

## Florida Grand Opera Names Howard Bender as Chief Development Officer



Florida Grand Opera (FGO) has selected Howard Bender as Chief Development Officer, following an executive search process led by Arts Consulting Group (ACG). He will begin his tenure on July 9, 2018.

With 18 years of experience in arts management, Mr. Bender has successfully secured new revenue streams and audiences as well as recruited new board members and major stakeholders in competitive marketplaces. He most recently held the role of Vice President at Virginia Opera, serving a board of 90 members. His efforts helped surpass contributed income goals by 15 percent in FY17 and by 7 percent in FY18. He also created new contributed revenue streams, such as the Adopt-a-School Program and the Virginia is for Opera Lovers tourism initiative. Prior to his time at Virginia Opera, he served as Director of Institutional Advancement and External Relations of the Castleton Festival, where he was chosen by Maestro Lorin Maazel to reconfigure and reposition

the organization. In 2001, Mr. Bender founded TodiMusicFest, a multi-disciplinary, international arts festival located in Hampton Roads, Virginia.

An operatic tenor for 28 years, Mr. Bender has performed on four continents. His opera singing career included four seasons at the Metropolitan Opera as well as his debut in Florida Grand Opera's 1986-87 Season, where he performed in Richard Strauss's *Salome*. A Cleveland native, Mr. Bender has been recognized by Coretta Scott King for his extraordinary work in bringing diverse communities together through shared operatic experiences. He holds a bachelor of music and a postgraduate diploma in voice from Manhattan School of Music.

In making the announcement, General Director and CEO Susan T. Danis said, "Florida Grand Opera is thrilled to welcome Howard Bender to our company and the position of Chief Development Officer. Howard brings years of experience both on the stage and in the community. His accomplishments are only topped by his warm and engaging personality. FGO is so fortunate to have him working with us."

"Congratulations to everyone at Florida Grand Opera and to Howard Bender on his appointment as Chief Development Officer," said ACG Senior Consultant Ellen Kulik. "Thank you to the search team for their outstanding efforts throughout the search process. With Mr. Bender's vast opera knowledge and extensive arts management career, the organization is sure to have an exciting and prosperous future."