



VICE PRESIDENT, LYRIC UNLIMITED

ABOUT LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO

COMPANY VISION

Lyric is redefining what it means to experience great opera today. Through artistic excellence coupled with innovative, relevant programming; initiatives to connect with and grow new audiences; engagement with communities to ignite creativity across Chicago; and a modernized Opera House that is the setting for truly great experiences, Lyric is leading the advancement of opera. This collaborative vision will deliver ever more exciting, thought provoking and inclusive audience and community experiences—while increasing the gravitational pull of our art form, our company, and our city.

COMPANY OVERVIEW

Renowned internationally for its artistic excellence, Lyric Opera of Chicago was founded in 1954 and distinguishes itself by presenting the finest artists in the opera world. Lyric is dedicated to producing and performing consistently thrilling, entertaining, and compelling opera with a balanced repertoire of core classics, lesser-known masterpieces, and new works; to creating an innovative and wide-ranging program of community engagement and educational activities; and to developing exceptional emerging operatic talent. Under the leadership of the General Director, Music Director, and Music Director Designate, Lyric is dedicated to reflecting, and drawing strength from the diversity of Chicago.

Key Information

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Lyric Unlimited Programs

- [Opera Residencies](#)
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Visit



Through innovation, collaboration, and evolving learning opportunities, Lyric offers exciting, accessible, and thought-provoking audience and community experiences. It also stands committed to training the artists of the future, through The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center, and to becoming increasingly diverse across its audiences, staff, programming, and artists – magnifying the welcoming pull of the art form, the company, and the city. Lyric strives to become the great North American opera company for the 21st century: a globally significant arts organization embodying the core values of excellence, relevance, and fiscal responsibility.

For more than six decades, Lyric Opera of Chicago has made a profound impact on the artistic landscape of Chicago. Lyric's artistic strategy includes presenting a well-balanced season that includes world and company premieres that speak to the art form's relevance today, classic and contemporary masterworks of the operatic canon, and programs that welcome new audiences to the art form and deepen the experience of returning opera lovers. Mainstage productions reach nearly a quarter-million ticket buyers each year.

LYRIC UNLIMITED – LEARNING & CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT

Lyric Unlimited is dedicated to education and community initiatives that connect Lyric Opera to the city of Chicago through collaborative programming. The department engages approximately 100,000 people each year through programs at the opera house and across the city. Through arts education and community engagement programming, Lyric Unlimited has built valuable strong relationships with schools, neighborhood organizations, and local civic, arts, and business leaders representing communities across Chicago.

Lyric considers it vital to engage with communities on their terms. Through partnerships and community engagement, Lyric Unlimited gains essential insight into the needs and interests of new audiences and communities, and receives ongoing feedback to ensure that its programs provide purposeful and impactful service. Lyric Unlimited arts education programming serves thousands of students throughout the region, with an emphasis on access and participation by Chicago Public Schools (CPS) students. Lyric Unlimited works closely with partner schools to ensure that its programs meet evolving classroom needs. By designing programs focused on the audience being served, Lyric Unlimited spans the breadth of everyone from elementary school students, to adults, to long-time opera fanatics, to aspiring artists looking to expand what opera can be as an art form.



ABOUT THE VICE PRESIDENT, LYRIC UNLIMITED

The Vice President of Lyric Unlimited will play a leadership role in imagining and executing the future of Lyric Unlimited programming, by establishing strategic goals, operational philosophy, structure, content, and fundraising strategy. The next Vice President will be the senior leader for this vital department within Lyric Opera, leading all planning, budgeting, and development of programs, and working to grow and cultivate partnerships with Chicagoland communities and organizations. Additionally, they will explore ways to increase Lyric's reach to Chicago's racially and ethnically diverse communities, and broaden and deepen the cultural experience that opera provides throughout the region.

The Vice President of Lyric Unlimited will have a close working partnership with the General Director, President & CEO in setting a creative vision for Lyric Unlimited. The Vice President will formally report to the Deputy General Director / COO, serving as a key member of Lyric's senior leadership team, and will collaborate closely with the leaders of the mainstage opera activities and business functions. They will manage a current team of three, with the expectation of expanding the team with time. The Vice President must bring extraordinary vision and creativity, excellent communication skills, an ability to inspire and motivate colleagues and volunteer leadership, sensitivity to multicultural issues, and enthusiasm for opera as an art form.

MAJOR OBJECTIVES

Within the first 12 to 18 months, the Vice President, Lyric Unlimited will achieve the following major objectives:

- Strategically and holistically assess Lyric Unlimited's structure, programs, and team to determine the optimal path forward for the department; develop a multi-year strategic plan for Lyric Unlimited that aligns with the plan for Lyric as a whole, and inspires financial support for Lyric Unlimited programs.
- Enhance the reputation of Lyric and Lyric Unlimited as a leader in community engagement and education of the performing arts across Chicagoland, as an in-demand collaborator and partner, and as a model for similar programs nationally.
- Continually strive to balance Lyric Unlimited programs targeted toward larger audiences with those that are more intensive creative projects; help determine the right mix of revenue-generating and non-revenue-generating programs.



RESPONSIBILITIES

The Vice President of Lyric Unlimited will have the following primary responsibilities:

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND EXECUTION

- Provide artistic vision, guidance, and strategic direction for all Lyric Unlimited programs, drawing from and inventing new avenues for artistic expression, civic impact, and education.
- In partnership with the General Director and Deputy General Director, formulate the long- and short-term strategies for Lyric Unlimited establishing annual artistic and financial goals, in collaboration with members of the senior management team and the Lyric Unlimited Board Committee.
- Provide operational guidance and strategic direction for all dimensions of Lyric Unlimited impacting revenue and expense; monitor ongoing financial performance against objectives; identify problems and initiate appropriate corrective action to help Lyric meet its goals.

ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT

- Provide direct supervision to Lyric Unlimited's two functions: Community Engagement and Education.
- Lead and manage performance effectiveness of staff; supervise ongoing work to ensure excellent operational results; identify training and development needs; provide support/guidance as necessary to assist individuals with skill progression.
- Represent and report on Lyric Unlimited activities to the Executive Leadership Team, Board of Directors and Executive Committee, with direct accountability to the Lyric Unlimited Committee of the Board.
- As needed, represent the company at local, national, or international conferences and forums.

PROGRAMMING

- Imagine and create programming that is both relevant to the broader community and strengthens Lyric's vision.
- Continue to expand access to opera for students and teachers in Chicago Public Schools; sustain and expand the focus on youth development and learning through opera education including the development of curricula for teacher, teaching artist, and volunteer training.



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- Create relevant programming to complement grand opera presentations, helping to both attract new audiences and to deepen their appreciation of the art form.

PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDRAISING

- Expand established strategic relationships with key external partners and identify new opportunities to collaborate with community organizations.
- In partnership with Lyric's development team, provide leadership for seeking support for Lyric Unlimited programs, participate in donor prospecting, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship in support of Lyric Unlimited's strategic goals and programmatic endeavors.
- Work with development staff to secure grants from national foundations and corporations that align with Lyric Unlimited's philosophy and objectives.

OPERATIONS AND BUDGET MANAGEMENT

- Collaborate with Lyric colleagues in operations, artistic, marketing, development, technical, and production to maximize internal resource utilization and strategically coordinate the scheduling and implementation of projects.
- Manage an approximately \$1 million annual operating expense budget and work to grow it in alignment with increases in contributed revenue; follow and enhance established processes for forecasting, monitoring, and reporting.
- Produce reports for various internal and external stakeholders to demonstrate program impact.
- Participate in Lyric Unlimited union (AGMA and CFM) contract negotiations.

QUALIFICATIONS

The ideal Vice President, Lyric Unlimited will bring most of the following qualifications and skill sets:

- A passion for the performing arts, particularly opera, as well as community engagement and education.
- A minimum of ten years of experience in programming and community engagement, coupled with strategic planning and execution, ideally within a performing arts or arts and culture organization.
- Expertise in designing educational programming for diverse populations and a track record of producing small-venue artistic events.
- The ability to bring a fresh artistic voice to a traditional art form and make it relevant to diverse, modern audiences.



- The confidence to advocate for creative, original programming coupled with the resilience to lead a department that is constantly evolving to meet the changing needs of the community.
- A strong marketing sensibility, awareness of philanthropic partners and processes, and prior experience collaborating on fundraising activity.
- A collaborative team player who can work closely with company leaders, Board members, artists, and other internal and external constituencies; the ability to be decisive and align others around strategic decisions.
- Exceptional interpersonal skills and professional presence to build strong relationships and adapt to the needs of diverse groups of individuals at all levels of the organization.
- Strong management skills with demonstrated success in team building and leadership.
- Strong project management, planning, and execution experience, particularly involving overlapping deadlines; experience developing and managing multi-million-dollar budgets.
- A degree in the arts or arts administration is preferred.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

Lyric offers a competitive salary range for this position. The Vice President, Lyric Unlimited will need to be based in Chicago at the Civic Opera House (staff is currently working remotely due to COVID-19). Benefits include medical, dental, and vision insurance; life insurance; short- and long-term disability; 401(k) program with employer match; paid time off including holidays, sick days, personal days, and vacation.

APPLICATION

The Lyric Opera of Chicago has retained Campbell & Company to conduct this search. The team for this project includes Colleen Rogers, Emily Thompson, and Marian DeBerry. To be considered for this opportunity, please send a letter of interest and resume to:

EMILY THOMPSON

Associate Consultant, Executive Search

emily.thompson@campbellcompany.com

(312) 896 - 8891

The Lyric Opera of Chicago is committed to enhancing our diverse work environment and is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. Lyric does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, parental status, veteran status, or any other protected status under applicable laws. We encourage individuals of all backgrounds to apply.



1 East Wacker Drive, Suite 2100
Chicago, IL 60601