

## Artistic Leadership Opportunity

Pacific Opera Victoria – one of the most innovative and distinctive professional opera companies in Canada – **invites expressions of interest** from artistic leaders interested in providing ambitious, risk-taking, and community-centered artistic leadership in **the role of Artistic Director**.

Pacific Opera's work takes place on the traditional lands of the Lekwungen speaking people, now known as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations. Pacific Opera identifies equity, diversity, inclusion and reconciliation among its core values and encourages inquiries from candidates of diverse backgrounds and equity-deserving groups. Demographics among staff, board and artists are available [here](#).

### About Pacific Opera Victoria

Founded in 1980 by a group of passionate opera enthusiasts in Victoria and ignited by the vision of founding Artistic Director Timothy Vernon, Pacific Opera Victoria has developed into a leading voice in Canadian opera, and increasingly in international circles. Distinguished by its inspired repertoire, Pacific Opera curates surprising seasons that weave original productions of traditional and contemporary operas, with new commissions, co-productions and collaborations, and thoughtful community initiatives. It is known for taking its audience on humanistic, moving operatic journeys by crafting timely interpretations of classic works, championing new works, and uplifting superb lesser-known works. Driven by a relentless curiosity to advance opera both as an artform and an essential societal asset, the company's work captivates loyal opera-fans, invites and engages audiences new to opera, and furthers opera as an important tool for civic engagement, education, and youth development.

At the heart of its programming, administration, and board leadership is a commitment to fostering equity, inclusion, and reconciliation practices that celebrate diverse voices from within, and beyond, its community; invite and reflect individuals from different lived experiences; and honor the unique region it operates within by investing in Indigenous artists and partnerships. Among its [guiding principles](#) are commitments to: artistic development, audience experience, inclusivity, civic practice, and cultivating collaboration.

Pacific Opera is deeply rooted in Victoria's engaged community – its audiences are profoundly invested in supporting dynamic and adventurous programming. The company's sense of family and civic engagement permeates all aspects of its work. Notably, it champions and invests in the pipeline of opera artistry by providing an important, nurturing home for Canadian artists, administrators and

craftspeople who thrive on its exceptional creative latitude and supportive culture. Its artists and managers alike are skilled collaborators adept at developing new work and approaches. Pacific Opera Victoria is also one of the community's greatest artistic exporters, touring and co-producing across North America.

In Summer 2022, the Company shared that Founding Artistic Director Timothy Vernon would be stepping down from the organization's artistic helm at the close of the 2022-2023 season after 43 years of dedicated service – one of the longest in Canadian history. At the heart of his leadership, Vernon has brought an exquisite ability to translate deep human values through opera, advance opera as an artform through inspired artistry, and build a profound relationship with Victoria's community. As Vernon has described, *"Our role is to curate four centuries of opera, to provide a range of opportunities for the performers we love and admire, and to bring our audience to understand the deep human values in the art."*

At this important juncture, **Pacific Opera's leadership is excited to extend an invitation to opera artists who have a vision for furthering this dynamic institution as its next Artistic Director.** Pacific Opera Victoria welcomes interest from opera artists with relatable experience that would prepare them to excel in the role.

### **About the Role**

Pacific Opera Victoria's Artistic Director will be a dedicated artistic leader who has demonstrated their commitment to advancing their artistic vision and practice in a personal, humanistic way over their career to date. They will be an inclusive collaborator with demonstrated leadership experience centring equity, inclusion and reconciliation practices in their work.

At their core, the Artistic Director will be a relationship builder, who will build and nurture trusting, authentic relationships with Victoria's community, artists, staff, board, and partners and serve as an important leader locally and in the field of opera.

The Artistic Director will bring an expansive curiosity in opera and a drive and ability to produce adventurous, bold programming that builds on and advances Pacific Opera's rich artistic legacy. They will bring a strong artistic point of view, and an ability to translate this view into innovative and expertly produced works and seasons, and engaging programming. They will bring an ability to reflect and explore their lived experience in their work, as well as to collaborate with and champion artists, directors, designers, and administrators with lived experiences different from their own. They will develop, and continue to evolve, a long-term artistic vision that illuminates an exciting institutional identity for Pacific Opera Victoria in which stories of place, aesthetic beauty, and social inquiry unite.

The Artistic Director will be invited to explore the following three themes in their programmatic vision, which emerged from the company's recent strategic planning process: Place & People; Beauty & Transcendence; and Inquiry & Action. Traditional, contemporary, new commissions, and community-engaged artmaking traverse these three dimensions. Additional detail on these themes and programmatic, educational and civic opportunities can be found in the supporting materials.

The Artistic Director will be appointed by the Board and CEO jointly and will report operationally to the CEO. Pacific Opera Victoria is committed to a collaboration in pursuit of the art, and a relationship based on mutual trust and respect.

**Responsibilities include:**

- Establish an environment of artistic leadership, community connection, and operational sustainability that honors Pacific Opera Victoria's legacy and furthers its mission and impact.
- Provide leadership that reflects the organization's commitments to diversity, equity, inclusion, and reconciliation. Recruit and engage people of diverse backgrounds, experiences and voices. Foster an inclusive environment to prevent, and address if necessary, practices of discrimination or exclusion. Establish productive and collaborative working relationships with all staff, contractors and community stakeholders.
- Design and produce an ambitious long-term artistic vision and plan that incorporates original productions of traditional & contemporary works, new commissions, co-productions & collaborations, and curated community initiatives; deeply engages audiences; and pushes the boundaries of the artform. Explore and incorporate new mediums, approaches, or methods as desired. Collaborate with the CEO to budget for cohesive seasons that are artistically exceptional and financially sound.
- Produce approximately three major works each season at [the Royal Theatre](#) and a series of chamber works and music programs for [the Baumann Centre](#), as well as contribute to the artistic direction of performances and programs for [Youth and Schools](#). Explore alternative performance spaces that amplify the journey of a season and allow patrons to choose from a variety of experiences united by a strong curatorial vision.
- Determine repertoire plans including identifying artistic contributions to be made directly by the Artistic Director (as performer, conductor, director, etc.) and engage the remaining creative and performing artists required for each season. The Artistic Director will have ample administrative and logistical support from Pacific Opera Victoria's talented artistic and educational teams in producing this body of work.
- Play an active role in Victoria's community, developing authentic, trusting relationships with audiences, donors, partners, and collaborators. Engage diverse audiences at performances

and curated community events. Serve as a leading representative of the organization in the community and provide mentorship and support to artists and staff who also wish to represent Pacific Opera Victoria in this way. Serve as an ambassador of Pacific Opera Victoria nationally and internationally through tours, co-productions, and industry networks.

- Cultivate long-term, trusting relationships with artists, creative teams, production and administrative staff. Engage, hire, supervise, motivate, and inspire performers, conductors, directors, designers, artistic staff, and production personnel.
- Maintain a consistent awareness of Canadian performance and production talent at all stages of the career lifecycle and cultivate opportunities for talent to engage with Pacific Opera in meaningful ways. Regularly research, discover, engage, mentor and invest in emerging and new artists, as well as established artists.
- Collaborate with the CEO and staff to invite wide public and private investment in the company's activities, build strong relationships with supporters, prudently steward financial resources, and ensure effective, sustainable leadership among our Board, staff, artists, and volunteers.
- Collaborate with the CEO, Board and staff to implement the company's recent strategic plan and explore themes and opportunities identified therein. Be an active leader of and contributor to future strategic planning.

### **Required Skills**

Qualified applicants will demonstrate:

- A unique artistic vision and artistic aesthetic.
- Authentic knowledge of opera repertoire and history.
- Experience with opera, theatre or music performance practice.
- Experience creating and stewarding productions, performances, and programs.
- Casting expertise with proficiency identifying musicianship, vocal and theatrical talents.
- Hiring expertise of creative artists such as conductors, stage directors and designers.
- A respected practice in the opera, theatre or music sectors nationally and/or internationally.
- A collaborative and communicative leadership style, and an aptitude for working in an organization with artists, administrators and partners.
- A demonstrated commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and reconciliation - valuing diverse and lived experiences.

**Preferred Assets:**

Qualified applicants may demonstrate:

- Curatorial experience such as conceiving of artistic programs and long-term artistic planning. *Previous experience as an Artistic Director is not required.*
- Experience with new work development, and stewarding librettos, compositions, workshops and rehearsals.
- Experience in artist development and mentorship, as well as authentic engagement with young people.
- A previous or active performance practice such as conducting, singing, directing, etc.
- Interest and experience engaging with the community and serving as an ambassador for the artform.

**Employment & Compensation:**

- Term: Expectation for a long-term commitment.
- Citizenship: Canadian citizen, permanent resident, or extensive experience working in Canada.
- Residency: Minimum six months residency per year, and a commitment to root themselves in local identity, with a recognition that flexibility would enable an artistic practice in concert with Pacific Opera's fundamental objectives.
- Salary range: \$100,000 - \$180,000 contingent on experience, residency, and direct artistic contributions via conducting, directing, performing, etc.
- Benefits: Extended health and insurance benefits package, and an employer matching RRSP program.
- Relocation: Relocation assistance is available.
- Other: Proof of vaccination against COVID-19 required.
- Start date: Summer/Fall 2023, negotiable

**Are you interested in this opportunity? Let us know!**

This search is being facilitated by Syrah Gunning, Director, Executive Development and Ben Dietschi, Senior Consultant of the DeVos Institute of Arts Management at the University of Maryland, a leading provider of arts management services, training and thought leadership for arts, cultural, educational, and humanities sectors worldwide. Learn more about the Institute's work [here](#).

To express interest, please email your resume, a brief answer to the question below, and any questions you have about the opportunity to Syrah Gunning at [segunning@devosinstitute.net](mailto:segunning@devosinstitute.net).

*Why are you interested in this opportunity now and at this point in your career? What draws you to Pacific Opera Victoria's work?*

Questions without resumes are also invited.

A cover letter is not required. If you require accommodation of any kind throughout the process, please email [segunning@devosinstitute.net](mailto:segunning@devosinstitute.net).

Expressions of interest will be reviewed as received. The selection process is expected to progress to the initial Committee interview stage in April 2023. Interested candidates will continue to be accepted until the position is filled. For priority consideration, interested candidates are invited to express their interest by mid-March 2023.