



About Venice Island's New Musical Series

The New Musical Series was created to provide space and support for the next generation of composers, lyricists and performers. At its core, the Series is about giving Philadelphia-based artists the opportunity to dream boldly, refine their work and present new musicals in a professional theatrical environment.

In 2025, Venice Island Performing Arts Center launched the inaugural New Musical Series with the world premiere presentation of *The Lost Tango*—and it was a tremendous success. Written by Howard Burke (Composer/Lyricist) and Robert Calandra (Librettist/Lyricist), *The Lost Tango* was directed by Beth Criscuolo, musical direction by Jim Wade and choreographed by Maria Jackson. *The Lost Tango* played to a packed house in our 250-seat theatre.

The selected musical for the 2026 Season will receive its first, fully staged public performance and be produced by Venice Island Performing Arts Center. The musical will be supported by a director, music director, designers, cast and technical team. There is no fee for the submission.

We are currently seeking submissions for the 2026 New Musical and invite writers to become part of this exciting series.

Is Your Show Eligible?

Any new musical may be submitted for consideration, provided it meets the criteria outlined below.

Must-Haves

- The musical must be complete and production-ready. No placeholder, abbreviated, or summarized scenes or songs will be accepted.
- Must be a cast of 8 characters or less.
- The submission must include a demo that accurately represents the music and overall style of the show.
- Demo recordings should be of good audio quality, with clear accompaniment (typically piano or guitar) and clearly audible vocals.
 - Whenever possible, singers should represent appropriate vocal types for the show.
- All underlying rights for any pre-existing material (music, source material, etc.) must be fully secured.
- The writers must be ready and available for production at the time of submission.

Submissions or questions should be sent to Kelly Orenshaw via email to VeniceIslandPerformingArtsCenter@phila.gov



Ineligible

- The musical has previously been fully produced (workshops and readings are acceptable) or is currently being produced by another producer or venue.

Additional Considerations

- Writers participate in the New Musical Series as writers only and may not direct, serve as music director, or perform in their presentation.
- Writers must be open to feedback, revisions and/or musical changes as discussed with the director, music director and producer.
- Writers must be available for auditions, rehearsals and other commitments as requested.
- Venice Island does not require any financial contribution from writers. Writers will not receive payment or an honorarium.

Venice Island requires credit and acknowledgment in any future productions and/or publications of the musical.

Compiling Your Submission

Important Dates

- March 31, 2026 – Submission Deadline (11:59 PM EST)
- May 15, 2026 – Latest date for Decision Announcement
- Rehearsals Begin –Dates TBD, tentatively Fall 2026
- November 20 & 21, 2026 – Performance Dates

Submission Materials

Introductory Pages

- Page 1: Title page including show title, current creative team
- Page 2: Brief synopsis of show (200 words or fewer)
- Page 3: Production history
- Page 4: Character breakdown (300 words or fewer)
- Page 5: Scene & track listings (in order)

Script

- Must be complete and presentation-ready.

Submissions or questions should be sent to Kelly Orenshaw via email to VeniceIslandPerformingArtsCenter@phila.gov



- Demo track numbers must be clearly noted within the script at the corresponding moments in the libretto.
- Remove all writer notes, edit notes, internal comments, text boxes, or other annotations.

Introductory pages and script should be one PDF document with all pages numbered.

Demo Tracks

- Track numbers must correspond exactly to the submitted track list.

Proof of Rights

- If the musical includes any copyrighted material, please submit the following:
 - A signed letter from the authors and underlying rights holder (or their legitimate representative) confirming that all rights have been secured, or a copy of the contract with all financial information redacted.
- Venice Island must be able to verify:
 - The length of the agreement and renewal/extension terms.
 - Identification of all parties, clearly showing that the submitting writers are included.
 - Clauses outlining artistic control and required approvals.

If You Are Selected

Each year, one musical will be selected for presentation as a World Premiere in the Venice Island New Musical Series.

Venice Island Performing Arts Center will provide full production, financial and administrative support to ensure a high-quality presentation within the production budget allocated.

Writers are welcome to be fully engaged throughout the process—from auditions through rehearsals and performances in partnership with the Venice Island Creative and Production Team. Participation in the New Musical Series may be intensive and time-consuming and selected writers must be prepared to commit fully and enthusiastically.

Submissions or questions should be sent to Kelly Orenshaw via email to VeniceIslandPerformingArtsCenter@phila.gov