

Success Story

LA Opera operates in harmony with Sage Intacct

Finance automation and reporting tools help a performing arts nonprofit stay focused on performance

“Sage Intacct has transformed our finance function completely.”

Kathleen Ruiz,
CFO, LA Opera



The challenge

Legacy systems created data silos, slow reporting, and excessive manual work across a complex, nonprofit finance environment.



The solution

Sage Intacct delivered frictionless automation, powerful reporting, and real-time financial clarity tailored for nonprofit needs.



Results with Sage Intacct

A confident, efficient finance team with time to focus on strategy, not admin—and data that drives better decisions.

- Cut month-end close time by 50%.
- Saved 10–15 hours weekly with AP automation.
- Achieved full financial transparency and audit confidence.
- 80% of invoices auto-populated by AI.

Company
LA Opera

Location
California, US

Industry
Nonprofit

Sage Products
Sage Intacct, Sage Intacct Planning

Sage Partner
Armanino



About LA Opera

Founded in 1986, LA Opera is one of the largest and most ambitious opera companies in the US, serving 150,000+ Angelenos annually.

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Off key and out of sync

Before working with Sage, LA Opera's finance operations were spread across an array of disconnected systems. Kathleen Ruiz, Chief Financial Officer, recalls the challenge vividly:

"Accounts Payable lived in MetaViewer, revenues in Tessitura, and accounting in Great Plains. Everything was imported manually. Nothing spoke to each other."

Manual inputs and fragmented data made even routine tasks painfully slow. "Running a weekly payment cycle could take two or three days. Closing the month? That took two weeks. Preparing for board meetings meant weeks of compiling spreadsheets and checking for errors." The time drain didn't stop at finance. Department heads had no real-time visibility into their own budgets. "They'd constantly email or call us just to check the status of an invoice," says Kathleen.

As the company grew, employing more than 1,200 people across a season and managing a \$50 million annual budget, these inefficiencies became unsustainable. "We were all asking the same question: why does everything have to be so hard?"

A new tempo with Sage Intacct

Looking for a more modern, flexible solution, LA Opera consulted its audit firm and shortlisted finance platforms used by other nonprofits. Sage Intacct quickly stood out. "It had everything we needed, especially for grant tracking and nonprofit reporting. Plus, Sage really understands this sector," says Kathleen.

Working with Sage implementation partner Armanino, the team made the leap. "Armanino were fantastic. They guided us through every decision, from how to structure our chart of accounts to best practice workflows. They even reached out to other arts organizations to help us make informed choices."

The results were immediate. The platform's AI capabilities now auto-populate more than 80% of incoming invoices, intelligently recognizing vendors and departments. "It's incredibly smart; it knows which department submitted an invoice and codes it correctly based on past activity," Kathleen explains. "We're getting back 10 to 15 hours every week, just in AP."



With Sage, LA Opera's finance team has shifted from reactive to proactive.

The right cues at curtain up

Sage Intacct has dramatically improved financial reporting at LA Opera, in both accuracy and accessibility. Previously, data lived in multiple systems, and reports were manually built in Excel, with pivot tables stitched across spreadsheets.

Today, the team builds custom dashboards directly in Sage, creating reports for internal departments, the CEO, the board, and auditors. "We used to double and triple-check everything before presenting it," says Kathleen. "Now, we trust the data. The confidence that gives us is hard to overstate."

For leadership, that change has been transformative. "The CEO and I meet monthly to review reports. Now, instead of just a P&L, we're looking at forecasting tools, cash flow models, and dynamic visuals. It's become a more strategic conversation."

In tune with donors and directors

With 70% of income coming from donors, financial integrity is non-negotiable. "Our responsibility is to show that we're using funds efficiently, as intended," says Kathleen. "Sage gives us that clarity."

Audit trails are now automated and accessible. "Our last audit had zero findings. That speaks volumes." The impact of Sage reaches beyond finance. Department managers now check their own budgets, flag anomalies, and take ownership. "They're in the system every week. Some even build their own reports."

Sage Intacct Planning is expected to take this even further. "We've just launched it, and the goal is to move from one annual budget to rolling forecasts," says Kathleen. "It's early days, but the potential is huge."

More time for the encore

Automation isn't just saving time, it's freeing teams to think bigger. "Now that we're not buried in manual tasks, the team is thinking more strategically," says Kathleen. "They're identifying cost savings, asking smarter questions, and proactively improving how we operate."

Even the smaller wins signify big changes behind the scenes. "We looked at all our photocopier costs. One manager led a project that cut those expenses by 50%. That just wouldn't have happened before."

With Sage, LA Opera's finance team has shifted from reactive to proactive. "There's momentum now. We're learning, experimenting, and genuinely enjoying the process."



“It’s night and day. With Sage, we’re empowered, efficient, and confident.”

Kathleen Ruiz
CFO, LA Opera

Strengthening the community with every performance

At LA Opera, the curtain doesn’t rise without a stable foundation behind it. “We can’t support world-class productions unless the business runs smoothly,” says Kathleen. “Sage makes that possible.”

“Sage Intacct has been a major step forward in modernizing our infrastructure,” adds Christopher Koelsch, President and CEO. “It really has been transformative for the institution.” That includes greater accountability for community initiatives. “Our programs are funded by institutions and donors, and we account for every dollar,” says Dr Andréa Fuentes, Vice President of LA Opera Connects. “Sage Intacct certainly helps us do that.”

With real-time visibility into budgets and funding, the team can make smarter decisions about program delivery, from school outreach to free public performances. “Sage gives us the tools to show where support is going and why it matters,” says Andréa.

As planning expands and integration with arts enterprise software, Tessitura, goes live, the company is future-ready. “We’re not just keeping pace; we’re ready to grow,” says Kathleen.



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