

## **Near West Theatre - POSITION DESCRIPTION: Managing Director**

---

Near West Theatre seeks a dynamic and passionate individual to become the new face of the organization in the position of a Managing Director. The ideal candidate for this position will be an inspiring, collaborative, and creative leader, a supportive and effective manager, an advocate for the arts and social justice, and a spokesperson for the organization. The Managing Director will be responsible for providing oversight to the organization and its stakeholders, assist in setting the strategic vision, lead fundraising efforts, and raise the profile of the organization. The Managing Director will also work closely with the Artistic Director to ensure impactful and inventive programming.

### **MISSION:**

Near West Theatre builds loving relationships and engages diverse people in strengthening their sense of identity, passion, and purpose, individually and in community, through transformational theatre arts experiences.

### **PHILOSOPHY**

The soul of Near West Theatre is belief in the healing, transformative power of the theatrical arts. The personal and communal growth possible when participating in an acting, singing, dancing ensemble is most fully realized with both skilled leadership and loving collaboration.

### **VALUES:**

Love, inclusion, integrity, creativity, activism, and continuity.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Based on the Near West Side of Cleveland, Ohio, Near West Theatre has a unique identity as an intergenerational theatre where people of all ages work side by side, onstage and off. It prides itself on providing innovative, socially relevant musicals with casts of 35 to 65 people while maintaining affordable ticket prices so as to encourage audiences from all backgrounds.

Near West Theatre was founded in 1978 as a summer youth theatre program in response to vandalism, violence, and substance abuse by teenagers and to provide adults with a way to see young people as contributing members of the community. In 1983, it expanded its programming to include adults.

For 36 years, Near West Theatre rented the un-air-conditioned, inaccessible third floor ballroom of St Patrick's Club Building on the Near West Side of Cleveland. In February, 2015, Near West Theatre completed the construction of a \$7.3 million, debt-free, 25,000 square foot theater and community center in the Gordon Square Arts District. Using a highly energy efficient design that incorporates elements of the European *Passivhaus* method and a full solar roof, Near West Theatre opened its new home to the community on February 28, 2015. In its new home, Near West Theatre has been



able to increase its impact in the community, expand its programs previously limited by its rental space, and diversify its programming and services.

Near West Theatre offers year-round programs that provide children, teens, and adults with opportunities to perform, to develop peer and mentoring relationships, and to explore and develop skills. Programs are designed to involve the greatest number of participants which is why the vehicle of musical theater is most often used. Near West Theatre has grown to become home to many who seek a safe place in which to grow, learn and be responsible participants in their community.

Near West Theatre is professionally directed and designed. The technical elements of the production are then turned over to volunteers, many of them teens and young adults who receive training to work on backstage crews. It involves entire families and members of the community in the implementation of support activities with each production (concessions/gift shop sales, box office, and ushering). All actors at Near West Theatre are volunteers.

#### **GORDON SQUARE ARTS DISTRICT:**

Since 2002, the economic and social impact of this growing arts district – and of the cooperation among three non-profits which came together to form the district – has been felt in Cleveland’s Detroit Shoreway neighborhood and beyond. Near West Theatre remains an active partner in the implementation of Gordon Square Arts District’s Master Plan, created in 2014.

#### **BUDGET AND STAFF:**

Near West Theatre has an annual operating budget of approximately \$960,000 (25% earned and 75% contributed) and will complete its 39th season this July, 2017. The theater has 8 full time and 3 part-time staff members. Near West Theatre contracts with more than 50 professional designers/artists/musicians, annually and its casts and crews are volunteers.

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Reporting to the Board of Trustees, and in partnership with the Artistic Director, the Managing Director is charged with leading the theater, guided by the theater’s mission and values. As the theatre’s chief spokesperson, the Managing Director shall be responsible for the following:

##### *Vision and Leadership*

- Lead the development of a long-term vision and strategic plan for the institution in collaboration with the Artistic Director, trustees, staff and artists
- Lead a management team composed of key staff leaders
- Develops and implements policies and procedures for the effective operation of the organization
- Hold responsibility for all aspects of day-to-day operations of Near West Theatre



### *Finance*

- Sustain Near West Theatre Theatre's fiscal integrity
- Develop an annual budget for all Near West Theatre operations with Board approval; direct the successful implementation of that budget
- Manages finances of the organization to generally accepted accounting practices
- Provides timely and accurate financial reports to the board

### *Fund Development*

- Lead Near West Theatre's fundraising activities
- Lead audience development initiatives to achieve earned income goals
- Proven track record in developing and executing fund development initiatives
- Develop financial resources among individuals and in the corporate, government and philanthropic communities.
- Create a plan to target needed resources and secure diverse, alternative, and sustainable revenue streams that address the programmatic and financial needs of the organization
- Oversees grant research and writing

### *Community Engagement and Collaboration*

- Develop and maintain effective partnerships with the President of the Board, the Board of Trustees, the Artistic Director, the staff, artists/participants
- Build external relationships with community, government, and strategic partners
- Identifies opportunities to partner with community organizations to enhance the mission, vision, and values of the Near West Theatre
- Promote a culture of collaboration and a working environment that is effective, productive, and humane

### *Board Relations, Strategy Development, and Implementation*

- Collaborate with the Board to develop and implement the organizations overarching goals, strategic priorities, and measurable outcomes
- Represent Near West Theatre at Gordon Square Arts District (GSAD) Board meetings and at GSAD's leadership team meetings (with the City Councilperson, Executive Director of GSAD, and leaders of Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization and Cleveland Public Theatre)
- Assist the board with establishing best practices for governance best practices
- Develop a framework for the board and staff to track progress toward stated outcomes



## TRAITS AND CHARACTERISTICS:

The ideal Managing Director shall possess the following traits and characteristics:

- Have a proven track record in fundraising
- Value collaborative decision-making and fiscally sound management
- Have leadership experience at the senior management level and ideally will have experience in running a non-profit organization.
- Have an understanding of and passion for the arts and for the craft of theater
- Possess an eagerness to learn and know the institution's history, development and its alumni and stories
- Embrace Near West Theatre's mission and special character—that of engaging the rich diversity of the community through the vehicle of theatre resulting in multidimensional experiences that build intimacy, trust, self and community awareness
- Be an articulate advocate for Near West Theatre
- Have the capacity for working collaboratively with staff, including with an innovator who is the Artistic Director
- Be a relationship builder and possess the ability to inspire with spirited leadership
- Have strong organizational and administrative skills.
- Understand institutional image building, marketing, and fundraising and will lead Near West Theatre in each of these areas
- Be a person of integrity. Ingenuity, fairness, compassion, resilience, perseverance, tenacity, enthusiasm, commitment to social justice, and a sense of humor are also key attributes
- Be a lover of people, recognizing the possibilities and spark in every person; must understand the need to balance risk and security; must know how to live with the tension within the mission –that of product versus process;
- Must have the ability to live *in* and *with* the dual mission that Near West Theatre uses theater as a vehicle to foster community while at the same time produces professionally-directed and designed, large-scale, dynamic theater pieces.



**COMPENSATION:**

Near West Theatre offers a salary commensurate with qualifications and experience. Near West Theatre provides a comprehensive benefits package.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

M.B.A., M.N.A, M.N.O, or equivalent, or an appropriate bachelor's degree, with a minimum of five years' managerial experience in the field is required. A prior knowledge of theatre or non-profit management is preferred.

**PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS:**

Must be able to work in an open office environment. Requires the ability to sit and be stationary for prolonged periods of time, normal or corrected vision and manual dexterity sufficient to perform work on a personal computer and other office equipment such as a copy machine and computer printer.

**TO APPLY:**

Applicants must provide:

- Cover letter that highlights your qualifications
- Resume
- List of three professional references
- Please answer two of the following questions in two pages or less:
  - How can theatre help build community and address social justice issues in a community?
  - Describe a professional success and what you had to overcome to achieve the success.
  - Describe a professional situation in which you led a team. What were you able to accomplish together?
  - If given the opportunity in this position, how would you use NWT's mission to reach new audiences?

Interested applicants must be willing to submit to a background check as part of the evaluation process.

The deadline to apply is Friday, June 30, 2017. Please send materials and direct all inquiries to Brant Duda at [bduda@strategydesignpartners.com](mailto:bduda@strategydesignpartners.com).

Near West Theatre is an equal opportunity employer and is strongly committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment where a variety of backgrounds, cultures, orientations, ideas, and talents can flourish.

