

The entire page is framed by a wide, ornate border of gold-colored floral and foliate motifs on a dark purple background. The motifs include stylized leaves, acanthus leaves, and small flowers, arranged in a repeating pattern.

La Bella Notte

✿ THE GILDED AGE OF OPERA ✿

PRESS KIT



**Friends of Nashville Opera
announce the thirtieth annual
La Bella Notte**

Saturday, February 10, 2024

Cocktails at 6:30 p.m.

Dinner at 8:00 p.m.

The Fisher Center for the Performing Arts

**Julie and John Schneider
Chairmen**



SUPPORTS NASHVILLE OPERA'S EDUCATIONAL AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMMING

Since 1995, Nashville Opera has brought opera to students around Middle Tennessee, introducing young audiences to the art form and filling in an enormous gap in arts education.

The works generally are based upon classic fairy tales: Little Red Riding Hood and The Three Little Pigs, for example. The story is set to the music of classical opera: Mozart, Rossini, Offenbach, and others. Rather than adhering strictly to the original fairy tale narrative, the writers often weave in lessons geared towards young audiences, such as the value of reading, listening to your parents, and cooperation.

The 2023 Tour visited 101 venues ~ schools, libraries, and community centers ~ and reached 25,343 young people who may not have otherwise had the opportunity to experience the art of opera or classical music. To date, Nashville Opera on Tour has reached 775,000 students across the region.

The tour cast is comprised of Nashville Opera's Mary Ragland Emerging Artists, up and coming singers gaining experience as they progress through their education. The show is accompanied by a professional pianist, staged in front of a flat mobile setting, and fully costumed.

Founded in 2021, Opera on Wheels is Nashville Opera's mobile stage setup capable to bringing concerts into the community. The Spring 2023 tour traveled across Davidson, Williamson, Cheatham, Maury, Montgomery, Robertson, and Wilson Counties, visiting senior communities, parks, libraries, and even Girl Scout camps. Along the way, free concerts were presented to 24,080 audience members.

All of this happens at absolutely no cost to any participating venue, school, student, or parent.

That is possible because of the guests of La Bella Notte and the generosity of Friends of Nashville Opera.



Founded in 1981 by Mary Cortner Ragland, Nashville Opera is the largest opera company in the State of Tennessee and has grown into a regional powerhouse commensurate with Atlanta Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Cincinnati Opera, and San Diego Opera.

CEO & Artistic Director John Hoomes has led the company since 1995. Across his tenure, Nashville Opera has presented the premieres of eight new works, including two by Nashville composer Marcus Hummon. Through its education and outreach programming, the company is a community leader striving to break down the barriers that prevent all Nashvillians from being able to access and appreciate the art of opera.

Nashville Opera's Education Tour has expanded since 1995, reaching over 25,000 young people across Middle Tennessee in 2023 alone. To date, Nashville Opera on Tour has invited 775,000 students to become the next generation of opera lovers.

The Mary Ragland Emerging Artist program serves as a training ground for up-and-coming singers to hone their skills, participate in master classes and workshops, have one-on-one coaching sessions, and gives them the opportunity to appear in Nashville Opera's spring mainstage production. In 2024, that will be Mozart's masterpiece, *The Magic Flute*.

The HBCU Fellowship, a first of its kind program, partners Nashville Opera with both Fisk and Tennessee State Universities, Nashville's Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Members of each yearly cohort participate in masterclasses with world renowned Black artists, are provided mentorship by Black arts leaders, and gain experience in all avenues of the arts, including administration, production, and performance.

Nashville Opera on Wheels brings opera to neighborhoods, libraries, the Nashville Zoo, senior communities, scout camps, and regional arts centers. Forty-five minute concerts are presented on the Opera on Wheels mobile stage and feature Nashville's finest classically-trained singers. The Summer 2023 tour reached 24,080 audience members across seven Middle Tennessee counties.

The Friends of Nashville Opera, formerly the Nashville Opera Guild, has worked tirelessly for over four decades to support Nashville Opera through volunteerism, providing artists with food and drink during rehearsals, hosting premiere dinners before mainstage shows, and being the chief financial sustainer of Nashville Opera's education and outreach programming.

The annual gala, *La Bella Notte*, celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2024 at Belmont University's Fisher Center for the Performing Arts. *La Bella Notte* is the first black-tie gala supporting a major Nashville arts organization hosted at the Fisher Center.

THE CHAIRMEN

JULIE SCHNEIDER AND DR. JOHN SCHNEIDER



Dr. and Mrs. John Schneider are honored to serve as the Chairmen of the thirtieth annual La Bella Notte.

Originally from the Midwest, John and Julie moved to Nashville 14 years ago and have never looked back. They now call Nashville home with their three sons: Ben, who graduated from Montgomery Bell Academy in 2023 and is a first-year student at Auburn University, and William and Jack, who currently attend Montgomery Bell Academy.

John is Tennessee's only board-certified neurologist and board-certified interventional

pain management physician. In 2010, he founded Comprehensive Pain & Neurology Center, PLLC, now with seven offices serving Middle Tennessee. John previously served as President and was a Founding Board Member of the Tennessee Pain Society. He has served former Tennessee Governor Haslam on the Tennessee Drug Utilization Review Board and Opioid Reduction Tennessee Together Task Force. John is currently on staff for the HCA hospital system as an assistant professor in neurology specializing in headache and pain management.

Julie is a retired attorney but continues a career in property management. Her volunteer work encompasses many facets of the Nashville community. She is on the Advisory Board of the Nashville Repertory Theater, having served as co-chair of the fifth and sixth annual Broadway Brunches and founded the patrons' party for the event. Julie is on the General Board of the Montgomery Bell Academy Mothers Club and currently serves on Symphony Ball, Ballet Ball, and Symphony Fashion Show committees.

HONORARY CHAIRMEN

JUDY FISHER AND DR. ROBERT FISHER



Friends of Nashville Opera have named Mrs. Judy and Dr. Bob Fisher as the Honorary Chairmen of La Bella Notte 2024.

For 21 years, Dr. Fisher served as President of Belmont University before retiring in 2021. During his tenure, university enrollment more than doubled, academic fields of study expanded, and the campus hosted presidential debates for the 2008 and 2020 elections. Dr. Fisher has been named both Nashvillian of the Year and Tennessean of the Year in recognition of

the numerous roles he has served throughout the community. All the while, Judy Fisher coordinated the beautification and design of Belmont's campus. Her efforts towards environmental stewardship and sustainable design included green roofs capping many of Belmont's buildings and being named to the Tree Campus USA list by the Arbor Day Foundation.

Longtime advocates for the arts, both in Nashville and at Belmont, the couple were honored with the naming of The Fisher Center for the Performing Arts, the glittering \$180 Million facility that will serve as the home of La Bella Notte 2024.

KEY EVENTS AND DATES

THE KICKOFF PARTY

Thursday, October 5, 2023

Gucci

The Mall at Green Hills

6:00 p.m. ~ 8:00 p.m.

THE PATRON PARTY

Thursday, February 1, 2024

By Invitation Only

Private Home in Northumberland

LA BELLA NOTTE THE GILDED AGE OF OPERA

Saturday, February 10, 2024

Cocktails at 6:00 p.m.

Dinner at 7:30 p.m.

The Fisher Center for the Performing Arts

Belmont University

2020 Belmont Boulevard

TO LEARN MORE

Visit LaBellaNotte.org or scan the following QR Code:



To obtain more information about La Bella Notte, the kickoff party, or the patron party, please contact Friends of Nashville Opera Liaison Margaret Carpenter at mcarpenter@nashvilleopera.org or (615) 832-5242.

For photos, audio or video, and other media resources, please contact Will Shutes, Nashville Opera's Director of Marketing and PR at wshutes@nashvilleopera.org or (615) 832-4252.



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