

Applause

Summer 2025

Opera
LEX
OperaLex.org

Benefiting the
University of Kentucky's
Opera Theatre Program

McCorvey's Corner

Opera is Alive and Well! As we wrap up a wonderful season of opera, we are so excited to celebrate the success of our mainstage operas this year. THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO, one of the most popular operas in the operatic repertoire (and my favorite opera) was a huge success in bringing new audiences to the theatre. It was a joy to introduce our students to one of the operas that they will perform their entire careers. I was also excited to make my conducting debut with UK Opera Theatre in the production of SANCTUARY ROAD. SANCTUARY ROAD was the first presentation in a new series that we have started at UK Opera Theatre entitled TELLING AMERICA'S STORY. We are focusing on all parts of American stories including history, literature, film and great storytelling as it relates to America. This was a very successful first installment and we have already decided to extend it past the originally planned three-year cycle.

We hope that you are enjoying the work that we are doing and will consider supporting UK Opera Theatre. As you hear me say a lot, "opera is expensive!" but the rewards to our students and to our wonderful community are worth the investment.



Dr. Everett McCorvey,
Artistic Director

We hope that you will continue supporting UK Opera Theatre with your philanthropic efforts as well as your attendance. Please consider bringing your family and friends to our productions. We love introducing opera to new audiences. We have a wonderful product, and we are happy to partner with you in sharing it with our community.

It's a Grand Night for Singing! 2025

The semester may be over, but that means It's a Grand Night for Singing is in full swing! Grand Night began rehearsals on May 12 with cast of 50 talented students and community members.

We are grateful to have a group of seven "Rosenstein Scholars;" a group of students with additional responsibilities to the Grand Night production funded by a generous gift from Robert Rosenstein and Dr. Kim Clawson.

Join us for the 2025 edition of It's a Grand Night for Singing!, the University of Kentucky Opera Theatre's beloved summer musical revue. This high-energy celebration of Broadway classics and contemporary hits features over 75 performers from UK and the Lexington community. Expect dazzling choreography, heartfelt solos, and the much-anticipated piano medley by Tedrin Blair Lindsay. Special highlights include a duet by Everett and Alicia Helm McCorvey, adding a personal touch to this spectacular event

Performances will be held at the Singletary Center for the Arts on June 13–15 and June 20–22. Tickets are available now at **SCFAtickets.com**. Don't miss this Lexington tradition that brings the community together through the joy of music and performance.

For more information, visit the UK College of Fine Arts event page by scanning the QR code below!



Megh Jennings-Posner, MA, BFA
Program Coordinator, UK Opera Theatre

Won't You Join Us?



Ticket Info

Fri, June 13 2025, 7:30
Sat, June 14 2025, 2:00
Sun, June 15 2025, 6:00
Fri, June 20 2025, 7:30
Sat, June 21 2025, 2:00
Sun, June 22 2025, 2:00
Singletary Concert Hall



Beware of fraudulent online tickets. The ticket range is \$15 – \$64 before ticket fees. If you go over that amount, you are purchasing from a scam website.

Join Us at the OperaLex Hospitality Tent Before Every Grand Night Performance!

OperaLex invites you to make *It's a Grand Night for Singing! 2025* even more memorable by joining us at our exclusive Hospitality Tent before each performance at the Singletary Center for the Arts. Located outside the venue on the west lawn, the OperaLex Hospitality Tent is your place to gather, reconnect with fellow arts supporters, and celebrate the incredible talent of the University of Kentucky Opera Theatre. Whether you're a longtime patron or attending Grand Night for the first time, we welcome you to stop by and enjoy complimentary refreshments, a cash bar, and conversation in a festive, music-loving atmosphere.

Our Hospitality Tent tradition is one of the many ways we show appreciation for the fantastic community that keeps opera thriving in Lexington. The tent is always buzzing with energy and excitement.

Take a look below at some of our favorite photos from past performances and pre-show gatherings — you just might spot a familiar face!



2025 Event Calendar

**Subject to changes or additions*

**Jun
13-22**

Friday, Jun 13 – Sunday June 22: It's a Grand Night for Singing! 2025

Six performances over two weekends – Singletary Center

**Oct
3-5**

Friday, Oct 03 – Sunday, Oct 5 : Hansel and Gretel

Times: TBD – Lexington Opera House

Nov

Date: TBA November: The Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition

10am – Singletary Center

**Nov
15**

Saturday, Nov 15: Grand Encore Affair 2025

6:30pm – UK Gatton Student Center Ballroom

**Dec
14**

Sunday, Dec 14: Celebration of Song

Time: TBD – Alltech Arena, Kentucky Horse Park

Alumni Accolades!

UK Opera Theatre Alumni Shine on Stages Around the World

At the University of Kentucky Opera Theatre, we take great pride in preparing our students for the professional stage—and the spotlight continues to find our alumni in some of opera's most prestigious venues.



Christopher Burchett

After earning praise for his insightful directorial debut in *The Marriage of Figaro*, DMA candidate **Christopher Burchett** will return to the director's chair this fall for *Hansel and Gretel*, October 3–5 at the Lexington Opera House. His vision promises a classic, whimsical production with enchanting sets and costumes—a can't-miss moment for Lexington audiences.

Meanwhile, UK Opera Theatre alumni are making waves nationwide. Baritone **Reginald Smith, Jr.** is captivating audiences as Porgy in *Porgy and Bess* at the Washington National Opera, where **Amira Hocker**, another UK alum, is performing in the chorus. In Houston Grand Opera's production of the same masterpiece, **Blake Denson** takes on the role of Crown, with **La'Shelle Allen** as Maria and recent graduate **Audri Hughes** in the chorus—adding a special family note, as Hughes is also Denson's cousin.



Reginald Smith, Jr.



Amira Hocker



Blake Denson



La'Shelle Allen



Audri Hughes

On the international stage, **Evan Johnson** continues a meteoric rise, with performances at the Bayerische Staatsoper, Oper Frankfurt, Dallas Opera, and more. His upcoming debuts include the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and the National Theatre in Prague—a testament to both his talent and the excellence of UK's vocal training.



Evan Johnson



Norman Reinhardt



Ellen Graham

Closer to home, the powerful duo of **Norman Reinhardt** and **Ellen Graham** recently returned to campus to perform with the UK Symphony Orchestra in a moving performance of Verdi's *Requiem*, inspiring the next generation of singers by example.

Reflecting on these alumni achievements, UKOT Artistic Director **Dr. Everett McCorvey** shared:

"It is one of the greatest joys of my career to see our students grow from young hopefuls into internationally recognized artists. Their success is a reflection of their dedication and of the high standards we set at UK. We don't just train singers—we train artists who go on to change the world through music."

We are so proud of all our alumni who continue to elevate the name of UK Opera Theatre on the world stage. Bravo to each of you!

Board Member Spotlight: DR. FRANK C. MILLER



OperaLex is proud to shine the spotlight on board member Dr. Frank C. Miller, whose lifelong commitment to service, education, and the arts continues to enrich our organization.

A retired physician and Professor Emeritus at the University of Kentucky College of Medicine, Dr. Miller brought his leadership experience from both academia and military service when he and his wife, Patricia, moved to Lexington in 1990. Since then, they've been dedicated supporters of the UK School of Music and UK Opera Theatre, watching it grow into the nationally recognized program it is today.

Dr. Miller's love for music and the arts is matched by his belief in community impact.

"Serving on the OperaLex board has been incredibly rewarding," he shares. "It allows me to support an art form I deeply value while helping ensure opportunities for young artists right here in Central Kentucky."

We're grateful for Frank's thoughtful leadership and passion for opera!

Join OperaLex Today!

When you become a member of OperaLex, you provide vital support for Central Kentucky's vibrant opera scene and help educate the next generation of opera stars.

By joining OperaLex, you will play an instrumental role in preserving and promoting the arts in our community. Our organization has supported UK Opera Theatre and its renowned director, Dr. Everett McCorvey, for over 25 years.

To learn more about the benefits of OperaLex membership and to join our organization, we encourage you to visit our website at www.operalex.org. Or, review membership levels and benefits below, and scan the QR code above to join or renew your membership today!



MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

OperaLex Patrons provide the leadership support to sustain UK Opera Theatre as one of the top five academic opera programs in the United States.

BRONZE: \$1,000

- Bronze Patron level recognition in performance programs and on website
- Preferred seating at operas, Grand Night for Singing and Alltech Celebration of Song

SILVER: \$2,500

- Silver Patron level recognition in performance programs and on website
- Access to preferred parking
- Luncheon with the Artistic Director
- Invitation to a dress rehearsal with backstage tour and photos

GOLD: \$5,000

- Recognition in Artistic Director's remarks at opera performances
- Gold Patron level recognition in performance programs and on website

GENERAL DIRECTOR'S CIRCLE: \$10,000

- Annual Meeting with the Director
- Exclusive opportunities to travel with Director to see operas around the country
- 45-minute in-home performance by faculty and staff

Alltech Vocal Scholarship Competition Celebrates 20 Years of Transforming Dreams into Reality



The 20th annual Alltech Vocal Scholarship Competition, held at the Singletary Center for the Arts, commemorated two decades of investing in young vocal talent. Through a unique partnership with Alltech and UK, more than \$700,000 in scholarships and prizes were awarded, offering promising students the opportunity to study at the University of Kentucky and join the acclaimed UK Opera Theatre program.

Founded in 2006 by the late Dr. Pearse Lyons in partnership with Dr. Everett McCorvey, the competition has provided life-changing opportunities to over 200 vocalists. Dr. Mark Lyons, president and CEO of Alltech, reflected on the milestone, stating:

“This competition has allowed students to overcome financial barriers and pursue their dreams.”

In addition to scholarships for study at UK, several top students were awarded summer stipends to study abroad at AIMS in Graz, Austria. The competition continues to elevate the next generation of opera performers and celebrate the power of music to change lives.



2025 ALLTECH VOCAL SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION WINNERS

Undergraduate Student Winners

CoryOn Brooks – Paducah
Destiny Cardell – Louisville
Darian Wright – Louisville

Emory Hampton – Louisville
Lucy Schapman – Edwardsville, IL
Grayson Boehm – Louisville

Graduate Student Winners

Christian Abbo* – Las Vegas, NV
Matthew Pearce* – Lexington
Emily Wicker – Chaseburg, WI
Bizhou Chang* – Liaoning, China
Lily Allen* – Cleveland, TN
Lillian Broderick – Northfield, VT

Collin Stillday* – Plymouth, MN
Darien Roby – Alexandria, VA
Reagan Hinze – Lincoln, NE
Samuel Phillips – Birmingham, AL
Andrea Trusty – Ezel
Austin Morgan – Georgetown

**American Institute of Musical Studies (AIMS) Tuition Stipend*

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF THIS YEAR’S WINNERS!

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TEDrin Talk: Opera 101



People often ask me how I come up with my piano extravaganzas for Grand Night, so I thought I would demystify it for you! First comes the selection itself, for which I have two criteria:

1. At least 75% of the audience must be able to recognize the music immediately without the benefit of words;
2. The music must translate well to the piano and orchestra, so for example Barry Manilow tunes work better than Jimi Hendrix.

Back when I opened the second act of our show, I didn't feel the same time constraint that I do now that my feature comes in the middle of a one-act format. That makes cogent medleys harder to formulate so I find myself going for extravagant arrangements of single songs more often now, as I will this year! As for the selections themselves, I always feel that Grand Night could use more classic pop/rock, so I frequently go there, but I also like to change it up with humorous novelty (like my Liberace routine or Happy Birthday Variations) or lush, heartfelt romance. You'll have to come to Grand Night to find out which of those three categories I've tapped for my solo this year, but I can assure you of this: it will be over the top and it will be delivered with love for my favorite audience in the world!

SAVE THE DATE

**A GALA BENEFITING
UK OPERA THEATRE**

Grand Encore Affair
presented by OperaLex

Saturday, November 15th | 6:30 pm
University of Kentucky Student Center Ballroom

Enjoy an evening of music, dinner,
dancing, and more!