



THE 2024–2025 ANNUAL REPORT



Photo@ Sarah Shatz

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A WORD FROM DEBORAH SANDLER KEMPER

Thank you for being part of the 2024–2025 season. In 2021, Lyric Opera revised its strategic vision and asked: Where will opera be in fifty years? This past season gave us a glimpse of that future—through outstanding performances, meaningful community engagement, and milestones that affirm a bright path ahead.

Our season opened with a major company debut: soprano Renée Fleming, joined by baritone Rod Gilfry, in Kevin Puts’s *The Brightness of Light*, followed by Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville*. Spring brought *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*, the world’s first mariachi opera, presented with the Consulate of Mexico in Kansas City and performed with GRAMMY®-winning Mariachi Los Camperos. The season concluded with a triumphant revival of *Turandot*, uniting more than 200 performers and crew.

In 2025, we premiered *Maya and the Magic Ring*, our third family opera commission, which toured venues across Kansas City. We also offered a rich slate of community engagement, including the vocal group Voz en Punto in collaboration with the Consulate of Mexico, a program on music’s power to heal led by Renée Fleming, and our popular initiatives Opera Dives Deep and Community Conversations. A season highlight was a GRAMMY® nomination for Best Opera Recording for our release of Paul Moravec and Mark Campbell’s *The Shining*, elevating Lyric Opera to the international stage.

Looking ahead, we return to four fully staged productions in 2025–2026. Highlights include a new Kansas City–built staging of Rossini’s *Cinderella*, the return of *Madame Butterfly*, and two American masterpieces: *Porgy and Bess* and Carlisle Floyd’s *Of Mice and Men*, honoring the composer’s 100th birthday.

Opera at this scale is possible only through the dedication of donors, subscribers, board members, and community partners. Thank you for helping bring these stories to life.



Deborah Sandler Kemper, General Director and CEO

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Revenue

In 2024–25, the Lyric’s work was primarily supported through contributed income in the form of individual charitable donations, grants, and sponsorships. Individual giving was more vital than ever: 498 donors carried forward legacies of connection and transformation. Partnerships with local and regional institutional partners helped anchor world-class opera in Kansas City. Ticket sales continued to grow, with 1,517 new households joining our audience and an average new attendee rate of 24% across the season.

These combined revenue sources supported emerging artists and musicians, expanded Learning initiatives that reached thousands of young people, and continued ambitious set-building efforts that enriched the national repertoire and built long-term sustainability for the Lyric.

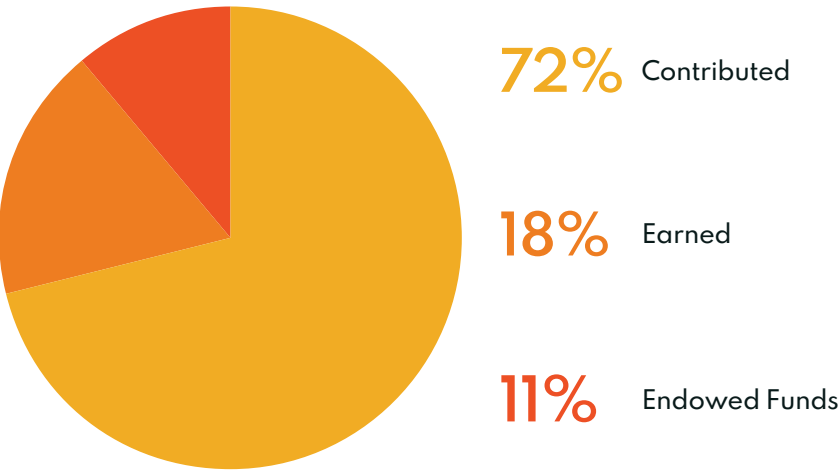
Expenses

The majority of the Lyric’s budget went directly to programs, turning donor generosity into artistic excellence on stage and lifechanging art education in our community. The Lyric employed artists and professionals in more than 600 roles, including singers, orchestra musicians, set designers, directors, stage technicians, costumers, and painters. Together, these talented creatives brought over eleven performances to life at the Kauffman Center, reaching 12,612 audience members and returning to pre-pandemic capacity.

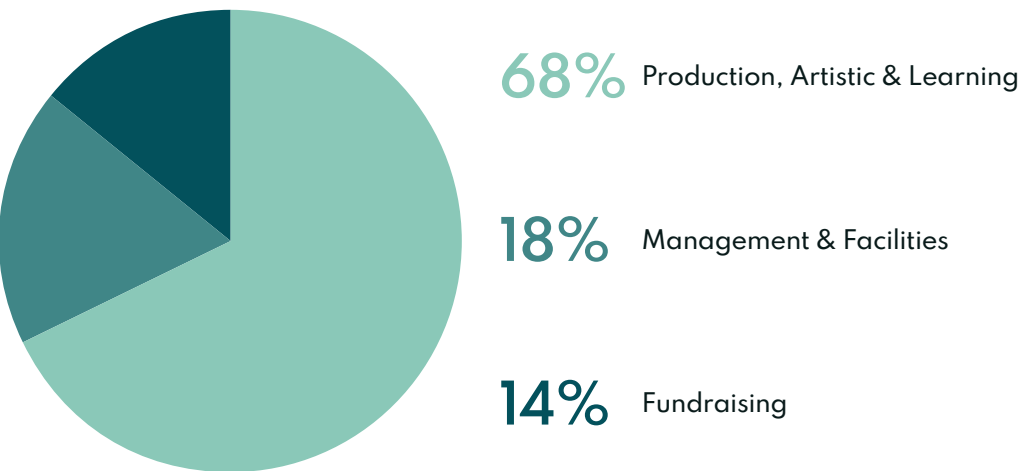
Learning programs expanded significantly, with dollars supporting community access to the arts. K–12 Residency Courses provided 714 hours of advanced arts instruction for 345 students. Learning programs impacted 6,931 K–12 students and 5,665 adults through more than 100 events held throughout the Greater Kansas City region.

A history of audited financial statements can be found on our [website](#).

FY25 REVENUE



FY25 EXPENSES



FY25 Operating Expenses: \$6,491,306



Photo© Don Ipock

2024-2025

MAINSTAGE ATTENDANCE

This season, the Lyric welcomed 12,612 individuals to eleven performance of four world-class productions at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts.

The season opened with Renée Fleming's unforgettable Lyric debut in Kevin Puts's *The Brightness of Light*, followed by Rossini's comedic masterpiece *The Barber of Seville*, the groundbreaking mariachi opera *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*, and Puccini's glorious *Turandot*—which had not been seen since its 2011 debut in the Kauffman Center's inaugural season.

We were thrilled to welcome 1,517 new households this year, with new attendees comprising 24% of our audience. Audience enthusiasm soared, with *Turandot* surpassing ticket revenue goals by 13% and performing to sold-out houses.

THE BRIGHTNESS OF LIGHT

September 27 & 29, 2024

1,965

Attendees

THE BARBER OF SEVILLE

November 15-17, 2024

3,451

Attendees

CRUZAR CARA DE LA LUNA

March 7-9, 2025

3,213

Attendees

TURANDOT

May 2-4, 2025

3,983

Attendees

The Brightness of Light



Photo© Don Ipock

“Fleming and Rod Gilfry bring to life these strange and intense characters, with their strange and intense relationship, Fleming with her superb sense of flow and the limpid articulation of every word, Gilfry with his full, rich baritone.”

-Hilary Stroh, *Bachtrack*

“It was a wonderfully rendered piece, an exquisite portrait of an American artist.”

-Libby Hansen, *KC Studio*



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THE BARBER OF SEVILLE



Photo@ Don Ipock

"I think this is the 4th time I've seen *The Barber of Seville* [...] But this production was a completely different experience!! I was engaged for the entire opera. The characters were larger than life, and all the extra additions to the action (the humorous, the tongue-in-cheek) were amazing. And for some reason that I'm not even sure of, I could follow all the plot and characters this time. Not to mention the world-class singing, symphony, and creative sets. Thank you!"

-Audience Member

"Thankfully, Lyric Opera's cast knocked it out of the park with an overwhelming collection of impressive talent—framed by a production where all the other elements exceeded the company's own high bar."

-Brock Wilbur, *The Pitch KC*



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CRUZAR LA CARA DE LA LUNA



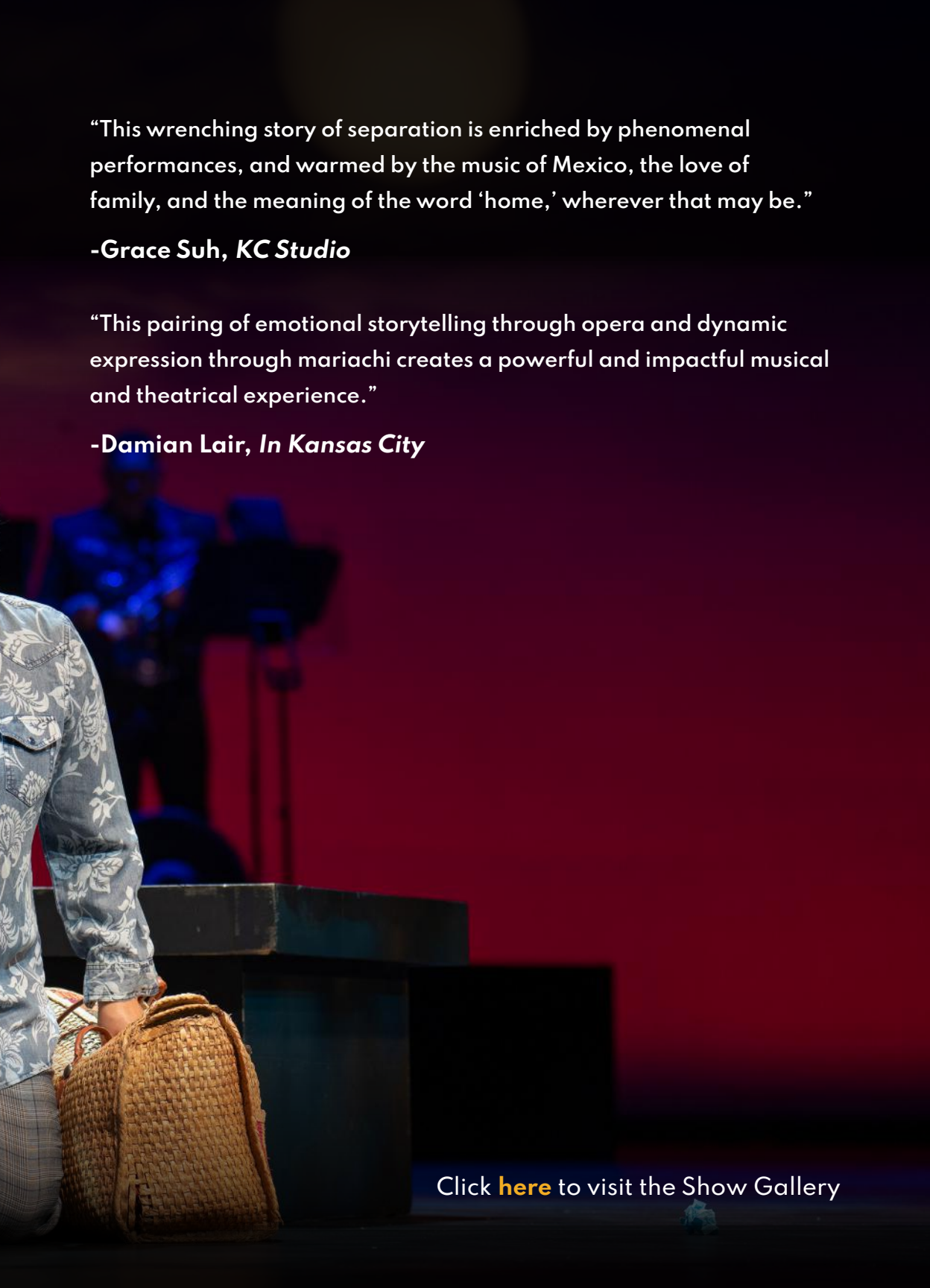
Photo© Sarah Shatz

“This wrenching story of separation is enriched by phenomenal performances, and warmed by the music of Mexico, the love of family, and the meaning of the word ‘home,’ wherever that may be.”

-Grace Suh, *KC Studio*

“This pairing of emotional storytelling through opera and dynamic expression through mariachi creates a powerful and impactful musical and theatrical experience.”

-Damian Lair, *In Kansas City*

A person wearing a light blue floral patterned shirt is seen from the side, holding a large, light brown woven basket. They are standing on a dark stage. In the background, a mariachi band is visible, with one member playing a trumpet. The background is a deep red color.

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TURANDOT



Photo© Andrew Schwartz

“Diego Torre sang Calaf, he whose singularity disrupts the myth. He is a bleeding-heart presence tenor, his voice dripping with melancholic passion and sustained sound.”

-Hilary Stroh, *Bachtrack*

“Visual impact is of great importance to Puccini’s potboiler, and it was satisfying to see this lovely production again this May 2nd through the 4th—its first outing here since the premiere fourteen years ago.”

-Paul Horsley, *The Independent*



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GRAMMY® RECOGNITION FOR LYRIC OPERA



Lyric Opera of Kansas City is honored that our world-premiere recording of Paul Moravec and Mark Campbell's *The Shining* earned a **2025 GRAMMY® Award nomination for Best Opera Recording**. This recognition celebrates the incredible talent of our artists and partners, and it highlights Kansas City's place on the international stage as we champion the future of opera.

Recorded live at the Kauffman Center in March 2023 and released on the Pentatone label in April 2024, *The Shining* features the Kansas City Symphony, Lyric Opera Chorus, and an exceptional cast of soloists under the baton of Gerard Schwarz. Called a work that "elevates the tale from horror story to a human drama" (*Wall Street Journal*), the opera now reaches audiences worldwide through this landmark release.

This nomination is a milestone for Lyric Opera and a testament to the extraordinary arts community of Kansas City.

"Moravec's score is richly effective—from the eery evocations of the supernatural at the start, to the lyric, tender moments between the Torrrences before Jack's madness takes hold."

-John-Pierre Joyce, *BBC Music Magazine*

Click [here](#) to listen to the world premiere recording of *The Shining*



Two of the stars of Lyric Opera's
GRAMMY® Award-nominated
recording of *The Shining*, Edward
Parks (Jack Torrance) and Tristan
Hallett (Danny Torrance), at the
awards ceremony in February 2025.





Photo© Andrew Schwartz

2024–2025

LEARNING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This season, Lyric Opera’s Learning programs connected with students and families across the region through inspiring, hands-on arts experiences.

Through our educational partnerships, we provided more than 1,100 hours of classroom instruction and reached approximately 7,000 students. Our new year-long residencies brought choir, opera, and theater courses to Central Middle School, Lincoln College Preparatory Academy, and Notre Dame de Sion Grade School, embedding the arts into daily learning.

This year also marked the completion of our commission of three new operas for youth and families. *Maya and the Magic Ring* by Lori Laitman and Dana Gioia premiered at the Midwest Trust Center and toured community spaces throughout the region.

Altogether, 12,596 people participated in Learning programs designed to spark creativity and build community through opera.

K–12 EDUCATION
PROGRAMS

6,491
participants

FAMILY
PROGRAMS

2,184
participants

COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT
PROGRAMS

3,921
participants

LEARNING PROGRAM REFLECTIONS

“Well done!! An amazing resource to families experimenting with showing their kids different art forms.”

“This is my favorite Lyric show that I’ve ever seen. Thank you for bringing it to life! Great music, storytelling and performances all combined!”



Remove the Queen!

¡Llévense a la
Reina!

Photo© Andrew Schwartz

“This was an excellent partnership. I don’t know that my kids would have seen an opera otherwise. We really enjoyed it!”

“Performers were wonderful! Orchestra was amazing! We loved the talk afterwards to help kids make connections.”



LYRIC OPERA IN ACTION







THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING
LYRIC OPERA OF KANSAS CITY



Photo© Andrew Schwartz

To our generous donors and sponsors,

Thanks to your extraordinary generosity, Lyric Opera of Kansas City's 2024–2025 season was nothing short of transformative. Together, we brought the power, beauty, and impact of grand opera to tens of thousands of people across our community. From beloved classics to bold new productions, every note, every curtain rise, and every moment of shared awe was made possible by you. Your gifts did more than support world-class performances—they ensured that opera continues to thrive as a vital cultural force in Kansas City.

This season, we expanded our reach, deepened our education programs, and strengthened the company's foundation for years to come. Approximately 7,000 students experienced opera through our K–12 initiatives, nurturing the next generation of artists, patrons, and advocates. Behind the scenes, your support empowered us to invest in new productions, world-class artistry practices, and creative collaborations that reflect the richness and diversity of our city.

As we look ahead to the return of four full productions in 2025–2026, we are imagining seasons that are even more ambitious, more accessible, and more memorable for the next generation of Kansas Citians. With your continued partnership, Lyric Opera will remain not only Kansas City's hometown opera company, but also a national leader in artistic excellence, community impact, and fiscal responsibility.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, staff, and artists, we offer our sincere gratitude for your enduring support and shared belief in the transformative power of opera—yesterday, today, and in the many seasons still to come.

Season Sponsors:

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