

Opera Grants for Female Composers: Discovery

Funded by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation

Overview

Opera Grants for Female Composers: Discovery

2016–2017 Guidelines and Application Procedures

OPERA America has long been committed to increasing the quantity and quality of new American operas, granting nearly \$13 million to member companies in support of repertoire development over the last 25 years. Fewer than five percent of those grants have been awarded to works by female composers. Through the generous support of The Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, Opera Grants for Female Composers provide support for the development of new operas by women, both directly to individual composers and to OPERA America Professional Company Members, advancing the important objective to increase diversity across the field.

Discovery Grants

OPERA America invites proposals for grants of up to \$15,000 from female composers able to document their ability to compose theatrical works for the classically trained voice and instrumental ensemble. Each Discovery Grant will provide financial assistance to advance and promote an opera in development.

Grant recipients will be introduced to leaders in the field through a feature in Opera America Magazine and at future New Works Forum meetings and annual conferences. Supported works will be considered for presentation as part of the New Works Forum in January 2017 and New Works Sampler at future annual conferences.

For more information, contact Noah Stern Weber, artistic services manager, at NSWeber@operaamerica.org.

Supported Activities

Supported activities include but are not limited to

- Lab productions, workshops, readings and working performances, with or without an audience;
- Costs incurred to create or prepare new musical materials, such as expanded or reduced orchestrations and copyist expenses for creation of parts;
- Other specific expenses associated with the development of a new opera;
- Production design development; and
- Dynamic promotional materials.

Projects that request funds for the development of the work described in the application will be given priority.

Eligibility

- The applicant must be a female composer.
- The composer must demonstrate her ability to write for the opera/music-theater medium by providing recording samples of theatrical work for voices and instrumental ensemble as part of the application.
- The lead applicant must be the composer, who serves as the fiscal agent for the project. The composer must apply for the grant, disburse all funds received and provide all required financial and narrative documentation. The work of each applicant remains the property of the composer.
- The composer must be a United States citizen or permanent resident.
- Grant funding may not be applied to expenses incurred before June 1, 2017.
- Proposed projects must be completed by June 30, 2018.
- Composers who were awarded Discovery Grants in 2014, 2015 or 2016 are ineligible to apply for additional Discovery Grants.

- Composers who have applied unsuccessfully on three consecutive years with the same work are ineligible to apply with that work again.
- Composers who have applied unsuccessfully in two consecutive years with the same piece must articulate the substantive change made since the last cycle in their Intent to Apply. Changes may include, but are not limited to:
 - Rewriting of the text and/or music
 - Restructuring of the dramatic arc
 - Change in librettist or other key personnel
- A piece that has already had its premiere may be considered for a Discovery Grant provided the submission represents a substantial reworking of the piece.

Funding Parameters

- It is anticipated that individual grants of between \$10,000 and \$15,000 will be awarded.
- The size of an individual grant will vary according to the project's total costs as defined in the summary budget. Additional expenses to complete the project are the responsibility of the composer.
- Grants will cover up to 100 percent of eligible expenses, not exceeding \$15,000; no matching funds are required.
- Only coach-class airfare will be covered by grants for applications requesting air transportation.

The Discovery Grant program does not fund:

- Commissioning fees or direct payments to composers;
- Institutional overhead expenses if partnering with an organization;
- Expenses that are not connected specifically to a project, including general administrative expenses and competition or contest application fees;
- Tuition expenses;
- Professional development fees;
- Fundraising expenses;
- Ticket subsidies;
- Set, costume or properties construction or rental expenses for a fully staged production; and/or
- Any other expenses incurred in relation to a fully produced premiere for public presentation.

Timeline

The following timeline is in place for the FY17 Discovery Grants:

- **October 2016:** Intent to Apply available online
- **November 28, 2016:** Intent to Apply deadline (required to file full application)
- **December 20, 2016:** Application deadline
- **Late January 2017:** Applications adjudicated
- **February 2017:** Grantees notified

How to Apply

- Read these guidelines carefully before completing any application materials.
- Applicants will be advised of the suitability of the project for support and counseled on the eligibility of proposed expenses once their Intent to Apply is submitted. Only applicants who submit an Intent will be advanced to the Full Application. Early submission facilitates the review and counseling process. Intents must be filed by **11:59 p.m. EST on November 28, 2016.**
- Submit a complete, final application, including all supplementary materials, by **December 20, 2016.** Applications that are submitted without work samples as specified in the application will not be considered. Applications that are incomplete, late or sent via fax or mail will not be accepted.

Application Review

All final applications for Opera Grants for Female Composers are reviewed by an independent panel drawn from a pool of experts approved by the Board of Directors of OPERA America. No current board member or employee of OPERA America may serve on any panel. Individuals who stand to benefit from a grant are also ineligible to serve. Each panel represents the diverse disciplines involved in creating and producing new works, as well as artists and individuals with special expertise in interdisciplinary programming and audience development. Panelists are also selected to reflect geographic diversity. Decisions of the panel are final.

The following review criteria are weighed equally by panelists to determine which applications will receive funding and at what level. Projects eligible for support must meet all criteria.

- **Artistic Merit:** Applications are judged on the artistic excellence — or the potential for excellence — of the work and on the merit of the female composer's body of work.
- **Quality and Distinction in Concept and Planning:** Applications are evaluated on the appropriateness, effectiveness and thoroughness of the planning process guiding the proposed activity.
- **Evaluation:** Applications must articulate plans for long-term evaluation of the work and the project. Goals should be realistic and achievable.

The most competitive applications will include recent examples of compositions that demonstrate the composer's ability to write theatrical work for classically trained voices and orchestra. Applications are most effective when they include a work sample from the opera for which support is requested.

Applicant Information

Project Name*

Either official title or working title

Character Limit: 150

Are you a US Citizen?*

Only US Citizens may apply for this grant. Inaccurate reporting of this information will disqualify your application from consideration.

Choices

Yes

No

Address other

If you have any relevant additional information about your mailing address, please include it here (i.e. "my best contact address is above, but my legal address is" or "I am living outside of the US. Here is my full address as it should appear on a posted correspondence")

Character Limit: 1000

Work and Project Information

Project Name*

Either an official title or a working title

Character Limit: 150

Composer*

Character Limit: 100

Librettist*

Character Limit: 100

GRANT ACTIVITY PERIOD

While development of the project may have commenced, this award cannot cover expenses incurred outside of the award period, and the budget should be restricted to anticipated expenses between June 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018.

Proposed project start date*

Character Limit: 10

Proposed project end date*

Character Limit: 10

Total anticipated budget*

Character Limit: 20

Total requested funding

The Discovery Grant may fund up to \$15,000.00 of the total budget.

Character Limit: 20

Synopsis*

Submit a character synopsis of the opera associated with this application. (You will be given an opportunity to describe the work in greater detail in the full application.)

Character Limit: 750

Rights documentation

If the opera is based on an existing work (e.g., a novel, short story, film or life story), have you secured rights to the material? Please explain and/or attach documentation.

Character Limit: 1500 | File Size Limit: 3 MB

Roles*

List the cast by role and voice type

Character Limit: 1500

Chorus*

Does this work utilize a chorus? If so, of what size?

Character Limit: 750

Instrumentation*

Character Limit: 2000

Project Description*

Provide a description of the specific project for which funding will be requested. (You will be given an opportunity to describe the project in greater detail in the full application)

Character Limit: 1500

Status*

Describe where this project falls in the overall development process of creating this work.

Character Limit: 1500

Have you previously submitted a Discovery Grant?*

Please list the name of the project (if different) and the year(s) that you applied. If this is the same project as your previous application(s), please articulate the changes or progress made since your last submission.

If this is your first time applying for a Discovery Grant, respond with: N/A

Character Limit: 1500

Signature*

By typing my name below, I attest that to the best of my knowledge the information contained in this application and its attachments are accurate and complete.

Character Limit: 100

NSW - Sample Discovery Grant

OPERA America

Work Information

Project Name*

Either official title or working title

Character Limit: 150

Composer

Character Limit: 100

Librettist

Character Limit: 100

Describe the opera associated with this application*

Character Limit: 2000

Why did you chose to tell this story as an opera?*

Provide a brief statement explaining the relationship between your form/style of composition and the subject of this work.

Character Limit: 1000

Why have you chosen this subject? Why are you drawn to create this work at this time?*

Character Limit: 1000

Provide a scenic breakdown of the opera*

You may use either a character/scene breakdown, storyboard or dramaturgical outline that narrates the theatrical arc of the work.

Character Limit: 5000

Has this work received a previous grant from OPERA America?*

If yes, please provide a brief account of the outcome of the project.

Character Limit: 300

Creative Team

Composer Biography and Resume*

The biography should be narrative and limited to 1000 characters. The resume should be uploaded as a PDF.

Character Limit: 1000 | File Size Limit: 1 MB

Librettist Biography and Resume

The biography should be narrative and limited to 1000 characters. The resume should be uploaded as a PDF.

If the composer is also the sole librettist, please leave this blank.

Character Limit: 1000 | File Size Limit: 1 MB

Why an Opera?

If the composer and/or librettist have not previously written an opera, please explain the artist(s)' motivations for writing in this medium.

If the composer and librettist's bio or resumes articulate previous opera experience, please leave this section blank.

Character Limit: 1000

Have you previously submitted a Discovery Grant?

Please list the name of the project (if different) and the year(s) that you applied. If this is the same project as your previous application(s), please articulate the changes or progress made since your last submission.

If this is your first time applying for a Discovery Grant, respond with: N/A

Character Limit: 1500

Has this work received a previous grant from OPERA America?*

If yes, please provide a brief account of the outcome of the previous project.

Character Limit: 1000

In the following section, please upload biographies for any other artists associated with this project.

Artist 1

In the text section, provide the name and role of the artist, then upload the biography.

Character Limit: 100 | File Size Limit: 1 MB

Artist 2

In the text section, provide the name and role of the artist, then upload the biography.

Character Limit: 100 | File Size Limit: 1 MB

Artist 3

In the text section, provide the name and role of the artist, then upload the biography.

Character Limit: 100 | File Size Limit: 1 MB

Artist 4

In the text section, provide the name and role of the artist, then upload the biography.

Character Limit: 100 | File Size Limit: 1 MB

Artist 5

In the text section, provide the name and role of the artist, then upload the biography.

Character Limit: 100 | File Size Limit: 1 MB

Project Overview

Proposed project start date

Character Limit: 10

Proposed project end date

Character Limit: 10

Describe the project for which you are applying*

For reference on the range of activities eligible for funding, please refer to the list of examples in the grant guidelines.

Character Limit: 1000

Provide a detailed timeline for the complete development of this project*

Include all past developmental activities and projected plans going forward for this work with general date ranges assigned.

Character Limit: 2000

Has this work been commissioned?*

If so, by whom? If not, reply N/A.

Character Limit: 1000

Work Samples

WORK SAMPLES

Please provide three high-quality audio and/or visual recordings of your work. A corresponding score and/or libretto, with detailed notations, must accompany each submission. Applications without complete work samples will not be advanced for consideration.

MANDATORY GUIDELINES:

- At least one of the samples must be from a theatrical work for voice(s) and instrumental ensemble.
- All A/V media must be uploaded to a streaming or hosting site.
 - Audio: Soundcloud is strongly preferred.
 - Video: Youtube or Vimeo are strongly preferred.
 - **Please remember to provide a password if the link is "private."**
- Submit a score that corresponds with each excerpt. Scores may only be submitted as PDFs. Hard copies, .MUS, or other formats are not accepted.
- The total timing of the musical selections should not exceed 30 minutes.

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES

- Provide only the materials required. Trim samples to the specific excerpt which you would like to be considered.
- If you are not trimming the samples as suggested above, clearly mark the timings in the notes (i.e. Play from 3:22-7:49).
- Remove unnecessary pages from the scores, and clearly mark where the selection begins.
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit excerpts from the work being submitted, if they are available.
- **MIDI recordings are strongly discouraged.** In specific very high-quality renderings, they may be accepted, but any auto-generated midi from Sibelius, Finale or similar programs will not be considered as appropriate work samples.
- The quality of the sample is paramount. A refined audio sample is more compelling than a poorly constructed video.
- If you have any questions about audio samples, please contact OPERA America. Questions about media samples should be addressed more than 72 hours before the deadline to ensure a timely response.

SAMPLE 1

Title*

Character Limit: 100

Composer*

Character Limit: 100

Librettist*

Character Limit: 100

Description/Annotation*

Please include roles, voicing, and information about the first work sample.

If not excerpting, please include timings for guided listening.

Character Limit: 1000

A/V Link*

Character Limit: 2000

A/V Password (if necessary)

Character Limit: 100

Score*

Upload the score below and provide any relevant notes about the score here.

Character Limit: 500 | File Size Limit: 4 MB

SAMPLE 2**Title***

Character Limit: 100

Composer*

Character Limit: 100

Librettist*

Character Limit: 100

Description/Annotation*

Please include roles, voicing, and information about the first work sample.

If not excerpting, please include timings for guided listening.

Character Limit: 1000

A/V Link*

Character Limit: 2000

A/V Password (if necessary)

Character Limit: 100

Score*

Upload the score below and provide any relevant notes about the score here.

Character Limit: 1000 | File Size Limit: 4 MB

SAMPLE 3

Title*

Character Limit: 100

Composer*

Character Limit: 100

Librettist*

Character Limit: 100

Description/Annotation*

Please include roles, voicing, and information about the first work sample.

If not excerpting, please include timings for guided listening.

Character Limit: 1000

A/V Link*

Please include roles, voicing, and information about the first work sample.

If not excerpting, please include timings for guided listening.

Character Limit: 2000

A/V Password (if necessary)

Character Limit: 100

Score*

Upload the score below and provide any relevant notes about the score here.

Character Limit: 1000

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

If there are additional materials (press clippings, program copy, design proposals, etc.) that further illustrate the concept, history and/or development of the project to date, upload them here as a single PDF.

File Size Limit: 7 MB

Budget

BUDGET

Funding Parameters Review

It is anticipated that individual grants of between \$10,000 and \$15,000 will be awarded. The size of an individual grant will vary according to the project's total costs as defined in the summary budget. Additional expenses to complete the project are the responsibility of the composer. Grants will cover up to 100 percent of eligible expenses, not exceeding \$15,000; no matching funds are required. Only coach-class airfare will be covered by grants for applications requesting air transportation.

The Discovery portion of this program does not fund

- Commissioning fees or direct payments to composers;
- Institutional overhead expenses if partnering with an organization;
- Expenses that are not connected specifically to a project, including general administrative expenses and competition or contest application fees;

- Tuition expenses; Professional development fees;
- Fundraising expenses;
- Ticket subsidies;
- Set, costume or properties construction or rental expenses for a fully staged production;
- and/or Any other expenses incurred in relation to a fully produced premiere for public presentation.

Total requested funding*

The Discovery Grant may fund up to \$15,000.00 of the total budget. The number provided is the amount originally submitted in your LOI. Please adjust this according to the final budget submitted with this application.

Character Limit: 20

Budget Upload*

Please use the budget worksheet available [HERE](#) to complete your budget. Export as a PDF and upload using the link below. If you have supplementary budget documents, please add them to the budget PDF.

This budget worksheet covers many possible expenses in various developmental scenarios - do not assume that every line should have an associated expense. There are three "other" lines in each budgetary section to add other fees. Please address any questions you have to nsweber@operaamerica.org.

File Size Limit: 1 MB

Signature*

By typing your name below, you acknowledge that, to the best of your knowledge, the information contained in this application and the attachments are accurate and complete.

Character Limit: 100