

# Foo Foo Fest Grant Application

Fields marked with an \* are required.

**Name of Organization**

Pensacola Opera

**Organization Location**

75 S. Tarragona Street

**Contact Name**

Chandra McKern

**Contact Phone Number**

(850) 433-6737

**Contact Email**

chandra@pensacolaopera.com

**Name of Existing/Proposed Event**

Songs Down South- "From Opera to Opry"

**Date(s) of Existing/Proposed Event**

11/4/2023

## Additional Dates for Existing/Proposed Event ( if needed)

**Additional Event Date 1**

Event Date

**Website (If any)**

<https://www.pensacolaopera.com>

**Funding Amount Requested**

\$38,500.00

**Please provide an overview for your vision and marketing plan to promote your event**

FOO FOO FESTIVAL 2023

PENSACOLA OPERA – "Songs Down South- From Opera to Opry"

**VISION**

Pensacola Opera has a long history of producing events and shows that reflect diverse genres of music. Our next Foo Foo Festival event will bring some of the best music the world has ever known to Pensacola in a unique way. Southern music can't be rivaled, born out of the traditional music of Ireland and Scotland and fused with the lifestyle and culture of the Southern United States, this music is woven into the fabric of Southern life. Southerners place great value on this culture and the history that created it. In addition to southern music, we will also celebrate the other cultural cornerstones of the South, food and cocktails!

On Saturday, November 4, 2023, Pensacola Opera will bring the best the south has to offer, by presenting "Songs Down South-From Opera to Opry". This diverse musical lineup for the evening will include favorite selections from musical theatre, country, bluegrass, gospel, spirituals and blues. Of course there will be a bit of opera,—although probably in a way most people have never heard.

Upon arrival, guests will be able to kick back and enjoy a variety of southern crafted cocktails, wine, and beer that will bring a little dixie into your glass. Beverages will be curated by Birmingham's Scott Jones, a nationally recognized writer and the former Food and Wine Editor of Southern Living. Scott's expertise and enthusiasm are unique, and he is now the owner of "Jones is Thirsty" a premium wine tasting company. In addition, guests will be able to experience some of the finest Southern food in the region prepared by William "Bill E. Stitt" from Bill E's restaurant in Fairhope, AL. If you love the bacon at Jackson's Steakhouse

or Restaurant Iron, then you have already experienced the small batch bacon that Bill-E cures and smokes at his restaurant in Fairhope.

Songs Down South will be emceed by none other than Loosey LaDuca, a nationally recognized drag performer who was recently a top five contestant on Season 15 of Rupaul's Drag Race. Besides her instant hit original song "Let Loose," Loosey also became known for her memorably iconic Dolly Parton impression during one of the show's acting challenges. She'll bring her over-the-top, larger-than-life personality to our event, emceeing the evening as Dolly and presenting her own comedy and musical numbers as part of the lineup.

In order to pay homage to the variety of genres of music that have roots in the South, we are going to bring in a diverse group of artists that have a variety of expertise. To open the show, our very own Jan Miller Studio Artists will sing a variety of musical theater and opera selections that have Southern ties. This will range from solos, duets and ensembles with a variety of instrumentation. In addition to our own group of studio artists, we are bringing guest performers to cover other genres. Janinah Burnett, who recently closed *The Phantom of the Opera* on Broadway, and is a veteran of the Metropolitan Opera, will showcase her unique genre bending style of singing. This will include southern spirituals, traditional hymns set in new arrangements, and covers of great artists of our past, including Nina Simone. Most recently seen as Billy Bigelow in our March production of *Carousel*, Robert Wesley Mason will close out the first act. Beyond his classical artistry he is an accomplished guitarist and performs country standards, folk music, and a variety of acoustic southern themed songs.

Our final act will showcase the "Opera Cowgirls". You will be able to experience Grand Ole Opry meets Grand Opera in a marvelous mashup of opera, bluegrass, and country! The critically-acclaimed Opera Cowgirls blend operatic melodies and voices with the country flavor of their instruments to transform familiar operatic pieces and Southern standards into toe-tapping tunes. Individually, the Opera Cowgirls have performed as soloists with The Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Nashville Opera, Opera Memphis, Florida Grand Opera, Sarasota Opera, St. Pete Opera, and many others.

Immediately following the show, attendees will have the opportunity to meet these incredible performers at the Artist Meet & Greet After Party, which will include food and Scott Jones hand selected wines.

#### 1. TIMING AND CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

Pensacola Opera will present Songs Down South: From Opera to Opry, an anchor event presented during the first weekend of Foo Foo Festival on Saturday, November 4, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. at the Jean & Paul Amos Performance Studio.

#### 2. PROGRAM EFFECT ON SUCCESS OF FESTIVAL MISSION.

Songs Down South will have the unique ability to effectively capitalize on the support of our regular opera patrons and classical music lovers, while also drawing in a different audience of festival goers who will be intrigued by the different, more popular genres of southern music. Pensacola Opera and its performing partners have enjoyed stellar reputations locally, regionally, and nationally. Last year's Foo Foo event, Forty Forward, featured sixteen soloists who regularly perform with leading opera houses both in the United States and around the world. Pensacola Opera was able to assemble over 150 artists who participated in our gala celebration. Pensacola Opera has a proven track record over the years with Foo Foo Festival patrons. Those who have attended festival presentations of *The Three Foo Foo Tenors*, *From Sea to Shining Sea: A Musical Salute to Service*, and last year's Forty Forward: Celebrating Four Decades of Opera, expressed their overwhelming appreciation for the quality of these Foo Foo Festival events. All of our collaborations to date have been big box office draws, and have helped shape the Foo Foo Festival reputation as a world class arts festival. In addition to Forty Forward last year, we added a "Friend of the Foo" event. To kick off the festival on Thursday, November 3, 2022, Pensacola Opera transformed Vinyl Music Hall into a masterpiece of art for Pensacola Opera's premier fashion event MODA! These combined

events brought in over 1600+ attendees to the Foo Foo Festival.

### 3. UNIQUENESS, INNOVATION, CREATIVITY & EXPRESSION

Having world class, trained classical artists performing a wide variety of genres is an event unique unto itself. Taking musicians from the highest levels of the classical performance world, and showcasing their ability to bring virtuosic ability and apply it to beloved traditional Southern music will be a fusion that Pensacola, Florida has never seen.

### 4. MARKETING & PR PLAN OF ACTIVITY

In coordination with Foo Foo Festival's marketing team, Pensacola Opera will access multiple constituencies on local, regional and national levels to market Songs Down South. Pensacola Opera sees a combined subscriber base of over 9,500, and historically has seen over 150K impressions on social ads for Foo Foo Festival events.

The event will be marketed through traditional channels, such as rack cards, direct mail, print/digital ads, targeted and segmented email and social media campaigns, as well as targeting web users who fit the age/income demographics. The event will be promoted in Google AdWords and Facebook Promoted Posts, social media will augment the marketing done by the FooFoo team. In tandem with our long-established partners WEAR-TV, WALA-TV, Ballinger Publishing, Lamar Advertising, VIP, Scarlett/Faces Magazines, Pensacola News Journal, Cat Country Radio, WUWF Radio, Visit Pensacola, and other regional and visitation media outlets, Pensacola Opera will maximize its relationships in order to create buzz and fill the Amos Center for such an exciting event.

In addition to email and social media, we will also focus on earned media including print and radio trade advertising spots with local media outlets and publications, press releases, information on the Pensacola Opera website, and by placing ads in other arts organizations' programs and Garden and Gun and Southern Living Magazines. Through years of expertise with marketing Foo Foo Festival-this new event will be included as a major highlight and draw for locals and tourists.

### 5. APPEAL FOR DIVERSE TOURIST AND LOCAL MARKET

Generally speaking, opera is a genre that is respected for its power and the ability for the human voice to tell a story and convey emotion. However, this doesn't always trickle down as a genre that creates "popular appeal". Having world class musicians performing genres of music that the general population can relate to, paired with Southern food that people love to eat, and a unique cocktail program is a winning combination. It is our duty as a nonprofit to serve the whole community, and for us that is the power of music and storytelling. Pensacola Opera believes this event will truly have something for everyone, whether you are a country music lover or not.

### 6. NATIONAL MARKETING AND MESSAGING APPEAL

The unique nature of this event presents an opportunity for the Foo Foo Festival to market itself as the Gulf Coast's premiere presenter of events that are bold, inclusive, and innovative. This program is unique throughout the Gulf Coast region and 100-mile radius, with no festival or arts organization having announced plans for a concert with this combination of artists, styles of music, and variety of food and beverage. Regional opera audiences in New Orleans, Mobile, Birmingham, and even those in Tampa, St. Petersburg, and Sarasota, appreciate opera and opera-related events in their communities and travel throughout their region. An event with this style of music, would be of immediate interest, especially when combined with the full complement of Foo Foo Festival events.

Additionally, Loosey LaDuca has over 120K followers on Instagram and Social Media. With RuPaul's Drag Race inclusion and representation, it is no surprise that the series continues to be a massive global success.

### 7. INFRASTRUCTURE AND STAFF TO DELIVER PROGRAMMING

With over 30 combined years in professional leadership positions, Pensacola Opera's Executive, Artistic

and Music Directors enjoy a long history of successfully presenting large scale events including previous Foo Foo Festival presentations of the Foo Foo Three Tenors concert at Maritime Park, From Sea to Shining Sea: A Musical Salute to Service at the Saenger Theatre, and last year's Forty Forward: Celebrating Four Decades of Opera at the Saenger Theatre. Pensacola Opera employs a full-time staff of six, one permanent part-time employee, and has over 50+ BRAVI Volunteers. The company's Board of Trustees complement a devoted corps of active volunteers who support the company's community engagement programs through their attendance and interaction with audience members. Also, for this event, we will collaborate with staff at the Jean & Paul Amos Performance Studio, with whom we have worked with on previous events.

#### 8. INFRASTRUCTURE & STAFF TO MANAGE AND COMPLY WITH ACCOUNTING EXPECTATIONS

Pensacola Opera has a full-time General Director and Artistic Director, a part-time Accountant, and a volunteer Treasurer from the Board of Trustees, who chairs the company's Finance Committee. Pensacola Opera has successfully submitted final reports with detailed financial information to granting organizations such as the National Endowment for the Arts, OPERA America, Department of Cultural Affairs for the State of Florida, IMPACT 100, Sunday's Child, and Art, Culture, and Entertainment, Inc., in addition to other local, regional, and national granting organizations.

#### 9. MEASUREMENTS FOR VALIDATING RETURN ON INVESTMENT OR PROGRAM SUCCESS

The success of Songs Down South will be measured by the number of performance attendees, demographic information, completion of audience survey (on-line) which includes travel and housing information, and the numbers of online interactions via social media and our website. New customers will be engaged and cultivated through future marketing efforts, developing a loyal (and returning) arts & culture patron to Pensacola for years to come. Pensacola Opera will consider the ticket sales and sponsorships portion of the event for financial success.

#### 10. USE OF FUNDS

Pensacola Opera has a proven history of producing opera in a fiscally responsible manner. We believe the budget for Songs Down South is both realistic and achievable. Pensacola Opera will supplement all monies received from this grant request with monies from additional sources that would include ticket revenues, sponsorships, and donations.

**Budget Requirements - Grant may not cover more than 85% of program budget. Budget amendments must be approved in advance. Please upload your budget and ANY other supporting documents.**

FF 23 Budget.pdf

**Certification: Sign your name - By signing my name here, I certify that I have read and agree that all statements contained herein, and in the application submission, are true and complete to the best of my knowledge, and I agree to the terms of this grant program as outlined in the guidelines. I also certify that submission of this funding proposal is authorized by the applicant organization's Board of Directors.**

The block contains two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature, on the left, is 'Chandra' written in a cursive, flowing style. The second signature, on the right, is 'McNew' also written in a cursive, flowing style.