



# Friends of the Opera House Newsletter

June 2025



## A Fond Farewell to Daniel Campbell

On March 25, 2025, many gathered in Stage Left to celebrate and bid farewell to Opera House Director Daniel Campbell. It was a lovely occasion filled with delicious food, engaging conversations, fond memories, and even some entertaining karaoke.



Daniel served as the director for seven years and dedicated many more to the Opera House in various roles since 1998. During his time, he supported the creation and use of Stage Left, introduced new technologies and diverse programming, and oversaw the nearly completed current renovation. Daniel's commitment was always to offer the community opportunities to experience the magic of the historic Opera House through the arts. As a strong supporter and member of the Friends of the Opera House, his invaluable advice and guidance as an ex-officio member of our Board of Directors have been instrumental. Notably, the Friends' Endowment Fund for the Opera House was created with his support and advice. We extend our best wishes to Daniel for all his future endeavors.

## Programing Support and Community Outreach

### Little Miss Woodstock

This year marks a first for the Friends of the Opera House as we proudly sponsored a contestant for the title of Little Miss Woodstock. Our candidate was Hateya Klein, a bright and articulate 10-year old who will be a fifth

grader at Westwood Elementary. While she didn't win the top honor we are incredibly proud of her poise and public speaking skills and the great job she did at the pageant. We know she has a very bright future ahead of her.

### Friends Support Students and the Arts

On May 16 **Acapella on the Square** took place at the Opera

House. The concert featured a variety of traditional and popular choral tunes performed by the WHS Jazz Choir and Madrigal Singers! Concert goers heard the music of artists such as Billie Eilish, John Legend, Joni Mitchell, Stevie Wonder, Jacob Collier, and many more! One of the goals of music director Brian Jozwiak, was to generate interest in music on the part of middle school youngsters. Through a donation from the Friends of the Opera House, student tickets were offered at no cost, to encourage all students to attend.



### Friends Support the Pioneer Center

The members of the Pioneer Center Day Classes wanted to put on a play for family members and the community. So they chose *Beauty and the Beast* and then looked around for a performance site. And what better location than the historic Woodstock Opera House! Through a donation from the Friends of the Opera House that covered all the technical support costs, these budding actors and actresses had the opportunity to experience acting from the same stage as Orson Welles and Paul Newman, with lighting and sound pros ensuring a great theater experience for everyone.

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## Programing Support and Community Outreach Continued

### Support for the Resident Companies of the Opera House

Over the past year, the Friends of the Opera House reached out to the Woodstock Community Choir and the resident companies of the Opera House to offer financial support for a project during the 2024-25 season. We received a variety of creative ideas, and some of the projects we supported included providing cookies and coffee before Woodstock Fine Arts Association programs, offering financial assistance for Off Square Music's Sunday concerts during the summer of 2025, covering the printing costs for the Woodstock Choir Concert program this past spring, helping establish the pointe shoe fund for Judith Svalander Dance, and making a donation to the Woodstock Children's Summer Theater program. These are the groups that provide much of the programming at the Opera House.

### Upcoming Events

#### Concerts in the Park (Wednesdays at 7:00 PM)

The Friends of the Opera House will once again have a presence at each of the summer concerts in the park. Our goals include promoting membership, holding 50/50 raffles at each concert, and informing the public about our work in supporting and preserving the opera house and its programming. You'll find our table near the bandstand, and members will also circulate during intermission to sell raffle tickets. We are still looking for volunteers to help at these events. If you are available, please contact Peggy Hart at [peggyhart06@comcast.net](mailto:peggyhart06@comcast.net).

#### Family Fun Day

Join us for Family Fun Day on June 22 at the Park in the Square! It's a wonderful opportunity for families to enjoy a Sunday afternoon with various booths featuring games, prizes, and other special activities. The Friends of the Opera House will have our own booth with games, prizes, and membership information. We'd love for you to stop by and say hello!

### The Arts: A Living History

#### first in a series by Maura Simms, Board Member

As you step into the Woodstock Opera House, you are immediately struck by its grandeur and a sense of its rich history. One can almost imagine the rustling of



velvet gowns and the gleam of top hats from performances past. With over a century of shows within its walls, the Opera House holds countless memories. While our Woodstock Opera House is unique, many other 19th-

century opera houses still exist across the country. In this ongoing series, I will explore these remaining treasures, beginning with the oldest: the Woodward Opera House of Mt. Vernon, Ohio, which opened on December 8, 1851, with a lecture on electricity.

The Woodward Opera House was built by Ebenezer Woodward, who cleverly designed it to be a performing arts venue with the added benefit of commercial space to ensure financial stability beyond theater revenue. The first floor has been continuously occupied by various businesses since its completion in 1851, with an event space above that can accommodate approximately 400 people.

The Woodward has a strong connection to the renowned musician Dan Emmett, famous for his songs "Dixie," "Turkey in the Straw," and "Blue Tail Fly." It also hosted the first motion picture show in Knox County in 1897. For many years, it featured vaudeville, minstrel shows, and traveling acts before closing in the mid-1920s and remaining shuttered for decades.

In the 1990s, the Woodward Development Corporation embarked on a restoration project to revive its ornate architectural details, including the horseshoe balcony inside and the triple gable parapets that define its Gothic Revival exterior. Remarkably, some of the original paintings survived and are still enjoyed throughout the building today. Through dedicated effort, the Woodward was renovated and reopened in 1998. Currently, the musical "9 to 5" is being presented, along with performances by The Rat Pack, dramatic plays, and dance troupes. It is wonderful to see another historic Opera House thriving in the 21st century.

Sourced from: Woodward Opera House website