

# Das Opernstipendium

## Composition and doctoral scholarship within the framework of Dissertation Plus on the theme "Citizen's Opera"

The Claussen-Simon Foundation, in collaboration with the Hamburg State Opera and the Institute for Cultural Innovation Research at the Hamburg University of Music and Theatre (HfMT), is offering a two-year Composition and Doctoral Scholarship ("Opernstipendium") for the fourth time, starting on October 1, 2025. The scholarship provides monthly funding of up to €1,600 under the Claussen-Simon Foundation's Dissertation Plus program ([www.claussen-simon-stiftung.de/dissertationplus/](http://www.claussen-simon-stiftung.de/dissertationplus/)).

The artistic part of the doctoral thesis involves composing a full-length chamber opera or site-specific opera or a participatory music theater project. This work has to engage with the concept of the "Citizen's Opera" in celebration of the 350th anniversary of the Hamburg State Opera in the 2027-28 season. The composer is expected to reflect on this term and integrate it into the conception and composition of the new work. The goal is to create a new form of Citizen's Opera, addressing either its historical significance and/or modern participatory aspects. The resulting opera is expected to premiere during the 2027-28 season. The academic component of the dissertation will use an artistic-research methodology to explore the work created within this context.

### Who Can Apply?

The scholarship is open to composers up to the age of 35, regardless of nationality. Direct relatives or spouses of jury members are excluded. The composer must reside in Hamburg during the scholarship period.

### Selection Process

A jury will decide on the scholarship allocation through a two-stage selection process. In the first round, candidates will be shortlisted based on their submitted materials and invited for personal interviews. First round results will be communicated in April 2025. The second-round interviews will take place in May or June 2025. The scholarship is contingent upon acceptance by the HfMT doctoral committee, which must approve the candidate for an artistic-scientific doctorate leading to the degree of Doctor scientiae musicae. The scholarship can commence on October 1, 2025, following formal admission to the doctoral program at HfMT.

### Academic Requirements

Applicants must meet the requirements outlined in HfMT's current [doctoral and academic regulations](#) for the degree Doctor scientiae musicae. This includes a completed Master's degree and proof of qualification for academic or artistic research. The candidate should demonstrate outstanding abilities in contemporary music theater production, a high level of reflection, and a strong interest in pursuing a doctorate. Regular reporting on the progress of the dissertation in HfMT's doctoral colloquia is required.

### Composition Requirements

Applicants should have experience composing larger works. An interest in the concept of the Citizen's Opera and in innovative formats of music theater is also required. Potential performance venues include the opera stabile, the Hamburg State Opera's smaller stage. Alternatively, composers may reinterpret the concept of the Citizen's Opera by, for example, creating multi-part short operas performed in various locations across Hamburg. Other forms of participatory music theater are also conceivable.

It is desirable that the work reflects and reinterprets the concept of the Citizen's Opera, not only artistically but also in terms of its integration into the urban space. The form in which the composer

engages with possible Citizen's Opera concepts is open to individual interpretation. Various concepts and potential approaches are [outlined](#) as guidance (in German).

The composition must take into account the artistic, personnel, technical, and financial conditions of the Hamburg State Opera. Continuous updates on the progress of the work, coordination with the State Opera, and openness to feedback are expected.

#### **Ensemble Requirements:**

- Maximum of five instrumentalists, primarily from the classical orchestra
- Up to six singers
- No choir or extra performers
- Alternative ensembles are possible for participatory or site-specific projects

The Hamburg State Opera has the final decision on the ensemble. The composed work must be unpublished, i.e. not previously performed, broadcast, printed, or otherwise reproduced or distributed, and must not infringe third-party rights. The composer must be willing to grant the Hamburg State Opera the exclusive right to premiere the work. The score will be marked as a commission by the Hamburg State Opera. Attendance at rehearsals is expected.

#### **Application Documents**

Applications must be submitted digitally via email by February 1, 2025, and include the following:

- A detailed letter of motivation (approx. two pages, max. 8,000 characters)
- Proof of a Master's degree or equivalent qualification entitling the applicant to pursue a doctorate
- A concept for the planned composition (approx. three pages, max. 12,000 characters)
- A detailed CV
- Two letters of recommendation
- Samples of previous musical works and written/scientific works

Submit the application materials, excluding work samples, as a single PDF file (max. 10 MB) to Dr. Jenny Svensson at [svensson@claussen-simon-stiftung.de](mailto:svensson@claussen-simon-stiftung.de).

Work samples should be sent in a separate PDF file (max. 10 MB). Audio or video files and large scores can be provided via a web- or download link (e.g., YouTube, SoundCloud, or WeTransfer).

For up-to-date information about the application process, visit:

[www.claussen-simon-stiftung.de/opernstipendium/](http://www.claussen-simon-stiftung.de/opernstipendium/)

Feel free to contact us with any questions!

#### **Claussen-Simon-Stiftung**

Dr. Jenny Svensson  
Bereichsleitung Kunst & Kultur  
E-Mail: [svensson@claussen-simon-stiftung.de](mailto:svensson@claussen-simon-stiftung.de)  
Große Elbstraße 145f  
22767 Hamburg  
Tel. 040-380 37 15 26  
[www.claussen-simon-stiftung.de](http://www.claussen-simon-stiftung.de)