

Lyric

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LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO
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#LyricChicagoVoices

Chicago Voices

wants YOU to tell YOUR community's story through song!
Community Created Performances accepting applications through March 7;
winners to receive \$10,000 + professional support
New Lyric Opera initiative celebrates Chicago's diverse music culture



Photo: Kyle Flubacker

Chicago – No matter where you live in Chicago, your community has compelling stories to tell. **Lyric Unlimited** wants to hear and share those stories through **Community Created Performances**, part of the new **Chicago Voices** initiative recently announced at The Hideout by **Lyric Opera of Chicago** and Lyric's creative consultant **Renée Fleming**.

Chicago Voices is a groundbreaking, multi-year initiative celebrating the city's diverse music culture and exploring the untold stories of Chicago communities. Through **Community Created**

Performances, Lyric invites groups of Chicagoans to share stories through song based on their unique communities and experiences. In partnership with the **Chicago Public Library**, applicants will utilize the 2016 One Book, One Chicago theme, *Chicago: The City That Gives*, to help frame the stories of Chicago communities. Groups should demonstrate how their community interacts with the city and how Chicago has been a part of defining that community. Applications are being accepted online through March 7 at [www.chicagovoices.org/community created performances](http://www.chicagovoices.org/community-created-performances).

Up to ten semifinalists will be chosen, after which the public will vote for the performances they find most compelling. The three groups who receive the highest number of votes will each undertake a 16-week creative process to develop an original music theater work with the support of a professional team and a \$10,000 stipend. Groups will receive training and support to create original songs and scripts to further develop their stories into fully-realized productions, which will be presented to the public. While no prior performing experience or training is required to apply, groups selected to participate will be asked to sing and perform in front of an audience.

“**Community Created Performances** put creative control into the hands of communities to tell their stories using the building blocks of opera: storytelling through song,” says **Anthony Freud**, Lyric’s general director. “It’s a tremendously exciting idea that I hope will cast a spotlight on the untold stories of Chicagoans and the tremendous creativity that exists in our city.”

Blu Rhythm Collective, a newly formed group of young-adult performers from Chicago, recently participated in the second pilot program of **Community Created Performances**. Members created an original script and music over a period of six weeks that was presented at the Vittum Theater in December 2015. **Blu Rhythm Collective** is now a licensed LLC in the Chicago area. Learn more about Blu Rhythm Collective’s experience during the pilot program [here](#).

Hour-long information sessions for **Community Created Performances** are scheduled throughout February at Chicago Public Library branches in the Chicagoland area. Remaining sessions include:

- **Bezazian Library, 1226 W Ainslie St: Wed. 2/17, 6:30PM**
- **Little Village Library, 2311 S Kedzie Ave: Thu. 2/18, 6:30PM**
- **Near North Library, 310 W Division St: Sat. 2/20, 10AM**
- **Back of the Yards Library, 2111 W 47th St: Sat. 2/20, 2PM**
- **Humboldt Park Library, 1605 N Troy St: Mon. 2/22, 6PM**
- **Lincoln Belmont Library, 1659 W Melrose St: Tue. 2/23, 6:30PM**
- **Jefferson Park Library, 5363 W Lawrence Ave: Thur. 2/25, 6:30PM**

• **Roosevelt Library, 1101 W. Taylor St: Mon. 2/29, 6:30PM**

Partners for **Chicago Voices** are Chicago Public Library, Chicago History Museum and Columbia College Chicago.

Chicago Voices is made possible by major support from **The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation** and the **Ford Foundation**. This project is partially supported by **The Chicago Community Trust** and an IncentOvate Grant from the **City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events**.

About Lyric

Lyric Opera of Chicago's mission is to express and promote the life-changing, transformational, revelatory power of great opera. Lyric exists to provide a broad, deep, and relevant cultural service to Chicago and the nation, and to advance the development of the art form.

Founded in 1954, Lyric is dedicated to producing and performing consistently thrilling, entertaining, and thought-provoking opera with a balanced repertoire of core classics, lesser-known masterpieces, and new works; to creating an innovative and wide-ranging program of community engagement and educational activities; and to developing exceptional emerging operatic talent.

Under the leadership of general director Anthony Freud, music director Sir Andrew Davis, and creative consultant Renée Fleming, Lyric strives to become The Great North American Opera Company for the 21st century: a globally significant arts organization embodying the core values of excellence, relevance, and fiscal responsibility.

About Lyric Unlimited

Lyric Unlimited is a long-term, evolving initiative that encompasses company activities that are not part of Lyric's main stage opera season. Its mission is to provide a relevant cultural service to communities throughout the Chicago area and to advance the development of opera by exploring how opera as an art form can resonate more powerfully with people of multiple backgrounds, ethnicities, and interests. It also leads the development of innovative partnerships with a wide range of cultural, community, and educational organizations to create a breadth of programming through which Chicagoans of all ages can connect with Lyric. In the 2014/15 season, more than 126,000 children, students, and adults participated in Lyric Unlimited activities. For more information about Lyric Unlimited program offerings, visit lyricopera.org/lyricunlimited.