

Introduction

Kunsthuis Opera Ballet Vlaanderen (Opera Vlaanderen Royal Ballet Flanders) is one of Flanders' most prestigious cultural institutions. Having its administrative seat in Antwerp and a permanent establishment in Ghent, Kunsthuis Opera Ballet Vlaanderen exercises a distinctive role in the production of outstanding opera and ballet performances. Close ties with the regions in its immediate vicinity – with productions of international standing – distinguishes Kunsthuis Opera Ballet Vlaanderen as one of the foremost opera and dance centres in the world.

Kunsthuis Opera Ballet Vlaanderen assures access to a diverse offering of opera productions and emphasizes the importance of being aware of, and taking into account, the demands of societal trends and evolutions. Maintaining the already existing audiences, and reaching out and attracting new adherents amongst the public, constitutes the core of the future vision which both opera and ballet view as an integral component of a broad cultural infrastructure imbued with far-reaching social significance.

Opera Vlaanderen is as of the first of June 2019 looking for an Artistic Director.

Profile:

Artistic:

- a) Experienced in programming and providing artistic guidance and direction to an establishment in the performing arts sector.
- b) Has extensive experience with the international opera environment, with a proven network of directors, singers, musicians, theatrical designers, lighting designers, and sundry other stakeholders.
- c) Possesses wide experience in international scouting and the deployment of a national and international network to promote the realisation of productions of outstanding quality.
- d) Has a *proven track record* in the field of national and international co-productions with due respect for, and compliance with, all commercial agreements.
- e) Has given proof to be able, through his/her choices of repertoire, with focus on the existing rich tradition but also with an eye on artistic innovation, to forge social bonds, including both audiences and sponsors.
- f) Has experience in successful collaborations with other forms of artistic expression.
- g) Has experience in the realisation of his/her artistic vision, in collaboration with the artistic units of Kunsthuis such as the chorus and orchestra members, with all due consideration for the agreed upon frameworks and the management contract.

Communication:

- a) Possesses outstanding communication skills and is able to represent the institution with style and enthusiasm in diverse circumstances and contexts.
- b) Has demonstrable communicating and negotiating

experience with various *stakeholders*, both internal and external, amongst which the authorities being the most important.

- c) Has a finger on the pulse of public tastes and demands and has proven to consider the participant as the central focus in the evaluation of the artistic activities.
- d) Is an active and experienced networker in a variety of fields, possessed of a purposeful and explicit vision on both the artistic and social missions of the cultural institution.
- e) Is sensitive to, and aware of, evolutions within the political and social environments such as may exert a notable impact on the workings of Kunsthuis, and has the ability to react speedily and effectively to such currents.
- f) Is linguistically sensitive and proficient and an inspiring speaker.

Experience in People Management:

- a) Has a demonstrable record in successful leadership to groups and individuals of diverse backgrounds and in executive functions, without losing sight of the common goal.
- b) Possesses strong social and communicative skills, is an attentive listener, empathic by nature, and prepared to learn.
- c) Can demonstrate existing experience in the development of a learning-oriented organisation that offered collaborators the opportunities for further self-improvement.
- d) Is able to deal with conflicts in a sympathetic and thoughtful manner.
- e) Is a team player, prepared to conduct a coherent and consistent HR policy in collaboration with the artistic director of the Ballet and the General Manager.

Organisational experience:

- a) Possesses extensive experience in both short and long-term planning and budgeting.
- b) Is prepared to work within an organisational structure with a management committee, wherein the General Manager assumes ultimate responsibility for the general policy.

Function requirements

Artistic function requirements:

The suitable candidate understands and appreciates the organisation's complexities and possesses a clear vision of the Opera's position within Kunsthuis. Kunsthuis Opera Ballet Vlaanderen acts and represents itself as a single artistic unit. The Artistic Director must possess a clear and strong artistic vision, while its execution needs to remain in full harmony with the multi-year policy established by the General Manager and approved by the Board of Directors. The Artistic Director shall perform the following duties in pursuance of the management contract, the legal provisions obtaining, the internal regulations, and the delegated and internal procedures.

The Artistic Director:

- a) Develops and presents to the Board of Directors, in consultation with the General Manager and the Ballet Director, a long-term artistic strategy and programming which sets forth the mission of Opera Ballet Vlaanderen and can be included into the management contract. Artistic elaboration and, of course, synergy between opera and ballet are the guiding principles.
- b) Develops with the Board of Directors and the General Manager agreed upon objectives such as: growth of attendance figures, international recognition, educational reach, own revenues, national and international co-productions, the Association of Friends, and tries to realise such objectives within a realistic time frame on the basis of the multi-year plan.
- c) Ensures a correct planning, organisation, development, and performance of productions, in a five-year cycle, in order to be able to offer an artistically outstanding and commercially sound programme of international quality.
- d) Sets priorities with respect to reaching quantitative and qualitative objectives.
- e) Invests in Kunsthuis Opera Ballet Vlaanderen as a European centre for both international top talent and Flemish talent, both starters as well as seasoned performers. In the process, develops an opera studio in order to create opportunities for young – preferably Flemish – artists, composers, and technical personnel, whereby aspects such as innovation in repertory, directing techniques, and interpretation constitute the core values.
- f) Is capable of developing a mobile, educational programme for children and youths as an investment in creating new audiences, in collaboration with the management committee.
- g) Works out a future strategy for the chorus and orchestra within Kunsthuis Opera Ballet Vlaanderen, taking into account further broader developments, for instance, in the Flemish orchestral landscape, all of this according to the internal procedures and in pursuance of the organisation's HR policy.
- h) Provides leadership to the artistic teams (both internal and external), within such frameworks as dovetail with

the standards and values and the HR context of Kunsthuis Opera Ballet Vlaanderen.

- i) Is present at the Opera Vlaanderen performances, or makes arrangements to be immediately informed about their success, in order to maintain the high artistic level.
- j) Is ready to gather information pertaining to the reality of the Flemish cultural context and, particularly, for what happens in the Antwerp and Ghent environs, taking such knowledge into account in the development of his/her programme.

Communication function requirements:

The Artistic Director:

- a) Employs his/her outstanding communication and representation skills in order to re-enforce and enhance the reputation of Kunsthuis Opera Ballet Vlaanderen, both within and outside of Flanders. Is able to attract international support for Kunsthuis' artistic vision and its social impact and importance.
- b) Contributes to Kunsthuis' active fund raising programme by his/her enterprising spirit and actions. Cooperates with the General Manager to provide form and content as well as interpretation and implementation of a drive to generate increased revenues.
- c) Anticipates political developments and trends within society such as may affect the popularity and continuity of Opera Vlaanderen.
- d) Together with the General Manager and the Ballet Director develops a purposeful lobby towards political stakeholders based on a stakeholder plan that has been approved by the Board of Directors.
- e) Invests in the cooperation with, and involvement of, the Friends of Opera Ballet Vlaanderen
- f) Is proficient in the Dutch language or prepared and competent to learn the language within one year in order to facilitate nuanced communications with colleagues, the Board of Directors, and sundry other stakeholders.
- g) Is capable of communicating with the media in a coordinated action with the General Manager on matters of artistic import.
- h) Is capable of discoursing with inspiring passion on the importance of artistic expression and achievement within the social context and the place of Kunsthuis Opera Ballet Vlaanderen in the Flemish and European cultural mosaic.

People management function requirements:

The Artistic Director:

- a) Is eager to build up a learning-oriented organisation wherein collaborators are offered the opportunity for further self-improvement in the conviction that leadership is not only characterised by risk-avoidance but also by the creation of trust and openness and aimed at the organisation's growth.

- b) Is able to offer effective leadership to groups of diverse backgrounds and different strata, without losing sight of the common goal.
- c) Is an emotionally intelligent manager, prepared and able to delegate tasks, attentive at listening to other opinions, possessed of an emphatic capacity for accepting other viewpoints and always prepared to adapt his/her own if it seems appropriate to do so.
- d) Has the ability to establish contacts between outside artistic teams and permanent personnel members.
- e) Directs artistic and business department heads specified in the organisational chart to engage in annual job discussions with their collaborators.

Organisational function requirements

The Artistic Director:

- a) Is prepared to engage in ongoing communications with the General Manager in matters pertaining to possible financial consequences of artistic demands. The General Manager assumes ultimate responsibility for general policy and, more specifically, for what concerns commercial and financial policy, HR policy, marketing and sponsoring in the broadest sense, communications, and the technical department. The General Manager is likewise *primus inter pares* amongst both Artistic Directors and the chairman of the management committee. The General Manager is the contact person for the Board of Directors and its committees, as well as for the various public administrations.
- b) Coordinates the co-productions and works out the short and long term planning for the preparatory and rehearsal phases, and the performance, with main focus on efficiency and results.
- c) Holds an annual job performance discussion with the Board of Directors, both with respect to his/her own performance and collaboration with the Ballet Director and the General Manager.