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Chris Cox, Director of Marketing and Communications
412.281.0912 ext. 217
Email: ccox@pittsburghopera.org

Pittsburgh Opera and National Opera House announce programmatic and strategic partnership

Pittsburgh Opera and the National Opera House announce a long-term programmatic and strategic partnership.

The [National Opera House](#) (NOH) is the steward of the legacy of the National Negro Opera Company (NNOC), the first African-American opera company in the United States. The NNOC was founded in Pittsburgh by Mary Cardwell Dawson in 1941 and operated until her death in 1962. The NNOC headquarters building, also referred to as the National Negro Opera Company House, is owned by NOH President Jonnet Solomon.

The House, located in Pittsburgh's Homewood neighborhood, was placed on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's 2020 list of [America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places](#), and is the subject of a massive rehabilitation effort. To date, the NOH has raised \$1.8MM for the House's renovation, including significant gifts from the A. W. Mellon Foundation, the Richard King Mellon Foundation, the Allegheny Foundation, and Laura and former President George W. Bush. Solomon estimates another \$1MM is needed to finish the multi-year project.

The partnership between the NOH and [Pittsburgh Opera](#) includes developing curricula and programming in music education, artistic development, and community engagement. These curricula and programming will take place throughout the greater Pittsburgh area, including at Pittsburgh Opera's Headquarters the Bitz Opera Factory and at the NNOC House as various stages of renovation are completed, and beyond.

"This coming together of our two organizations is monumental", says Ms. Solomon. "Mary Cardwell Dawson wanted a stage for us all and because that couldn't happen in her time, the National Negro Opera Company was created. The time for reconciliation is never too late and when it happens, it bridges the gap that once existed."

"I am thrilled we've been able to establish this meaningful partnership. We're excited to develop purposeful initiatives to connect with, and support, the Homewood neighborhood and Pittsburgh in general," said Pittsburgh Opera General Director Christopher Hahn. "The historical importance of the National Negro Opera Company House is something to be cherished here in Pittsburgh and throughout the nation. We look forward to achieving our shared goal of bringing the beauty and magic of opera to the entire community, together."

About Pittsburgh Opera:

Pittsburgh Opera celebrates its 83rd season in 2021-22. Established by five intrepid women in 1939, Pittsburgh Opera is viewed as one of the most vibrant opera organizations in the U.S., with a rich artistic tradition, outstanding educational programs, an acclaimed artist training program, and a progressive outlook toward the future. Its green initiative culminated in LEED® Silver certification for its Strip District headquarters, and its capacity as a true community partner has increased significantly under General Director Christopher Hahn's leadership.

About National Opera House:

The 'National Opera House' or the 'NOH' is a Nonprofit Organization with 501(c) (3) status, working to restore and maintain a historic home at 7101 Apple Street in Pittsburgh PA. The house rose to national significance in 1941, when Mary Cardwell Dawson, a celebrated musician and educator, rented the third floor of the house as an office and rehearsal space for the National Negro Opera Company, the first permanent African-American Opera company in the nation. The NOH also provides National Negro Opera Company™ programming. The NOH is supported through National Negro Opera House™ fundraising through donations and grants. To learn more about our mission and current project needs, email us at info@nationaloperahouse.org to see how you can get involved!