

Because of You, Opera Thrives in Music City



Unamplified. *Unforgettable.*



From left to right, Andrew Payne, Alex McKissick, Robert Wesley Mason, Martin Bakari, and William Clay Thompson in Stephen King's *The Shining*.

All Photos by
Anthony Popolo

You made Nashville Opera's 2025-2026 season one to remember. Your support fueled a wide range of opera performances, attracting both longtime patrons and first-time attendees. More than 40% of ticket buyers were new to Nashville Opera, reflecting the company's growing visibility and Nashville's status as a cultural destination.



The season opened at TPAC with *The Shining*, a gripping contemporary opera adapted from Stephen King's iconic novel. In January, *The Girl of the Golden West* brought Puccini's sweeping vision of the American frontier to life at the Fisher Center for the Performing Arts. The season concluded at TPAC with *The Barber of Seville*, presented in a fresh mid-century setting with all the beloved characters, wit, and charm of Rossini's classic comedy.

From left to right, Elizabeth Fisher, Emily Fons, Michael Adams, and David Walton in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*.

Together, these productions celebrated the artistry, imagination, and deeply human experiences that make opera such a powerful presence in our community. **Thank you for making this season possible.**

The Shining and *The Girl of the Golden West* were supported in part by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Cover Photo by Anthony Popolo

Your City. *Your Opera.*

NASHVILLE
OPERA



From left to right
Jonathan Burton,
Kara Shay
Thomson, Kyle
Albertson, and
chorus members in
Puccini's *The Girl of
the Golden West*.

All Photos by
Anthony Popolo



From left to right, Brian Russell, Andrew W. Potter, and Dale Travis bring humor and charm to Nashville Opera's production of Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*.

Nashville Opera's Production and Artist Patrons help bring each production to life by providing vital funding for the artists, musicians, designers, technicians, and production teams who make every performance unforgettable. They enjoy unique opportunities to engage with the creative process through rehearsals, behind-the-scenes experiences, and personal connections with the artists they sponsor.

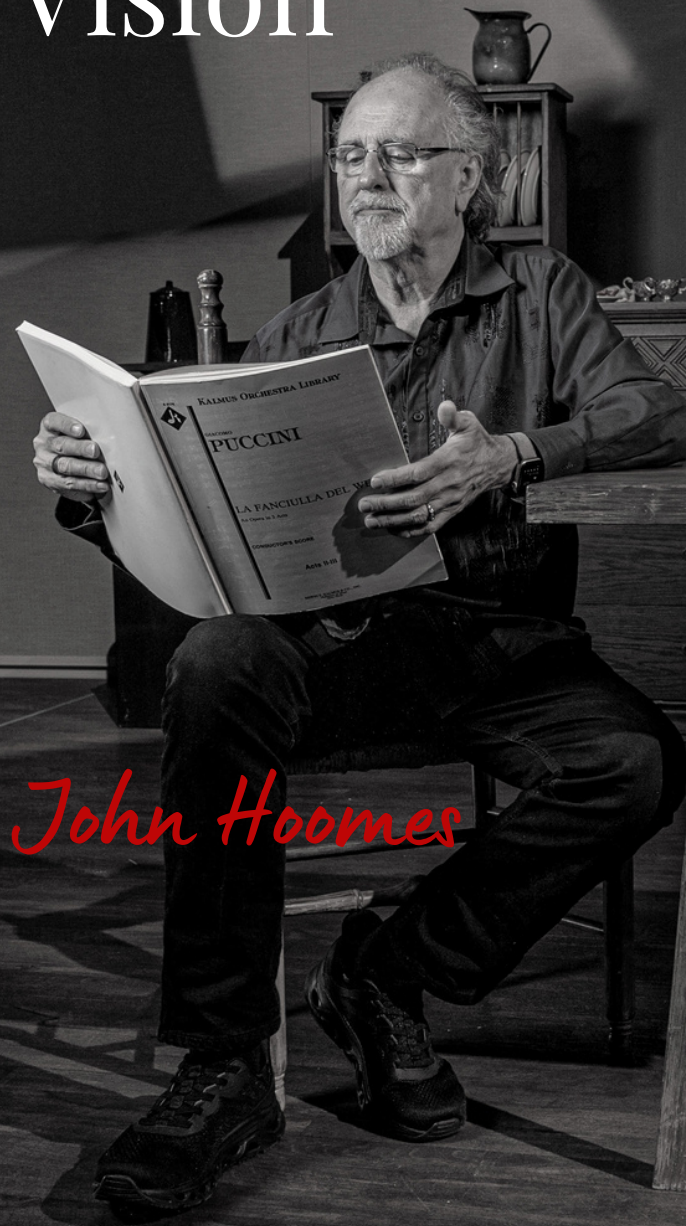
PRODUCTION AND ARTIST PATRONS WHOSE SUPPORT HELPED MAKE THE 2025–2026 SEASON POSSIBLE:

Joe and Judy Barker
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Janice and David Morgan
Gary W. Parkes
Molly and Richard Schneider
Dee and Ryan Thompson
The Estate of Stacy Widelitz

*"Sponsoring and getting to know Dale Travis, one of the principals in *The Barber of Seville*, made the experience of Barber even more meaningful for my husband and me. Thank you, Nashville Opera!"*

— Susan Holt

Thirty Years of Vision



John Hoomes

When **John Hoomes** arrived in Nashville in 1995, he and his wife Carol Penterman were given a piece of advice: don't buy a house. Nashville Opera's future was far from certain.

Thirty years later, John remains at the helm as CEO and Artistic Director of Nashville Opera, which has grown into a thriving cultural institution.

Under John's leadership, the company has earned a reputation for artistic excellence, bold storytelling, and creative risk-taking. Across more than 200 productions, he has brought both beloved classics and unexpected works to Nashville audiences. The opera world has taken notice, with *The New York Times* hailing his work as "an operatic miracle... in Nashville."

John told *NFocus*, "Early on, we wanted to find a way for the opera community to break out of being fully traditional. We will always do the famous pieces, but little by little, we started putting other pieces in that normally, in a city the size of Nashville, you would never have a chance to experience."

John has also championed the idea that opera belongs to everyone. Through education programs and community partnerships, he has helped ensure that opera is accessible, relevant, and welcoming to audiences of all backgrounds.

Today, John's passion for opera and commitment to Nashville remain as strong as ever. His 31st season will open with Puccini's *Tosca* in October 2026.

Carry the Flame



Keri Alkema

*Chief Strategy and Operations Officer
Nashville Opera*

After an accomplished international career on the world's most celebrated opera stages, Keri Alkema brought her artistry, expertise, and vision to Nashville Opera in 2025 as Chief Strategy and Operations Officer. Partnering with CEO and Artistic Director John Hoopes, she brings deep industry knowledge, cherished artistic relationships, and a bold passion for innovation and collaboration that will help propel Nashville Opera into its next era of growth and excellence.

"I am committed to advancing the transformative power of the arts, nurturing the next generation of artists, and building cultural spaces that inspire community and excellence. Building on the incredible legacy John and Carol have created, we are poised to ensure this city has the world-class opera company it deserves. Nashville is growing, and the world is watching."



Photo by Peyton Hoge

Stacy Widelitz

*Stacy received the 2025 Robinson-Couch
Award from the Friends of Nashville Opera*

Songwriter, composer, volunteer leader, and devoted supporter, Stacy Widelitz believed deeply in the importance of opera. He generously shared his time, leadership, and expertise, serving as a leader of both Nashville Opera's Board of Directors and Friends of Nashville Opera.

When Stacy passed away in 2025, his commitment to Nashville Opera continued through a generous bequest. His life was a wonderful example of the lasting impact one person can have on an art form they love.

*"I love the opera. It's an important part of this community,
and it brings something important to this city."*

Inspiring the Next Generation



Left to right: Elizabeth Fisher, Louis Tiemann, and Noah Mond delight their young audience in *Little Red's Most Unusual Day*

Photo by Sarah Antell

For many students, **Nashville Opera on Tour** is their first experience with live performing arts. It may be the first time they hear an unamplified voice fill a room, watch a story unfold through music, or see professional artists perform just a few feet away.

This year, students delighted in *Little Red's Most Unusual Day*, while older students and adults experienced a program of arias in *Opera Out Loud*. Each encounter is more than a performance; it is an invitation to imagine and connect. By bringing opera directly into schools and communities, Nashville Opera helps young people discover that the arts are for, and can be created by, them.

*Your opera
is so good.
I hope you
can see me
one day.*

— Tyler Grace, Grade 3

By the Numbers

NASHVILLE
OPERA

**TOTAL PEOPLE
REACHED:**
20,284

REACH:

19,212 Students Reached
in 62 Schools

1,072 People Reached via
Community Performances

10 Community Venues

13 Counties

COUNTIES SERVED

(Number of Students):

Cheatham (1,000)
Coffee (495)
Davidson (5,202)
DeKalb (300)
Dickson (2,010)
Montgomery (1,480)
Putnam (450)
Robertson (900)
Rutherford (2,630)
Smith (510)
Stewart (450)
Sumner (1,635)
Williamson (2,150)

SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS:

Title I Schools 60%
Non-White Students 37%
Economically Disadvantaged 27%
English Language Learners 27%
Students with Disabilities 18%

Dear Nashville Opera
Thank you for coming to
perform. My favorite performer
is little Red.



Rockledge
Elementary
From: Halle

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO OUR PROGRAM SPONSORS:

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Kiwanis of Nashville Foundation
The Memorial Foundation
Metro Arts Commission
Publix Charities
Tennessee Arts Commission



Photo by Sarah Antell

The Future Takes the Stage



Elizabeth Fisher as Berta in *The Barber of Seville* Photo by Anthony Popolo



Noah Mond as Billy Jackrabbit and Hailey Cohen as Wowkle in *The Girl of the Golden West*

Photo by Anthony Popolo

Nashville is known for developing musical talent, and the **Mary Ragland Emerging Artists Program** is part of that longstanding tradition. Each year, four talented early-career singers and one pianist travel to Nashville to receive training, performance opportunities, and mentorship from Nashville Opera.

This season, Emerging Artists performed leading roles in *Little Red's Most Unusual Day* and *Opera Out Loud*, appeared in Nashville Opera's productions of *The Girl of the Golden West* and *The Barber of Seville*, performed a concert at the Frist Art Museum, and participated in a masterclass led by acclaimed tenor Russell Thomas. Through these experiences, they gained skills, confidence, and professional connections to advance their artistic careers.



The 2026 Mary Ragland Emerging Artists: (left to right) Mezzo-soprano Hailey Cohen, Pianist Benjamin Pessognelli, Soprano Elizabeth Fisher, Bass Noah Mond

Photo by Peyton Hoge

Opera for Everyone



POWERED BY
amazon

In 2025–2026, Opera on Wheels brought live musical performances to nearly 30,000 people through 38 performances at 31 community venues across four Middle Tennessee counties.



Claire Paschal performs with Opera on Wheels at The Crestmoor of Green Hills

Photo by Sarah Antell

Opera on Wheels brings Nashville Opera beyond the theater and into the heart of the community. Performing at community celebrations such as Southern Festival of Books and Main Street Festival in Franklin, cultural destinations including the Nashville Zoo, Cheekwood, and the National Museum of African American Music, and neighborhood libraries and senior living communities, this program connects people of all ages with live opera in familiar spaces.

Programs included concerts of opera, Broadway, and jazz favorites, as well as ***When Marian Sang***, a program about the life and legacy of contralto Marian Anderson. Thanks to the generous support of presenting sponsor Amazon and our program donors, these performances were offered at no cost to venue partners, making it possible for more people to experience the music, storytelling, and joy of opera close to home.

Check to see if Opera on Wheels is coming to a community near you by visiting:

nashvilleopera.org/wheels

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO OUR OPERA ON WHEELS SPONSORS:

Amazon	Ingram Charities
Advance Financial	The Memorial Foundation
Audrey Jones	Metro Arts Commission
Friends of Nashville Opera	Publix Charities
HCA Healthcare Foundation	Tennessee Arts Commission

Opera in Music City

Great art thrives through connection. Our partnerships with fellow Music City institutions help Nashville Opera reach new audiences, create unique experiences, and enrich the cultural life of our community.



Photo by Jordan Powell

Nashville Opera partnered with **Cheekwood** for an enchanting night of music in the gardens.



In partnership with **Vanderbilt University's Dyer Observatory**, Nashville Opera presented *Opera on the Mountain*, a special evening of live opera under the stars.



Photo by Sarah Antell

Nashville Opera met Tennessee history, performing at the **Tennessee Central Railway Museum**.



Photo by Sarah Antell

Nashville Opera staff and singers volunteered with **Backlight Productions** for their presentation of *The Sound of Music*.

Nashville Traditions

NASHVILLE
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In 2025, Nashville Opera launched Opera Jukebox Live, a one-of-a-kind event celebrating the musical talent that makes Music City unique. Featuring music spanning pop, Broadway, country, and opera, the evening brought together artists and audiences for a fun-filled night of song. With audience requests helping shape the playlist, every performance felt spontaneous and completely Nashville. Event proceeds supported Nashville Opera's productions, artists, and community programs.

By popular demand, Jukebox Live returns to the Noah Liff Opera Center on August 29, 2026.
nashvilleopera.org/jukeboxlive

Photo by Peyton Hoge



Friends of Nashville Opera hosted the 32nd La Bella Notte, honoring John Hoomes' 30th anniversary and supporting Nashville Opera's education and outreach programs.



The Next Act Begins With You

Thank you for making opera thrive in Music City.

NASHVILLE
OPERA

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nashvilleopera.org

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