

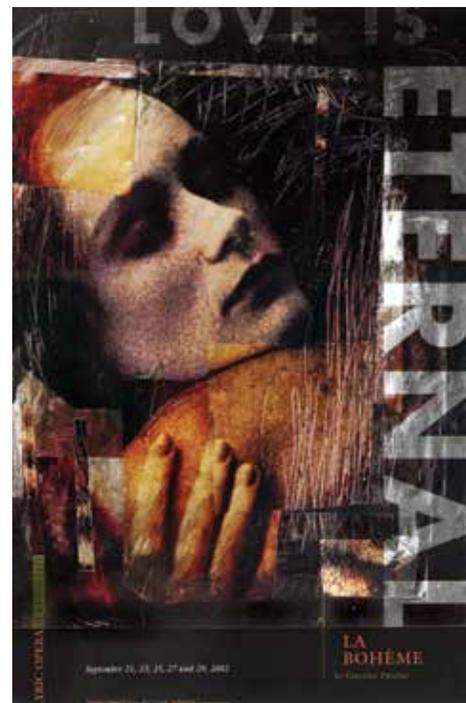


The Lyric Opera: *Realize the Vision*

The Lyric Opera's \$11.5-million endowment campaign, *Realize the Vision*, was a resounding success. The campaign goal to establish an endowment to attain to higher levels of artistic expression, coupled with a desire to create a distinct and lasting reputation for the Opera, was achieved in this three-year campaign.

Founded more than 45 years ago, the original Lyric Opera of Kansas City was one of this country's first regional opera companies. Today it occupies an historic theater that has already lived several lives: a Masonic Temple; a Red Cross blood collection center during World War II; a performance theater, under two different names; and a movie theater.

LYRIC OPERA
KANSAS CITY



The Lyric Opera

In the 1970s the Kansas City Lyric Theatre (as the Lyric was called at that time), entered into a lease agreement with the building's owner. In the late 1980s, the Lyric purchased and renovated the center into its present condition.

A \$2-million gift from the Charitable Remainder Trust of Mr. and Mrs. Robert P. Ingram provided the lead gift to the Lyric's campaign. A gift of this size and significance can often serve, as this one did, as a wake-up call to an organization.

Hartsook was retained to provide professional consultation for a \$10-million endowment campaign. The firm had come highly recommended. Hartsook helped the Lyric with committee selection. Within 12 months, the committee was discussing program enhancements in addition to the original \$10-million endowment.

They began to realize that donors wanted long-term financial strength for the Opera, but they also were motivated by some short-term, quickly realized benefits.

The Lyric had to decide how to present programming enhancements. Increase the number of productions to five or continue doing four even better? Their decision was to raise the bar on their four annual performances.

Board member solicitation took place behind the scenes prior to the public announcement of the campaign. Solid board support gave the Lyric the solid foundation needed to take the campaign to the community.

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They had not attempted a campaign of this size, so there was some reluctance. They started with the Lyric family—people they already knew had a strong interest in giving—and worked from there.

At the beginning of the campaign, a matching grant from the Missouri Cultural Trust paved the way for greater momentum. The grant would match 50 cents on a dollar. If the Lyric could raise \$1 million, the Trust would provide an additional \$500,000. However, the million dollars had to be raised within four months.

Sometimes a prospect would say, "I can't give now (for this or that reason) or I can't give as much as I would like," but there were never turned down for lack of interest. After four months of strategic solicitations, they met the deadline and made the match.

On the heels of this grant, the Lyric was given another, more substantial matching opportunity by the Missouri Cultural Trust—a second challenge of \$2,157,000 which would

The Lyric Opera



generate a matching gift of \$1,078,500. They had one year to complete that match, and they did.

A generous gift from Mr. and Mrs. Landon Rowland came in just as the campaign was closing—a million-dollar matching gift with half going to long-term endowment and half to immediate programming. The donors' flexibility in allowing the Lyric to use their gift as a matching opportunity opened up many new and exciting gift opportunities toward the end of the campaign.

Over time, the campaign mentality became integrated into the Opera's culture of philanthropy. Even when the campaign was over, the work continued.

This campaign has caused the Lyric to grow. Its annual fund, donor relationships—everything was strengthened by having gone through the process.

Another important aspect of the Lyric Opera mission is education. This element was strengthened significantly by the campaign for endowment. The Lyric provides programs for

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music and arts education in schools and throughout the community.

Their award-winning programs and activities include: Opera Heroines and Opera Heroes, Head Start with Opera, Opera for Captive Audiences, and Summer Opera Camp. A \$100,000 gift from the William Randolph Hearst Foundation for education was given to help advance these vital programs. Other family foundations interested in supporting arts and music education were also prompted to give similar gifts during the campaign.

Ultimately, the campaign came in \$500,000 over goal with \$10.5 million raised for endowment and an additional \$1 million earmarked for program enhancements.

For the Lyric Opera of Kansas City, the ability to bring in world-class artists and musicians to provide Kansas City audiences with breathtaking performances, and an elevated stature for the Opera, were reasons enough to undergo a major campaign.

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