

Dear MCANA Colleagues,

I hope everyone is keeping well and hanging in there.

I'm writing today with the unhappy news that the MCANA annual meeting, scheduled for June 19-21 in San Francisco, has been canceled/postponed. The board made that decision Tuesday after the San Francisco Opera announced that its summer season was canceled because of the covid-19 pandemic. The press release is attached.

Although it was expected in the midst of the pandemic, SFO's decision is still a heavy blow, not just for the opera company and San Francisco, but also for MCANA. Our annual meeting was put together in collaboration with the SFO, the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. There were to be performances by the orchestra and the opera, as well as the presentation of the 2020 MCANA Award for Best New Opera, receptions, panel discussions, and the annual business meeting. The SFSO has so far canceled/postponed everything through May 10, and while I haven't yet heard a timeline for an announcement of the orchestra's plans, if any, for June, now that the opera company season is shut down it wouldn't be feasible for us to proceed with our meeting. Today I'll also be sending notes to that effect to our San Francisco hosts, who have been marvelously responsive and helpful to MCANA throughout the process of organizing the annual meeting and now calling it off.

I have discussed possible scenarios for a postponement with our hosts. One option was to reschedule in the fall, another was to look at next spring, when, incidentally, the opera's summer season will be earlier, April 25-May 16, 2021, because of renovation of the opera house next summer. Off the top of my head, at least from a timing standpoint, I see spring of 2021 as more doable for an annual meeting, for a couple of reasons: 1) It would allow more time for life to return to whatever the new normal is going to be; and 2) this coming fall is likely (hopefully) to be loaded with performances by orchestras and opera companies and other arts organizations getting back to work around North America, thus a time when many members would be busy with local matters and unable to get away for a meeting.

In my mind, there is also a third issue to consider, which is that whenever and wherever MCANA gets together after this crisis settles down we can't really be conducting business as usual. I think our next gathering needs to address the survival of music journalism post-pandemic. I hope that will be in 2020. Perhaps it could be an educational institute with a virtual component as well as performances.

To be sure, there are a few items from the 2020 annual meeting agenda left to be resolved. For example, on March 12, the opera committee met and then relayed to me its choice of the winner of the Best New Opera Award. Normally by now I would have been in contact with the winning composer and librettist to give them the good news, swearing them to secrecy so as to try to keep word from getting out prematurely, seeking their presence for the annual meeting and presentation, and plotting coverage of the award on CVNA and other outlets. But all of that hasn't felt appropriate in the past month under

such dire, uncertain circumstances, and I haven't yet reached out to the winners. Now we will come up with an alternative scenario and keep you posted on that.

As for the annual meeting itself – that is, the board's business meeting – we'll be looking into doing it live online on Zoom or some other platform, with all members invited.

I am sorry to be the bearer of such bad tidings, however necessary and inevitable. I was really looking forward to being with you in San Francisco. In some housekeeping matters, Robert will inform the Holiday Inn Golden Gateway that our meeting is canceled and that we no longer need a block of rooms, and he will refund meeting registration fees to members who have paid.

Onward and upward – John

sent on behalf of John Fleming by