What have you been up to since graduating from the Arts Administration program?

Right out of grad school, I accepted a position with The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and moved to New York. Mellon is a national funder and I managed grantmaking to orchestras and opera companies across the country. It was incredible to be able to identify key challenges for performing arts organizations and then make a difference supporting them. Now at OPERA America, I am able to apply all of that experience in a more hands-on way. I oversee field-wide learning at the annual conference, and programs that support leadership development for opera administrators and educators.

Since moving to New York, I’ve made a home in Williamsburg, Brooklyn with my fiancé Ray, gone to tons of contemporary classical music performances, and been able to try amateur storytelling and painting.

How did UC’s Arts Administration program affect your career path?

I came into the program thinking that I would like to run an opera company. After learning more about the ecosystem for nonprofit arts, I realized that I wanted to find out more about national trends and try to address systemic issues. The MA set me on this new course and the MBA certainly gave me an edge in finding this kind of work.

Where do you see yourself professionally in five years?

I see myself leading a larger department or organization where I am able to create change in a community. I’d like to be able to expand on the experiences I’ve had so far: philanthropy, leadership development, increasing the role and contributions of the arts. I’m open to what form that might take!

What makes you excited to go to work?

One of my favorite things about my job is talking with experts from other industries who can inform the opera field about new ideas (design thinking, social justice, research practices, etc.). I get to think big picture, but also help guide real change for people and companies. I love being able to work with such dedicated people and learn from amazing opera practitioners around the world.

What professional accomplishment are you most proud of?

When I add it all up, the grants I managed totaled over $46 million during my time at Mellon. I still hear about the impact of those projects and am grateful I had the opportunity to help support that activity.

At OPERA America, I recently launched two new programs: Opera Teens, a national initiative to empower high schoolers; and the National Opera and Teacher Educator Source (NOTES), an online platform geared toward classroom teachers. As a result, I’ve been able to speak at conferences (including one at Yale) and publish articles. I’m excited to see that these projects are putting opera on the map.

Any other exciting news?

I got to shake Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s hand when she spoke at last year’s conference in Washington, D.C. That was pretty cool.

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