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CONTACT: Saira Frank, Managing Director
Opera for the Young
608.277.9560 | saira@ofty.org

\$80.5 Million Awarded for Arts Projects Nationwide
Includes \$20,000 awarded to Opera for the Young

Madison, WI— National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Jane Chu has approved more than \$80 million in grants as part of the NEA’s second major funding announcement for fiscal year 2018. Included in this announcement is an Art Works grant of \$20,000 to Opera for the Young for its original opera, *Super Storm!*. The Art Works category is the NEA’s largest funding category and supports projects that focus on the creation of art that meets the highest standards of excellence, public engagement with diverse and excellent art, lifelong learning in the arts, and/or the strengthening of communities through the arts.

“The variety and quality of these projects speaks to the wealth of creativity and diversity in our country,” said NEA Chairman Jane Chu. “Through the work of organizations such as Opera for the Young in the Upper Midwest, NEA funding invests in local communities, helping people celebrate the arts wherever they are.”

Super Storm! librettist and Opera for the Young Artistic Director Diane Garton Edie said, “Our upcoming production will provide Opera for the Young with an incredible opportunity to show young people that not all opera was created long ago...opera is a living, breathing artform! Our super hero adventure will be seen by over 75,000 Midwestern school children during our 2018/19 season. This production was composed by Scott Gendel and will be created by Opera for the Young’s Resident Artists, Musicians and Designers. *Super Storm!* will showcase opera’s musical storytelling with our special brand of interactive performance. We are honored that the National Endowment for the Arts has honored OFTY’s *Super Storm!* with this prestigious award and we hope you will be able to join us at one of more than 180 performances next season.”

Super Storm! is an Opera for the Young original by Madison-based composer Scott Gendel, with story and libretto by Diane Garton Edie. OFTY artistic staff endeavor to provide elementary students exposure to varied styles of opera; in this case, a modern work by a living composer. *Super Storm!* showcases individuality and cooperation. Four very different vocalists discover their unique strengths when caught in a storm of epic proportions. Students from each school play abandoned cats and dogs hiding out in the same cave during the bad weather. By creating a completely original opera, OFTY will be able to expand and deepen its usual student chorus involvement by writing in more opportunities for singing and active participation in the plot. The value of diversity in our society, an educated understanding of responsible care of domestic animals, and extreme weather (including electricity and magnetism!) will provide appealing themes and topics for elementary classroom discussions.

To join the Twitter conversation about this announcement, please use **#NEASpring18**. For more information on projects included in the NEA grant announcement, go to arts.gov

About Opera for the Young

Opera for the Young, Inc. is a leading provider of arts-in education services in the Midwest, as well as a pre-eminent producer of opera for children in the United States. Each year OFTY brings opera to more than 75,000 children. Opera for the Young's award winning programming focuses on arts education (educating children about the value and beauty of the arts) and also arts-in-education (using the arts as a springboard to teach other core curriculum subjects).

Founded in 1970, Opera for the Young's mission is to: Ignite a love for the arts in every child. The organization's artistic vision, in support of that mission:

- Engage and educate children about opera with professional, affordable school-based performances;
- Involve students in all aspects - from design to performance;
- Provide professional opportunities for artists;
- Foster the creation of new operatic works expressly intended for young audiences;
- Broaden access to opera for the entire community.

Since its founding Opera for the Young has performed to more than 2.5 million children throughout the Midwest.