



**DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS**  
**LYRIC OPERA OF KANSAS CITY**  
**Kansas City, Missouri**  
[Lyric Opera of Kansas City](#)



The Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with Lyric Opera of Kansas City in the search for a Director of Marketing and Communications.

The Director of Marketing and Communications will be responsible for the strategy, implementation, evaluation, and achievement of earned ticket revenue goals and for the development and effective implementation of communications. The Director of Marketing and Communications will provide clear and consistent leadership and oversight of the Marketing and Ticketing and Patron Services (T&PS) teams. The Director of Marketing and Communications will develop short-term and long-term marketing and communications plans in support of LOKC productions, publications, and events.

The Director of Marketing and Communications will manage the Company's brand identity both internally and externally. The Director of Marketing and Communications will track and analyze sales and attendance data to monitor and improve the Company's sales performance. In cooperation with the Chief Financial Officer, the Director of Marketing and Communications will generate relevant financial analysis to assist in developing ongoing strategies to maximize ticket revenue and to create and monitor the annual budgets for both Marketing and T&PS teams.

The Director of Marketing and Communications will be an integral partner in the creation and implementation of community engagement programming, working in conjunction with the General Director and CEO, Senior Leadership Team, and other key staff. The T&PS team is responsible for providing excellent customer service to patrons and the sale and distribution of tickets for LOKC performances.

Located in the heart of Kansas City's Crossroads Arts District, Lyric Opera creates transformational opera experiences through its performances and through its outreach and education initiatives. It develops talent, repertoire, programs, and productions that bring the best of Lyric Opera of Kansas City to the world. The Company mounts productions that enrich the community it serves, and as well reflects the highest artistic standards of the profession. Lyric Opera offers innovative programs designed to further music and arts education both in schools and in the community. These programs, as well as its innovative productions of classic and contemporary operas, make Lyric Opera of Kansas City indispensable to the community.

The Company is based at the Richard J. Stern Opera Center located in the Crossroads Arts District of downtown Kansas City. The Opera Center includes the Beth Ingram Administration Building, where the Company's offices are based above a 4000 square foot area for set storage, and the Michael and Ginger Frost Production Arts Building, housing space for rehearsals, set construction and painting, prop storage, costume shop, and vocal coaching rooms.

## REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Director of Marketing and Communications will report to the General Director and Chief Executive Officer Deborah Sandler. The Director of Marketing and Communications has three direct reports.

## PRINCIPAL OPPORTUNITIES

*Lyric Opera of Kansas City, founded in 1958, brings high quality live operatic performances to the people of the Kansas City area and the surrounding five-state region. The Company mounts productions that enrich the community it serves, as well as reflecting the highest artistic standards of the profession. Lyric Opera is proud to present at the state-of-the-art Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts in the Muriel Kauffman Theatre. Since moving to the Kauffman Center in 2011, Lyric Opera has taken advantage of the visionary space by staging ambitious and innovative productions.*

*Kansas City boasts a thriving performing arts scene. The Lyric Opera is based in the heart of downtown Kansas City, in the Crossroads Arts District. Great restaurants and shops are all within easy walking distance from the offices. In addition to Kansas City's famous Jazz heritage, and world-class barbecue, they are also home to the 2015 World Series Champion Kansas City Royals and the 2020 Super Bowl Champion Kansas City Chiefs.*

*Kansas City is home to a vibrant arts community. Strong relationships exist among its leading arts organizations including Lyric Opera of Kansas City, the Kansas City Symphony, the Kansas City Ballet, and the world-class Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, among others. The Director of Marketing and Communications at Lyric Opera of Kansas City plays an important role with the Company as a member of the senior leadership team. This opportunity is best suited for an individual with a love for the art form, the imagination to be creative, and the passion to communicate and advocate for opera, using all platforms currently in play and others still to be created. With the emerging need for new and innovative digital programming, the ideal candidate will join the team, playing an integral part in these and other community engagement initiatives.*

–Deborah Sandler, General Director and Chief Executive Officer

## PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

### **Leadership and Management**

The Director of Marketing and Communications will

- lead and manage the Marketing and T&PS teams;
- evaluate and set goals for all direct reports; and
- embrace and model the core elements of the Statement of Common Understanding.

### **Revenue Generation and Financial Management**

The Director of Marketing and Communications will

- develop and recommend annual departmental business plans and budgets for revenues and expenses that support the program and earned income goals of the Company;
- supervise the scale, pricing, and inventory management and reporting, in collaboration with the Senior Manager of T&PS;
- prepare weekly marketing reports for the General Director and CEO and prepare reports to present to the Board of Trustees; and
- provide monthly projections to the CEO and CFO for the Marketing and Ticketing and Patron Services departments.

### **Communications Planning and Brand Management**

The Director of Marketing and Communications will

- direct marketing and communications campaigns that span across all communication channels (including, but not limited to, direct mail, print, social media, E-Commerce, and broadcast media); and
- create and implement communications and brand management plans.

### **Audience Development**

The Director of Marketing and Communications will

- research, develop, and implement strategies for the retention and expansion of the Company's audience;
- work with all staff, especially T&PS team, on strategies that build patron loyalty;
- participate in peer arts marketing meetings;
- research, develop, and implement strategies to expand the footprint of the Company through engagement programs which connect the Company to the community, in collaboration with the Manager of Education and Community Engagement.

### **Accomplishment of Company Objectives**

The Director of Marketing and Communications will

- support the Company's mission to make Lyric Opera of Kansas City indispensable to the public through transformational opera experiences and broad service which capture the hearts and minds of its communities;
- strive to create a culture that emphasizes quality, continuous improvement, and high performance;
- maintain and present a positive attitude with public, donors, and staff;
- analyze key sales and marketing information for presentation to the Board of Trustees;
- participate with the senior leadership team in the creation and implementation of audience development and engagement initiatives;
- deepen relationships with patrons and the community through communications events and engagement programs; and
- possess the knowledge and ability to conduct and coordinate appropriate market research as needed.

## **KEY COLLEAGUES**



### **Deborah Sandler**

#### **General Director and Chief Executive Officer**

Deborah Sandler became General Director of the Lyric Opera of Kansas City in 2012. She is known throughout the opera industry for her strong commitment to artistic excellence, company growth, and deepening community connections.

Previously, Sandler served as General Director of Kentucky Opera where her expertise as both the artistic and management leader of the company gained acclaim for productions of high artistic quality. In addition, as leader of an outstanding artistic and management team, she was recognized for implementing a strategic plan which led to the expansion of the audience through increasing subscriptions, securing financial stability and extending the company's educational and outreach programs. Sandler began a young artists training program and oversaw an innovative series of education programs which incorporated the use of puppetry

in opera for young people. Known for well-balanced casts and discovering new talent, Sandler is credited as the first General Director to cast a young Joyce Di Donato in the role of Rosina in Kentucky Opera's production of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* in the beginning of her career.

Deborah Sandler began her career as General Manager of the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia and later moved to the Opera Theatre of New Jersey as General Director, managing both the artistic and administrative functions. In New Jersey, Sandler was recognized for her ability to increase the artistic quality and expand the capacity of the company by developing community awareness through artistic initiatives and dynamic education and outreach programs. The budget tripled in size under Sandler's leadership and she was recognized for innovative artistic programming.

In service to the future of opera and the American Opera service organization OPERA America, Sandler's passion for opening doors to expand the role of women in professional opera was the impetus for the first ever field wide conversation on this topic, which took place in May, 2015 in Washington, DC. She has been a leader and catalyst regarding the convening of women to advance this cause and served as the founding chair of the Women's Opera Network at OPERA America.

Originally from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Sandler is a graduate of Temple University with a degree in music. Sandler earned a Master of Arts degree in Musicology from New York University, completing all of her doctoral course work. She has also studied at the Mandel Center for Nonprofits at Case Western Reserve and at the Fundraising School at Indiana University.



**Jeffrey S. Walker**  
**Chief Financial Officer**

Jeffrey S. Walker has been the Chief Financial Officer at Lyric Opera of Kansas City since February 2014. He earned a B.S. Degree in Accounting, Business Administration, and English from William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri in 1995. While at William Jewell he also earned a Saxophone Performance certificate. He earned an MBA from the University of Saint Mary in Leavenworth, Kansas in 2002. He has spent the majority of his professional career in the nonprofit sector, having worked for the Kansas City, Kansas Chamber of Commerce, Community Housing of Wyandotte County,

Sunflower House, the National World War I Museum and Memorial, and Lyric Opera of Kansas City. He has served on several nonprofit boards including the University of Saint Mary National Alumni Board, Leadership 2000 (President) and currently, the Kiwanis Club of Kansas City, Kansas (Treasurer) and the Humane Society of Greater Kansas City (Treasurer). Outside of work, he enjoys traveling, reading and the fine arts.



**Joanne M. Burns, RN, MPA, FACHE, FHIMSS**  
**President, Board of Trustees**

Joanne Burns is a Board and C-level healthcare, business, and technology leader with strategic and operational leadership experience at companies ranging from S&P 500 to early-stage start-up.

Burns' leadership roles include Chief Strategy Officer, Chief Information Officer, Board Vice-Chair/Director, Advisory Board member, and Business Unit Leader. Experience includes launching start-up businesses, building executive and operational teams, turning around struggling business lines, defining and executing processes for market entry and exit, and reviewing/approving acquisition and divestiture targets.

Burns is an experienced board professional, with program certification from Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health in "Women on Boards." She has served as Director and member of Finance and

Compensation Committees of Availity, a \$300M, PE backed healthcare technology company; Chair of the Board for SNOMED, an international, not-for-profit healthcare standards organization; Board member of Innara Health, a Series A funded health care device start-up; and Advisory Board member for the Regenstrief Center for Healthcare Engineering at Purdue University. She is a former Advisory Board member of URXMobile through market exit.

As former Chief Strategy Officer for Cerner Corporation (Nasdaq: CERN), Burns worked with Cerner's CEO, defining corporate strategy and plans. She served as internal consultant to operations and business units to bring operational, technical, and industry expertise improving execution, delivery, and growth plans. She assumed operational responsibility to turnaround struggling \$200M P&L securing additional \$500M bookings, while reducing expense resulting in 52% operating margin in 18 months.

As Chief Information Officer of MU Health Care, Burns had responsibility for strategic direction and operational execution for information technology including cybersecurity. As Executive Director of the Tiger Institute responsible for joint venture startup focused on new product development, she brought several new products to market, managing through the product lifecycle resulting in divestiture, ongoing ownership or market exit.

As a current Board professional, Burns provides guidance and governance to executive teams. She serves as a mentor to CEOs and is recognized for approachability and ability to navigate challenges and propose innovative solutions. She lends expertise where needed outside of standing Board meetings.

Burns is recognized as a leader in the healthcare IT industry through authorship, lectures, presentations, and awards including Women to Watch in Health IT 2020, American College of Healthcare Executives Fellowship, HIMSS Fellowship, Most Powerful Women in Health IT, and The Wharton School and Purdue University guest lectures.

### **PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS**

Lyric Opera of Kansas City seeks a Director of Marketing and Communications with

- a demonstrated ability to collect, analyze, and act upon financial and demographic data and use related metrics to produce increases in the effectiveness of the marketing programs;
- superior knowledge of opera and the performing arts industry;
- an ability to communicate effectively with a multi-generational audience;
- an ability to effectively manage staff;
- an ability to collaborate with staff, professional colleagues, and supporters;
- excellent written and verbal communication skills;
- proficiency in Microsoft Office (including Word, Excel, Outlook, and Power Point); and
- experience with Tessitura (a plus).

A bachelor's degree in Marketing or Arts Administration from an accredited baccalaureate program or an acceptable equivalent is required for this position as is at least five years of experience producing outstanding results. An advanced degree is preferred.

### **SALARY & BENEFITS**

Lyric Opera of Kansas City offers a competitive salary and a comprehensive benefits package.

## LOCATION

This position is located in Kansas City, Missouri. Out of concern for the health and safety of its employees during the COVID-19 pandemic, the physical offices of Lyric Opera of Kansas City remain closed. The Lyric Opera of Kansas City continues to monitor this health crisis and is following safety recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and its state and local government and health departments. Team members are working remotely. Staff, senior leadership team, and other meetings are being held via Zoom or phone conference.

## APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. ***Cover letters should be responsive to the mission of Lyric Opera of Kansas City.*** Lyric Opera of Kansas City is an equal opportunity employer and affords equal opportunity to all applicants for all positions without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law. Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the successful candidate has been selected.

*To apply for this position, visit:*

[Director of Marketing and Communications, Lyric Opera of Kansas City.](#)

*To nominate a candidate, please contact Anne Johnson:*

[annejohnson@aspenleadershipgroup.com.](mailto:annejohnson@aspenleadershipgroup.com)

*All inquiries will be held in confidence.*