The 2018-2019 season engaged with teachers from public, private, charter schools and home school groups, who understand the importance of the Arts in education. Many were particularly excited about the season’s repertoire, as Romeo & Juliette was also presented by the PA Ballet, and their students would experience Shakespeare’s masterpiece in two forms.

Over 1,300 students, teachers, and chaperones - from 27 schools and home school groups - attended the annual Fall and Spring Student Matinee performances. Not only did a large number of long-time participants attend the performances, but several new schools and home school groups were involved this season, with the promise to returning in the future.

In addition, over 150 reservation requests went unused, due to academic testing schedules in several schools.
Participating Schools & Homeschool Groups

- Beverly Hills Middle School
- ChArter Tech
- Cochise Christian Academy
- David Homeschool
- El Centro de Estudiantes High School
- French International School
- George Washington HS
- Global Leadership Academy West
- Greater Phila Homeschoolers for the Arts
- Levis Homeschool
- Mastery Charter Schools, Shoemaker Campus
- Mastery Charter Schools, Thomas Elementary
- Mastery Charter Schools, Grover Cleveland
- Mitchell Home School
- Northeast High School
- Olney Charter High School
- Roncacas Valley Regional High School
- Sandy Run Middle School
- West Chester Friends School
- Wright Home School

Student Matinee Performances
(Centennial Hall, The Haverford School)

- LE VILLI (Puccini) ~ Wednesday, November 28th, 2018
- ROMÉO et JULIETTE (Gounod) ~ Wednesday, May 8th, 2019

Preparation

Comprehensive Study Guides, designed for each opera, were distributed to teachers and parents electronically in advance of the event so that they could prepare their students for what they would see and hear, and to keep as a resource for further study after the performance. This season’s Study Guides contained the following elements (the following are specifically for Roméo et Juliette):

- The Academy of Vocal Arts
- The Basic Elements of Opera
- The Art Form - A Brief History of Opera
- AVA Resident Artists
- Roles
- Synopsis
- The Composer
- The Librettist
- The Author
- The Background - Historical & Literary
- The Themes & Symbolism
- The Locale
- What is a Pants Role
- Where Else?
- The Operatic Voice & Vocal Categories
- Opera Comprehension Test
- Activities:
  - Create a Character Sketch
  - Journaling from the Point of View of a Character
  - Listen & Compare
  - Questions for Discussion & Writing
  - Be an Opera Critic
- Opera Etiquette
- Careers in Opera - Under the Lights & Backstage
- Glossary of Opera Terms
After the Performance

Following each performance cast members stayed on stage for a **Question & Answer Session** to answer the questions asked by a group of students chosen from the audience who were invited to the stage to interact personally with AVA’s Resident Artists.

The fall matinee included the opportunity to see a Chinese translator at work, as he interpreted the students’ questions for one of the principal artists. Our youngest attendee to date, a homeschooler age four, also asked a question via her Father.

The students learned about what the rehearsal process is, and how long putting together an opera takes, what it’s like to sing in foreign languages, what each artist likes best about performing opera, and that several Resident Artists had participated in programs similar to ours, and that it had a large influence on their career choice.

**Financial Assistance**

Transportation was provided to those schools that, without which, would have been unable to attend the performances.