

Accessibility Options Available at Opera Birmingham

Opera is for everyone! At Opera Birmingham, we try to remove barriers that can inhibit a patron's enjoyment of our performances. We already provide supertitles for patrons so they can understand what is being sung, and all of our theatres have options for assisted listening devices for patrons who need them. With our move to digital programs last season, patrons can access information about our shows on their computer or smart phone. Additionally, this year, we will be implementing some new features to our performances to expand accessibility, especially for Deaf and Blind patrons.

Beginning with our performances of *dwb (driving while black)*, we are expanding how patrons can access our supertitles through a new program which can allow low-vision patrons to access titles on a digital device. We will have iPads that patrons can use so they can view the titles, with the option to adjust the size of the font as needed. Patrons with their own digital devices can also access a website, which will allow them to see the titles as well. This will be especially helpful for patrons who are not able to see the titles projected above the stage, allowing them to continue to enjoy our performances and understand what is being sung from the stage.

This is the first step to provide a broad range of accessibility features to our performances. Throughout this coming year, we will introduce additional accessibility options including:

- Audio descriptive services: Patrons can check out a headset to wear during the performance and hear a description of action happening on the stage.
- ASL interpreters: Selected performances will include ASL interpreters translating what is being sung.
- Braille and large-print program materials

Behind the scenes, we have implemented new audition and casting processes to allow greater access for disabled artists to audition for our shows, and we will have resources in the rehearsal room and backstage at performances to support all our performers.

We are excited to expand access to the performing arts and will continue to explore new technology and procedures to allow more patrons and artists to be part of our productions.

If you are interested in using one of our iPads for supertitles, please contact the Opera Birmingham office at 205-322-6737 so we can reserve one of our units for you. We have a limited number of devices and will add more as we see how many patrons need to use them. Stay tuned for more announcements as additional accessibility features are added to future shows.