

## **PROJECT NAME**

Interactive Opera Program

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## **OVERVIEW**

Currently, there is a large distance between opera and contemporary audiences. This distance is from a number of factors including a fear of understanding the content, old material that lacks contemporary cultural relevance, and perceived boredom. Introducing the **Interactive Opera Program (IOP)**: a community engagement tool and software that allows a community to augment any opera, or create a new opera, in real time. By using a carefully designed algorithm which takes data gathered from interactive sensors and devices, the audience will collectively create a unique version of the opera they're watching, further engaging them and creating a bespoke personalized experience. The Interactive Opera Program can be used as a way to refresh an old opera or create a completely new opera sourced entirely from the community.

During the course of an evening, there will be multiple touch points for interaction and data gathering beginning with ticket purchase and continuing to a pre-show and intermission experience with interactive stations in the lobby. These stations could include technologies like Leap Motion, biosensors, and computer vision. It is key that the collection is completely optional, doesn't get in the way of the opera experience, or feel like surveillance. Additionally, The IOP would be deeply invested in audience members leaving their trace on the production in as frictionless a way as possible. The goal is to create an experience that brings in new audiences without alienating current subscribers while engaging the community in a smart, artistically supported way. At the end of the night, a generative artwork created from the night's data will be available for purchase, cementing the experience in unique physical form.

While our proposal is to create a platform for interaction and engagement that allows opera companies to use the IOP for a variety of productions without starting from scratch, it is vital that there is a robust collaboration between the commissioning opera company, outreach department, and production's design team to ensure a successful production using the program. Integrative moments in the opera will be considered dramaturgically, while opening up spaces for the community to see themselves reflected in the text and design elements to create connection points between creative teams and the wider community. Beyond interactive elements augmented by data captured on the evening of the performance, there is further opportunity for community engagement in the design process such as utilizing pictures from an art class at a local primary/secondary school or having community members respond to prompts given by a designer for inspiration. With the production's design team, community, and IOP software collaborating together, the opera will be a powerful combination of historic human driven performance and cutting edge technology.

## **INDUSTRY IMPACT**

There is an extremely high opportunity for impact in the opera industry as the Interactive Opera Program directly addresses many of the issues preventing audiences from engaging with opera. By making the community a part of the production, the opera will engage younger audiences, their families, and reframe the opera house as a center for innovation and community conversation. The program is a powerful tool which turns who's in the room demographically, socioeconomically, and politically into a creative engine prompting discourse. Similar to how New York's Public Theatre has reconceived community engagement through their highly successful PUBLIC WORKS program, which is now being adopted by other companies like the Dallas Theatre Center, we see the program as an opportunity to create a national cultural shift towards new audience engagement through interactive technology. While the exact fit and use of the program will shift for each community and company, by investing in the creation of the program, we will be investing in finding solutions that make running the program dramatically more cost effective in comparison to each company creating a program from scratch. Additionally, if companies choose to commission new operas utilizing the program, we will be creating a new canon of operas that deliver technological engagement that returns the opera to its original place in society and the home for technological innovation.

## **MILESTONES**

We are requesting funding to complete initial research and workshopping for this project through the next year 12 months.

### **September - Research Begins**

Conversations with administrative teams, opera creators, and outreach teams to find current ways community is being engaged and discover opportunities for collaboration.

### **December - Workshop 1**

Our first workshop in NYC will be focused on compiling research found from prior months conversations with opera creators, company admin teams, and outreach teams. We will also break down key dramaturgical moments in operas that are most ripe for interaction.

### **March - Workshop 2**

Our second workshop will be focused on data collection and testing interactive moments within an opera. We will investigate smart, story connected prompts for each data collection moment.

### **June - Workshop 3**

Our final workshop will be focused on creating a rubric of interaction for a mock production. This will lead to a new proposal to be submitted to SD Opera and Opera America to find a company partner for a full test of the PLATFORM.

## **BUDGET**

Team Research Stipends	
Dramaturgy	\$2000
Creative Direction	\$2000
Technology	\$2000
Workshops (3 total)	
Travel/Accommodations	\$3,300
Space rental	\$1,900
Artist Stipends	\$2,000
Technology Costs	\$1,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$14,700</b>

Following this year of research and development, we would move into the next phase of the project focused on prototyping the interactive software based on research and input from a test company. Then we'd move to find a production partner and deploy the software.