



Call for Papers

„Women Composers for Opera: From Conception to Performance“

International Conference

18–19 May 2027, Staatstheater Nürnberg, Germany

Research Institute for Music Theatre Studies (*fimt*) of the University of Bayreuth, Nuremberg -
University of Music, TU Dortmund University, Staatstheater Nürnberg

Operas by Richard Wagner, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Giuseppe Verdi, Giacomo Puccini, etc., dominate the repertoires of opera houses. With few exceptions, works from the standard repertoire by male composers are repeatedly performed. However, this repertoire policy does not reflect the fact that opera as a genre has historically been of interest to women composers, nor that women have composed operas that are both suitable for and valuable to the repertoire. More recent databases and publications, such as *500 Operas by Women* by the American project Women’s Philharmonic Advocacy and Mary F. McVicker’s handbook *Women Opera Composers* (2016), clearly demonstrate through the listings they contain how substantial the number of operas composed by women is.

To help bringing these operas to the stage, the conference *Komponistinnen für die Oper: Komponieren – Publizieren – Aufführen* will take place from 13–14 May 2027 at the Staatstheater Nürnberg as part of the 50th anniversary of the Research Institute for Music Theatre Studies (*fimt*) of the University of Bayreuth. It is organised by the *fimt* (Prof. Dr. Anno Mungen, M.A. Lidia Krier) in cooperation with the Nuremberg University of Music (Prof. Dr. Susanne Rode-Breyman, M.A. Charlotte Müller), the TU Dortmund University (M.A. Rahel Schwarz), and the Staatstheater Nürnberg (Johann Casimir Eule).

The conference aims to bring together academic research and theatre practice in order to develop strategies for the long-term integration of operas by women composers into theatre repertoires, as well as facilitate an exchange of existing experience. The focus of this discussion will be on historical operatic works by women composers born between 1800 and 1910. Contributions on works from other periods are also welcome.

The conference contributions are expected to be published in the open-access online journal *ACT: Zeitschrift für Musik & Performance* in May 2028 and are intended to encourage further research into operatic works by women composers. This publication is also meant to serve as a resource for directors, dramaturgs, and opera houses in order to promote the inclusion of more operatic works by women composers in their repertoire.

We invite submissions **from both research and theatre practice** addressing the following aspects:

- Presentation of **individual works** from different periods and cultures.
- Exploration of **biographical aspects** related to opera composition.

- **Collaboration between women composers and librettists as well as other artists** (dynamics of collaboration among artists, writers, singers, conductors, theatre directors, etc.)
- **Publication histories** of the works (publishers, formats, dissemination).
- **Source-critical perspectives** (surveys of sources relating to individual works and their performances, opportunities and challenges of working with sources, etc.).
- **Performance histories** of the works (organisation of premieres and subsequent performances, selection of theatre venues, communication with theatre institutions, directors, and artists).
- **Staging and performance practices from a contemporary theatre practice perspective** (reports on productions and projects; experiences, obstacles, and challenges in staging a rediscovered operas by women composers today).
- **Public reception of the works** in the past (the social significance of the composer's public presence and its discussion, responses from audiences and critics, and, if applicable, from other composers).
- **Mediation and presentation of operas by women composers** from the perspective of contemporary dramaturgical practice (e.g. program notes, marketing, press).

Interdisciplinary contributions that connect musicology with theatre studies, cultural studies, gender studies, sociology, and related disciplines are especially welcome. Applications from practitioners who wish to report on their work with operas by women composers from the perspective of theatre makers are also encouraged. Submissions from early-career researchers are particularly welcome.

Presentations are planned in 30-minute slots, consisting of a 20-minute presentation followed by a 10-minute discussion. The conference languages are German and English. The event will take place in person in Nuremberg, digital presentations (e.g. via Zoom) are not possible. We intend to cover the costs of accommodation and travel to Nuremberg. We kindly ask you to clarify whether travel expenses can be covered by your home institution.

To participate, please send an abstract of your presentation (max. 300 words) and a brief biography (max. 150 words) as a PDF file **by 14 June 2026** to Rahel Schwarz (rahel.schwarz@tu-dortmund.de).