

THE OPERA FACTORY • Zarzuela

Representation: **OVATION! Management**

Blanche Artis Lewis

6161 N. Hamilton • Chicago, IL 60659-4220 • 773-338-4182

BIOGRAPHY

“Is Zarzuela opera or musical comedy? Classical or popular music? Theatre or dance? Zarzuela is all of these things... **Spectacularly!**” John McLellan (Washington Post)

Since its auspicious debut in 1985 with the American premiere of Jose Serrano's **Los De Aragon**, The Opera Factory (TOF) has gained steadily in importance, popularity and prestige in the presentation of this unique art form originating in 17th century Spain. Zarzuela is still performed in Spain, Latin America and the Caribbean. TOF presents fully staged performances with orchestra, sets and original costumes. These have included American premieres of **Bohemios** (Vives), **El Barbero De Sevilla** (Gimenez), **Luisa Fernanda** (Moreno-Torroba), **Adios A La Bohemia** (Sorozaabal), **La Verbena de la Paloma** (Breton), and **Los Claveles** (Serrano), These performances are given bilingually with the dialogue in English and the arias sung in Spanish.

In addition to a season of Zarzuela performances TOF has performed for conventions, business and private clubs, universities, and symphonies. From 1989-1995 we presented programs through Urban Gateways for school children in the Chicagoland area. Northeastern Illinois University Spanish Department sponsored performances of **Holiday Music of Latin America** from 1988-1996. TOF was awarded residency through the Arts Partners of the Chicago Park District from 1997 -1999.

TOF departed from its usual fare to produce the world premiere of **The Magic Cup** in 1988 with music by Rev. Edward McKenna and libretto by renowned author Rev. Andrew Greeley. This original work was greeted enthusiastically by critics and audience alike and was broadcast over Vatican Radio (Italy) and WFMT-FM in Chicago. In 1992, **The Death of Michael Collins**, was the second collaboration of the two clerics and TOF presented a first reading of the score for Chicago audiences. TOF Produced a concert in 1998 of the final version with orchestra given at St. Patrick's Church in Chicago. Nationally, the Opera Factory has appeared for two seasons at the International Festival De La Zarzuela in El Paso, Texas by invitation from the United States Department of the Interior. Performances of **Bohemios** and **El Barbero De Sevilla** were given at the **Chamizal Memorial Theatre** to ecstatic reviews; “Outstanding Zarzuela singing” (El Paso Times), “Strength of The Opera Factory lies in the operatic talents of its members” (El Paso Post). In 1993 The Opera Factory was invited to participate in the Siglo De Oro Festival at Chamizal Memorial Theatre with additional performances given in Ciudad Juarez and Chihuahua, Mexico. The 18th century play **El Desden Con El Desden** by **Moreto y Cabana** was performed to great acclaim “Grand Exito de la Compania The Opera Factory” (Great Success for The Opera Factory) Beunas Dias Chihuahua paper. TOF celebrated the 100th anniversary of the first performance of Breton's **La Verbena De La Paloma** by presenting performances in Chicago and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, through the auspices of the Peruvian-American Society. **El Barbero** was selected to be given at Amarillo Civic Center in Amarillo, Texas under the sponsorship of the Amarillo Opera in August, 1995. **La Vida Breve** by Manuel de Falla was given in 1995. In 1996, **Homenaje a Manuel de Falla** was presented receiving critical acclaim in the international magazine Opera News. TOF was subsequently featured in the Opera News article on Zarzuela. Our 1997 performances spotlighted Zarzuela & Zabava (Z & Z). Zabava a 20 member folk ballet from Russia had won the International Folk Dance Competition in Spain in 1994, touring the country for 3 months as a result. Early Music of Spain and Peru was the first of our three part project of Zarzuela. This concert gave performances of the first opera ever

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given in the New World (Peru) & a Spanish, tonadilla-forerunner of the zarzuela. Because of this outstanding performance, attended by a representative from the NEA through an on-site visit; we were awarded a grant from the NEA for our second project, Antologia de la Zarzuela of the 20th & 21st centuries, presented in 2000. Excerpts from Cuban zarzuela as well as the only American zarzuela will be featured.

TOF has received funding from the National Endowment for the Arts both in Expansion Arts and the Opera/Musical Theatre divisions. We have had continuous support front the Illinois Arts Council, Chicago Office of Fine Arts, and the Spanish government.

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THE OPERA FACTORY HAS APPEARED WITH

- International Festival de La Zarzuela - El Paso, Texas
- Siglo de Oro Festival - El Paso, Texas
- Juarez and Insitiuto Chihuahuense de la Cultura, Mexico
- Amarillo Opera – Texas
- Peruvian-American Society -Milwaukee, WI
- Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago
- Art Galleries - Findlay & Castillo
- Universities - U of Chicago, Elmhurst, Goshen, IN, Institute of Technology, St. Augustine's College, Northeastern Illinois and College of Lake County

- Libraries - Sulzer, Harold Washington, Chicago
- Chicago Cultural Center
- Daley Plaza
- American Opera Society
- Lyric Opera of Chicago
- Agrupacion HispanoAmericana de Personas Mayores
- Casa Central (Home for the Elderly)
- Dubuque Symphony, Iowa
- Lake Shore Symphony, Chicago

AND FOR

Urban Gateways

Chicago Park Distrist

WFMT - Studs Terkel Show

National Endowment for the Arts

Illinois Aid to Dependent Children

Television – Channels 44, 26 and Cable 44

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REVIEWS

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El Paso Post

“Grand Exito de la Compania The Opera Factory” (Great Success for The Opera Factory)

Beunas Dias Chihuahua