



# Campbell Opera Librettist Prize

*Created and funded  
by librettist/lyricist Mark Campbell*

## 2024 Guidelines and Application Procedures

### Important Dates and Deadlines

- Intent to apply deadline: April 26, 2024, 11:59 p.m. ET  
Required for access to full application
- Application deadline: May 24, 2024, 11:59 p.m. ET
- Applications adjudicated: June 2024
- Grantees notified: July 2024

### Important Links

[OPERA America Website](#)  
[OPERA America Grants Portal](#)

The OPERA America website and Grants Portal require different usernames and passwords.

If you need to reset your password for OPERA America's website, go [here](#).  
For Grants Portal information, contact [Diana Hossack](#), director of grantmaking.

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

Over the past five decades, OPERA America has awarded \$23 million to opera companies and artists across North America. Since 1984, OPERA America has been committed to increasing the quality and quantity of North American opera, providing financial support to Professional Company Members in such areas as new work and audience development, civic practice, co-productions, innovation, and gender parity in key artistic leadership roles.

In 2020, OPERA America worked with librettist/lyricist Mark Campbell to establish the Campbell Opera Librettist Prize — the first award in the history of American opera that specifically recognizes the opera librettist. Early in Campbell’s career, Stephen Sondheim presented Campbell with the first Kleban Foundation Award — a prize for extraordinary theater writers. “The award changed my life,” said Campbell. “Sondheim’s acknowledgment of my talent instilled a confidence in me to move my career forward.”

“In designing the Campbell Opera Librettist Prize,” said Marc A. Scorca, OPERA America president/CEO, “we seek to replicate Campbell’s experience and have a similar impact on the career of one outstanding librettist/lyricist each year. We also hope this award shines a light on the important role librettists/lyricists play in the development of new American opera.”

## Purpose

The Campbell Opera Librettist Prize is an annual award created and funded by Mark Campbell and offered as part of OPERA America’s continuing effort to support individual opera creators. The program is intended to recognize a librettist who has:

- Exceptional talent for writing opera librettos with a growing body of work that is already making a contribution to the American opera literature; and
- Demonstrates experience writing for opera/music theater and a commitment to making opera a central part of their artistic work and career.

## Prize Award

Grant recipients will receive:

- A one-time \$7,000 direct cash prize in support of their artistry and development as an opera librettist to be used by the awardee at their own discretion;
- Complimentary registrations to attend OPERA America’s Opera Conference and New Works Forum;
- Access to professional development programs for artists, including the Opera Entrepreneurship Workshops;
- Recognition through *Opera America Magazine*; and
- An OPERA America individual one-year membership.

The prize winner will receive a 1099 tax form at the end of the calendar year. This is for tax purposes. Awardees should consult a tax professional as necessary.

## Eligibility

- Applicants must have U.S. citizenship, permanent residence, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status. (Proof of residency and citizenship may be requested.)
- Applicants must have demonstrated experience as an opera librettist and have written at least two complete librettos that have been set to music or are in the process of being set to music.
- Applicants must demonstrate a commitment to opera as a central part of their artistic work.
- Applicants must demonstrate their ability to write librettos by providing work samples.
- Applicant participation (past or current) in a librettist-training program is preferable, but not required.
- Recipients of the Campbell Opera Librettist Prize may not reapply for the Prize in a subsequent cycle.

OPERA America recognizes that historic practices impact who has access to resources and opportunities in the opera industry. If you are a librettist who does not have the experience for this grant program, please review OPERA America's portfolio of grants for artists ([link](#)).

## How to Apply

- Read the guidelines carefully before completing any application materials.
- All materials must be submitted online via the [Grants Dashboard](#).
- An intent to apply form is required for all applications and is due by April 26, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. ET. Only applicants who submit an intent to apply may submit a full application.
- Applicants will receive notification if the intent to apply form has been advanced to the application stage.
- Submit a complete final application, including all supplemental materials, by May 24, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. ET.
- Applications that are incomplete, late, or sent via mail, fax, or email will not be accepted.

## Work Samples

Work samples are one of the most important parts of this application. Your work samples represent your artistic work and voice.

- Applicants must submit two written work samples and may submit up to three written work samples. Audio or video recordings of the submitted samples are encouraged (whether set to music or text readings), but not required.

- The most competitive applications will include recent examples of the librettist's works.
- Samples should demonstrate your aptitude for theatrical storytelling for trained voice(s) and instrumentation.
- Two of the samples must be from opera librettos that have been set to music or are in the process of being set (though not necessarily premiered in a full production).
- Shorter and/or one-act librettos are permitted. Only complete dramatic works for the stage will be considered. Screenplays, poems, text for arias, fragments from librettos, and academic articles are not accepted.
- Librettos written in languages other than English must be accompanied by a complete English translation.

## Narrative Statements

In addition to a current biography, applicants are required to submit written narrative statements describing their:

- Desire to choose opera as a form for their storytelling;
- Experience writing opera librettos;
- Success working collaboratively with composers and other creators;
- Vision of what impact they hope to have through their writing and how they want to affect people using the opera/music-theater medium; and
- Vision of how they will use their writing skills to influence the future direction of opera.

## Application Review

All final applications for the Campbell Opera Librettist Prize are 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, with different areas of expertise and experts with an understanding of diverse writing and creation styles, as well as new work producers from OPERA America Professional Company Members. 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.

- **Artistic Ability:** The artistic quality of the work samples.
- **Creativity:** The capacity to enrich the art form and the field.
- **Impetus for Opera:** Applicants' motivations for expressing themselves through opera.
- **Collaborative Expression:** The history of successful collaborative work in the applicant's artistic practice.

## Award Announcement

- All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their requests after the panel completes its review.
- The receipt of the prize does not guarantee future support from OPERA America grant programs.
- The recipient of the Campbell Opera Librettist Prize will serve as the fiscal agent for the award. The prize winner will receive a 1099 tax form at the end of the calendar year. This is for tax purposes. Awardees should consult a tax professional as necessary.
- The Campbell Opera Librettist Prize is intended for the named awardee(s) only and is not transferable to any other artist or organization.

## Reporting Requirements

Successful applicants will receive an award agreement explaining the prize's terms and conditions.

The Campbell Opera Librettist Prize recipient may be asked to submit documentation or cooperate with OPERA America in sharing the results of their award.

Awardees are required to acknowledge OPERA America and Mark Campbell, including the Campbell Opera Librettist Prize, in the manner described by OPERA America in the award agreement. Recipients of the Campbell Opera Librettist Prize must maintain OPERA America's logo, including a hyperlink to OPERA America's website, in a prominent location on their websites.

## Contact Information

For more information, contact Diana Hossack, director of grantmaking, at [DHossack@operaamerica.org](mailto:DHossack@operaamerica.org) or 646.699.5236. You may also schedule a 15-minute grant consultation using this [Calendly link](#).

## Funder

The Campbell Opera Librettist Prize is made possible through the generosity of Mark Campbell.