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Q1. Name

# ICS

**BGSU** | Institute for the Study of  
**CULTURE** and **SOCIETY**  
BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

Q2. Pronouns

Q3. Unit

Q4. Academic Rank

Q5. Office Phone

Q6. Mobile Phone

Q7. Email

Q8. Please indicate your availability for residency

- Fall Term
- Spring Term

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## Characteristics of the Award Program

Each year up to four BGSU faculty members may receive Institute awards to pursue research or creative work for one team. During the award period, Institute Scholars and Artists are freed from teaching and service responsibilities so that they may devote unimpeded time to their projects

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## Conditions

1. Each Fellow will present on their funded project in a public, general-audience lecture sponsored by the ICS in the semester of the fellowship period. Additional community engagement activities may be required as developed in consultation with the Fellow, the Director, and the ICS Executive Board.
2. Fellows are expected to participate actively in the intellectual community at ICS, through attendance at meetings of the ICS Fellows, Fellows talks, and other ICS-sponsored events.
3. ICS Fellows are requested to acknowledge the role of the Institute in publications/creative projects that result from their residency. We ask that you submit a copy of the final product (book, article, exhibition catalog, video, etc.) to ICS upon publication/exhibition.
4. If you anticipate taking a one-semester Faculty Improvement Leave, you may also apply for a semester-long ICS fellowship. However, those applying for full-year FIL should NOT expect to be able to switch to a semester FIL if awarded an ICS fellowship. These are separate awards with different timelines and processes; ICS cannot intervene in FIL matters.
5. ICS Fellows remain on regular academic-year salary throughout the award period. Funding for the Fellowship program comes from the College of Arts and Sciences, which provides compensation to instructional units to offset the costs of the release time. (Units must agree to make up the difference.) Replacement costs are capped at \$5,000 for a one-semester residency and are contingent upon fulfillment of ICS obligations.

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## Eligibility

All full-time faculty who have successfully completed one Enhanced Performance Review are eligible to apply for a fellowship. Awards to untenured (probationary or nontenured-track) faculty are contingent upon

reappointment.

Faculty who have previously received an ICS Fellowship must wait at least five years before reapplying. No more than two faculty members from one department or program may be in residence at ICS in any given academic year.

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## Review Criteria

- The intellectual significance and public relevance of the project, including the major ideas, themes, and questions to be explored
- The ways in which the project will enrich the university and broader communities through meaningful collaboration
- The significance of the project to a broader or more nuanced understanding of culture and society by building on and advancing existing disciplinary knowledge through interdisciplinary methods
- The clarity and conceptual coherence of the project
- The originality, importance, or substance of the applicant's proposal
- The probability that the project will lead to a tangible research/creative outcome (e.g., scholarly article, artwork, book chapter, etc.)
- The degree to which the project is sufficiently well conceived to be completed in a timely manner
- The potential for the project to serve the public good

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## Proposal Evaluation Procedures

Applications are reviewed by the ICS Executive Board and the ICS Director.

Award recommendations are forwarded for approval to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and the Vice-Provost for Research.

Q13. Project Title

Making American Opera after "Einstein"

Q14. Project Abstract (250 words maximum)

In the wake of the avant-garde opera "Einstein on the Beach" in 1976, American opera experienced a renaissance, one which has continued to the present. My book project, "Making American Opera after Einstein," centers on contemporary attempts to remake opera in an American image. In it, I argue that American opera—as a genre, a sphere of cultural institutions, an expression of national identity—has transformed significantly over the past four decades. I examine how American cultural politics and the operatic politics of institution and genre act as dialectical forces in the creation of new music theater ranging from Philip Glass's "Satyagraha" (1980) and Anthony Davis's "X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X" (1986) to John Adam's "Doctor Atomic" (2005) and Missy Mazzoli's "Song from the Uproar" (2012). As the first critical history of contemporary American opera, my book—which I will submit for peer review in 2023—draws on extensive archival research and interviews to contribute new perspectives on opera in the postmodern, neoliberal era. Through chronologically arranged case studies that uncover the collaborative processes and artistic networks crucial to opera's creation, I address issues with transformative implications for the genre: narrative strategies and American exceptionalism in "Satyagraha," race and improvisation in "X," notation and the body in Meredith Monk's "Atlas" (1991), documentary aesthetics and political economy in Steve Reich's "The Cave," sound design and space in "Doctor Atomic," and theatricality and new music ensembles in "Song from the Uproar" and David Lang's "the whisper opera"

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## Proposed Community Engagement Activity (100 words maximum)

Describe a new community engagement activity that you might develop during an ICS residency in order to connect your project to other publics. What non-BGSU constituency could you reach out to for collaboration (such as a high-school, hospital, or particular community service organization)? How would this audience advance your work and/or increase its impact on the world? Think carefully about the kind of event or activity that would be appropriate and relevant to your project. You may wish to consult with the ICS Director in advance of your application.

I am interested in presenting my research to the general public through organizations such as Toledo Opera or Michigan Opera Theater (MOT), which in recent years have demonstrated a commitment to the performance of contemporary American operas. The newly appointed general director of MOT, Yuval Sharon, told me over the summer that my 2020 New Yorker article on Anthony Davis's opera "X" was instrumental in leading to the revival of this opera at MOT next May after lying dormant for more than 30 years. Thus, MOT might be particularly receptive to helping me bring my work to a wider audience.

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## Additional Application Materials to be Emailed

- Project Narrative (1000 words maximum): The project description should be written in a clear, jargon-free style intelligible to colleagues outside the applicant's area of expertise.
  - Provide a concise overview articulating:
    - the central ideas, problems, or questions examined in the research/creative project being pursued
    - the intellectual significance of the project, including how you will complement, challenge, or expand existing scholarship and public perceptions of the topic
    - the social relevance to and impact on university and area communities
    - potential audiences for the work, including those on-campus as well as in the wider community
    - the longer-term goals for the project, what you plan to accomplish during the leave semester, and the form the final product will take
- Curriculum Vitae
  - Please attach in BGSU format
- Please use Times New Roman, 12-point font, one-inch margins
- In addition to the written project descriptions, artists may submit supplementary materials, such as digital files (photos, audio, videos) with their application packet.
- Submit additional application materials through email to [ics@bgsu.edu](mailto:ics@bgsu.edu)

Q17. Please include the name and email for your Unit Chair/Director. Please ensure to type in the name and email correctly, they will receive an email requesting their signature as part of your application for the ICS Faculty Fellowship.

Unit Chair/Director Name

Unit Chair/Director Email

Q18. Please include the name and email for your College Dean. Please ensure to type in the name and email correctly, they will receive an email requesting their signature as part of your application for the ICS Faculty Fellowship.

College Dean Name

College Dean Email

Q16.

I have read and understand the ICS Faculty Fellowship Program guidelines, and agree to its conditions:

Applicant Signature:



**Location Data**

**Location:** [Redacted]

**Source:** GeoIP Estimation



## Making American Opera after *Einstein* Project Description

In the wake of composer Philip Glass's groundbreaking opera *Einstein on the Beach* in 1976, the field of American opera experienced a renaissance. Buoyed by generous funding initiatives, composers and artists—many of them avant-garde—gained access to institutional resources; in turn, opera companies capitalized on newfound prestige. The production methods and aesthetics of these artists and institutions, however, collided at times. At the heart of these collisions lay a desire to redefine opera. In 1982, Glass framed his ongoing theatrical forays as an historical imperative, declaring, "I'm trying to create a new kind of musical theatre—one that speaks the language of our times." His erstwhile colleague Steve Reich responded a decade later with *The Cave* (1993), a "documentary music video theater work" that was his "answer to what music theatre could be."

I am applying for an ICS fellowship to support the completion of my book project, *Making American Opera after Einstein*, which centers on contemporary attempts to remake opera in an American image. In it, I argue that American opera—as a genre, a sphere of cultural institutions, an expression of national identity—has transformed significantly over the past four decades. Whereas many composers embrace operatic convention, tailoring their operas to audiences through adaptations of cherished American stories, others attempt self-consciously to test the genre's aesthetic boundaries through new approaches to operatic space, time, and subject. By exploring operas that manifest an enduring modernist impulse to innovate, *Making American Opera* examines how American cultural politics and the operatic politics of institution and genre act as dialectical forces in the creation of new music theater. It presents both the visual and sonic as negotiations of these factors, in case studies ranging from Glass's *Satyagraha* (1980) and Anthony Davis's *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* (1986) to John Adam's *Doctor Atomic* (2005) and Missy Mazzoli's *Song from the Uproar* (2012).

Musicological scholarship has struggled to keep pace with the remarkable growth of American opera since 1976. Only in the past few years have younger scholars, including Alice Miller Cotter, Megan Steigerwald Ille, and Leah Weinberg, begun addressing this lacuna through studies of specific works, composers, or institutions.<sup>1</sup> As the first critical history of contemporary American opera, my book will contribute new perspectives on opera in the postmodern, neoliberal era. Through a series of chronologically arranged case studies that uncover the collaborative processes and artistic networks crucial to opera's creation, I address issues with transformative implications for the genre: narrative strategies and American exceptionalism in *Satyagraha*, race and improvisation in *X*, notation and the body in Monk's *Atlas* (1991), documentary aesthetics and political economy in *The Cave*, sound design and space in *Doctor Atomic*, and theatricality and new music ensembles in *Song from the Uproar* and David Lang's *the whisper opera* (2013). This attention to the aesthetic dimension of opera is complemented by an equally robust inquiry into opera's social terrain. By interfacing neglected archival sources with more than forty new interviews I have conducted with composers, librettists,

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<sup>1</sup> Alice Miller Cotter, "Sketches of Grief: Genesis, Compositional Practice, and Revision in the Operas of John Adams," PhD diss. (Princeton University, 2016); Megan Steigerwald Ille, "Bringing Down the House: Situating and Mediating Opera in the Twenty-First Century," PhD diss. (University of Rochester, 2018); Leah G. Weinberg, "Opera behind the Myth: An Archival Examination of *Einstein on the Beach*," PhD diss. (University of Michigan, 2016).

administrators, and performers, my book maps out the complex networks of actors, institutions, ideas, and cultural forces at play in the creation of new American operas. In that regard, my work complements recent scholarship by William Robin, Michael Uy, and Eduardo Herrera on the role of institutions in shaping the field of non-operatic classical music in the mid and late-twentieth century.<sup>2</sup>

My book draws on research I have conducted over the past several years at the Houston Grand Opera, Columbia University, New York Public Library (NYPL), Brooklyn Academy of Music, and University of California at San Diego, supported by fellowships and grants from the Society for American Music, NYPL, and Eastman School of Music. I have published and presented portions of this research in various peer-reviewed publications and at several conferences. This work has been well-received: my 2017 article in *American Music* received an ASCAP Virgil Thomson/Deems Taylor Award. I also have taught various seminars related to my work. My teaching load as a qualified-rank faculty member during my first four years at BGSU, however, afforded me comparatively little time to weave together the various threads of my large-scale project.

During the 2022–2023 academic year, I plan to complete my monograph with the combined support of a faculty improvement leave and ICS fellowship. I intend to submit my proposal and sample chapters to Oxford University Press or University of Michigan Press by August 2022, and to spend the rest of the academic year drafting the remaining chapters. I anticipate submitting my completed draft for peer review by April 2023.

As a scholar of new American opera, my research resonates strongly with the mission of the MidAmerican Center for Contemporary Music at BGSU and continues to inform my work with student musicians at the undergraduate, master's, and doctoral level. It also informs my growing profile as a public scholar. Over the past several years, I have written more than a dozen articles for publications including the *New Yorker*, *New York Times*, and *NewMusicBox*. In these, I bring a scholarly perspective to current music events, such as the May 2020 announcement of composer Anthony Davis's Pulitzer Prize for his opera *Central Park Five*. I also have given public talks for national arts organizations such as the Los Angeles Philharmonic (on Monk's opera *Atlas*) and Opera Philadelphia, as well as local organizations such as the Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo Symphony, and Way Public Library (where I served as musicologist-in-residence in Fall 2019). As an ICS fellow, I would be interested not only in engaging with faculty and students outside the College of Musical Arts (such as those in the Department of Theatre and Film), but also in presenting my research to the general public through organizations such as Toledo Opera or Michigan Opera Theater, which in recent years have demonstrated a commitment to the performance of contemporary American operas alongside more standard canonic European fare.

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<sup>2</sup> William Robin, *Industry: Bang on a Can and New Music in the Marketplace* (Oxford UP, 2021); Michael Uy, *Ask the Experts: How Ford, Rockefeller, and the NEA Changed American Music* (Oxford UP, 2020); Eduardo Herrera, *Elite Art Worlds: Philanthropy, Latin Americanism, and Avant-garde Music* (Oxford UP, 2020).