

**American Opera Projects (AOP)** is proud to announce the return of its popular ***Composers & the Voice*** program for its 2017-2019 season. We will select 6 composers and up to 2 librettists for a two-year fellowship. The primary focus of *Composers & the Voice* is to give composers and librettists extensive experience working collaboratively with singers on writing for the voice and contemporary opera stage.

## **OVERVIEW**

### 2017-18

There will be a total of 15 workshop sessions between October 2017 and May 2018, working with the company's Resident Ensemble of Singers and Artistic Team. The 2017-18 sessions also include courses for composers and librettists in acting, improv games, and libretto development.

There will be two public performances of work created during the series. In May 2018 there will be a concert performance of solo works written during the course of the workshop. In September 2018 there will be a culminating public performance of new scenes written during the summer.

### 2018-19

During the 2018-19 season, AOP will provide continued mentorship and career guidance for its C&V fellows. Select C&V operas-in-progress will potentially receive continued development workshops, such as staged readings at The Manhattan School of Music (part of a fourteen-year AOP partnership), as well as with other partners.

The second year of the cycle will also include a new partnership with The Hermitage Artist Retreat (<http://hermitageartistretreat.org>) that nurtures creativity in mid-career writers, painters, poets, playwrights, composers, translators, sculptors, and artists. A C&V Fellow (or Fellowship team) will be selected to receive a 6-week residency to continue opera development at the Hermitage's Florida estate.

## **DETAILS ON WORKSHOP SESSIONS, 2017-18**

American Opera Projects' Resident Ensemble is made up of 6 singers who have been selected based on their superior technical and musical skills, as well as their commitment to developing and performing new works. The ensemble is comprised of one each of the basic operatic/vocal categories: Coloratura Soprano, Lyric Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor, Baritone and Bass. The Artistic Team includes Steven Osgood, *Composers & the Voice* founder and Artistic Director, a Head of Music, a Head of Drama, an additional Music Director, instructors in acting and improv, as well as guest librettists and directors.

The *Composers & the Voice* series has two major components: Working Sessions with Singers and Music Directors (2 Introductory Sessions; and 6 New Works Sessions) and Skill Building Sessions with members of the Artistic Team.

In the First Introductory Session each of the 6 singers will present their own voice type. They will each explain how their particular voice works throughout its range, addressing issues of tessitura, negotiating the passagio, demands for vowel modification, and how these affect their performance of text. Each singer will present 3 arias from the modern operatic/art song repertoire, discussing in detail how each of them suits that particular voice type well. A Second Introductory Session allows each composer time to present their own work to the singers and fellow composers, giving each singer a unique insight into the composers' process as they collaborate on new material.

Over the 6 New Works Sessions, each four weeks apart, the participating composers or composer/librettist teams will work with each singer, one at a time, in rotation. The participants will have four weeks to create a solo work (3-5 minutes in length) with piano accompaniment for each singer. Each of the new compositions will receive a 25-minute period for presentation and discussion at the next New Works Session. The pieces will be performed

and discussed by the entire group. The primary focus will be on how well suited the composition is to the voice, and clarity of text setting. Steven Osgood will lead the New Works Sessions, consulting with the composers and librettists, and moderating the feedback sessions.

By May 2018, each composer or composer/librettist team will have rotated through the entire Resident Ensemble of Singers, creating a piece for each voice type. At the end of the sessions, these solo works will be performed for the public in May 2018 at AOP's *First Glimpse* songs concert. During the summer, each participant will write a 15-20 minute scene or extended work using up to three of the voice types and piano. The composers and librettists will have 3 months to complete these extended works. These compositions will be rehearsed and presented by the Resident Ensemble in September 2018 as part of AOP's *Six Scenes* public performance series.

Skill Building Sessions will occur approximately every 2 weeks throughout the season. Composers and librettists will train in acting and improv games, gaining in-depth and firsthand knowledge of how singers build characters, and deliver text. Mark Campbell will lead a course in libretto development for the operatic stage. Steven Osgood will lead sessions in role analysis. Guest directors and librettists will investigate successful opera libretti from both standard and contemporary repertoire, and will provide on-going fostering of each participant's libretto in development. *Composers & the Voice* librettist fellows will be called on to generate new material for use throughout the Skill Building Sessions.

## **SCHEDULE**

### 2017-18

Workshop Schedule:

October 11, October 25, November 8, November 15, December 6, December 20, January 3, January 17, February 7, February 21, March 7, March 14, April 4, April 18, May 2.

All workshop sessions will begin at 2:00 and end at 10:00. All sessions will be in New York City.

**All participants must be present for all of the workshop sessions.**

*First Glimpse* Concert: May 18 & 19, 2018

*Six Scenes First Chance* Concert: September 28 & 29, 2018

## **PROGRAM AND APPLICATION DETAILS**

AOP is encouraging applications from both composers and librettists working alone, and from composer/librettist teams. Composers and librettists applying jointly need not have prior collaborative projects. Please note: if a composer and librettist apply as a team, the panel reserves the right to select only one of the applicants for an individual fellowship.

Applications are reviewed and fellowships are selected by the C&V Artistic Director, the Head of Drama and Head of Music, and a panel of industry professionals.

There is no age limit for participation.

The fee for application is \$50; there is no fee for participation.

There is no stipend for selected composers or librettists.

**All participants must be in New York City for all workshop dates.**

For more information, call (718) 398-4024 or email [info@operaprojects.org](mailto:info@operaprojects.org)

**The application deadline is April 28, 2017.**

**Notification of participants will be made by July 1, 2017.**