

A black and white portrait of Mary Cardwell Dawson, a woman with short, curly hair, looking slightly to the left. She is wearing a dark, sequined jacket and a necklace with a circular pendant. The background is a plain, light color.

Open Wide the Door

The Story of Mary Cardwell Dawson and
the National Negro Opera Company

EXHIBIT OPENING
SPRING 2024

About the Exhibit

Imagine it is a hot, August night in 1941. The theater is buzzing with activity. Costumes are being buttoned and zipped, make-up applied, and the singers are preparing to take the stage. The orchestra is tuning their instruments and a sense of anticipation fills the air. This is the scene on August 28, 1941 as the National Negro Opera Company, the most commercially successful Black- owned and operated company, prepared to perform 'Aida.'

In Spring 2024, the Charlotte Museum of History will unveil a new exhibition that imagines this night to tell the story of the National Negro Opera Company and its founder, Mary Cardwell Dawson.

This is the story of dancers, singers, musicians, set designers, costume designers, painters, and the entire production team. It is the story of segregation and a lack of funding, but also of perseverance and determination as a Black woman from the Piedmont of North Carolina carved out a space for herself in the world of opera, bringing a talented group of artists along with her in a world where separate was anything but equal.

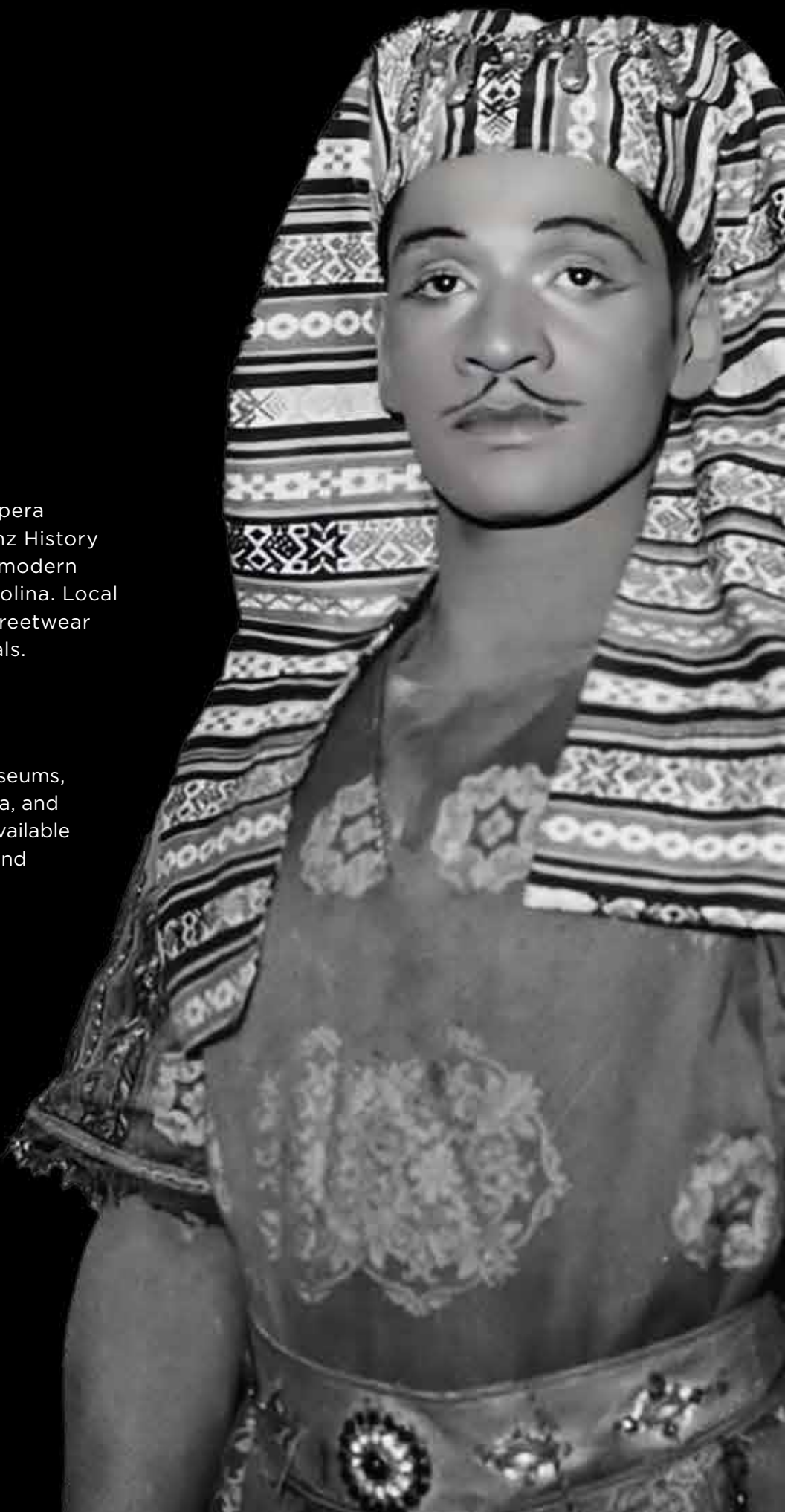


Costumes

Historical costumes from the opera company on loan from the Heinz History Center will be contrasted with modern costumes loaned by Opera Carolina. Local fashion designers will create streetwear versions inspired by the originals.

Artifacts

Items on loan from Carnegie Museums, Smithsonian Institution Anacostia, and the Library of Congress will be available for viewing as a part of this ground breaking exhibition.



The National Negro Opera Company Foundation, Incorporated

MARY CARDWELL DAWSON, Founder—Managing Director

with its PITTSBURGH GUILD

— presents —

VERDI'S
IMMORTAL

“AIDA” in English



★ Napoleon Reed
as “RHADAMES”



★ Muriel Rahn
as “AIDA”



★ Robert McFerrin
as “AMONASRO”

★ Catherine Cardwell Gardner as “THE HIGH PRIESTESS”

★ Walter Burte Jackson as “THE MESSENGER”

★ William Summerfield as “THE KING”

★ Members of PITTSBURGH SYMPHONY Orchestra

ANGELO GATTO, Conductor

JAMES W. BUTCHER, Stage Director

JOSEPH NASH, Choreographer

★ Marion D. Cuyjet, Ballet Mistress Delores Brown, Premiere Danseuse

SYRIA MOSQUE

Bigelow Blvd.

Pittsburgh, Pa.

Saturday, Oct. 9, 1954 -- 8:15 P.M.



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TICKETS:

\$1.10 - 1.65 - 2.20

\$3.30 - 4.40 - 5.50

Box Seats:

8 for \$100

6 for \$75

On Sale Now:

Opera Headquarters

2601 Centre Ave.

Vollwain's

632 Liberty Ave.  
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Eleanor Tobin
as “AMNERIS”

Sponsorship Levels

All levels include recognition in the exhibition. Additional benefits available at each level.

PATRON



Name & Logo on the Exhibit

Name & Logo on the Exhibit Website

Two (2) Tickets to the Exhibit Opening

Five (5) Exhibit Guest Passes

\$5,000

BACKSTAGE CREW



Name & Logo on the Exhibit

Name, Logo, & Hyperlink on the Exhibit Website

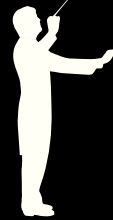
Four (4) Tickets to the Exhibit Opening

Ten (10) Exhibit Guest Passes

Discounted tickets to CMH special events

\$10,000

MAESTRO'S CIRCLE



Name & Logo on all Exhibit materials

Name, Logo, & Hyperlink on the Exhibit Website

10% discount on Event Space Rentals

Six (6) Tickets to the Exhibit Opening

Fifteen (15) Exhibit Guest Passes

Discounted tickets to CMH special events

\$15,000

CENTER STAGE



Name & Logo on all Exhibit materials

Name, Logo, & Hyperlink on the Exhibit Website

15% discount on Event Space Rentals

Eight (8) Tickets to the Exhibit Opening

Twenty (20) Exhibit Guest Passes

Discounted tickets to CMH special events

\$20,000

Sponsor Agreement

EXHIBITION COMING SPRING 2024

YES! We will sponsor the exhibition at the following level:

- **CENTER STAGE | \$20,000+**
- **MAESTRO'S CIRCLE | \$15,000+**
- **BACKSTAGE CREW | \$10,000+**
- **PATRON | \$5,000+**

One Presenting sponsorship available. Please contact Terri L. White at terri@charlottemuseum.org for information.

Payment & Recognition Information:

Name/Business (as it will appear in collateral material) _____

Web URL (to be linked, if applicable) _____

Main Contact _____

Email _____

Mailing Address _____

Social Media Handles _____

Payment may be made by:

- Check (to: The Charlotte Museum of History, mail to 3500 Shamrock Dr, Charlotte NC 28215)
- Credit Card (at charlottemuseum.org, credit card form available on request)

Signature

Date

Please send information, plus a high-resolution logo (JPEG or PNG), to the Museum by January 15 to receive full recognition. For more information or to discuss custom sponsorship packages, please contact Terri White, President & CEO, at 704.568.1774 or terri@charlottemuseum.org.

