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For Immediate Release

Madison Opera receives NEA grant to support *Galileo Galilei*

Grant part of NEA announcement of 863 grants and \$22.543 million in funding nationwide

Madison, Wis.—The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Chairman Rocco Landesman today announced that the agency will award 863 grants to organizations and individual writers across the country. Madison Opera is one of the grantees and will receive \$15,000 to mount its production of celebrated composer Philip Glass’s *Galileo Galilei*. The 863 grant awards total \$22.543 million, encompass 15 artistic disciplines and fields, and support projects in 47 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Madison Opera is one of five Wisconsin arts groups to be so recognized.

“Art Works is the guiding principle at the NEA,” said agency Chairman Rocco Landesman. “And I’m pleased to see that principle represented through the 823 Art Works-funded projects included in this announcement. These projects demonstrate the imaginative and innovative capacities of artists and arts organizations to enhance the quality of life in their communities.”

Madison Opera’s production of iconic American composer Philip Glass’s *Galileo Galilei* depicts the life of the famed astronomer, whose discovery that the Earth revolved around the sun resulted in his persecution by the Catholic Church and his peers. Glass’s opera charts Galileo’s life backwards in time, interjecting personal moments between Galileo and his beloved daughter Marie Celeste with scenes from Galileo’s trials before the Inquisition. Among Glass’s most acclaimed recent works, *Galileo Galilei* explores questions of science, religion and, ultimately, humanity.

“We are honored to be recognized on the national level,” said Madison Opera General Director Kathryn Smith. “NEA grants like this one help us present world-class productions and contribute to Madison’s robust and exciting arts culture.”

In March 2011, the NEA received 1,686 eligible applications for Art Works requesting more than \$84 million in funding. The resulting funding rate of 49 percent of eligible applications reflects both the significant demand for support and the ongoing vitality of the not-for-profit arts community despite current financial challenges. Art Works grants are awarded based on the applications received by the NEA and how those applications are assessed by the review panels.

For a **[complete listing of projects](#)** recommended for Art Works grant support, please visit the NEA web site at arts.gov.

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Madison Opera is a non-profit professional opera company based in Madison, Wisconsin. Founded in 1961, the company grew from a local workshop presenting community singers in English-language productions to a nationally recognized organization producing diverse repertoire and presenting leading American opera singers alongside emerging talent. A resident organization of the Overture Center for the Arts, Madison Opera presents three productions annually in addition to the free summer concert Opera in the Park and a host of educational programming.