

Blind and Visually Impaired Night at the Opera

Rigoletto—March 8, 2023

In collaboration with the Moran Eye Center and the Utah Council for the Blind, Utah Opera hosted its 26th annual Blind and Visually Impaired Night at the Opera during the March 8th dress rehearsal for Utah Opera's production of *Rigoletto*.

In a pre-performance presentation, Utah Opera Education Manager Kevin Nakatani and Artistic Director Christopher McBeth introduced the story, history, and themes of the opera. At this time, props and fabric swatches from the production were passed around to the audience, providing a tactile element to the experience.



During the performance, many audience members used provided headphones to listen to a live audio description of the events happening on the stage. Patrons also had access to braille supertitle scripts provided by the Library for the Blind.

Sixty-four people attended this event, as well as six guide dogs in training who attended with their owners.



“My son really enjoyed hearing the orchestra warming up. He used to play clarinet and it brought back happy memories. My son had never been to an opera before and he really enjoyed it. He is wanting to see the Steve Jobs opera! Thanks for a wonderful evening.”



“The narration was exceptional according to my wife who made the comment that she ‘Could see everything clearly in her mind even though her eyes don’t’ ... [the narrator] did an amazing job and brought much joy to my wife who was in dire need of a night out such as last night!! I can’t thank you enough for this opportunity and hope to go again soon to other events.”



“We very much enjoyed being invited to the performance. And we took home a regular program and will now attend two performances by the Utah Symphony that we might not have otherwise known about.”

“My daughter... is blind. It was not her first symphony orchestra or opera experience, but it WAS the first with Descriptive audio, which made her feel included...My daughter gets bored very easily, but one thing that she has an almost obsessive appreciation for is verbal feedback, so this was the first event we have ever attended that she wasn't forced to sit through or begging to go home. Please, please understand how important this was for us culturally to take in a rare experience that was catered to a niche group of people. We enjoyed this more than any other performance to date, and hope you will consider future events like this, so she can feel included AND understand what is happening.”