

**B E R L O P E  
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R P R E I S****Competition by Neuköllner Oper and GASAG****THE BERLIN OPERA AWARD IS LOOKING FOR SHORT OPERAS!****Who's Behind It**

Launched in 1997, the BERLIN OPERA AWARD has become a fixture in Berlin's cultural landscape and beyond as a prize for young talent in the field of musical theater. For 28 years, the sponsors of the Berlin Opera Award, Neuköllner Oper and GASAG Berlin, have shared a shared interest in new, innovative, and accessible compositions specifically for the musical theater stage. The competition, now announced in cooperation with the Munich University of Music and Performing Arts and the Hanns Eisler School of Music, will present the winners with performances of their award-winning works in spring 2027. For this 30th anniversary in 2027, interested composers at the beginning of their careers are invited to submit a short opera. The award supports and honors premieres that explore new avenues in musical theater, exploring the boundaries of the genre while simultaneously achieving a sensual, emotional, and immediate impact. In cooperation with the Munich University of Music and Performing Arts and the Hanns Eisler School of Music in Berlin

At the grand gala in 2027, three selected short operas will be staged before an expert audience and a professional music theater network, and the winner will receive prize money sponsored by GASAG Berlin. But participating already means winning: The three projects will receive intensive support during their development phase from mentors Moritz Eggert (composition) and Bernhard Glocksinn (libretto) in workshops and coaching sessions. Here, young composers can experiment, exploring, for example, the intersection of pop and avant-garde, and, in particular, expand their expertise in composing for the stage, the scenery, the plot, and for the human voice. During this intensive development phase, the composers can further develop through exchanges with experienced mentors from the fields of text, dramaturgy, theater direction, and composition. Together with the directing teams, singers, and musicians of the Hanns Eisler Academy of Music, they will gain hands-on experience of the complex processes of music theater work, such as the specifics of spaces and cast, proper scheduling for the interplay of the various disciplines, and, last but not least, creative chaos, collaboration, and compromise-finding within the artistic teams.

## **ARE YOU INTERESTED?**

**THEN APPLY WITH YOUR COMPOSITION PROJECT BY SEPTEMBER 30, 2025!**

### **How the process works**

A selection committee, composed of representatives from the Neuköllner Oper, the Munich and Berlin universities, and other external experts, will select three composers (or teams), each of whom will develop a short opera of up to 20 minutes and premiere it at the Neuköllner Oper with students from the Hanns Eisler Academy of Music (directing, conducting, vocals, etc.). Immediately following the premiere in April 2027, the jury will select the winning project (€3,000) and the second and third place winners (€2,000 each). Additionally, one team will receive the Audience Award. The jury members will be announced in September.

### **The Requirements**

- You are a young composer – that is, you are in a higher semester studying composition, have already gained some relevant composition experience, or are at the beginning of your career.
- You work alone or in a team.
- You are interested in musical theater and would like to write for the stage/voice.
- You are curious and open to collaborating with both the mentors and the leading team at the Hanns Eisler University of Music (direction, set design, dramaturgy).

### **The Framework for the Short Operas**

- Duration: Max. 20 minutes
- Cast:
  - 2–3 singers
  - 5–10 musicians from the following pool: • Flute/alto flute/piccolo • Oboe/E.H. • Clarinet/Bass Clarinet • Horn • Trumpet • Trombone • Drums • Piano/Keyboards • Violin • Cello

### **The Play**

What generations of theater makers have long waited for is now finally possible: Bertolt Brecht's works will be free of copyright in 2027, meaning they can be freely adapted – and there are no limits to creativity. The 2027 BERLIN OPERA AWARD will focus on Brecht's first drama, **BAAL**. The egocentric poet Baal not only lives contrary to bourgeois morals, but also lives excessively and recklessly until he is destroyed. Within Brecht's oeuvre, the play marks an early, expressionist-influenced attempt to expose the "genius cult" and critically examine social outsiders. Applicants are asked: what can the work tell us today about the destructive power of radical individuality and the

clash between art, freedom and responsibility.

### **Applications**

Please send the following documents to [kuehn@neukoellneroper.de](mailto:kuehn@neukoellneroper.de) / [altenhof@neukoellneroper.de](mailto:altenhof@neukoellneroper.de) by September 30, 2025:

- A one-page concept for the short opera in German or English. Please consider the following points:
  - What is my position on the above question?
  - What approach and form do I find?
  - Which cast do I choose from the available options?
  - What do I want to achieve with my approach?
- CV
- 2–3 audio and/or video examples of previous work

### **Schedule**

- Call for applications: September 30, 2025
- Selection of three projects: By the end of November 2025
  - Start of development/workshop series: January 2026
  - Submission of score: End of September 2026
- Submission of score: End of December 2026
- Rehearsals: March/April 2027
- Premiere: End of April 2027

### **About the awarding Institutions:**

The Neuköllner Oper on Berlin's Karl-Marx-Straße boulevard was founded in 1977 with the aim of freeing musical theater from its elitist prison – with themes that move people in the neighborhood and in Berlin, and with music that conveys these themes in a universally understandable way. Over 270 musical theater works have been created in this way over 48 years. Pop culture has always been at the heart of the Neuköllner Oper's work – for artistic reasons and, at the same time, to inspire and bring together many different people for musical theater. Starting in the 2025/26 season, Rainer Simon will take over as artistic director of the Neuköllner Oper and will sharpen and expand the established focus on all forms of pop culture.

### **GASAG - Full of energy for Berlin.**

GASAG AG and its subsidiaries are a leading network operator, energy service provider, and energy producer with a focus on the Berlin-Brandenburg region. In addition to supplying gas and green electricity to hundreds of thousands of household and commercial customers and increasingly generating their own green electricity, the companies of the GASAG Group offer a wide range of energy services. As a company

with strong ties to the capital for more than 175 years, it is a Berlin Partner and assumes social responsibility for sports, culture, the environment, education, and science through targeted sponsorship. For many years, GASAG has been working with partners from Berlin's cultural scene to set a positive tone in cultural promotion and enable things that wouldn't exist without this commitment. A collaboration like this with the NEUKÖLLNER OPER is part of the company's identity and an expression of its role as one of Berlin's oldest and most traditional companies. Uniqueness, entrepreneurial courage and perseverance, the constant development of ideas and initiatives, and sustainable added value for all involved – these are generally the hallmarks of a successful product. These are also characteristics that distinguish artistic work – and GASAG's long-standing commitment to culture.

## **Cooperation Partners**

**Munich University of Music and Theatre** The Munich University of Music and Theatre (HMTM) is one of the largest and most diverse art schools in Europe, with around 1,400 students in over 100 degree programs in music, dance, and theatre. Founded in 1846 as the Royal Conservatory, it has borne its current name since 1998 and promotes both artistic and educational excellence as well as academic education. With approximately 500 teachers at several locations in Munich's art district, the HMTM significantly shapes the city's cultural life through numerous concerts, performances, and collaborations – including with the Bavarian Theatre Academy August Everding.

## **Hanns Eisler Academy of Music**

The Hanns Eisler Academy of Music Berlin (HfM) was founded in 1950 as the "German Academy of Music" in what was then East Berlin and was named after its first professor, the composer Hanns Eisler, in 1964. Today, around 500–600 young musicians from approximately two-thirds of all countries of origin study at two centrally located locations (Charlottenstrasse at Gendarmenmarkt and Neuer Marstall on Museum Island) in classical disciplines such as singing, instruments, conducting, composition, and music theater directing, as well as in specialized institutes for jazz, new music, and musicians' health. With over 400 public concerts, opera productions, and master classes annually, as well as collaborations with Berlin orchestras and opera houses, the HfM Eisler is one of the leading international educational institutions and has a lasting impact on the city's musical life.

For any questions, please contact Andreas Altenhof | + 49 30 68 89 07 12 | [altenhof@neukoellneroper.de](mailto:altenhof@neukoellneroper.de)

