

POSITION AND CANDIDATE SPECIFICATION



MINNESOTA OPERA

PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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POSITION SPECIFICATION

The Opportunity

The next President of Minnesota Opera will join an organization whose artistic product has never been better, whose staff is strong and committed, whose board is engaged and effective, and whose national reputation is outstanding. The company is seeking a leader who will continue its focus on artistic excellence, embrace its commitment to new work and its successful Resident Artists Program and will seek a position of leadership in a vibrant and competitive Twin Cities arts community. The company is actively creating a legacy that goes beyond its five production season as a result of its support of new work and training of young artists.

The next President will help Minnesota Opera articulate a vision to celebrate the company's 50th anniversary in 2013 and define the place it wants to secure within the opera world and within the Twin Cities arts community. The board expects the President will focus on fundraising and be an active leader in the \$7 million Minnesota Opera New Works Initiative (over \$5 million has been committed) and the \$74 million Arts Partnership Campaign (an endowment campaign supporting the four performing arts organizations resident at the Ordway Center), in addition to the consistent growth of earned revenue and a strong annual fund.

This is a unique opportunity to lead a healthy opera company with a reputation for innovation and consistently strong financial management. The challenges are to grow the base of support in a uniquely competitive arts marketplace and lead the company through its next strategic planning cycle, which will define the company's aspirations for artistic, operating and governance excellence. The next President will help define what the next level of excellence and reputation will be.

Client Organization

Founded in 1963, Minnesota Opera has established an international reputation for innovation and quality. The Opera presents five productions annually at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts in Saint Paul and is internationally renowned for staging new and contemporary works, as well as treasures from the Bel Canto era. Now the 15th largest opera company in the nation, Minnesota Opera prides itself on creating a new, dynamic opera company model based upon innovation, world-class artistic quality and strong community service.

Minnesota Opera's artistic philosophy is guided by the recognition that opera is a multimedia art form in a multimedia world – the singer's unique ability to express emotion and arouse the imagination is supported by exquisite visual design of the sets, costumes and lighting. Minnesota Opera combines the art form's historical core (singing) with 21st-century production techniques to provide audiences with a complete multisensory

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experience, integrating artistry and innovation to produce operas of dazzlingly expressive power.

A major national producer, Minnesota Opera is acclaimed for leading successful, high-quality co-productions of standard repertoire. Since its inception, the company's identity has grown as a result of its history of commissioning and producing rare works. The company recently formalized its commitment to contemporary opera through its landmark, multiyear New Works Initiative, which is designed to infuse the operatic art form with premiering new operas and revivals of contemporary American works. In addition, through the last decade Minnesota Opera has produced one Bel Canto-period opera per season, setting the standard for this neglected body of work and becoming a destination point for audiences and artists interested in the Bel Canto repertoire and style of singing.

Minnesota Opera maintains a professional training program that is generating some of the nation's best young professional singers. Its productions are consistently reviewed in opera publications in Italy, France and Great Britain, as well as across the USA. The most prominent mark of Minnesota Opera's success is the steady increase in number of audience members. This year more than 75,000 people will be served by Minnesota Opera through performances at the Ordway and educational activities. The company will reach another 350,000 through broadcasts on Minnesota Public Radio.

Minnesota Opera, together with the Ordway, The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and The Schubert Club, have formed the Arts Partnership, an organization that collectively governs the use and schedule of their shared venue. This model has not only resulted in a unified vision and cooperative work toward endowed rental subsidies and a major reconstruction of Ordway, but is also seen as a national example of a successful construct for relationships among venues and their constituent organizations.

The Company's opera productions and education programs are created at its 50,000 sq. ft. production and administration facility in Minneapolis. Minnesota Opera has an annual operating budget of \$9 million and net assets of \$28.8 million. Its mission is to produce opera and opera education programs at the highest artistic level that inspire and entertain audiences and enrich the cultural life of the Twin Cities community.

Minnesota Opera has enjoyed consistency and long tenure among its leadership team. Kevin Smith, entering his 30th season with the company, has announced his intention to retire as President and CEO, once a successor has been named. Dale Johnson was named Artistic Director in 1994, after having served as the music administrator, chorus master and artistic director of the company's touring and education program for the preceding 10 years. Prior to coming to Minnesota in 1984, he was one of the nation's foremost vocal coaches. As Artistic Director, Dale chooses repertoire, performers, conductors, directors and designers, advising the President and CEO on all aspects of artistic planning. Dale is actively involved in the company's commitment to commissioning new works.

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Additional information on Minnesota Opera can be found at www.mnopera.org.

Position Summary

The President and Chief Executive Officer provides the overall leadership for Minnesota Opera and has ultimate responsibility for the artistic and financial success of the company. S/he must provide a vision for Minnesota Opera's future that positions Minnesota Opera as a premier opera company among 21st century audiences and takes advantage of new production tools and the distinct advantages provided through the Arts Partnership. The President and Chief Executive Officer must establish high standards of quality and excellence while increasing the company's financial support and ensuring appropriate leadership depth and management controls. The President & CEO has an important partnership with Dale Johnson, Artistic Director and with Patrick Dewane, Vice President, Advancement. Together they ensure that the company stays true to its artistic mission while ensuring the long term sustainability of the company. In addition, s/he works closely with the Board of Directors and its Officers to assure their knowledge and understanding of Minnesota Opera and to increase and enhance their leadership in fundraising and development of an increasingly diverse audience.

Key Relationships

Reports to:	Board of Directors
Direct reports:	Artistic Director Vice President, Advancement Finance Director Marketing & Communications Director Production Director
Other key relationships:	Artists Donors Volunteers Twin Cities business and community leaders Peers in the field Leaders of the Arts Partnership (Ordway, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Schubert Club)

Major Responsibilities

General Management

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- Create and articulate the vision for Minnesota Opera. Working with the Artistic Director, staff and the Board, develop a long-range plan to position the company for sustainable growth and importance.
- Assure an appropriate organization structure and management team to achieve the vision. Assure hiring, development and retention of a motivated, highly talented staff that can achieve the artistic and financial goals.
- Establish a set of financial and operational measures to provide clear performance targets and focus the company's attention on the critical aspects of the Company's business affairs.
- Provide leadership in the creation and delivery of marketing and audience development strategies, and raise awareness of Minnesota Opera's programs and performances.
- Provide leadership and direction to the staff, working closely with them to achieve the company's goals. Be both accessible and willing to make tough decisions when necessary.
- Work closely with the officers, committee chairs and members of the Board to strengthen their energy, commitment and leadership. Maintain an effective partnership with the Board Chair. Help in cultivating and recruiting new members to the board.

External Relations

- Work with the Board and the VP Advancement on a fundraising strategy that supports the strategic plan. Through personal involvement with donors, solicit and secure major gifts.
- Continue, and even accelerate, the growth in stature and leadership of Minnesota Opera, both regionally and nationally to broaden its influence and strengthen its base of financial support.
- Broaden the company's service to the community with an appropriate focus on educational outreach.
- Serve as the primary spokesperson to promote Minnesota Opera's artistic vision nationally and internationally.

Artistic Planning and Relations

- Initiate new productions and premieres to challenge, stimulate and engage the company's audiences.
- Work in close partnership with the Artistic Director to initiate new productions and premieres.

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- Support and encourage the Resident Artists Program as a way to develop talent, engage audiences, and enhance the future of the art form.
- Serve as a leader of the Arts Partnership along with The Ordway, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and The Schubert Club to ensure the future of a viable arts venue within the Twin Cities.
- Provide leadership to the New Works Campaign in support of the creation of new operas. Ensure that the development of new works results in productions that increase the standard repertoire and expand the audience.
- Be a public face for Minnesota Opera locally and nationally, communicating the company's vision and securing its reputation among local performing arts companies and nationally among the very best opera companies.

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CANDIDATE SPECIFICATION: KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

Ideal Experience

The ideal candidate will have the following experience and qualifications:

- Experience leading a high caliber performing arts organization, ideally, a nationally recognized opera company.
- Appreciation for and general knowledge of operas, music and performers and, ideally, experience getting performing arts productions and performances on the stage.
- A fundamental understanding of the business model and financial aspects of opera management.
- A record of translating vision into a viable operational plan.
- Enthusiasm for and a commitment to fundraising, with measurable and successful results in soliciting gifts from individuals, foundations, and corporations.
- Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively with performing artists.
- A successful track record of recruiting, developing, retaining and leading a talented team, as well as a reputation for accessibility and the ability to work with and respect staff throughout the organization.
- Exposure to labor unions and contract negotiations, including experience with successful labor partnerships.
- Experience building partnerships among diverse stakeholders.
- Undergraduate or advanced degree in Business, Arts Management, Music or related field.

Critical Competencies for Success

- **Strategic and Visionary Leadership:** Enjoying a national reputation for artistic excellence and sound governance, Minnesota Opera looks forward to achieving its current strategic plan at the end of the 2012-2013 season. The new President will lead the development and implementation of a vision and subsequent strategic plan for the next stage in the Opera's growth. The vision will be formed in collaboration with the Board and reflect the company's commitment to influencing the art form. As a key leader and voice for the arts in the Twin Cities, the President will communicate and market this vision in a message that is both exciting and fiscally responsible. In order to achieve this, s/he must have the ability to think both expansively and pragmatically in order to deliver results. The successful candidate will be an effective strategist full of ideas and possibilities, coupled with prior success in translating ideas into action.

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- **Fundraising:** It is essential that the President have a demonstrated track record of fundraising, both in donor cultivation and solicitation, in an environment where there are multiple competitors. The desired skill set includes being a passionate and credible communicator, being able to craft a message that resonates personally with each prospect, and being a tireless advocate and spokesperson for Minnesota Opera.
- **Collaboration:** An important component of the President's success will be dependent upon his/her willingness and ability to collaborate effectively. S/he will quickly grasp and respect the critical role of the Artistic Director and the VP, Advancement and partner with them to develop operas and seasons that are artistically inspiring and financially viable. The President will also need to build strong relationships with the singers, musicians, board, staff, volunteers, audience and donors. S/he will do this by establishing a reputation for being knowledgeable, straightforward, and trustworthy, while exhibiting a strong appreciation for the delicate balance between artistic excellence and financial sustainability.

Other Personal Characteristics

- Committed to the mission of Minnesota Opera
- Passion for music
- High ethical standards; engenders trust and confidence
- Skillful negotiator
- Creative, entrepreneurial, yet collaborative and team-oriented
- A dependable, resilient leader
- A leader who appreciates creative people and different ways of working
- A strong sense of fairness
- Energetic and enthusiastic
- A skilled communicator
- Possessing a healthy sense of humor

Procedure for Candidacy

Application and nomination materials should be submitted electronically to: MNOpera@spencerstuart.com. Applications should include a current résumé and letter of interest which addresses the candidate's fit to the three critical competencies detailed above (Strategic & Visionary Leadership, Fundraising, Collaboration).

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APPENDIX – Overview of Minneapolis/St. Paul

The Twin Cities region is the home of two thriving downtowns, internationally acclaimed orchestras, operas and museums, six professional sports teams, and a robust business community.

National surveys consistently pick Minnesota as a great place to live. The Twin Cities came out on top in many “Best” lists including:

- Best Places to Live (*Money and MensJournal*)
- Best Cities for Families (*Child and Money*)
- 7 Cool Cities for Young Professionals (*Your Money*)
- America’s Top Ten Smart Cities (*Personal Finance*)
- Healthiest State in the Nation (*United Health Foundation*)
- Top 50 Fun Cities... Minneapolis was ranked #1 (*Money*)

Minnesota’s diversified business base includes 19 Fortune 500 companies as well as some of the largest private companies. Nationally recognized companies include: Target, UnitedHealth Group, Best Buy, 3M, General Mills, Medtronic, Cargill and Carlson Companies.

The Twin Cities area is second only to New York City in arts activities per capita. The area has a number of nationally renowned art, music, and theatre organizations including: the Guthrie Theater, the Children’s Theatre Company, the Minnesota Orchestra, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Minnesota Opera, the Walker Art Center, and the Minneapolis Institute of Art.

A leader in education, Minnesota ranks second among the fifty states in overall higher education attainment and has led the nation in average composite ACT scores for five consecutive years. In addition, the state supports a prestigious public university, top ranked medical school, and more than 20 private colleges and universities.

First-rate health care adds to the quality of living in the Twin Cities region. In 2008 Minnesota ranked second in the nation for overall quality of healthcare, according to a report by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

Each major professional sport is represented in the Twin Cities: Vikings (football), Timberwolves (men’s basketball), Wild (hockey), Twins (baseball), Lynx (women’s basketball) and Swarm (lacrosse).

Twin Cities parks and lakes are extensive with 136,900 acres of parkland and 950 lakes in the metro area alone.

The warmest month is July, with average daily high temperature of 83 degrees, and the coldest month is January, with average daily highs of 24 degrees.