Become part of the story.

War Memorial Auditorium (WMA), a historic concert hall in downtown Nashville, sits across the street from the Tennessee State Capitol building. Dedicated in 1925, this exquisite site is elegant and versatile, as leading architects and artists of the time contributed to its style and world-class acoustics. For more than 90 years, this storied space has served as concert hall, performance space, civic auditorium, political backdrop, video and film site, and more.

Built to honor Tennessee’s role in the First World War (1914-18) and commemorate the Tennesseans who fought and died in the war, the auditorium soon became the performance home of the Nashville Symphony (1925-80) and the Grand Ole Opry (1939-43). Minnie Pearl, Bill Monroe, and Ernest Tubb were inducted into the Opry while the radio program was based at War Memorial Auditorium.

The renovated venue functions as a multi-purpose space and offers the flexibility of theatrical, cabaret, banquet seating, or an open-floor configuration on the orchestra level. War Memorial Auditorium features in-house and state-of-the-art audio, video, and lighting equipment, placing it among the best sounding rooms in Nashville.

Artists who have performed at War Memorial Auditorium include:

Rocking Nashville since 1925.

Whatever the decade or style of music, history is always in the making at War Memorial Auditorium, which marked its 90th year on September 21, 2015. An ongoing series of short films highlighting emerging artists, The Attic Sessions provide an intimate look at an artist’s songcraft and showcases acoustic performances. Filmed in The Attic Lounge, an eclectic, private room backstage in War Memorial Auditorium, the candid documentaries, focus on the songwriter and the writing process, the foundation of Nashville’s music scene. Watch them all at WMAROCKS.COM/AtticSessions or on YouTube.

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- Adam Ant
- Atoms for Peace
- The Avett Brothers
- Bastille
- David Bowie
- Lindsay Buckingham
- Ray Charles
- Chris Cornell
- Elvis Costello
- Kevin Costner & Modern West
- The Eagles
- The Flaming Lips
- Florida Georgia Line
- Aretha Franklin
- The Fray
- HAIM
- Jeezy
- Billy Joel
- Elton John
- KISS
- Lady Gaga
- Kendrick Lamar
- Ray LaMontagne
- Marilyn Manson
- Macklemore
- Moon Taxi
- Jason Mraz
- Mumford and Sons
- Willie Nelson & Family
- Dolly Parton
- Robert Plant
- R.E.M.
- Rush
- Skrillex
- Jack White
- Robert Plant and Patty Griffin

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The Fourth Home of the Grand Ole Opry

The most famous, and longest-running, radio show in the world made War Memorial Auditorium its home from 1939-43. During this time, the Opry charged a 25-cent admission to curb the large crowds, but admission quickly rose to 50 cents. From WMA, the Opry made its nationally broadcast debut on NBC Radio on October 14, 1939. A one-hour broadcast of The Prince Albert Show, the Opry’s original name due to its sponsor Prince Albert Tobacco, was hosted by Roy Acuff. Artists inducted into the Opry during its years at WMA include Bill Monroe, Ernest Tubb, and Minnie Pearl (Sarah Cannon). The Opry moved next to the Ryman Auditorium, however, it returned to WMA after the Nashville flood in 2010, performing several times between May and August of that year, wowed Roy Acuff and the Smoky Mountain Boys performing during an Opry show.

A Historic Backstage

Dressing rooms at War Memorial Auditorium are painstakingly curated to highlight different parts of its history. The Roy Acuff Suite commemorates the years in which the auditorium served as the home of the Grand Ole Opry. The Belle Kinney Room recognizes the artistic abilities of the underestimated 20th century sculptor of the “Victory” statue in War Memorial Auditorium’s atrium courtyard and the “Women of the Confederacy” monument that stands at the southwest corner of the building. The Alvin C. York Room pays tribute to one of the most decorated American soldiers in World War I, and a recipient of the Medal of Honor. In this room, we showcase the building’s political history – including visits by U.S. presidents and numerous Tennessee Governor Inaugurations.

Making Musical History

In the 1970s and 1980s, War Memorial Auditorium became a premier venue for the biggest names in music, and it was home to historic performances. The venue hosted David Bowie, Frank Zappa, KISS, Lou Reed, Elvis Costello, The Kinks, R.E.M., Elton John, and Billy Joel. In the early 2000s, WMA’s historical roots and stellar sound drew alternative, indie artists like Death Cab for Cutie, Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Jason Mraz, Nickel Creek, HAIM, and Ray Lamontagne. Robert Plant and the Band of Joy spent two snowy days in February 2011 recording their episode of “Live from the Artists Den.” The tradition continues as War Memorial Auditorium’s reputation spreads among emerging artists and legends alike.

1925 GRAND OLE OPRY 1939-43 CAMPAIGN STOP 1960-64 EMERGENCE AS A POPULAR CONCERT VENUE 1973-87 NASHVILLE HOUSE CONCERTS 2017-19

War Memorial Auditorium was dedicated on September 21, 1925, to honor Tennessee’s involvement in the First World War (1914-18) and commorroates 3,400 Tennesseans who fought and died in the war.

John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, and Richard Nixon made campaign stops at War Memorial Auditorium, a popular political backdrop.

Hundreds of celebrity artists have graced the stage of War Memorial Auditorium. The pop culture in one era becomes a part of WMA’s colorful history in the next.

Launches September 2017, Nashville House Concerts featured musical performances, imaginative interviews, and unpredictable fun. Storme Warren hosted this show each month with a variety of co-hosts and a diverse blend of talent.

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Architecture and Belle Kinney

At the Tennessee Centennial Exposition in 1897, Nashville-born Belle Kinney won first prize for her sculpture of her father. She was only 7 years old. At 15, she won a scholarship to study at the Art Institute of Chicago. Two years later, she received her first commission to sculpt the statue of Jere Baxter, organizer of the Tennessee Central Railway. Later with her husband, Austrian-born sculptor Leopold Scholz, Kinney completed several substantial works, including the “Victory” statue – a heroic statue of Youth holding Nike in his open left palm – symbolizing victory in WWI. Kinney and Scholz also collaborated in the reconstruction of the Parthenon at Nashville’s Centennial Park during the 1920s. Kinney’s “Women of the Confederacy” (1926) monument stands at the southwest corner of WMA and is visible from the dressing room which bears her name.

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