

# HUDSON HALL

*Hudson Hall*  
327 Warren Street  
Hudson, NY



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For Columbia-Greene Media

An \$8.5 million capital campaign would have a huge impact on any organization. For Hudson Hall at the historic Hudson Opera House, it has been transformative.

“We’re really seeing a shift. The organization for 20 years was a very large community organization with deep roots into various sectors,” says Executive Director Tandra Dillon.

“Now that same organization, with a new theater on top – now that we’re doing more large, produced events, we’re seeing the audience expand. We’re drawing from Albany, Great Barrington ... possibly a 60-mile radius,” she says.

Recent successes include five sold out performances of an updated version of 1947’s “The Mother of Us All,” an opera chronicling the life of Susan B. Anthony, who delivered lectures in the same hall over a century ago. The show was widely lauded by local, regional and national press ranging from The New York Times to the Wall Street Journal.

“It had a large cast, fictional and nonfictional characters, and was cast entirely from the com-

munity – which played into the right-to-vote, equal representation and topics which are incredibly relevant today,” says Dillon.

Hudson Hall’s first annual Jazz Festival was a surprising coup. “It was wildly successful, over Presidents Day weekend. We were pulling from Massachusetts, as far away as Maine, and sold out every single show,” says Dillon.

Last December’s Winter Walk brought a young choreographer who combined the tale of Rip Van Winkle with the Nutcracker Suite. “We had 100 different kids performing alongside professional dancers,” says Dillon, describing the result as “magical.”

Built in 1855 and housing New York State’s oldest surviving theater, the storied building was abandoned for 30 years beginning in 1962. Preservation and restoration has been funded through state, federal and private investment.

Dillon replaced Hudson Hall’s first Executive Director Gary Schiro this year, after worked side-by-side with him since 2013. Schiro oversaw year-round cultural and education programs here for 19 years.

Moving forward, Dillon envisions continued growth and development of what Hudson Hall

has been doing since 1998 – building community and a sense of connection, serving artists moving to the area and the underserved audience that calls this home.

“We aspire to redefine what it means to be a town hall today. This was one of the largest in the region, combining many things from boxing matches to poultry shows ... I think our future is really an updated version of what it was built for and how it served the people of Hudson and the region,” says Dillon.

The newly restored space is available for private functions including weddings, and mid-week corporate events - that don’t interfere with the weekend performance schedule. In addition to serving as a revenue generator, Dillon sees this as a community service.

“There is no other venue in town large enough to host these types of events. Most are held at the community college, but you can’t walk there,” she says, adding, from Hudson Hall, shops and restaurants are all within walking distance.

For more on the restoration, exhibitions, readings, talks, performances, and rentals visit [hudsonhall.org](http://hudsonhall.org).

