

Streetwise Opera's Composers in Residence Brief 2018-2019

Award-winning national charity Streetwise Opera is excited to announce its Composers in Residence scheme for 2018-2019, supported by PRS Foundation. We will be commissioning five composers to develop five short operatic choruses that will be dramatised for performance during our Opera Hour season in spring 2019.

Streetwise Opera is one of the UK's leading commissioners of contemporary opera, having commissioned 19 composers over the past 12 years including Orlando Gough, Anna Meredith, Will Todd, James MacMillan, Anna Appleby and Mira Calix. Our artistic policy is to combine existing classical repertoire with new music to create inspiring new opera. We are committed to investing in music creators and giving our performers, who have experienced or are at risk of homelessness, the opportunity to work with the highest quality artists, through new music that inspires and challenges them.

We have a biennial cycle which includes one major production and annual Opera Hour performances in each region that we work in, all responding to a shared theme. Opera Hour performances take place in a variety of different venues from high-profile to local arts venues, giving audiences the opportunity to experience a range of Streetwise Opera's work in an informal setting.

This is our third Composer in Residence scheme supported by PRS Foundation, following successful residencies in 2014/15 and 2016/17. We will be selecting one composer local to each of the five regions where Streetwise Opera runs its programmes: Greater London, Greater Manchester, Nottingham, Teesside and Tyneside.

The texts for the commissions will be inspired by the theme "Community and Belonging", and written in collaboration with our performers through a process of experimentation and exploration, allowing Streetwise Opera's performers to make creative decisions and feel a sense of ownership over the final piece.

Streetwise Opera's workshop leaders will help facilitate the process and composers will be supported throughout by the Artistic Director of Workshops and the Head of Programme.

Creative brief

- A chorus [up to 5 minutes] with a strong narrative intention inspired by the theme "Community and Belonging"; we would encourage you to think about matters of local significance, though we want to avoid themes directly relating to homelessness
- The chorus will be dramatised [not sung in a static formation] and directed by our workshop leaders
- Composers will take the lead in writing the text with our performers with support from the Head of Programme
- The performance will take place in an informal setting during the regional Opera Hour without costumes, lighting or props
- Vocal writing - lyrical lines in unison and harmony [2- 3 part]. Consideration should be made to balance the complexity of phrases, rhythms and range to suit the group so that it is ambitious but not too hard [composers will need to visit and consult with workshop leaders and the Artistic Director of Workshops]
- Instrumentation will be primarily for piano [keyboard or upright - not prepared] with other potential instruments to be agreed with the Artistic Director of Workshops

Eligibility

- Composers must be 18 years or older
- They must be British citizens or residents in the UK for the duration of the scheme
- They must live in the same region as the group they are writing for
- They must be available for interview on 12 July, for training on 14 September and to attend four Streetwise Opera workshops between September and November 2018
- They will need to be willing to travel to workshops and performances
- They must be able to invest the suggested time in residence with Streetwise Opera
- Experience in setting words to music is essential and experience in writing text is desirable

Practical brief

- Each composer will receive a fee of £1,000, and those outside London will be paid travel expenses to attend the interview on 12 July and training half-day on 14 September in London. We are unable to pay for local travel expenses to attend workshops, rehearsals or performances
- We are interested in composers at different stages of their career and from all backgrounds

Composer in Residence support

- As well as the half day training day on 14 September, the five composers will be offered mentoring by another well-established composer
- Composers will be fully supported by the Artistic Director of Workshops and the Head of Programme, and will be able to visit workshops and liaise with workshop leaders throughout the process

Timeline

- 20 June – Application submission deadline
- 12 July – Shortlisted candidates interviewed in London [availability on this date is essential]
- 14 September – Training half day in London
- 17 - 21 September – First visit [orientation] to regional group's workshop [availability on these dates is essential]
- 24 September – 5 October – Second visit [writing session] to regional workshop [availability during this period is essential]
- 19 October – First draft deadline
- 22 October - 2 November – “First try out” in sessions led by workshop leaders [availability during this period is essential]
- 31 October - 5 November – Feedback
- 5 - 11 November – “Second try out” in sessions led by workshop leaders [availability during this period is essential]
- 12 November – Second draft deadline
- 19 November – Feedback
- 26 November – Final delivery deadline for the chorus
- 27 November – Each chorus is learnt and rehearsed by regional performers
- Early February - mid March – Instrumentalists added into sessions to rehearse
- Mid February - end of March 2019 – commissions performed in regional Opera Hour [availability for the performance is desirable – date tbc]

Application process

Please send your application to info@streetwiseopera.org by midnight 20 June 2018, with the subject line 'Composers in Residence application'. Applications must include:

- Your CV [max. two pages], please make sure to include your postal address
- A one-page letter outlining your suitability for the project, identifying the region that you are applying to, and introducing your specific, and locally rooted, interpretation of the theme
- Electronic scores for two vocal pieces that you have composed
- Links to recordings of these pieces if available – for pieces with a duration over 5 minutes, please identify a 5-minute excerpt that we should listen to
- A completed Streetwise Opera equal opportunities form

About Streetwise Opera

Streetwise Opera is an award-winning charity that uses music to help people make positive changes in their lives. Working with people who have experienced or are at risk of homelessness, we run workshop programmes across England and stage critically-acclaimed operas.

Our productions platform the skills of our performers in a professional arena, showing that whatever life throws at them, they can achieve great things. Underpinning these, our workshop programme offers a dependable source of creativity in lives where everything else can be changing.

Streetwise Opera also runs With One Voice, an international movement which seeks to build the arts and homelessness sector globally through exchanges in policy and practice.