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OPERA AMERICA TO LAUNCH THE CAMPBELL OPERA LIBRETTIST PRIZE

**The first and only award recognizing the work of the opera librettist,
conceived and funded by librettist/lyricist Mark Campbell**

July 27, 2020 (New York) — OPERA America, the national champion for American opera, opera companies, and artists, is pleased to announce its latest program to advance the quality and creativity of the art form.

The **Campbell Opera Librettist Prize (COLP)**, conceived and funded by acclaimed librettist and lyricist **Mark Campbell**, will be awarded annually to an American librettist who demonstrates an exceptional talent for writing opera librettos and who exhibits the potential for making a substantial contribution to the opera literature. The COLP represents the first award in the history of opera designated specifically for the opera librettist.

The Prize, which joins a portfolio of OPERA America grants and awards dedicated to advancing the American opera repertoire, will bestow a \$5,000 award each year directly to the winning librettist, chosen from applicants by a panel of independent experts. The winner will be invited to attend OPERA America's annual Opera Conference and New Works Forum, and will be introduced to artists and producers in the field across OPERA America's communications platforms.

"The COLP is an extension of my mentorship of and advocacy for opera librettists. The Prize recognizes the crucial role librettists play in any opera's success," says Campbell. "While the position of the librettist has gained a higher profile in American opera in the last decade or so, there has been little specific recognition for their work. Thanks to training programs like the American Opera Project, American Lyric Theater, and the American Opera Initiative, the field is now blessed with many great librettists; if we want that trend to continue, we must affirm their importance."

Campbell, who just finished penning his 38th opera libretto, was the first recipient of the Kleban Award for Lyricists, from a jury headed by Stephen Sondheim. Campbell's works have since received countless

awards, including the 2012 Pulitzer Prize in Music for *Silent Night* and a 2019 GRAMMY Award for *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*. His other works include *The Shining*, *Sanctuary Road*, *Stonewall*, *Songs from an Unmade Bed*, *As One*, *Later the Same Evening*, *The Manchurian Candidate*, and *Elizabeth Cree*.

“Mark Campbell’s passionate advocacy for his craft has elevated the art of libretto writing throughout the opera field. Without a doubt, he is inspiring a next generation of writers to dedicate their pens to opera and music theater,” attests **Marc A. Scorca**, president and CEO of OPERA America. “We are honored that Mark has chosen OPERA America as the steward of the new Campbell Opera Librettist Prize, in recognition of all that we have contributed to the advancement of American opera over multiple decades.”

Over the past four decades, OPERA America has awarded more than \$20 million to support creators, companies, and administrators. The Campbell Opera Librettist Prize takes its place among OPERA America’s portfolio of grants and prizes for individual artists working in the field:

- Robert L.B. Tobin Director-Designer Prize, established in 2008 by the Tobin Theatre Arts Fund to recognize emerging stage directors and designers working in opera;
- IDEA Opera Grants, established by the Charles and Cerise Jacobs Charitable Foundation in 2019 to support BIPOC composers and librettists in the development of new work;
- IDEA Opera Residencies, established in 2020 by the Katherine S. and Axel G. Rosin Fund of The Scherman Foundation to invite early-career BIPOC composers and librettists into the opera field; and
- Opera Grants for Female Composers: Discovery Grants, established by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation in 2014 to support the development of new operas by women.

Applications for the Campbell Opera Librettist Prize will be available this fall at operaamerica.org/Grants. The inaugural recipient will be named in spring 2021.

The COLP was first announced on Friday, July 24, during OPERA America's July edition of [Good News Friday](#).



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 2,000 individuals. OPERA America extends its reach to 80,000 annual visitors to its National Opera Center and over 50,000 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.