



# **Awards for Digital Excellence in Opera**

***Supported by  
The Joseph and Robert Cornell  
Memorial Foundation***

## **2023 Guidelines and Application Procedures**

### **Important Dates**

- Application deadline: August 25, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. ET
- Finalist notification: October 2023
- Award ceremony at the National Opera Center: December 4, 2023

**OPERA America**  
National Opera Center  
330 Seventh Avenue  
New York, NY 10001  
[operaamerica.org](https://operaamerica.org)

OPERA America is pleased to announce the second annual Awards for Digital Excellence in Opera, an initiative that seeks to recognize the best projects created for digital platforms and encourage further investment in this vibrant aspect of opera. Open to member and non-member individual producers and organizations based in the U.S. and Canada, the program is made possible by a generous grant from The Joseph and Robert Cornell Memorial Foundation, with gratitude for the support of foundation trustees, Joe Erdman and Melissa Young.

During the COVID crisis, opera producers and artists demonstrated tremendous creative capacity to adapt and invent, most notably on digital platforms. From film projects and recitals to education programs and lecture series, new and exciting digital projects reached veteran opera lovers and newcomers to the art form across the country and around the world.

The objectives of the Awards for Digital Excellence in Opera are to:

- Raise the standard of digital opera production by turning the spotlight on the best audio/visual projects being created each year.
- Promote digital activity as a continuing and important part of the opera enterprise.

## Qualified Digital Activities

The Awards are open to member and non-member individual and organizational producers in the U.S. and Canada. Content may include any form of audio/visual digital product, including made-for-digital projects, filmed stage performances that progress work in the digital space, virtual and augmented reality, and enrichment content, among others.

This Award will be offered in four different categories:

- Artistic Creation, which may include film projects, stage performances and recitals, or any other artistic expression;
- Education/Enrichment, which may include education programs for all ages, such as K-12 classroom activities, lectures, demonstrations, master classes, and/or interviews or panel discussions;
- University/Conservatory Projects, which may include projects conceived, created, and distributed by a teaching institution; and
- Noteworthy Projects, which may include works that cross traditional boundaries, broaden accessibility onstage and off, achieve digital technical innovations, and/or expand the definition of opera. Examples may include accessibility projects, serial operas or video channels, or other digital activities, such as magazines and podcasts.

## Eligibility

- Both individual producers and organizations based in the U.S. and Canada are eligible to apply.
- OPERA America membership is not required to submit applications for consideration.

- To be considered, submitted projects must have been available to the general public and/or limited ticket-buying audiences between January 1, 2022, and December 31, 2022.
- Applicants must have permission to share links to the projects with OPERA America and the judges through the adjudication process.
- Applying producers must have had proper rights and licensing in place for the project's original presentation and any subsequent runs.
- Applying organizations must be based in the U.S. or Canada.
- Individual applicants must have U.S. or Canadian citizenship, permanent residence, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status.
- Applicants, including consortia, may submit a maximum of two digital products across any/all categories for consideration. Each submission must be in a separate category.

## How to Apply

- Read the guidelines carefully before completing any application materials.
- All materials must be submitted online via the [Grants Portal](#).
- Applications require:
  - A statement describing the case for consideration, including artistic objectives, intended audiences, and unique technical challenges;
  - Detailed specifications, including runtime, numbers of creative artists, crew, technical details, and labor involved;
  - A description of screening rights;
  - An external link to the complete digital project.
- Applicants must confirm they have permission to share links to the projects with OPERA America and the judges through the adjudication process.
- Submit a complete final application, including all supplemental materials, by August 25, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. ET.
- Applications that are incomplete, late, or sent via mail, fax, or email will not be accepted.

## Application Review

All final applications for the Awards for Digital Excellence will be reviewed by an independent panel of experts approved by the board of directors of OPERA America. The panel will consist of professionals of varied races and ethnicities, as well as gender identities, representing the varied disciplines involved in creating and producing digital content, such as artist training, direction, sound design, video engineering, audience development, and other expertise relevant to the applicants' projects. Panelists are also selected to reflect geographic diversity.

No current OPERA America board member or employee may serve on the panel. Individuals who stand to benefit from a grant are also ineligible to serve.

All panel decisions are final.

Using the following criteria, panelists evaluate the applications through a cultural humility lens, which is a practice of honoring the cultural values and perspectives of the applicants while self-reflecting on how one's own background and the background of others impact the review of applications.

- Success of the digital projects in relation to the overall screen experience and the project goals articulated by producers.
- Underlying quality of the digital projects.
- Level of innovation and/or experimentation demonstrated by the application.
- Quality of scenic design, costume design, lighting/projection design, sound design, and editing.

Those involved in the creation and/or submission of the digital projects should be available to OPERA America staff to answer questions about the application.

## Award Announcement

- All applicants will be notified in October 2023 of the outcome of their submissions after the panel completes the first round.
- Finalists will have until October 27, 2023, to provide OPERA America with materials and permissions required for streaming the digital project on December 4, 2023, and for a period yet to be determined following the Awards Ceremony.
- Awardees will be announced at an in-person and livestreamed Awards Ceremony on December 4, 2023, at OPERA America's National Opera Center in New York City.
- Each finalist will receive six complimentary tickets to attend the Awards Ceremony.
- The receipt of an award, prize, or grant from OPERA America does not guarantee or imply support for this project or subsequent support for other proposed activities.

## Award

- A winner will be awarded in each of the four categories — Artistic Creation, Education/Enrichment Material, University/Conservatory Projects, and Noteworthy Projects.
- The winners will receive:
  - A trophy in recognition of achievement;
  - Six complimentary tickets to attend the Awards Ceremony; and
  - The opportunity to have the awarded project featured on OPERA America's website for members to view for a period of time following the ceremony.\*

\* Exact nature and timing of such features will be subject to intellectual property rights, copyright, labor agreements, and other relevant considerations in force for the work at that time.

## Contact Information

For more information, contact Diana Hossack, director of grantmaking, at [DHossack@operaamerica.org](mailto:DHossack@operaamerica.org) or 646.699.5236.

## Funder

The Awards for Digital Excellence in Opera are made possible through the generosity of The Joseph and Robert Cornell Memorial Foundation, with gratitude for the support of foundation trustees, Joe Erdman and Melissa Young.