera companies became fundamental at the moment of securing highly skilled human resources. Therefore the quality of the artistic product, a crucial element for the Opera experience as described previously, was always great even if the budget was not big enough compared to other opera houses. In addition, this actor by itself, and with the help of his team workers at CAMI, were fundamental to develop the kind of national and international relations Santa Fe Opera can offer to the singers nowadays.

The Multilevel Structure of Programs

One element that the Opera field has not contemplated well enough is the amazing possibility that the Opera offers in terms of multilevel structure. In addition of allowing singers in their first steps of career interact with an experience singer in the stage, opera is an action arena that also allows a multilevel interaction between all the actors involved. In it, a professional actor in Opera could share with a student and a community member if correct interactions and roles for each level are clarified and encouraged. As a simple example, a professional cellist could work as the principal cello of the orchestra and could...
train the student about the specificities of playing cello in an Opera Orchestra\textsuperscript{129}. In addition, the student could play as a cello section member while teach the community member about how to play cello. Moreover, if the Opera Company crafts the interaction and Opera experience well enough, it could even allow the three people to perform Opera all together with a good artistic result\textsuperscript{130}. Besides, and as explained before, this model allows a financial sustainability because instead of paying three cellists, the Opera company could pay one and the other two are allowing the Opera Company to develop an educational business model securing more sources of revenue.

Furthermore, there is a remarkable element that the multilevel structure gives to the Opera Experience: the connection with the community and re-involvement of them in the decision-making process. The Collaborative Arts Opera Summer Camp in Los Angeles is a great example of it. This is an Opera program with remarkable community engagement where community, kids, young students, and professional musicians work collaboratively to produce an Opera. This Opera Camp that started in 2018 offers multiple disciplinary training in Orchestra, Singing (Soloists, Choir), and Arts (set design, costumes design, and digital design) as Majors. Plus Composition, Dance, and Art as Minors. In addition, apprenticeship opportunities for conductors and stage directors are being developed for the 2022 version.

The fact of having communities and students as part of the equation has returned the communities to the decision-making process. The schedule gives a good example of this process. It has been evolving based on the necessities of the community and the artistic product in an integrated decision. It went from a one-week full day proposal in 2018 and 2019, to a two weeks afternoon and early nights for the newer versions. This change came from an artistic decision that was looking for better artistic quality and more rehearsal was needed. However, it came also from the community necessity of having community members to have more time to train their roles by themselves in the morning, and to have flexibility to attend other school or personal events during the day. At the end, the Opera Experience was crafted not only thinking about the artistic element but also the community needs too.

Similarly, the necessity of prepare some orchestra and singer members before the two weeks experience came from the students’ level participants and the community. Both groups have requested to be prepared before to maximize their learning experience of the two weeks when they are interacting with professionals. And because the Opera Experience is only possible if the community and students are part of it, the community and students have decision-making power.

The multilevel structure also creates financial outstanding stability. In addition to the normal Opera business model, the CASC has been able to develop a full educational business model to produce opera. It includes support from local, and state government, support from allied institutions, and support from the community members who see in the program a good life-learning experience.

\textsuperscript{129} A very special skill that could be only developed if the student has the actual opportunity to play in a Opera Orchestra.

\textsuperscript{130} The clues to craft this Opera Experience are in the Barbosa-Vasquez, Diego Barbosa-Vásquez, “Model for Creation and Leadership of Sustainable Opera Camps,” abstract (DM diss., Jacobs School of Music - Indiana University, 2021 In process), Chapter 1 and 2: “Music, Artistic, and Pedagogic models”.
These developments are also possible to develop inside Opera companies’ structures and season proposals if a correct articulation of roles and interactions are carefully crafted. One example of it is the case, but in ballet, is the case of The Nutcracker of Tchaikovsky. This multilevel artistic experience allows kids, students, and professional to do a ballet in a sustainable way. There you see professionals receiving money for their job as dancers as well as trainers, students learning, and community receiving valuable life-long learning experience paying for it.

This creates again, not only a great educational business model, but also creates enormous benefits for the full ballet season and its tickets and fundraising activities. Not only the parents come multiple times to see their kids dancing, but also they invite their families and friends. And that means more tickets revenue with more donors and sponsors interest in support it. In addition, the high-level dancers become the heroes of the kids, and with that, the families and friends involved too. Now, the “pedestrian” families understand the enormous challenges associated with a performance (after more than six months of daily long rehearsals with their kids), and they support the ballet and its art. Not only for the Nutcracker itself, but also to the other performances within the year. Therefore, the multilevel experience also allows audiences to growth.

Conclusions

Next steps, room for development, and the “Ostrom Opera Camp/Laboratory”

What could be developed based on the previous information? As a conductor, arts administrator, leader, and entrepreneurship, for me knowing something is not the goal itself, it is instead the path to be able develop something better. Therefore, which elements of this research could develop better governance models for the Opera?

The first element is the fact that apprenticeship programs have shown that are good opera experiences that create relevant development for Opera Companies. They solve problems in the areas of human resources and business model. However, as was described in this paper, the current programs have only focused on some particular actors: Singers. Only a few companies have focused on orchestra, stage crew, and pianists. In addition, they been focused only in a specific level not into a multilevel setting. However, as presented at the beginning of the paper, Opera is an artistic arena that allows a great number of actors interacting in a polycentric and multilevel structure. It creates the possibility to develop apprenticeship programs for all the actors at multiple levels. This is also supported by my doctoral dissertation research in chapters 1 and 2, that clarifies the

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131 Ibid.
132 There are some interviews that shared that a good production of ballet can cover, with the tickets, almost the full yearly budget of a ballet company. In addition, the educational model it creates also helps the company.
133 There are programs for kids, or for students, or for pre-professionals. However, with the exception of the CASC Opera Summer Camp in Los Angeles, there is not record of multilevel structure at least in the doctoral dissertation research.
clues (from the Music, Artistic, and pedagogic perspective) to develop apprenticeship programs for all the actors in multiple levels (pre-professionals, students, community).

Therefore, the next step of the research in that area is to identify the elements that could secure, from an administrative and business models perspective, the best possible practices to develop these new apprenticeships in a multilevel approach.

The second element that the current research was able to identify is that the community has been relegated tremendously from the decision-making process at the Opera governance because of the current business model. Currently, only powerful actors are taken the crucial decisions about the field and this is putting the Opera field in a long but painful death spiral. The next step in that regard is analyze, with the help of polycentric theories134, and the implementation of multilevel Opera Experiences, the best ways to reincorporate communities to the decision-making process. This will return the necessary balance required for the field to be sustainable.

Third, the research shows that the Opera as a field has not developed strong data sharing between actors and Opera companies, an element that difficult the study of the field actual problems and with that the finding of solutions becomes more difficult. Therefore, a next step in that area is define the strategies to develop an Opera data-trust-hub where relevant artistic, financial, and community information could be shared between different Opera actors to find sustainable solutions.

The Ostrom Opera Camp/Laboratory

The proposed “tool” to develop these three elements and continue with this research is the creation of the Ostrom Opera Camp/Laboratory. This is a sustainable practical/theoretical arena where the full spectrum of Opera field actors could be identified allowing them to share and have a voice; better data collection about the field could be gathered, produced, organized, and analyzed; and the multiple interactions at local, regional, national, and international levels could be studied. With the support of the Ostrom Workshop, the goal of the Opera Camp/laboratory is to develop the “Governance Models” to create and govern “Opera Camps”. An innovative Opera Experiences that use the concept of multilevel-apprenticeship programs and its highly community involvement results to find sustainable solutions for the Opera field.

The plan is to create an interdisciplinary theoretical Opera laboratory on Aug 2022 with the support of the Ostrom Workshop and alliances at different schools, and organizations at IU and Bloomington. A place where scholars of different disciplines (music, arts administration, economy, philanthropy, business, law, ecology) and leading international Opera actors can share and discuss the core elements for sustainability of the Opera field. A place that will use the resulting data of previous research135, the outcomes of this paper, and

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134 McGinnis, Baldwin, and Thiel, “ When Is Polycentric Governance Sustainable?” Presentation at The Ostrom Workshop, Indiana University, Bloomington, Sept. 14, 2020
135 Diego Barbosa-Vásquez, “ Model for Creation and Leadership of Sustainable Opera Camps,” abstract (DM diss., Jacobs School of Music - Indiana University, 2021 In process), Chapter 1 and 2: “Music, Artistic, and Pedagogic models”.
the application of Polycentric Governance and Ostrom Design Principals Theories to Opera governance. All with the goal to develop the rest opera governance models for Opera Camps: administrative, business, and community models\textsuperscript{136}. Completing in that way an integrated and sustainable model for the Opera that contemplates the multiple voices and needs of the actors involved in the field.

Furthermore, and completing the “theory influencing the practice and the practical data influencing the theory” circle, a crucial element of what Ostrom Workshop is known for; the plan is to operationalize this research with an actual Opera Camp. Therefore, in May 2023, and celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Workshop, an actual Opera Camp at Indiana University could be created under the umbrella of the Ostrom Workshop.

This Camp will be a two-week intensive Opera experience specifically designed to allow the full spectrum of Opera stakeholders/actors to be integrated under a multilevel-apprenticeship organization. This Opera Camp model will become the practical artistic laboratory for the understanding of opera field sustainability and its practicality in the long run. The Opera Camp will allow the research to clearly identify all the Opera Field actors that the theory and previous research could not identify previously because of lack of access to some sensitive data. Also, it will generate multiple data (artistic, music, pedagogic, financial, administrative, and community) that will be accessible for the already established Opera Sustainability working group (Laboratory) for the subsequent research during the next school year (2023 – 2024). In the long run, as a yearly recurring event, the Camp/Laboratory will allow a constant development of better theoretical governance models for the Opera Field. Theoretical issues that could be tested in the practicality of the two weeks opera camp in the next year. A circular cycle that will continue clarifying the sustainability clues for the Opera field having the Ostrom Workshop as the International leader of the advances in Arts Governance and Sustainability.

\textsuperscript{136} Completing the cycle with the Music, Artistic, and pedagogic models already written on my dissertation.
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