OPERA AMERICA

PCM NEW TRUSTEE ORIENTATION

September 25, 2025, 4:30 p.m. ET

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OPERA America

Founded in 1970 by 20 companies

200 Professional Company Members (PCM)

500 Associate, Business, Educational Members

3,000 Individual Members

GOVERNANCE BASICS

Board/Staff Relationships

BOARD
(CHAIR)

- Governance/Fiduciary
- Policy Development
- Monitor Performance
- Hire/Fire CEO

STAFF
(GENERAL DIRECTOR)

Inform/Implement Policies
Manage Programs And Budgets
Manage Partnerships And Relationships
Manage Staff And Volunteers

BOARD

- Active Volunteers
- Community Ambassadors
- Recruit Volunteers, Donors, Ticket Buyers
- Contribute/Secure Funding
- Participate Actively

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Three Levels of Trust

Community

Mutual

Staff

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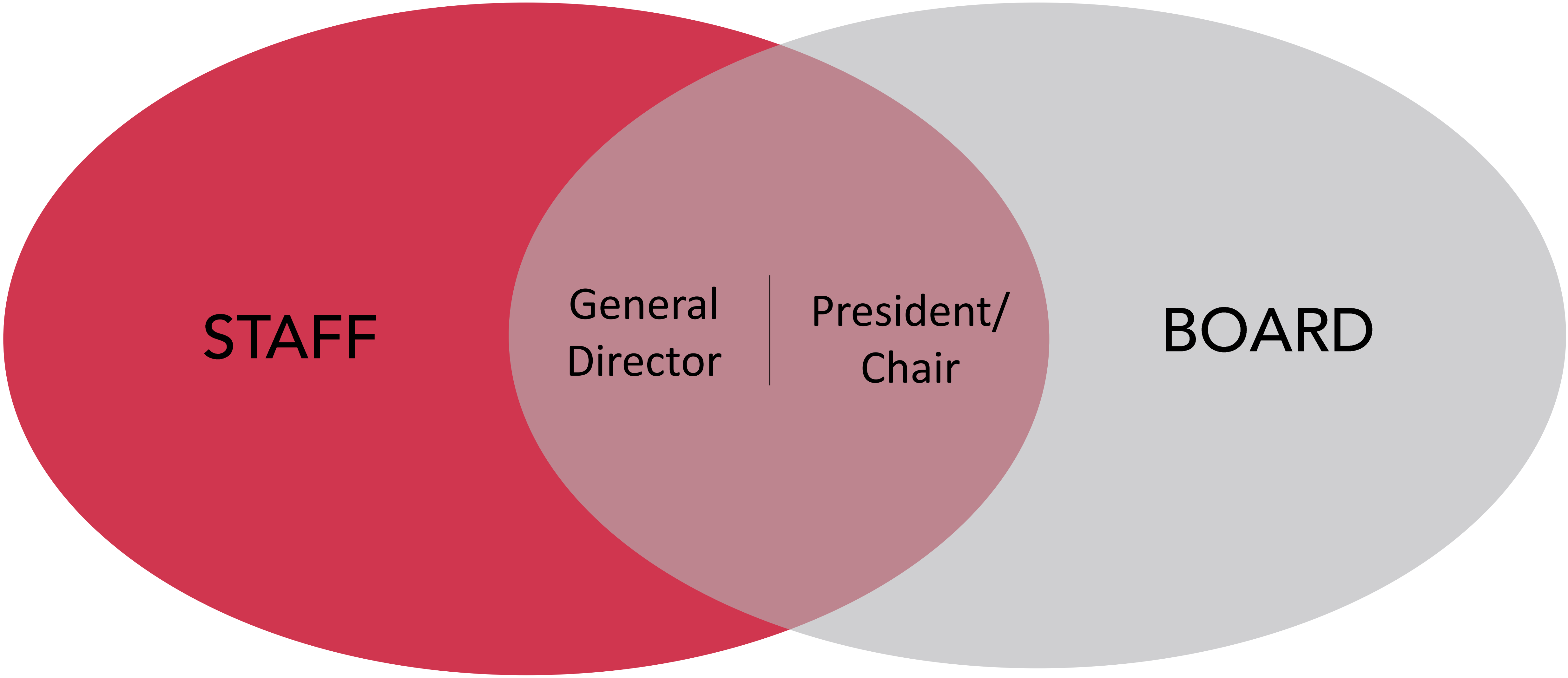
STAFF
General Director
President/ Chair
BOARD

Multiple Balances

Financial

Artistic

Civic

Human

Hearing, Understanding & Action

What have Board members been told?

What do Board members understand?

How do Board members act in relation to their understanding?

A Learning Board

Enjoys curiosity

Embraces learning as a responsibility

Listens to learn

Resists over-simplification

Avoids decision momentum

Socrates: "A wise man knows what he does not know."

Asking the Right Questions the Right Way

Ask questions at the right time and in the right place.

Ask questions in the context of established priorities and strategies.

Always consider the human dimension.

Ask about the effectiveness of the Board.

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Achieving Individual Purposefulness

Clarify current company priorities

Clarify your skills, interests, and connections as they pertain to company priorities

Volunteer for and accept specific assignments with goals

Request coaching or assistance as needed

Check in regularly

Celebrate success

DEFINITION:
Working Boards

Many board members work actively to fulfill some administrative functions as an extension of the staff.

DEFINITION: Governing Boards

The primary focus of board members is fiduciary oversight based on goals and related metrics for success.

DEFINITION:
Healthy Boards

Board members blend active engagement with fiduciary oversight.

INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

Most Important Current Issues

Evolving Repertoire	What do we produce? Where? For whom?
	The Top 10 and New Works
Audience Attitudes and Behaviors	Who is the audience(s) now?
	Subscriptions and single tickets

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Most Important Current Issues *(continued)*

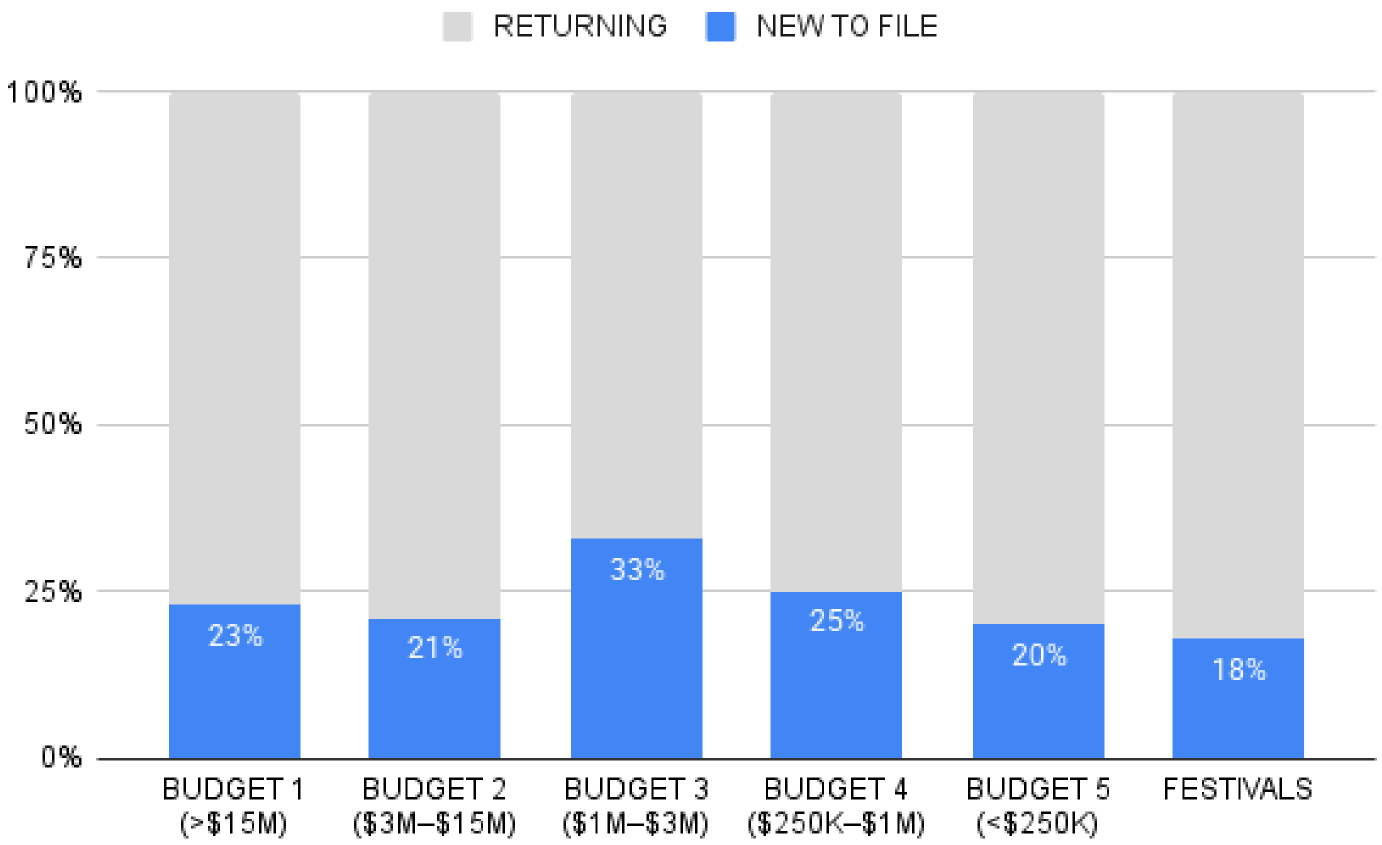
Diminished Media	Newspapers, reviews/features, classical radio stations
	Direct mail, telemarketing
	Changing social media platforms and protocols
Donor Dynamics	Creating a case amid increased competition
	Renewing/increasing support through consolidation
	Generational shifts

Most Important Current Issues *(continued)*

Increasing Expenses	Improved ticket sales and increased contributions do not offset rising costs
	Rising costs absorb operational efficiencies
The Human Dimension	Increasing diversity to reflect communities
	Changing staff dynamics
	Engaging and inspiring board members

Ticket Sales Survey

New to File Ticket Buyers: January – August 2024



The percentage of new-to-file ticket buyers increased by 15% from 2019 to 2024.

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New to File Audiences

Want to experience something ‘new’.

Are interested in the opera ‘experience’.

Are more likely to be drawn to works with recognizable titles.

Have had some introduction to opera through media.

Have a positive experience.

Want to know more about opera.

Are concerned about ticket prices.

Are more varied in age, race/ethnicity, income, and education.

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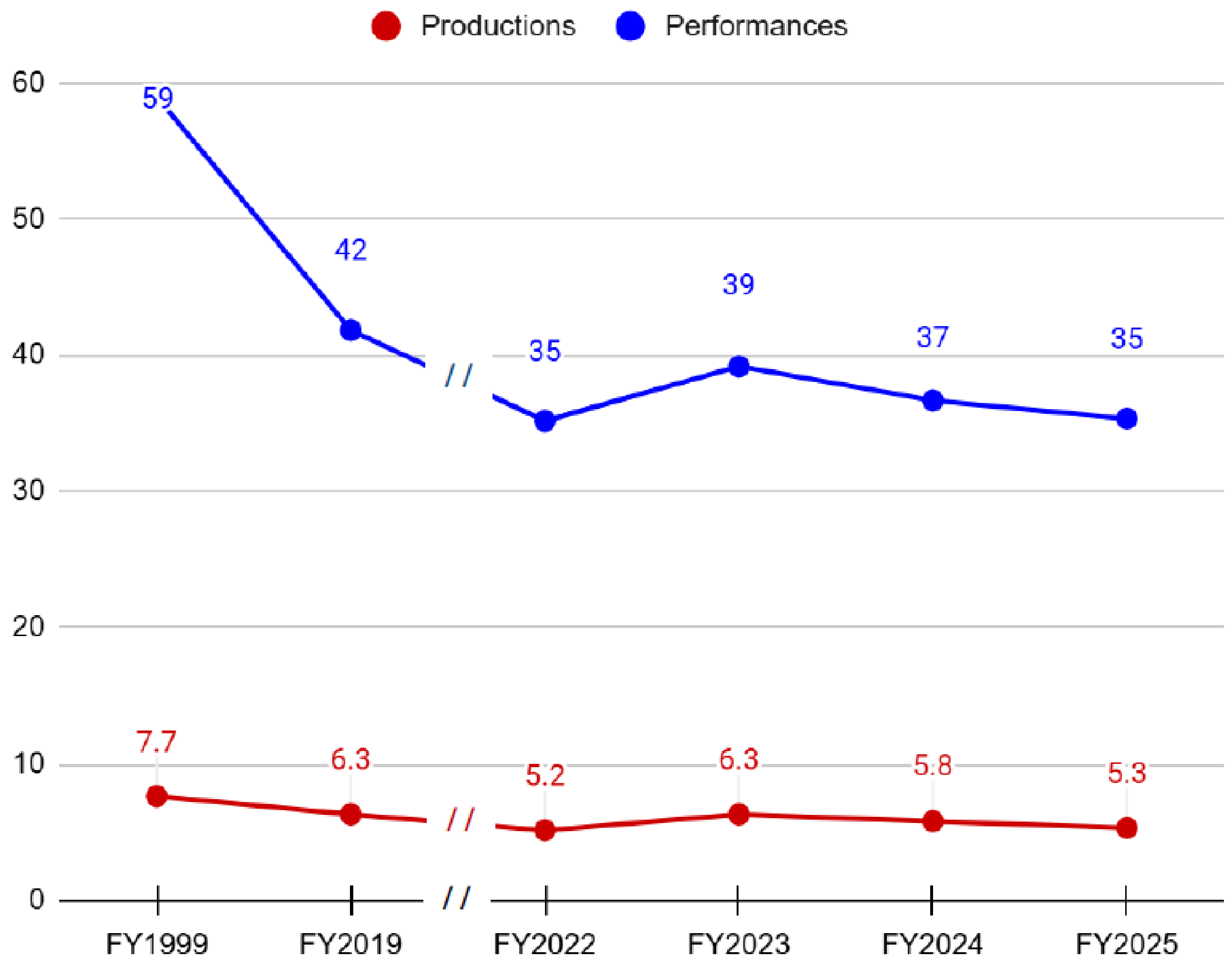
Budget 1 Companies Comparative Analysis

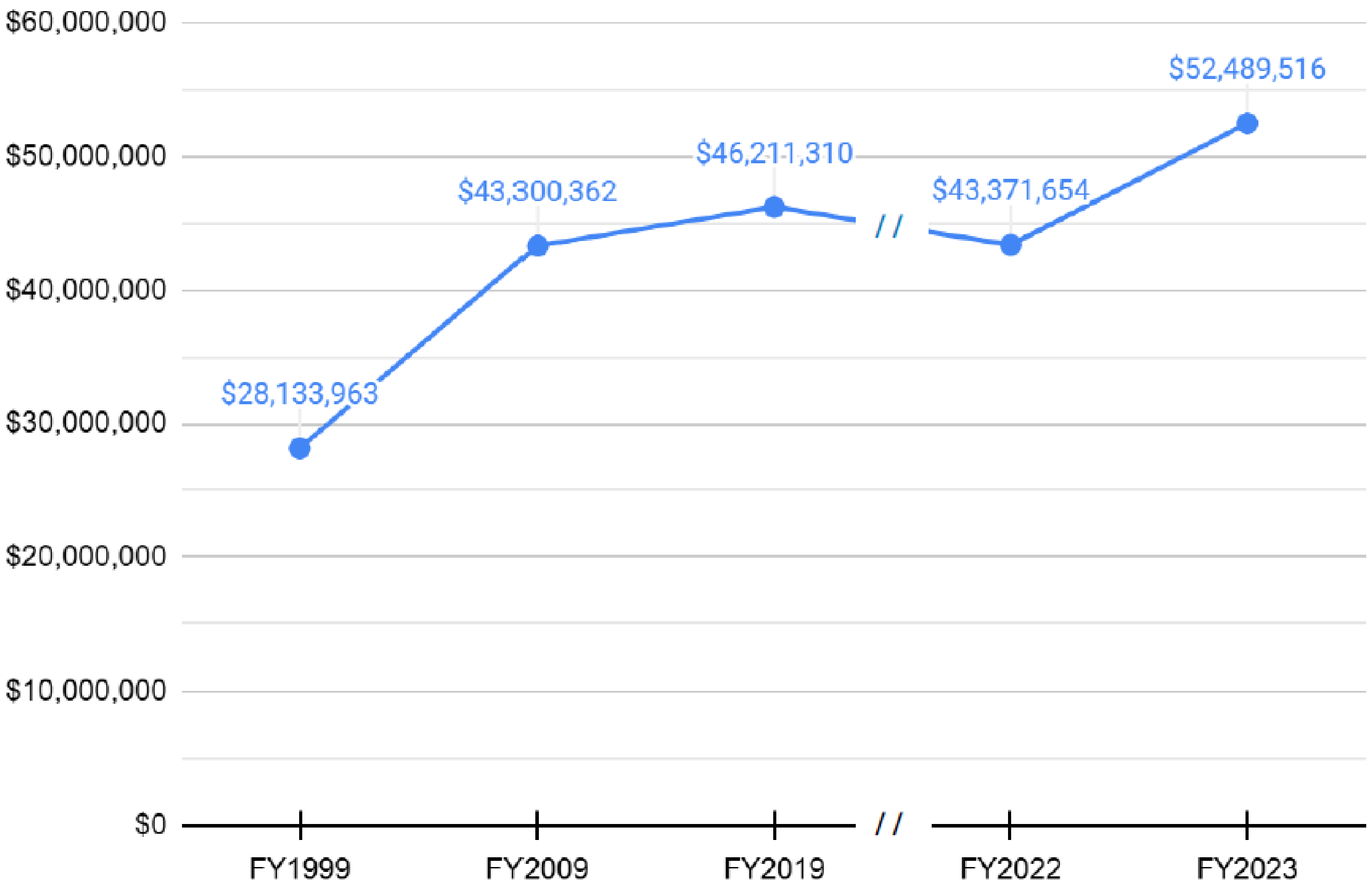
BUDGET 1 SAMPLE GROUP

Company	Year Founded
Houston Grand Opera	1955
Los Angeles Opera	1986
Lyric Opera of Chicago	1954
San Francisco Opera	1923
Santa Fe Opera	1956
Seattle Opera	1964

Budget 1 Average Productions & Performances



Budget 1 Average Operating Expenses



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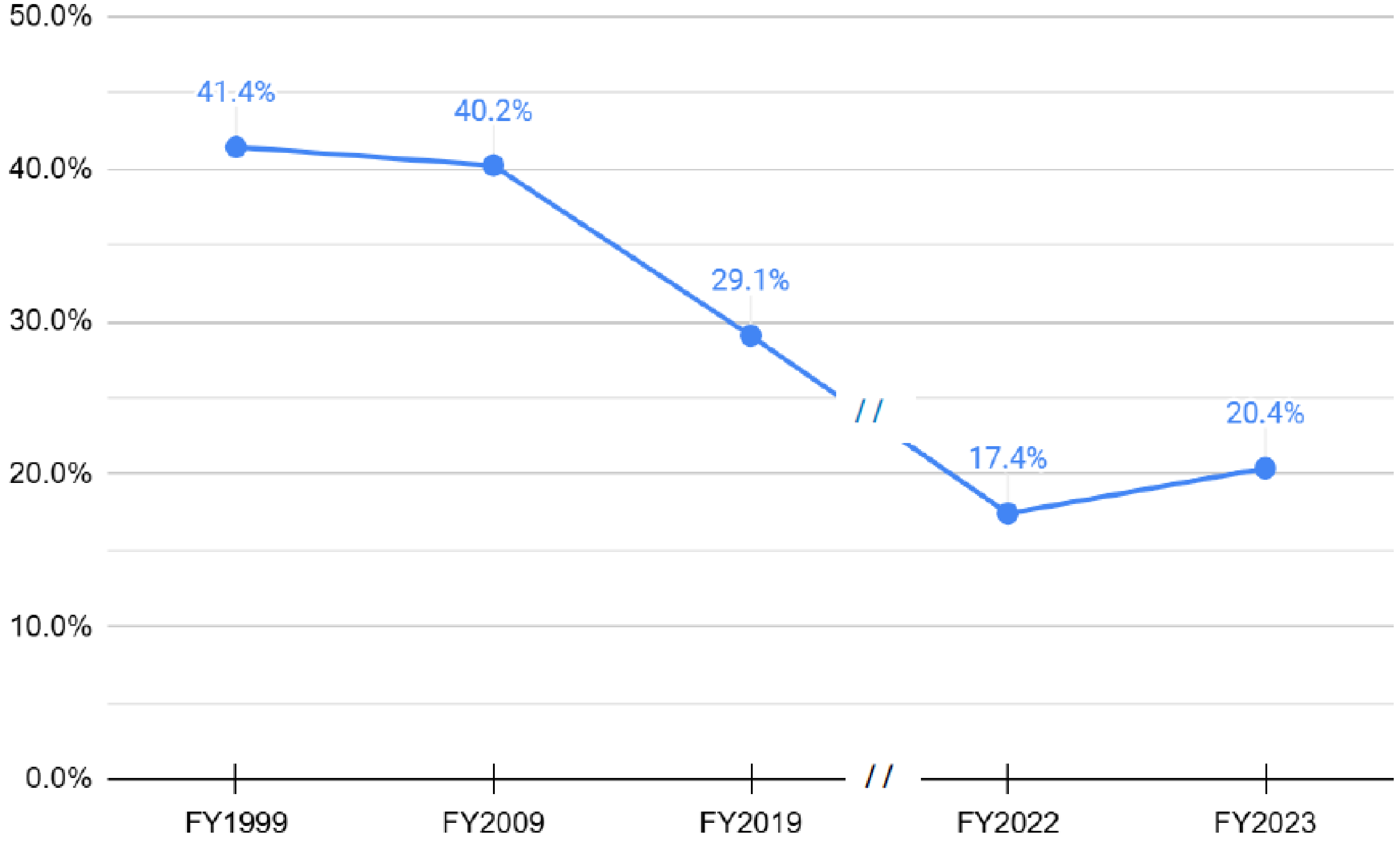
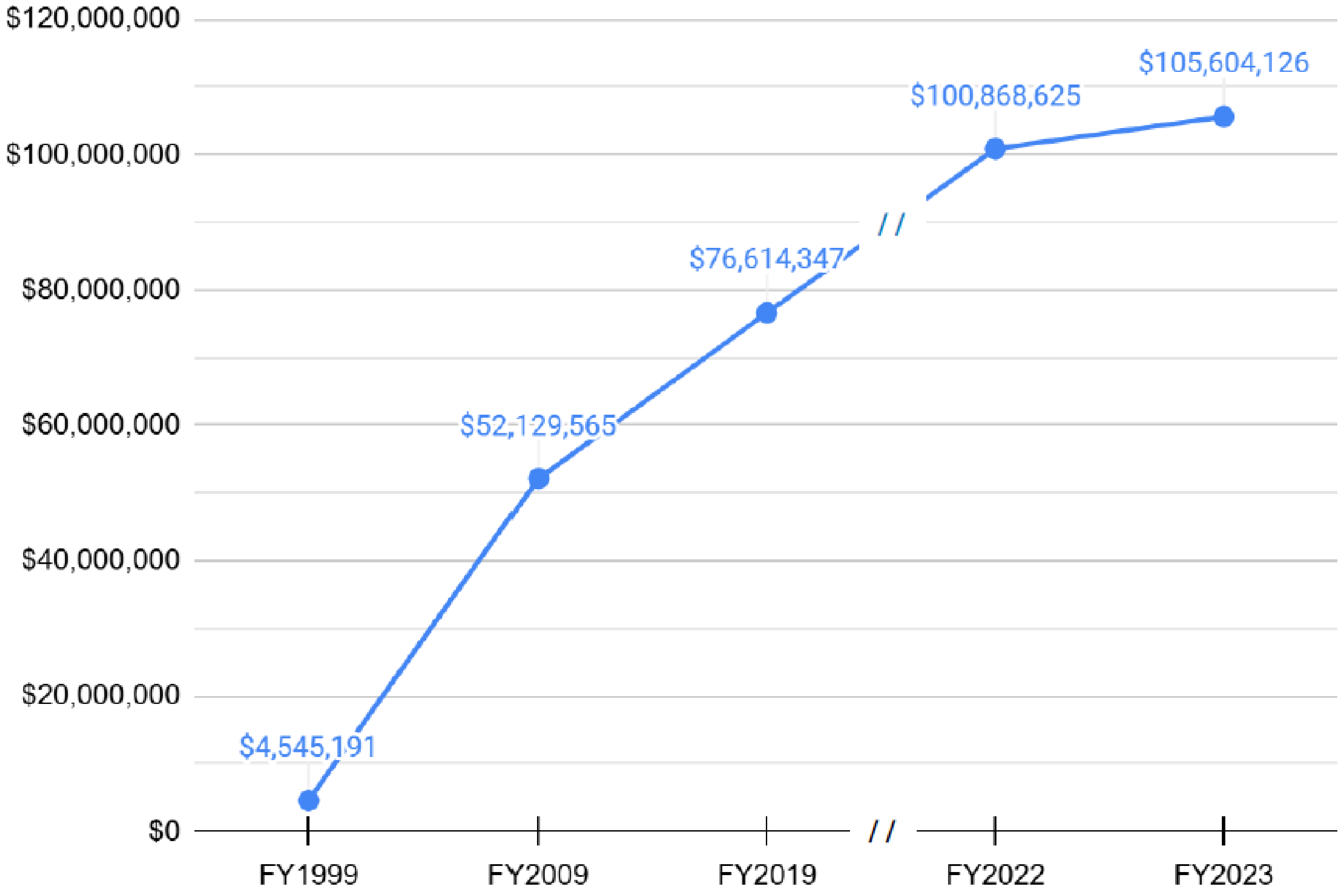
Budget 1 Box Office Income As % Of Revenue



Budget 1 Average Endowment Balance



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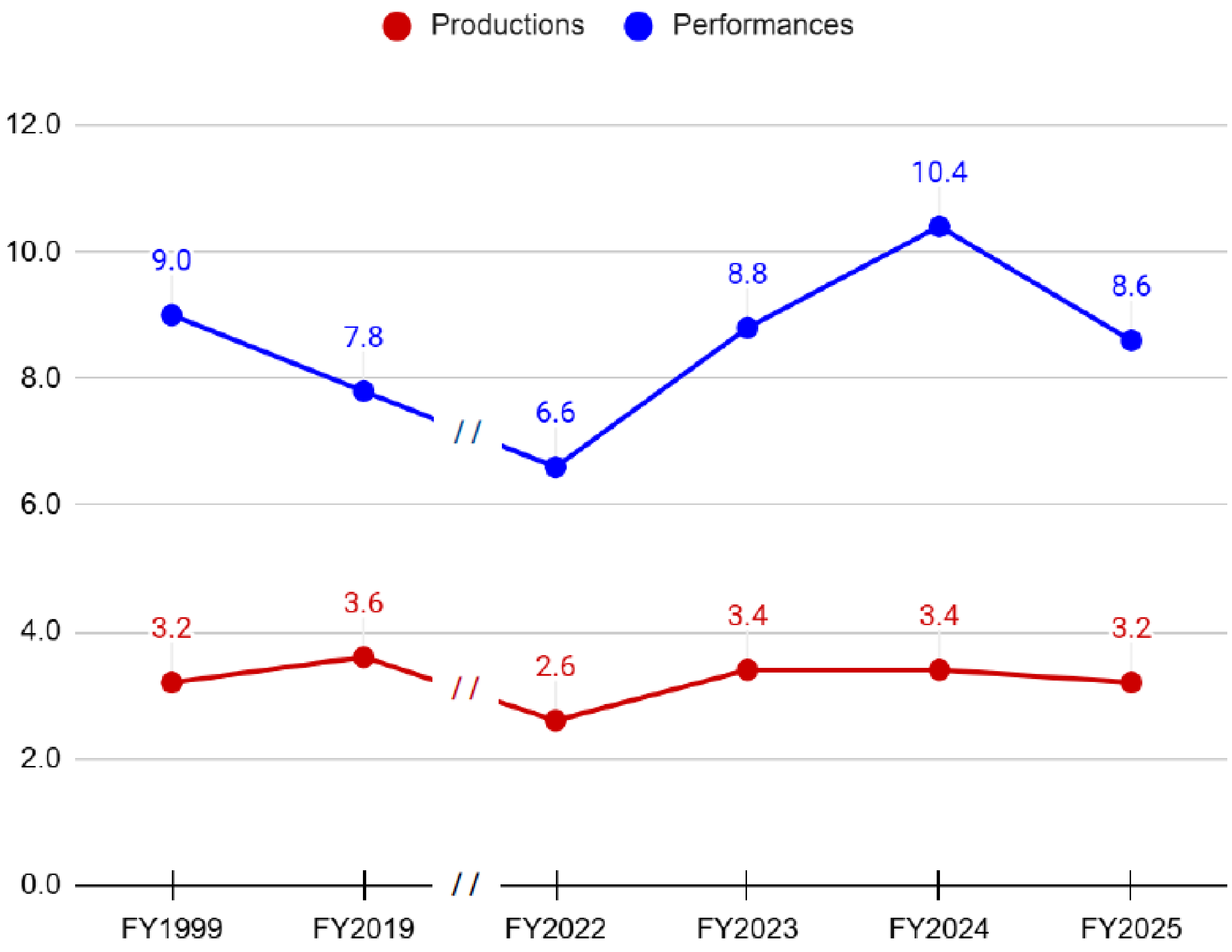
Budget 3 Companies Comparative Analysis

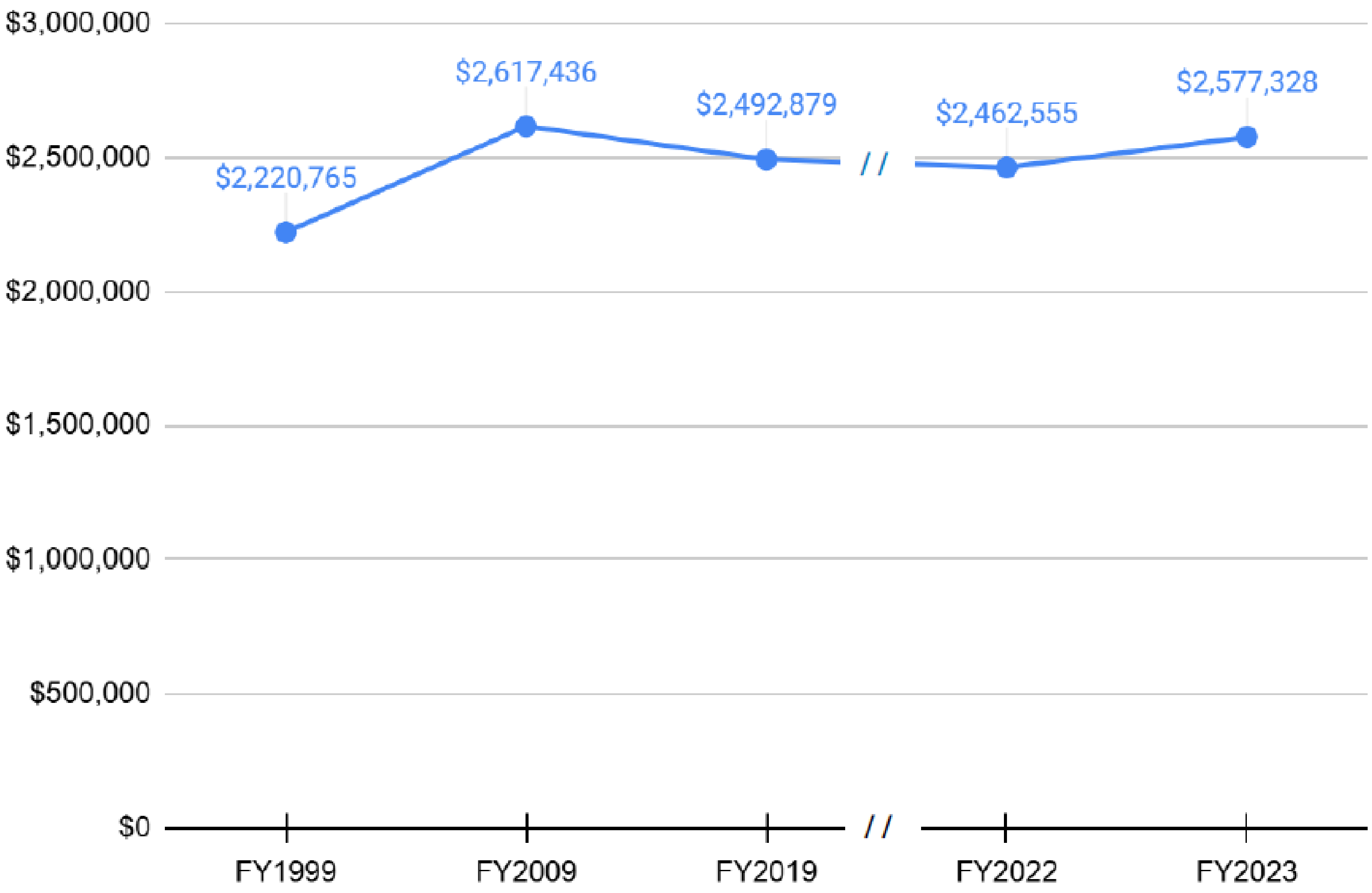
BUDGET 3 SAMPLE GROUP

Company	Year Founded
The Florentine Opera	1933
Kentucky Opera	1952
Nashville Opera	1981
Opera Columbus	1981
Tulsa Opera	1948

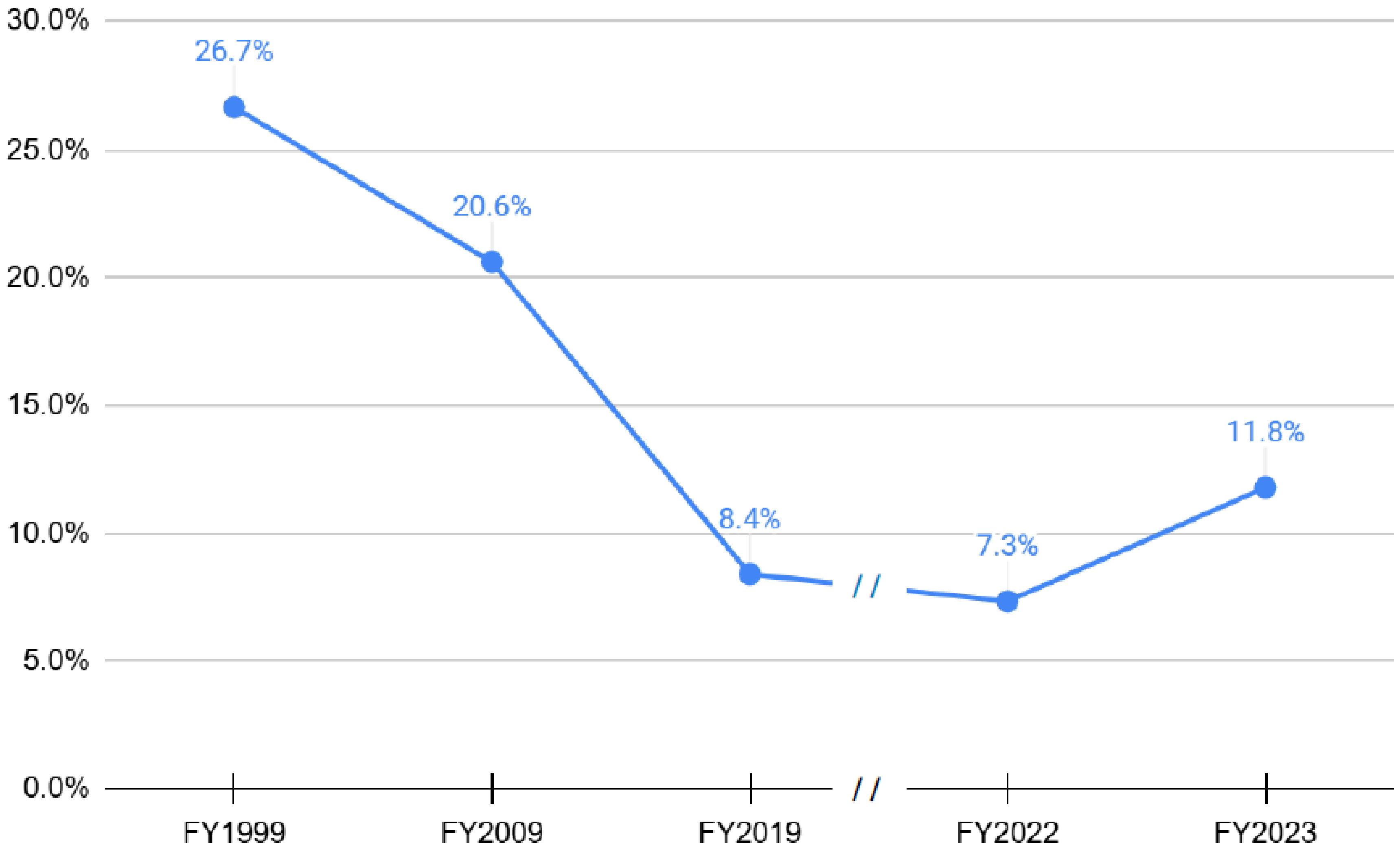
Budget 3 Average Productions & Performances



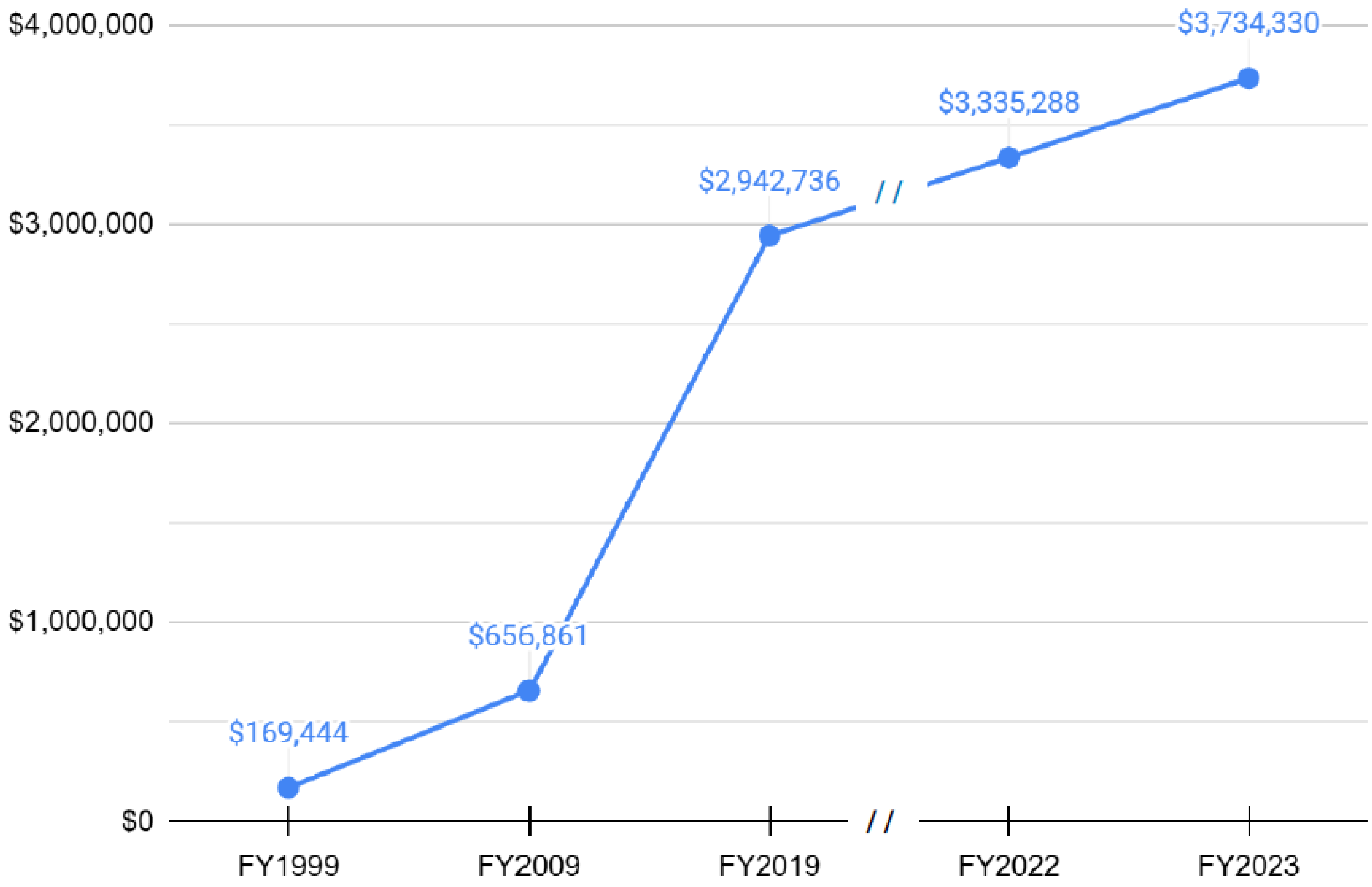
Budget 3 Average Operating Expenses



Budget 3 Box Office Income As % Of Revenue



Budget 3 Average Endowment Balance



KEY INDUSTRY RATIOS

Key Industry Ratios

BOX OFFICE REVENUE as a PERCENTAGE OF OVERALL REVENUE

- Budget 1 companies: 20.4%
- Budget 3 companies: 11.8%
- Festivals: 18.6%

CORE ARTISTIC EXPENSES as a PERCENTAGE OF OVERALL EXPENSES

- Budget 1 companies: 57.2%
- Budget 3 companies: 40.8%
- Festivals: 53.0%

BOX OFFICE INCOME as a PERCENTAGE OF CORE ARTISTIC EXPENSES

- Budget 1 companies: 35.4%
- Budget 3 companies: 27.7%
- Festivals: 31.0%

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Key Industry Ratios

PERSONNEL vs NON-PERSONNEL COSTS

- Budget 1 companies : 70.3% vs 29.7%
- Budget 3 companies : 57.5% vs 42.5%
- Festivals : 62.5% vs 37.5%

Key Industry Ratios

INDIVIDUAL/BOARD MEMBER GIFTS as a PERCENTAGE OF OVERALL CONTRIBUTIONS

- Budget 1 companies: 68.2%
- Budget 3 companies: 26.9%
- Festivals: 54.7%

CORPORATE GIFTS as a PERCENTAGE of OVERALL CONTRIBUTIONS

- Budget 1 companies: 3.3%
- Budget 3 companies: 3.2%
- Festivals: 8.9%

Key Industry Ratios

DEVELOPMENT PRODUCTIVITY RATIO

- Budget 1 companies: $7.43
- Budget 3 companies: $7.99
- Festivals: $4.96

MARKETING PRODUCTIVITY RATIO

- Budget 1 companies: $2.48
- Budget 3 companies: $1.67
- Festivals: $2.25

Key Industry Ratios

ENDOWMENTS as a PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL BUDGETS

- Budget 1 companies: 201%
- Budget 3 companies: 145%
- Festivals: 308%

What Boards and Staff Ask For

THE STAFF PERSPECTIVE

What Do Staff Wish to Ask For?

Make the opera company one of your top priorities

Activate networks/advocate

Develop personal goals related to the company

Honor your commitments/be accountable

Lead by example

What Do Staff Wish to Ask For? *(continued)*

Understand and focus on the mission

Focus on strategy; look to the future

Welcome new ideas/adapt to changes

Approve achievable goals

Be open to reasonable risk

What Do Staff Wish to Ask For? *(continued)*

Respond to the staff; remember it's small

Commit to teamwork/spirit

Respect boundaries

Prepare for an attend more meetings/activities

Participate but don't dominate/be courteous

What Boards and Staff Ask For

THE TRUSTEE PERSPECTIVE

Main Themes

Responsiveness: Better communication and attentiveness to board members, emphasizing proactive engagement and timely follow-ups

Decision-Making: Consistent and careful decision-making with focus on planning ahead and understanding financial projections

Engagement: Openness to new ideas, brainstorming sessions, and harnessing board member strengths more effectively

Main Themes *(continued)*

Focus: Emphasize the mission, implement proposals, show more willingness to listen.

Professionalism: Maintain structured meetings respect schedules, foster transparent interactions

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Essentials of Opera Governance

Thursdays, 4:30 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. ET

October 16 – Fiduciary Responsibility
November 13 – Strategic Planning

operaamerica.org/Essentials

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Upcoming Meetings

National Trustee Forum 2026

March 18–20 | New York, NY

operaamerica.org/NTF

Including performances at the Met, Juilliard, and NY Philharmonic – and celebration of Opera Hall of Fame and Trustee Awards

Opera Conference 2026

May 12–15 | Wilmington, DE

operaamerica.org/Conference

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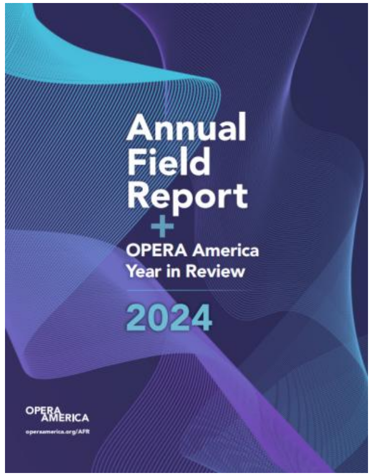
Publications for Trustees

Opera America Magazine

operaamerica.org/Magazine

Annual Field Report

operaamerica.org/AFR



Across the Board

operaamerica.org/AcrosstheBoard

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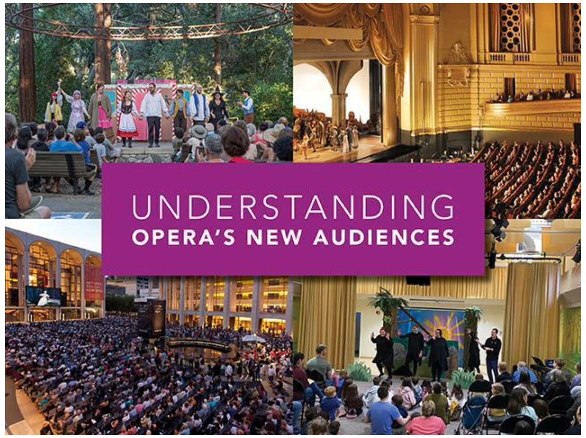
Research into Opera Newcomers

Understanding Opera's New Audiences

operaamerica.org/NewAudiences



Engaging Opera's New Audiences

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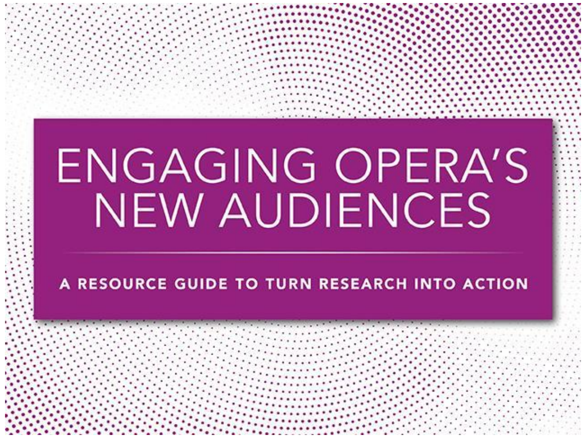

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