

MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS FOR THE ARTS, INC.

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POSITION PROFILE
PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
THE PLAYWRIGHTS' CENTER
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

BACKGROUND

The Playwrights' Center is nationally recognized as a leader in the cultivation and promotion of playwrights and their work. For nearly four decades, The Playwrights' Center (hereafter, PWC or the Center) has committed itself to serving those at the very core of the theater: its playwrights. In working with emerging and established writers, PWC simultaneously supports their professional development while advocating for new work on the stages of theaters and festivals across the country. The mission statement of PWC is very clear: *The Playwrights' Center champions playwrights and plays to build upon a living theater that demands new and innovative works.* Every decision and program at PWC focuses on this mission.

The Center is located in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where it was founded in 1971 by five playwrights looking for moral and professional support in the creation, development, and eventual production of their work. They envisioned a place where writers could have the rare opportunity to hear their work read aloud by professional actors, to hear comments and criticism from peers and audience members, and to develop their scripts with the help of artistic collaborators and working professionals. Nearly 40 years later, PWC has grown into a national resource for script development, and currently provides a range of services for writers at all stages of their careers. Current and past members of The Playwrights' Center include nationally distinguished artists such as Lee Blessing, Ping Chong, Barbara Field, Paula Vogel and Jeffrey Hatcher. The work of Center playwrights has won every major recognition the field offers, including two Pulitzers, the Tony, the Olivier, numerous Obies (NYC), Joseph Jefferson awards (Chicago), The Princess Grace Award, Helen Hayes Awards (DC), New York Dramatists Critics Circle Best New Play Award (NY), and Dramalogues (LA), as well as fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and major foundations and state arts councils. More information on the Center can be found at their website: www.pwcenter.org.

Current Environment

Programming. PWC is an artist-centric, and more specifically, a writer-centric institution. Fostering artistic quality of playwrights is at the forefront of each program and decision. These are its principal programs:

- **The Ruth Easton Series** is the public face of the Ruth Easton Lab. This exciting selection of new plays from the Center's Core Writers Program is prepared with the help of the nation's top directors and the Twin Cities' sharpest actors, and brought to the public for an exclusive sneak peek into the theater of tomorrow. The Center's Core Writers travel to Minneapolis from across the country to move their plays closer to production with the support of some of the finest dramaturgical and directorial minds in the nation.

- Through its **Core Writer Program**, the Center invites committed professional playwrights to apply for participation in this rigorous support of emerging and established writers. The Core Writer Program is intended to significantly further a playwright's career and is available to writers both locally and nationally.
- The Center offers financial assistance to writers through **five fellowship programs**: McKnight Advancement Grants; the McKnight Theater Artist Fellowships; the McKnight National Residency & Commission; Jerome Fellowships; and Many Voices Residencies.
- **Membership** to PWC is available to individuals and institutions, and the Center offers numerous benefits and support services to its members.
- Finally, in 2007, the Center welcomed the Workhaus Collective, a playwright-driven professional ensemble formed at the initiative of Center fellows, as its official company-in-residence.

Board and Staff. The work of the Center is supported by a Board of Directors consisting of eighteen members, a national Advisory Board of theater professionals, and a staff of ten full-time, and four part-time employees. The PWC board consists of playwrights, artists and business leaders, with a blend of long-term and newer members; there is an executive committee of five board members. Historically, trustees serve nine years (three three-year terms). The PAD reports to the board through the board chair, and attends all full-board and executive committee meetings. Of the ten full-time staff positions, four have been added in the past year...an indication of the recent growth of PWC. The PAD is the chief executive officer, with all staff reporting directly to this position or indirectly through the Managing Director. Reporting relationships could conceivably change with a new PAD, but it is the board's expectation that the two key leadership positions – the PAD and the Managing Director – will work in a highly collaborative fashion. The board has appointed the current Managing Director – Craig Harris – to serve as the Interim Director of the Center until the new PAD has been selected. Mr. Harris is not a candidate for the position.

Financial. PWC operates on a budget of approximately \$1.3 million. Income is principally from contributed sources, with a large portion from institutional funders. There is no accumulated debt and the organization has a healthy cash position. Last year, Mellon Foundation awarded PWC a \$1 million grant (over five years) to support new work, providing not only important financial resources but also a very strong endorsement of PWC's importance in the theater ecology.

The Facility. In 2001, the Center completed a \$1.1 million construction project on its existing building. PWC owns this facility outright; there is no mortgage. The Center is located in the Seward neighborhood on the near southeast side of Minneapolis. Originally, a church, the building houses administrative offices on its lower level; the top floor has been converted into a state-of-the-art 120-seat black-box theater.

Twin Cities Arts Community. The Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul have a very strong literary, arts and cultural community anchored by major institutions and enriched by more specialized organizations. In particular, the PWC can draw upon a community of actors and other theater artists experienced in developing new work.

The Future

The next PAD will have the opportunity to build on the exceptional success and growth that PWC has experienced through the past decade. As PWC approaches its 40th anniversary, there will be opportunity to celebrate its successes and outline a path for the future that builds on the foundation of its work.

One important area will be supporting efforts to get the work of PWC playwrights produced on stages of other theaters and festivals around the country. Placing the Center and its playwrights at the forefront of consideration by regional theater and festival artistic directors, dramaturgs and literary managers will remain a fundamental goal.

Core Responsibilities

The Producing Artistic Director is the leader as well as the public face and voice of The Playwrights' Center. The PAD is the number-one salesperson of the Center, advocating its work to theaters, festivals, funders and, of course, playwrights and members. Specific responsibilities include the following:

Advocacy:

- Serve as PWC's public face and voice, representing the Center to its membership and the field.
- Forge and maintain relationships with theaters, festivals and educational institutions across the country with an eye toward placing PWC playwrights' work in these institutions.
- Articulate the essential role of new work in keeping theater vital.
- Maintain and build the Center's prominent position in the local and national milieu.

Programs:

- Build upon existing programs, partnerships and cultural exchanges to broaden opportunities for new work to be seen and appreciated.
- Develop and uphold high artistic standards and supervise play development programs.
- Ensure that the organization, its staff and programming reflect our mission, values and artistic standards.
- Strengthen the role of all playwright members in the development of existing and new program initiatives.
- Work with Board and Managing Director to consistently evaluate ongoing programs and introduce new programs to ensure that the PWC's programming mix reflects the mission and values of the organization.
- Lead the planning that will ensure PWC's mission and values are reflected in every program.

Development:

- Collaborate with Managing Director, Development Director and Board of Directors to develop fundraising strategy, including corporate and foundation grants, major gifts, annual giving, planned giving and special events.
- Serve as the primary solicitor for new funding and major individual gifts.
- Support the Development Director in initiating and maintaining relationships with current foundation and corporate funders.

Community and External Relations:

- Serve as primary spokesperson for the PWC locally, nationally and internationally, with the goal of strengthening its presence and increasing awareness of its mission, programs and services.
- Develop outreach opportunities for the PWC to promote cultural exchange of plays and playwrights among diverse peoples.
- Support Managing Director's role in building broader relationships with neighborhood leaders, partners and peer organizations.
- Oversee development of the PWC's external and member communication strategies.

Finance:

- Work with the Managing Director to ensure the organization has the financial resources and operational systems to deliver quality programs and services.
- Use financial information to make strategic decisions on resource utilization and long-range planning.

Personnel:

- Build, develop and maintain a high quality staff.
- Further PWC's commitment to diversity.
- Hire, motivate and evaluate staff.
- Ensure all PWC employee policies and procedures are being implemented.
- Support Managing Director in annual staff evaluations.

Board relations:

- Serve as artistic liaison to the Board and attending meetings of the Board and Executive Committee.
- In concert with the Managing Director, communicate with and report to the Board on important matters of the Center.
- Work with the Board to identify and cultivate new members of the Board.

Qualifications

- A strong track record of leadership and visibility in a national theater arts organization. He/she will have the demonstrated ability to think strategically about all aspects of an organization, articulate its vision and provide direction to achieve that vision.
- Established artistic credibility in the theater.
- A dynamic and energetic personality, willing and able to assume a very public role in advocating for PWC.
- Experience in serving and developing artists and developing new work.
- An established professional in the field with strong national theater connections, including regional theaters, festival and educational institutions.
- Understanding of and ability to engage in fundraising, especially in developing / maintaining key institutional and individual relationships.
- Experience in managing income and expenses in a nonprofit organization.
- A proven track record in managing staff and effectively managing volunteer board relations.
- Demonstrated success in establishing and maintaining meaningful partnerships and collaborations.
- Confident and competent negotiating skills.
- Background that shows success in bringing new ideas and programs to fruition.

- Open-minded, artistically curious and willing to take calculated risks to advance plays and playwrights.
- A high value on intuition and creativity, while creating an environment of service and accountability.
- The ability to inspire others to excellence in fulfilling PWC's mission, possessing the skills to persuade others while also exhibiting good listening skills and sensitivity to others.

The following personal attributes will also be considered important to the Committee:

- An individual whose personality, temperament and ambition will result in a dynamic advocate for the Center.
- Generosity of spirit, nurturing and supporting others, especially the playwrights and members of PWC.
- While high artistic standards are essential, the leader will not be advancing a personal artistic agenda and will place the work of the Center and its playwrights first.

Compensation, Application Procedure and Start Date

The PAD is a full-time, 52-week position based in Minneapolis. The salary will be competitive with other organizations of comparable stature and size. Benefits include health insurance (largely employer funded), a matching tax-deferred pension plan and paid vacation / holidays.

PWC is an Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages candidates of all backgrounds to apply for this position. Recommendations of qualified candidates are also welcomed. The target date for a hiring decision is late spring / early summer, with the expectation that the new PAD will be in place as soon as possible thereafter. Interested candidates should send a **cover letter, résumé, salary history and four professional references (email and phone)** to the consulting firm retained to support PWC for this search:

Management Consultants for the Arts, Inc.

Attn: Len Alexander

By email (preferred method): MgtConArts2@aol.com

or mail / fax to

400 Main Street, Suite 400, Stamford, CT 06901
