

Opera is a multifaceted art form that comprises music and text to move a story or dramatic concept forward. The National Endowment for the Arts is committed to advancing the highest levels of operatic artistry across the nation's cultural landscape.

Funding through the  
opera programs,  
1966-2016:

**\$154 million**

### ADVANCING LEARNING

The National Endowment for the Arts supports learning opportunities for students and the public.

- Opera companies and artists do school tours and residencies presenting operas adapted for children and accompanied by curriculum such as Madison, WI's Opera for the Young tour of the operetta *Pirates of Penzance*.
- The Opera Iowa Education Touring Troupe at Des Moines Metro Opera serves rural mid-western schools with residencies including teacher preparation, workshops with the troupe, and a closing performance.

National Endowment for the Arts funding supports professional development for opera artists.

- The American Lyric Theater in New York City provides training for composers and librettists through mentorships and workshops of commissioned operas in development.
- Wolf Trap in Vienna, VA and its Filene Young Artists and Opera Studio Artists provides training for young singers and roles in fully-staged opera performances.
- The Merola Opera Program in San Francisco offers training and performing experience for singers, apprentice coaches, and an apprentice stage director.

### FUELING CREATIVITY

The National Endowment for the Arts makes a significant investment in the creation of new operas.

- Michigan Opera Theatre commissioned *Margaret Garner* by composer Richard Danielpour with librettist and author Toni Morrison based on the true story of a slave woman's quest for freedom.
- Issues-based operas are created, such as Terence Blanchard's *Champion* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Anthony Davis' *Amistad* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, and the premiere of Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* was at San Francisco Opera with productions in three other cities.

- Through the New American Works program (1980 to 1995), the NEA invested \$9.5 million for "the creation, development, and production of new and/or seldom-seen American works," an investment that continues today with grants such as one to the Minnesota Opera for a new production of *Wuthering Heights* by American composer Bernard Herrmann.
- NEA-funded new works have gone on to garner major recognition such as *Madame White Snake* by composer Zhou Long that premiered at Opera Boston, and was awarded the 2011 Pulitzer Prize for Music. John Adam's *Nixon in China* was awarded the 1989 Grammy for Best Contemporary Composition.



## CONNECTING AND CELEBRATING

The National Endowment for the Arts has supported countless performances by opera companies and ensembles.

- Between 2007 and 2016, the NEA made more than 390 awards to support opera performances totaling more than \$11 million.
- In 2005-2007, the NEA presented the Great American Voices: Military Base Tour, which offered free performances of melodies from opera and Broadway for military personnel and their families at more than 40 military installations, support that continues today through projects such as Hawaii Opera Theatre's project to engage military communities throughout the state.

The National Endowment for the Arts funds artistically significant and innovative programming.

- NEA-supported programs take opera out of the opera house and into community spaces, such as Boston Lyric Opera's Opera Annex, Opera Memphis' 30 Days of Opera, and The Industry's *Hopscotch*.
- The NEA launched National Opera Week in 2008 with OPERA America. The annual program produces 140 opera activities in 38 states.

## BUILDING THE FIELD

National Endowment for the Arts funding has had a significant impact on the size of the opera field, investing in performing, training, and service organizations that deeply enrich the country's artistic life.

- Through partnerships and grants to OPERA America, the NEA has provided cornerstone support for numerous initiatives in the opera field, including: the Field Assistance Program to assist small and midsized companies; the development of educational initiatives such as Music! Words! Opera!; the Opera Fund to generate new commissions; the New Works Forum to showcase new operas in development, and since 2008, the annual National Opera Week.

The National Endowment for the Arts is committed to bringing opera to as many people as possible especially audiences that are geographically isolated.

- Opera performances on the radio have significant audience reach and the NEA has consistently supported these programs such as the Saturday Matinee Broadcast from the Metropolitan Opera which is broadcast to more than 600 stations worldwide.
- Through television broadcasts, millions of Americans watch world-renown artists in full productions of operas. *Great Performances* on PBS featured a broadcast of Bartok's *Bluebeard's Castle* in July 2015.
- The NEA supports simulcasts, bringing together excellent productions and the latest digital technology to broad and diverse audiences such as the Dallas Opera's 2015 broadcast of *La Boheme* in Cowboy's Stadium.
- The NEA Opera Honors program (2008-2011) celebrated opera through lifetime achievement awards bestowed on selected master artists. Video and audio interviews featuring these artists are among the most popular on the NEA website.

The National Endowment for the Arts is one of the earliest funders of opera in the country.

- The first year of NEA opera grants provided support to the Metropolitan Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, New York City Opera, and San Francisco Opera, the latter to create Western Opera Theater whose tours would spur the creation of regional opera companies.
- A 1971 grant helped the newly formed national service organization, OPERA America, to establish an office.

