

The National Theatre

Executive Director

The National Theatre Foundation's Board of Directors seeks an arts venue manager, program developer, community leader and fundraiser to:

- ***Manage the historic National Theatre, its facilities, staff, partners, vendors, infrastructure and operations; education programs and historic archives; and its branding, marketing and community and government relations;***
- ***Maximize earned and contributed revenue so that all annual costs are fully funded and there is a set-aside for periodic building and infrastructure upgrades;***
- ***Build relationships and a team to undertake a fund-raising campaign to enable the Foundation to acquire the property from its private owner, upgrade the facility, and develop an endowment to ensure financial stability; and***
- ***Build (or expand) the Foundation's locally focused theatre/arts programs to serve diverse youth populations.***

Benefitting from a strategic partnership with The Nederlander Organization, The National Theatre is positioned as the Nation's Capital Broadway performance and education hub and as a premier out-of-town incubator for new shows headed to Broadway.

HISTORY, PERFORMANCES and PROGRAMS

Founded in 1835 and located in Washington DC across from Freedom Plaza near the White House, The National Theatre has a unique and rich [history](#) at the dynamic cultural heart of the Nation's Capital.

The [National Theatre](#) was founded by William Wilson Corcoran and elements of the building's original foundation form part of the current theatre constructed in 1923. Tad Lincoln was at a National Theatre performance when his father was assassinated at Ford's Theatre. Early in its history, the NAACP, actors and citizens staged protests at The National against racism, and in 1936 the originator of the role of Porgy in Porgy & Bess, baritone Todd Duncan, led Washington DC's first successful theater desegregation protest. The National Theatre performers and partners, notably frequent National stage star Helen Hayes, continued to push for racial justice, leading The National to fully integrate as an Actor's Equity theatre for the 1952 production of *Call Me Madam*. That cast included Broadway legend Ethel Merman and future Broadway legend Chita Rivera. A DC native, Rivera went on to originate the role of Anita in the 1957 World Premier of *West Side Story*, also at The National Theatre prior to the show's Broadway debut.

The National Theatre's ongoing string of historic theater and Broadway performances is just astounding, and peppered with appearances by great actors who have shaped American theatre, including: Sarah Bernhardt, Edwin Booth, Annie Oakley, Will Rogers, Lillian Gish; Ethel, Lionel and John Barrymore; George M Cohan, Pearl Bailey, Fanny Brice, Eartha Kitt, Mary Martin, Carol Channing, Debbie Reynolds, Rex Harrison; Audrey Hepburn, Robert Redford, Lilly Tomlin, Helen Hayes, James Earl Jones, Jerry Lewis, Laurence Olivier, George C Scott, Katherine Hepburn and Liv Ullman; and more recently performances by Craig Ferguson and Idina Menzel.

The National has two performance spaces – a 1,700 seat main theatre and the 125 seat Helen Hayes Gallery used for educational programming and intimate performances – and 4,300 sq. ft. of renovated office space. The historic building is privately owned and leased to [The National Theatre Foundation](#), a nonprofit governed by a 17 member Board of Directors with 5 staff members and an annual



operating budget of \$1.5 million (excluding budgets for main stage offerings). About 75% of the budget is from donations and 25% from earned revenue. The National Theatre's [archives](#) are a historical treasure trove, and present a significant opportunity to research, digitize and exhibit the archive for the public.

The National Theatre Foundation has a contractual relationship with Nederlander, the second largest owner of Broadway theaters and one of the world's great producing/presenting organizations of live theatre. Nederlander programs main stage performances under the agreement with the objective of extending the term of the relationship with Nederlander while providing: a superior audience experience, increased investment in the theatre's physical facilities and infrastructure, ensuring The National Theatre's sustained financial strength and stability, and delivery of theatre education programs that connect children and adults to small and main stage offerings as well as performances in the community.

The National Theatre is deeply rooted in the community and committed to serving the region's many constituencies and audiences. Delivering world class theatre and programs to creative, diverse, internationally connected and culturally sophisticated audiences of all ages, backgrounds and interests is the core mission of The National Theatre Foundation, its Board, staff and partners.

BASIC FUNCTION

The Executive Director will immediately assume full management responsibility for The National Theatre Foundation, including its staff, vendor relationships, contracts, maintenance, branding, marketing, infrastructure, tech and operations.

Reporting to the Board through its Chair, and working with a small but dedicated staff, the Executive Director's initial priorities will be to:

- Manage The National Theatre facilities, infrastructure, workflows, theater operations and patron services;
- Develop a strong working relationship with Nederlander representatives and encourage the expansion of performances that Nederlander presents;
- Cultivate strong relations with diverse individual, institutional and government funders and constituencies;
- Design and deliver dynamic educational programs for children, youth and adults; and
- Understand the attributes of the region's audiences and their interests, and, in concert with Nederlander, devise and implement branding, outreach, ticketing and revenue optimization activities.

An initiative is currently underway to transfer the building's ownership from private hands to the Foundation so that the theatre is owned rather than leased by the Foundation.

The Executive Director will work with the Board to add staff and consultants to undertake a capital and endowment campaign. Experience in leading or having a significant role in campaigns of this nature will be an important component of candidate evaluation.

IDEAL EXPERIENCE

Candidates should have many of the following types of experience and qualifications:

***The National Theatre
Executive Director***

- Significant hands-on experience managing a sizable theater, performing arts or ticketed event and hospitality organization (e.g. convention center, club, hotel, casino, festival, fairgrounds, or other such revenue-producing physical facility);
- Strong financial management and controls, including accurate expense and revenue forecasting, precise budgeting, and the ability to adjust operations to function within fiscal constraints;
- Ability to analyze and prioritize programmatic requirements and activities, identify potential problems and initiate corrective measures; demonstrated experience collaborating with presenting and producing organizations similar to Nederlander to maximize audience attendance, comfort and services while developing financially efficient responses to diverse needs; and an ability to anticipate and deal effectively with a variety of shifting challenges that arise in normal operation of a performing arts venue;
- Experience working collaboratively to shape fundraising campaigns for projects of significant scale that includes annual, capital, and endowment elements; experience recruiting new members to a governance board that is actively engaged in achieving give/get targets; experience directly soliciting significant gifts from individuals, businesses, foundations, corporations, and the public sector; broad-based knowledge of various development activities including: direct, online and mail solicitations, social media, proposal and grant development, planned giving, event management; using data to manage and enhance donor cultivation and drive fundraising; experience with a performing or visual arts organization is an advantage;
- A skilled negotiator and deal-maker who can develop positive alliances with organizations, producers, clients and community members; adept at writing or overseeing the drafting of proposals, solicitation letters, donor correspondence, and other materials; a good listener and strategist, comfortable receiving input from many sources, and able to analyze and formulate disparate information into a sound, well-organized plan;
- A roll-up-your-sleeves doer; demonstrated management skills in motivating, directing and managing staff and consultants, and in coordinating and supporting the activities of others; a history and commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility; a readiness to ensure that the Foundation embodies an anti-racist operating culture;
- Extroverted and fearless; derives energy from connecting with individuals, aligning the case for support, creating opportunities for engagement and building enthusiasm for The National Theatre;
- Outstanding speaking, writing, and editing skills, with demonstrated success in bringing regular, positive media attention to an organization; and
- Demonstrated success in managing shifting priorities and competing deadlines, with the flexibility and sensitivity to work with diverse personalities; emotionally mature with a very good sense of perspective and humor.

To apply, nominate others, or for further information, please contact:

Lee Kappelman

(202) 803-6674 or leek@moppenheim.com

Nzuki Waita

(202) 888-8417 or nzukiw@moppenheim.com

Mark Oppenheim

(415) 762-2640 or marko@moppenheim.com

m/Oppenheim Executive Search