

SEARCHLIGHT RECRUITMENT



COMPANY	Calgary Opera
TITLE	General Director
LOCATION	Mamdani Opera Centre
WEBSITE	http://www.calgaryopera.com
REPORTS TO	Board of Directors

THE ORGANIZATION

Established in 1972, Calgary Opera is one of Canada's leading arts organizations. It is the largest opera company in western Canada by programming, and a cornerstone institution of Calgary's cultural sector. Calgary Opera has earned a national and international reputation for high artistic integrity, sound business management, and deep community engagement. Calgary Opera is recognized for its commitment to the development of Canadian talent and new opera works, as well as bringing opera to all ages in the community on a broader scale. The company has received attention from critics and audiences alike for its artistic excellence, pioneering spirit, and steadfast willingness to take risks.

On the mainstage, Calgary Opera produces a subscription season of three full-scale operas at the 2,400-seat Jubilee Auditorium, complemented by a series of opera-related events, school programs, and community development experiences.

Calgary Opera presents Canada's only outdoor summer opera festival (*Opera in the Village*), which brings opera to over 9,000 locals and tourists in Calgary's burgeoning community of East Village for an opportunity to enjoy lighter musical fare, such as *Candide*, *The Mikado*, and *South Pacific*.

The company's *Emerging Artist Development Program* is one of only three designated annual National Training Programs in Canada to be funded through Canadian Heritage. The program, offered to eight singers annually, acts as a bridge between post-secondary graduate education and the professional opera world, providing the experience and practical skills necessary to succeed as a self-employed professional in a highly competitive international environment. The Emerging Artists also present a Second Stage full production of smaller chamber plus *Christmas at the Opera* each season.

In just the past 15 seasons, the company has presented six world premieres, six Canadian premieres, and many company premieres. *Filumena*, by John Estacio and John Murrell, and

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commissioned by Calgary Opera, is now the most produced Canadian opera ever. Calgary Opera's most recent Canadian premiere of *Die tote Stadt*, by Erich Wolfgang Korngold, received rave reviews and attracted audiences from across North America and Europe. In addition, Calgary Opera has designed and built many new productions and partnered with other opera companies in the development of new productions.

Education programs are an essential component of Calgary Opera's work, enriching the experiences of current patrons and building audience for tomorrow through outreach to students and young people. *Let's Create an Opera* takes the magic of opera into Calgary schools, giving children the chance to write and present their very own operas to Calgary audiences. The *Opera for All* program offers performances for those ordinarily not able to experience live opera, and our *For Students Only* Dress Rehearsal provides thousands of students with deeply discounted tickets to mainstage productions. The *Opera in Schools Tour* brings one-act operas performed by the company's Emerging Artists into schools across the province.

Calgary Opera has presented in recital some of the great international artists such as Renée Fleming, Anna Netrebko, Jessye Norman and Ben Heppner to name only a few.

In 2015, Calgary Opera announced a unique partnership with the Calgary Stampede that will see the Calgary Opera move from its current administrative and rehearsal home in the Mamdani Opera Centre to the Calgary Stampede's new Youth Campus, creating an inspiring gathering place for performing arts training and performance for youth. Calgary Opera will build a 45,000-sq. ft. Opera Community Arts Centre, which will include public space, a 350-seat rehearsal and performance space, classrooms, practice, halls, full shops for the creation and building of sets and costumes and administrative offices. The new Opera Community Arts Centre will enrich the Youth Campus with 70 percent of the Centre's space being used as shared space servicing more than 160 community organizations. The new Opera Community Arts Centre is scheduled to open in 2020.

Calgary Opera is a well-governed, fiscally sound, community-rooted, and artistically vibrant organization with an international reputation for artistic innovation and excellence.

THE POSITION

The General Director provides overall artistic and administrative leadership to Calgary Opera. The General Director is responsible for achieving the Opera's goals for artistic excellence, audience development, fundraising, financial sustainability, and community engagement. The General Director sets the artistic vision, including the selection of repertoire, artists, and other creative and educational programming. Equally important, the General Director provides leadership on all administrative and financial matters including budgeting, contract negotiation and management of human resources. Reporting to the volunteer Board of Directors, the General Director oversees a staff of approximately 20 full-time employees, and a budget of \$5.5M.

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The General Director is the chief spokesperson for the company, and represents Calgary Opera at home and abroad. The General Director engages with a wide range of stakeholders, including: municipal, provincial, and federal levels of government; other arts organizations; major donors; corporate sponsors; artists; community partners; and the Board.

THE LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

For the past two decades, Calgary Opera has been ably led by the highly-acclaimed W.R. (Bob) McPhee, CM. With the recent announcement of Mr. McPhee's retirement, the company is embarking on the search for its next General Director.

You recognize this rare opportunity to take a strong arts organization and make it stronger: to develop and implement the strategy to propel Calgary Opera forward.

We are seeking an exceptional leader: a person with a compelling vision of opera as a vital force in a thriving city. We are looking for an *Impresario* with a track record of artistic innovation, business acumen, and administrative excellence.

The ideal candidate will be an experienced leader of the performing arts with a record of success and expertise in fundraising, accompanied by strong interpersonal and relationship building skills and proven management ability in all aspects of company administration. As well as profile-raising and leadership, you will provide strategic and financial direction for the company and will report to and work closely with the Board of Directors and its Chair.

You are a bright and astute personality who is an accomplished leader with energy, vision and enthusiasm. You love opera and the performing arts, but equally you love people and connect easily with them, be they staff, artists, stakeholders, or members of the community. As such, you will be both leader and ambassador for the company – building and sustaining positive relationships with the Board, staff, subscribers, volunteers, artists, patrons, media, the local community and peer-level arts organizations. You are driven to lead an institution that thrives on all fronts and to provide the support needed by your staff to achieve their goals.

As the public face and spokesperson of Calgary Opera, you will raise the company profile and grow its importance both locally and nationally. You will strive to promote Calgary Opera as a nationally-recognized opera company and a highly sought-after destination for singers and opera patrons throughout Calgary, Canada, and beyond.

You have a keen sense of the opportunities and challenges facing the opera world and the performing arts sector in general: changing demographics, new ways for audiences to consume entertainment, rising costs, limited government support, volatile corporate sponsorship, and increased competition for recreational spending. These challenges invigorate you: you have a vision for opera as a vital, relevant part of the city in the 21st century, and the tenacious creativity to implement that vision by galvanizing the team and community around you. You take the greatest satisfaction by creating the sustainable conditions for artists to express themselves and for audiences and communities to be enriched through the magic of opera.

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THE COMMUNITY

Calgary is a major economic and cultural centre in Canada. Calgary's population exceeds 1.2 million, has a large contingent of young, well educated and entrepreneurial people who are community minded and generous. The number of volunteers in Alberta exceeds the national average. Calgary attracts human and economic capital from across Canada and around the world. It is a place where people value quality of life, and appreciate an array of wellness, recreational, educational, and social services opportunities.

Calgary Opera is one of the city's "cornerstone" arts organizations, along with Alberta Ballet, Alberta Theatre Projects, the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, the Calgary Folk Festival, the Glenbow Museum, One Yellow Rabbit, Theatre Calgary, and Theatre Junction. Calgary has two universities, and has the highest concentration of head offices in the country, as well as the highest personal income per capita in Canada.

Calgary Opera has enjoyed a long-term partnership with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra and is supported by the Calgary Opera Chorus chosen from the list of 60 community singers who audition for positions annually.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES of the GENERAL DIRECTOR

- Provide visionary leadership, strategic direction and financial stability for the company.
- Working with the Board of Directors, develop a Strategic Plan that articulates a vision, sets goals, and earns the support of key stakeholders.
- Stimulate and promote excellence and innovation in the company's programs, including its repertoire, publicity/marketing and educational activities.
- Manage the company's resources – human, financial and physical – to strengthen the company's place in an increasingly competitive environment.
- Lead, inspire, and motivate Calgary Opera's executive team and employees.
- Develop and encourage philanthropic, corporate, private foundation, government and community sponsorships and partnerships to create revenue sources for the company.
- Play an advocacy and ambassadorial role on behalf of the company in Calgary and its region, the province of Alberta, and across the country.
- Bring an understanding of audience development, challenges, and strategies, including younger and more diverse audiences.
- Promote and develop a diverse patron base through opera-related activities and productions, ensuring that a diverse patron audience exists and desires to attend Calgary Opera productions and activities.
- Work effectively with the Board of Directors and other volunteers and partners.

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CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS

Artistic Vision and Programming

- Demonstrated knowledge of and passion for the opera, with the ability to “sell” the company locally, provincially, nationally and internationally.
- An in-depth awareness of opera activity and opera trends: locally, nationally, and internationally. Brings a global perspective capable of developing international collaborations.
- A high-energy visionary with business savvy, drive and dedication to high-impact programming and audience satisfaction; the demonstrated ability to bring creative thinking to the Calgary Opera.
- Experience in educational programming development.
- Brings large-scale ambition with a sensitivity to local culture and the Calgary audience, fostering a sense of community.
- A reputation for artistic courage, innovation, and integrity.

Leadership

- Minimum of 10 years’ combined prior related experience in either a regionally or nationally recognized performing arts company (opera strongly preferred) with responsibilities for artistic/production, administration, development, marketing and Board relations.
- A demonstrated track record of inclusive and strategic executive leadership, vision, collaboration and team-building with strong interpersonal and organizational skills.
- High emotional intelligence with a collaborative and cooperative style; a relationship-builder with a strong, established and growing network who can manage large numbers of stakeholders with a variety of professional working styles.
- Commitment to consultation and consensus-building, balanced with the ability to act decisively in a politically astute and highly professional 360-degree manner; able to understand the complex nature of management in a multi-stakeholder arts organization.
- A sincere and meaningful engagement of diversity in all aspects of the organization, including: staff, artists, audience, community, and the Board of Directors.
- A dynamic public presence that will inspire the Board of Directors, staff, subscribers, volunteers, corporate and foundation communities, major donors, and patrons to support the public vision.

Business Management

- A proven track record of management in a senior executive leadership role within a performing arts company (opera strongly preferred), including responsibility for talent, budgeting and financial management.
- Strong business acumen; ability to develop and work within a budget; effectively interpret financial statements and identify areas of improvement, address problems, and develop forecasts.

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- Able to manage, monitor and deliver on several projects simultaneously while maintaining superior attention to detail; able to adjust style in response to changing priorities and opportunities.
- Work effectively with staff by motivating employees to achieve performance excellence.
- Provide overall leadership to all aspects of operations, including: production, finance, human resources, fund development, marketing and communications.

Fund Development

- Experience with government relations, their funding agencies, and grantsmanship.
- Cultivation and stewardship of major donors.
- Successful execution of a capital campaign.
- Proven success in fundraising, including granting and development, corporate partnerships and marketing strategies, utilizing a variety of social media/technology resources.

Governance

- Experience working effectively with a volunteer board.
- Develop (with the Board) and implement the strategic plan.
- Develop and report on the business plan, including the budget.
- Advise the board of opportunities and risks affecting the organization.

General

- Excellent written, leadership, and communication skills.
- Assured public presence and comfort level with business and community leaders; ability to create a compelling case for support in lay terms to directors and other stakeholders; ability to effectively make presentations to prospective donors and Board members.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- An impeccable reputation for integrity, and widely recognized for inspired, creative leadership.
- Outstanding energy and enthusiasm, with an entrepreneurial spirit.
- Deep and passionate commitment to artistic creativity and innovation, and its value to society and the mission of Calgary Opera.
- A personable and charismatic communicator who can present complex issues in straightforward and compelling ways.
- Must possess the outward and inward charm as well as intellectual capacity to motivate and retain the interest of Board members, volunteers, and community and corporate leaders.
- A courageous risk-taker: is action-oriented, adaptable and innovative with business and strategic planning.

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- A good listener and comfortable receiving input from various sources; creative and skilled negotiator.
- A mature bridge builder who engenders trust.
- Intellectually curious and creative thinker. Brings a sense of humour.
- Enjoys working and leading in a complex, open, and transparent environment.
- Comfortable living and working in Calgary, eager to be involved in local events.
- Willing to travel across Canada and the world.

COMPENSATION

A competitive, experience-based compensation package with benefits will be provided.

HOW TO APPLY

Please submit your application by emailing your cover letter and résumé to:
calgaryopera@searchlightcanada.com.

Calgary Opera is an equal-opportunity employer.

We thank applicants for their interest; however, only those advancing in the process will be contacted.