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OPERA AMERICA ANNOUNCES RECIPIENTS OF INNOVATION GRANTS

Generously Funded by the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation

A TOTAL OF \$1.4 MILLION AWARDED TO 18 COMPANIES TO FOSTER INNOVATION AND FIELD-WIDE LEARNING

April 10, 2019 (New York) — **OPERA America**, the national service organization for opera and the nation's leading champion of American opera, is pleased to announce the recipients of the third cycle of **Innovation Grants**, generously funded by the **Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation**.

Launched in fall 2016, Innovation Grants support exceptional projects that have the capacity to strengthen the field's most important areas of practice, including artistic vitality, audience experience, organizational effectiveness and community connections. These grants enable organizations of all sizes to increase their commitment to experimentation and innovation, as well as contribute to field-wide learning.

Eighteen companies received awards in this granting cycle:

Arizona Opera (Phoenix, AZ)

Austin Opera

Cincinnati Opera

Experiments in Opera (Brooklyn, NY)

Guerilla Opera (Boston, MA)

Los Angeles Opera

Manitoba Opera (Winnipeg, MB)

Nautilus Music-Theater (St. Paul, MN)

On Site Opera (New York, NY)

Opera Cultura (Oakland, CA)

Opera Lafayette (Washington, D.C.)

Opera Modesto (Modesto, CA)

Opera on Tap (New York, NY)

San Francisco Opera

The Santa Fe Opera

Seattle Opera

Tapestry Opera (Toronto, ON)

Wolf Trap Opera (Vienna, VA)

These grants will fund a wide range of initiatives, including community-based projects designed to make opera inclusive and accessible; novel business strategies; performances that incorporate immersive technology; professional development programs for future leaders; and new models for creating and commissioning operas. (See below for details about all the funded initiatives.)

In addition to providing direct financial support to these companies, the Innovation Grants program includes infrastructure to capture and assess outcomes of funded projects. OPERA America provides administrative and technical support that helps companies to document successes and learn from one another. Outcomes are shared at OPERA America meetings and conferences, as well as through publications and other learning tools.


“Thanks to the profound generosity of the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation, our member companies have received support to explore new strategies and experiments — to expand the boundaries of their current practices and nimbly adapt to an ever-changing field,” stated Marc A. Scorca, president/CEO of OPERA America. “These grants benefit more than just the recipients; through the lessons learned from the funded initiatives, companies throughout North America will be able to adapt good ideas, and ultimately contribute to a stronger field.”


The awardees were selected from a pool of 45 applications, which were adjudicated by an independent panel consisting of **Barbara Schaffer Bacon**, co-director of Animating Democracy; **Sarah Lutman**, principal at 8 Bridges Workshop; **Ann Owens**, consultant and former executive director of Houston Grand Opera; **Kyle Sircus**, director of marketing at Playwrights Horizons; **Bradley Vernatter**, consultant; **James Wright**, consultant and retired general director of Vancouver Opera; and **Joseph Yoshitomi**, vice-president and general manager of Dallas Summer Musicals.


Applications for the next cycle of Innovation Grants will open this fall. Visit operaamerica.org/Grants to learn more about Innovation Grants, as well as OPERA America's complete grant offerings.

ABOUT THE RECIPIENTS

Innovation Grants were awarded to the following 18 companies for the projects described below:

 <p>ARIZONA OPERA</p>	ARIZONA OPERA Funding Innovations Competition
	Arizona Opera, in partnership with Arizona State University's National Accelerator for Cultural Innovation, will create and launch a venture-capital-inspired competition. They will invite teams from across the country to develop and present revenue-generating concepts designed to create new earned income sources for Arizona Opera, with a goal of generating an additional \$1M in revenue each year, a process that can be replicated by companies throughout the field.

 <p>AUSTIN OPERA</p>	AUSTIN OPERA Immersive Technologies and Audience Experience
	Austin Opera will partner with the immersive technologies sector in Austin to experiment with augmented reality, virtual reality and mixed reality to market its programming. An Innovation Council of tech sector leaders will work with the company to develop and experiment with immersive experiences that can surround productions and/or be integrated into the productions themselves. Austin Opera will partner with the Behavioral Sciences Lab to measure the effectiveness of these strategies in audience attraction and retention.

 <p>CINCINNATI OPERA</p>	CINCINNATI OPERA In Harmony
	In Harmony is a community chorus drawn from a diverse group of 10 organizations, offering its participants the opportunity to connect and share experiences in singing and collaborative art-making. Cincinnati Opera believes In Harmony can bring people together and create social bridges. The company imagines new friendships developing between people whose paths may never have crossed.



EXPERIMENTS IN OPERA | EiO Writers Room

Experiments in Opera is launching a two-year program, EiO Writers Room, to write an opera using the format employed by TV serial dramas in which a single story is told from a range of perspectives and voices. Experiments in Opera will lead a collaboration among 10 composers and up to 10 librettists to create one story spread over 10 half-hour serial episodes. The company has found that when artists work within a community, they learn about their own work and that of others in a more equitable way.



GUERRILLA OPERA | Emergence Composition Fellowship

Guerilla Opera will present their first annual Emergence Composition Fellowship, featuring five composers chosen from a free international call for proposals by an independent panel of opera industry professionals. The fellows will work with Guerilla Opera throughout the season in workshops, culminating in a full production with the company's award-winning ensemble and esteemed theater artists.



LA OPERA | LA Opera Academy

The LA Opera Academy will cultivate the next generation of opera leaders through a career development program for students from communities underrepresented in the arts. Each year, two to three high school juniors embark on a six-year paid internship at LA Opera. They receive practical work experience and gain professional skills by working in all of LA Opera's departments. They also receive college and career guidance and experience unique cultural events while being embedded in the behind-the-scenes workings at one of the nation's largest opera companies



**MANITOBA OPERA
Building Bridges with Manitoba's Indigenous Community**

Eighteen percent of Manitobans identify as Indigenous, the highest concentration among the Canadian provinces and nearly four times the national average. Manitoba Opera has the opportunity to contribute to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples by expanding its service to that community. The company will engage a community facilitator to discover how it might connect authentically and meaningfully with the province's Indigenous community.



NAUTILUS MUSIC-THEATER

The Nautilus Genome Project: Preparing for the Next Iteration, Part Two

Nautilus is exploring a new approach to succession and strategic planning through the Nautilus Genome Project. For 35 years, Nautilus has contributed to the professional development over 1,700 operatic artists. Through a unique survey process, Nautilus staff will collect and analyze input from participants to map the Nautilus Genome, and then genetically engineer a new iteration of the organization so that its remarkable work can continue into the future.



ON SITE OPERA | Mobile App for Supertitles (and More!)

On Site Opera will launch a revolutionary mobile app for supertitles in collaboration with InstantEncore and LiveNote. The app will support site-specific operas by providing venue information, supertitles and audience touchpoints before, during and after each performance.



OPERA CULTURA | Rap Opera Project 2.0

The Rap Opera Project 2.0 will be a 45- to 60-minute rap-infused opera that tells the stories of local youth who have been incarcerated or placed in foster homes. The project advances the traditional art form of opera by uniting it with the newer, vastly different art of rap, and it will build new opera audiences through innovative community-engagement initiatives. By creating opportunities for youth to participate as both creators and performers, the project will offer a chance for marginalized voices to be validated.



OPERA LAFAYETTE | Philidor's *The Blacksmith*

Opera Lafayette will create an adaptation of François-André Danican Philidor's *The Blacksmith*, an *opéra comique* in two acts. Opera Lafayette will produce this opera in collaboration with the artists and audiences of Mancos, Colorado. This project will deepen the company's understanding of the genre and provide insight into the rural-urban partnership process. Following performances at the Mancos Opera House, *The Blacksmith* will be presented in New York City and Washington, D.C.



OPERA MODESTO | "Story into Song" Literacy Initiative

Opera Modesto will begin the "Story into Song" Literacy Initiative, which will involve extensive community collaborations. Each year, the company's young artists will perform a work based on a renowned author, beginning with Jane Austen. Opera Modesto will present an orchestrated version of Jonathan Dove's chamber opera, *Mansfield Park*, continuing with a double bill of one-act operas based on Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (in Spanish) and Rudolfo Anaya's *Bless Me, Ultima* (in Spanglish) in year two. Community partners will include the county libraries, county-wide schools, book clubs, government agencies and arts groups.



OPERA ON TAP | The Immersive Opera Project

The Immersive Opera Project is an ongoing effort spearheaded by Opera on Tap to develop, showcase and produce new works of opera that are designed for immersive environments and utilize augmented reality and virtual reality. As part of the program, tech industry leaders and innovators and opera industry partners are brought together to develop and present new works. Partners on the project include Arcturus Studio, Carnegie Mellon Privacy Economics and Experiments Lab, HEAR360, Inception VR, Jaunt, Light Sail VR, Samsung VR, Austin Opera, HERE, and Tapestry Opera.



SAN FRANCISCO OPERA | SFO+

San Francisco Opera will embark on the next phase of SFO+, a company-wide culture change initiative that uses a design thinking approach to launch research and development projects. The company will invite staff to submit project proposals through a process that will allow SFO+ efforts to receive full company buy-in and proper resource allocation with core operations in mind. Projects will be evaluated based on alignment with the company's new strategic framework and its vision to "crack the code in producing big art."



THE SANTA FE OPERA | Opera for All Voices: Stories of Our Time

Through a consortium of seven opera companies, the Opera for All Voices: Stories of Our Time (OFAV) initiative commissions and produces new American operatic works that are flexible in scope and scale, with the potential to be performed in smaller venues and off the main stage, while striving for rich storytelling, artistic integrity and social impact. The OFAV initiative is committed to representing diverse voices through its stories, creators, artists and audiences. This grant will support the next phase of the project: the development and production of the four works commissioned by this consortium.



SEATTLE | ALAANA Performing Arts Fellowship

Seattle Opera's ALAANA Performing Arts Fellowship will work to reverse decades of institutionalized racism within cultural organizations. The program will support individuals who identify as persons of color or ALAANA (African, Latinx, Asian, Arab and Native American) entering the field of arts administration through leadership training, skills building and hands-on work experiences.



TAPESTRY OPERA | World Premiere of *R.U.R.*

Tapestry Opera will present the world premiere of *R.U.R.*, and augmented-reality opera by composer Nicole Lizée, who is known for her integration of digital glitches with live voices. Lizée will compose a fully immersive environment of live, recorded and responsive sound, integrating the operatic voice and digital enhancements. *R.U.R.* is being produced in partnership with OCAD University.

WOLF TRAP OPERA

WOLF TRAP OPERA | Procorio

Procorio is a web-based scheduling solution developed by Wolf Trap Opera to manage artistic personnel across multiple productions and rehearsal locations. Procorio offers organizations significant cost-savings through more efficient use of personnel and data-driven resource management. Wolf Trap Opera will engage a cohort of OPERA America members to develop and test enhancements to Procorio, provide user support and continued improvements during a soft launch phase, and create a suite of training tools and resources for arts organizations at all budget levels.

For more information about OPERA America, its many programs and the National Opera Center, visit operaamerica.org.



About OPERA America

OPERA America (operaamerica.org) leads and serves the entire opera community, supporting the creation, presentation and enjoyment of opera. The organization is committed to:

- Delivering professional development to artists, administrators and trustees.
- Increasing appreciation of opera through educational and audience development resources.
- Offering technical support and informational services that foster the creation and presentation of new works.
- Fostering equity, diversity and inclusion across all aspects of the opera industry.
- Undertaking national research and representing the field to policymakers and the media.
- Managing the National Opera Center, a custom-built facility that provides a centralized space for collaboration, rehearsal and performance.

Founded in 1970, OPERA America fulfills its mission through public programs, an annual conference, regional workshops, consultations, granting programs, publications and online resources. It is the only organization serving all constituents of opera: artists, administrators, trustees, educators and audience members. Membership includes 150 professional opera companies; 350 associate, business and education members; and 1,600 individuals. OPERA America extends its reach to 80,000 annual visitors to its National Opera Center and over 40,000 subscribers and followers on e-communications and social media. Representing over 90 percent of eligible professional companies, OPERA America is empowered to lead field-wide change.

OPERA America's long tradition of supporting and nurturing the creation and development of new works led to the formation of the Opera Fund, a growing endowment that allows OPERA America to make a direct impact on the ongoing creation and presentation of new opera and music-theater works. Since the inception of its granting programs, OPERA America has awarded more than \$19 million to the opera field to support the work of opera creators, companies and administrators. Currently, OPERA America awards more than \$2 million each year through its range of grant initiatives.