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**Arizona Opera Wins Its Second Innovation Grant from OPERA America**

*The opera company is partnering with Arizona State University to develop a venture capital-inspired competition, the first of its kind in the field of opera*

PHOENIX (April 10, 2019) — [Arizona Opera](https://www.azopera.org/) has been awarded a two-year $150,000 OPERA America Innovation Grant, made possible by the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation, in support of a new partnership with Arizona State University (ASU). This marks Arizona Opera’s second consecutive, two-year Innovation Grant since the grant program’s inception four years ago.

Through this new partnership, Arizona Opera and ASU’s National Accelerator for Cultural Innovation—part of the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts—will develop and launch a new, venture capital-inspired competition, with a goal of reimagining earned income opportunities for Arizona Opera, while identifying viable frameworks for groundbreaking solutions across the entire cultural sector. In doing so, ASU achieves vital components of its mission: providing applied experience for students and investing in the cultural wellbeing of its surrounding community. While there exist a variety of opera competitions and venture capital competitions, this competition marks the first time that the two worlds are brought together in this way.

Teams of innovators across the country will be invited to present funding concepts designed to create new and novel earned revenue sources for Arizona Opera, through a national call for proposals later this year. Working with Arizona Opera, ASU will prototype a new cultural models lab and studio course that will engage in the work of vetting submissions for the competition to identify a select group of finalists in the spring of 2020. Proposals that reach the finals will then be evaluated by a group of business and thought leaders assembled by ASU and Arizona Opera to determine which team will be awarded a top cash prize of $25,000. In phase two of the program, the grant provides $100,000 of seed capital, which will be used by Arizona Opera to support the launch of the winning concept, with a goal of generating $1 million in new, annually recurring net earned revenue within five years.

“As reflected in Arizona Opera’s new artistic program, we are living in a time of incredible energy and innovation in the creation of new opera,” said Arizona Opera President and General Director Joseph Specter. “It is time now for us as an industry to embrace that same level of innovation in our approach to our business practices. Arizona Opera is thrilled to be working with ASU, a leader in innovation, on challenging opera’s current funding paradigm, and we are hopeful that our efforts will stimulate a new level of entrepreneurship across our field. We are deeply grateful to OPERA America and the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation for making this grant possible.”

“Herberger Institute lives ASU’s mission by taking social, economic and cultural responsibility for the communities in which we work. We are actively involved in many partnerships with Arizona cultural leaders to evolve the social and business models of arts and design in our region,” said Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts Dean Steven Tepper. “This partnership with Arizona Opera will bring creative minds together in a venture-capital inspired competition to identify new earned revenue sources that leverage the cultural and social impact of opera. We’re excited about the possibilities, and about the potential for scaling future groundbreaking models in the cultural sector through ASU's National Accelerator for Cultural Innovation.”

Marc A. Scorca, President/CEO of OPERA America commented: “We are delighted to support the creative initiative demonstrated by Arizona Opera — receiving its second Innovation Grant through our highly competitive program. OPERA America is grateful to be in a position to provide our member companies the resources needed to explore new strategies that expand the boundaries of their practice. The lessons learned from initiatives funded through our Innovation Grant program, generously underwritten by the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation, empower arts organizations to explore new concepts that will strengthen our member companies and create an even brighter future for our art form.”

**About Arizona Opera**

Arizona Opera, now in its 47th season, produces fully-staged operas, concerts, and collaborative programs throughout the state of Arizona each season, and is among only a handful of companies in the U.S. that regularly performs in more than one city. Arizona Opera elevates the transformative power of storytelling through music, cultivating community and strengthening a state and people as adventurous and diverse as the place they call home. Since its inaugural year in 1971, Arizona Opera has produced more than 175 fully-staged operas and concerts. The company's artistic history is rich with a blend of operas traditional repertoire featuring baroque, bel canto, and verismo works, turn-of-the-century masterpieces, operettas, and American operas.

**About Arizona State University’s Herberger Institute**

ASU’s Herberger Institute is the largest comprehensive design and arts school in the country, built on a combination of disciplines unlike any other program nationally and located within a dynamic research university focused on transformative change. Design and arts at ASU comprises the School of Art; the School of Arts, Media and Engineering; The Design School; the School of Film, Dance and Theatre; and the School of Music, as well as the ASU Art Museum. The Herberger Institute is committed to redefining the 21st-century design and arts school through developing and scaling ideas to strengthen the role of designers and artists across all areas of society and culture and to increase the capacity of artists to make a difference in their communities.



**About the OPERA America Innovation Grants Program**

OPERA America’s Innovation Grants support exceptional projects that have the capacity to improve the vibrancy of opera in the field’s most important areas of practice. These grants invest $1.5 million annually, enabling organizations to increase their investment in experimentation and innovation, and contribute to field-wide learning. This program is made possible by the generosity of the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation.



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