THE NATIONAL OPERA CENTER AMERICA

The Robert L.B. Tobin Director-Designer Showcase 2018–2019 Guidelines and Application Procedures

Important Dates
- **Application available online:** June 1, 2018
- **Intent to apply deadline:** August 20, 2018 at 11:59 p.m. EDT
- **Application deadline**: September 27, 2018 at 11:59 p.m. EDT
- **Applications adjudicated:** October 2018
- **Awards announced:** November 2018

OPERA America
330 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10001
212.796.8620
operaamerica.org

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About the Showcase

The Robert L.B. Tobin Director-Designer Showcase is a biennial program offered as part of OPERA America's continuing effort to foster emerging opera artists. The program is intended to bring new talent to the forefront and connect promising directors and designers with those who are in a position to advance their careers.

OPERA America will consider applications from director- or designer-driven teams of artists with a designated team leader. Each team must create a production proposal for one of the works on the following list:

Roméo et Juliette	Charles Gounod
Les Pêcheurs de perles	Georges Bizet
The Rape of Lucretia	Benjamin Britten
Cavalleria rusticana/Pagliacci	Pietro Mascagni and Ruggero Leoncavallo
Le nozze di Figaro	W. A. Mozart
María de Buenos Aires	Ástor Piazzolla
The Little Prince	Rachel Portman
Tosca	Giacomo Puccini
The Handmaid's Tale	Poul Ruders
Rigoletto	Giuseppe Verdi

(*Scores and recordings are available for use in the OPERA America offices. Please contact Claire Gohorel at CGohorel@operaamerica.org if you would like to access these for research.*)

The application is in two parts: the letter of intent and the full application. Once the letter of intent is approved as meeting all of the criteria for the program, the team will be approved for the full application. No letters of intent will be accepted after August 20, 2018.

The proposal should include a complete production concept, including an explanation of the staging approach; ideas and initial research for scenery, props, costumes and personnel to be involved (chorus, extras, etc.); and suggestions for adaptations and/or editing, if relevant. Basic illustrations (research images and designer sketches) are required, but fully developed designs or models are not necessary or accepted at this stage. The concept should be executable in the theater described in the guidelines section, taking into account size and technical capabilities. Identifying and addressing technical challenges for execution of the design is required in the narrative. Production costs are to remain reasonable, but an itemized budget is not required.

From the initial pool of applicants, a small number of finalist teams will be selected by a panel of experts approved by OPERA America's board of directors. Each finalist team will be given $2,000 to fund activities that may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Conducting further research and/or team meetings to inform the production concept's development;
- Purchasing supplies for the creation of more complete renderings and models; and
- Creating print or digital marketing materials to promote the production concept.

Finalist teams will be featured in an issue of *Opera America* magazine, and in June 2019, up to two representatives of each finalist team will receive complimentary round-trip travel, two nights lodging and registration to attend *Opera Conference 2019 in San Francisco* to present their proposals to general, artistic and production directors at a special session. This session will also be streamed on the OPERA America website and archived there for viewing by other members. As part of the preparation for this session, each team will be assigned an advisor from the industry to coach them on their final presentations. Finalists will receive no additional cash award but will be able to meet with company representatives at an event to be held immediately after the presentation. Each finalist team will recieve a six-month exhibition display residency at the National Opera Center in New York. No "winner" will be identified.

The work of each applicant remains the property of the director-designer team. Additional finalist team members wishing to attend *Opera Conference 2019* will receive complimentary conference registration but are responsible for their own travel and lodging costs.

Eligibility

- The Showcase is open to emerging designer-director teams regardless of their OPERA America membership status. OPERA America defines a team as a minimum of one stage director and a minimum of two creative designers.
- At least 50 percent of team members must be United States citizens.
- The program does not fund artists who already have a significant body of work in the field of opera, as determined by the panel.
- Applications must be submitted by the team leader.
- An artist can be a member of only one applicant team with one project.
- Previous Director-Designer Showcase finalists are not eligible to apply.

How to Apply

The following timeline is in place for 2018–2019 grants:

June 1, 2018: application available online
August 20, 2018: intent to apply deadline (required for full application)
September 27, 2018: final application deadline
October 2018: applications adjudicated
November 2018: awardees notified

- Read the guidelines carefully before completing any application materials.
- Intent to apply forms and applications must be submitted online by the team leader via the grants portal.
- After the intent to apply form has been submitted, applicants will be advised of the suitability of the application in time for the final application to be developed. No final applications will be accepted unless a letter of intent form has been submitted on or before the deadline of **11:59 p.m. (EDT)** on **August 20, 2018.**
- Submit a complete final application, including all supplementary materials, by **11:59 p.m. (EDT)** on **September 27, 2018.** Applications that are incomplete, late or sent via fax or mail will not be accepted.
- Contact Claire Gohorel at CGohorel@operaamerica.org with any questions.

Application Instructions

Describe the proposed production using the questions provided as a guideline. Questions are listed as a starting point and are not intended to be limiting. **Applicants must be able to articulate the concept broadly and provide details of the implementation plan that would be helpful for the adjudication panel.**

- Submit a ground plan and section to the specifications provided. Address sightlines and any technical barriers (e.g., breaking the proscenium) that may be part of the design.
- Submit artist biographies in narrative format (200-word max per bio).
- Submit current resumes for all team members.
- Submit samples of preliminary image ideas, renderings and/or video.
- Label supplementary materials in a clear and concise manner.
- No application may contain more than (10) ten 8.5'' x 11'' pages of attached supplementary materials, including all images and additional narrative. **Clarity and brevity are strongly encouraged;** please be judicious in including supplementary materials. The program staff may remove excess materials without consulting the applicant.
- PDF files are preferred for static supplementary materials. Files must be uploaded as all one document submission, including sketches and renderings.
- No preference is given to video samples; static images are equally acceptable. The quality of the sample should be the prevailing factor in an applicant's choice. If you create video samples or digital submissions, YouTube and Vimeo are preferred hosts for video links. Please provide passwords for any private sites.
- Any applications that do not comply with these guidelines may be declined for noncompliance.

Application Review

All final applications for the Director-Designer Showcase are reviewed by an independent panel drawn from a pool of experts approved by the board of directors of OPERA America. All panelists review all applications. Individuals who stand to benefit from an award are ineligible to serve. Decisions of the panel are final.

The composition of each panel represents the diverse disciplines involved in directing, designing and producing opera. Panelists will also be selected to reflect geographic diversity.

The following review criteria, weighted equally, will be used by the panel to determine which teams will be invited to present at Opera Conference 2019. Projects eligible for support through the Director-Designer Showcase must meet all of the following criteria:

- **Artistic Merit**
  Applications are judged on the artistic excellence — or the potential for excellence — of the proposal.
- **Quality and Distinction in Concept and Planning**
  Applications are evaluated on the appropriateness, effectiveness and thoroughness of the planning process guiding the proposed concept.
- **Robust Partnership/Collaboration**
  Successful applications will demonstrate a team dynamic and collaborative spirit. Where appropriate, applications must articulate the ways project participants will collaborate in planning and design.
- **Capacity**
  Each application must convey the technical and artistic capacity of the team to create a production that can be built according to industry technical and safety standards.

Reporting Requirements

Successful applicants will receive an award letter explaining the program's terms and conditions, including any financial documentation and narrative reporting requirements. These reports will be reviewed by the OPERA America staff. Periodic reports from awarded artists may be requested by OPERA America staff during the two years following the Showcase presentation at Opera Conference 2019.

Staff Contact Information

For more information, contact Claire Gohorel, grantmaking manager, at CGohorel@operaamerica.org.

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