

Organization

Boston Lyric Opera (BLO) leads the way in celebrating the art of the voice through innovative programming and community engagement initiatives that redefine the opera-going experience. Its mission is to build curiosity, enthusiasm, and support for opera by creating musically and theatrically compelling productions, events, and educational resources for the Boston community and beyond. More than 25,000 audience members enjoy BLO's performances each year.

Now in its 45th season, BLO is the largest and longest-lived opera company in New England. Founded in 1976 when three opera companies—New England Regional Opera, New England Chamber Opera Group, and Associate Artist Opera—decided to combine into one entity. In 1981, BLO became company-in-residence at Northeastern University. Performances moved to the Schubert Theatre in the 1990s and to the Majestic Theatre and Opera House in 2016. Currently BLO does not have a single performance venue and presents in a variety of venues throughout the Greater Boston Area.

The company has staged world premieres, United States premieres, and co-productions and co-commissions of note with organizations such as The Royal Opera, Scottish Opera, and San Francisco Opera. BLO continues to be a destination for some of the leading artists, conductors, directors, and designers from around the world. Programming at BLO celebrates the artform while blazing new ground, building audiences, and creating new ways to enhance the opera-going experience. Artists in the Jane & Steven Akin Emerging Artists initiative work to hone their craft and prepare themselves for other world-leading stages.

BLO's wide-reaching education initiatives introduce opera to new audiences across generations. Its School Partnership Program is designed and customized for all levels, learning styles, and backgrounds specific to the needs of each school classroom. BLO works with VOICES Boston to bring additional education and training opportunities to youth through its Creative Youth Development program. Based on the *Music! Words! Opera!* national curriculum, BLO's professional development programs offer teachers training on how to facilitate the opera creation process with students and new tools and techniques that support existing teaching practice.

BLO's 2021/22 season marks a return to live, on-stage opera and continuation of the company's on-screen programming throughout the year. The season is anchored by three new productions and return of the BLO Street Stage, which brings live music to communities throughout the region. BLO Street Stage debuted in the fall of 2020 and quickly became a platform for Boston artists to offer beautiful music as well as hope, healing, and joy through live performance. Seen to date in Boston's Financial District/Rose Kennedy Greenway, West End, South End, and Fenway neighborhoods, as well as the communities of Harvard, Lincoln, and Brockton, Massachusetts, BLO Street Stage will continue its regional performance schedule in fall 2021 and spring 2022.

BLO has a 24-member board of directors led by Chair Michael J. Puzo. Bradley Vernatter serves as Acting General and Artistic Director (GAD). BLO is currently undergoing a strategic planning process that will be completed in spring 2022. The staff is an energetic small team with big ambitions. They move fast with a 'fail forward' mindset and a belief that opera can be everything and be everywhere. BLO works with P&C Consulting to manage human resources functions. Financial services group RADAR manages BLO's financial operations, including payroll, revenue management, audits, taxes, compliance, cybersecurity, and loan management. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, BLO has budgeted total revenue of \$7.3 million, with \$6.8 million from contributions and grants. Total expenses are budgeted at \$7.7 million.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Values

BLO commits to becoming a more diverse and inclusive organization. It recognizes that this work will take time, intentional actions, and accountability from the board, employees, artists, patrons, and community. It commits to embrace individuals from all backgrounds and identities.

While BLO values the universality of themes in the work it produces, the organization acknowledges that the power held in these stories is different for different people. BLO will continue to ensure that the shared programs and productions will give voice and representation to diverse artists and perspectives.

Opera has the power to speak truth, broaden perspectives, and invite empathy.

BLO acknowledges that the history of operas and those engaged in opera have not always been diverse or inclusive. The organization believes that it has the ability to address the necessary changes for opera to evolve and thrive in Boston and around the world.

BLO commits to exhibit the following values:

- We acknowledge and appreciate the inherent human rights of all individuals, without discrimination.
- We believe that our work must be based on mutual respect.
- We aim to examine our actions so that we may act without bias based on the differences we encounter during our work.
- We aspire to listen, learn, and seek diversity among the voices that join us in our work.

For additional details and a summary of action to date, please visit: www.blo.org.

Community

As New England's largest city, Boston has long been the region's economic and cultural hub, offering a variety of performing and visual arts organizations. With an estimated population of 667,000, Boston is one of the 25 largest cities in the country. Greater Boston is home to nearly 4.6 million residents. With strong professional sectors in education, technology, and healthcare, Greater Boston is youthful, culturally diverse, and socially active. Robust public and regional transportation systems support its draw as a preeminent international destination. More than 20 million visitors travel to Boston each year for national events such as the Boston Marathon, First Night/First Day, or Head of the Charles Regatta. Known for its historical roots and the American Revolution, Boston is a city that honors history. It boasts leading educational and cultural institutions and offers a vibrant quality of life.

Sources: boston.gov; bostonusa.com

Position Summary

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) will report to the GAD, serving as their right hand to advance operating goals and strategy and to execute the BLO's tactical and strategic plans. Responsible for all business and administrative functions, the COO will be a key member of and work collaboratively with the senior leadership team, which includes the Senior Director of Administration, Senior Director of Artistic Operations, Senior Director of Development, and Senior Director of Public Engagement. This individual will set and prioritize annual, quarterly, and monthly goals that achieve long-range business strategies and facilitate workflows and departmental planning to ensure their success. Operating as a central figure in the business infrastructure, the COO will oversee the internal operations of BLO and ensure the business strategy is being effectively implemented. The COO will supervise the Senior Director of Administration, Finance Senior Manager, Operations Senior Manager, and RADAR Financial Firm. This individual will also lead the union negotiating team, which includes the Senior Director of Artistic Operations, Director of Production, Operations Senior Manager, Company Legal Counsel, RADAR Relationship Manager, and GAD.

Roles and Responsibilities

Business Growth and Partner Relationships

- Ensure BLO's stability and growth, executing long-range business and financial strategies and identifying and assisting with key internal and external priorities.
- Lead the financial aspect of BLO operations across the management team to develop long-range financial plans, multi-year and operating budgets, and cash flow reporting.

- Manage daily operational priorities and work with senior leadership to streamline, unify, and elevate BLO's daily operations, financials, and KPIs.
- Collaborate with RADAR and senior leadership to develop and implement effective financial and operational procedures.
- Advise on the financial matters of the organization and each department, providing strategic recommendations based on financial analysis and projections, cost identification and allocation, and revenue/expense analysis.
- Drive BLO's efforts to identify and evaluate new business opportunities and develop financial analyses, proformas, and cost benefit analyses.
- Participate in venue development planning and explore long-term venue options and financial models that reflect and advance BLO's mission and strategic direction.
- Work with BLO's legal advisors and manage all legal and liability matters, including negotiations, settlements, and litigation.
- Establish and expand partner relationships with political and community leaders and other artistic and community organizations locally and internationally in support of BLO's mission.
- Ensure active, strategic involvement in community affiliations and serve as representative of BLO in public and political forums.
- Embrace other business growth and partner relationships duties as needed.

Contract, Agreement, and Lease Management

- Negotiate and manage key business agreements such as the BLO real estate portfolio, facility leases including the office and warehouses, multiple theater venue agreements, and other material business agreements.
- Act as lead negotiator for co-production and commissioning agreements and collaborate closely with the Artistic & Production Department.
- Lead the negotiating team, alongside legal counsel, for BLO's collective bargaining agreements with American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA), International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), American Federation of Musicians (AFM), including the Electronic Media Agreement (EMA) / Integrated Media Agreement (IMA).
- Work closely with the GAD, Senior Director of Artistic Operations, Operations Senior Manager, and BLO legal advisors on all collective bargaining agreement-related matters.
- Coach and mentor department administrators and managers during their negotiation and contract execution process to support continuity and compliance, supporting any contract-related issues that may arise with other parties and internally with the company itself.
- Create and maintain relationships with unions and serve as a point of contact for matters concerning the organization's collective bargaining agreements.
- Guide and manage financial analysis related to contract negotiations and planning.
- Manage and negotiate annual license agreements for core organizational systems, including Tessitura and ArtsVision.
- Serve as BLO's point of contact for all contract terms related to business issues such as indemnification, force majeure, liability, and cancellation/termination, working closely with RADAR and BLO legal advisors.
- Manage the development of vendor and service agreement procedures, such as departmental service contracts and long-term and short-term equipment leases.
- Review complex issues during the contracting process, prepare a specialized and/or non-routine response for department managers and contract modifications, and elevate when necessary.
- Analyze regulations and contracts for potential impact on BLO goals and objectives.
- Embrace other contract, agreement, and lease management duties as needed.

Operational Excellence and Governance

- Serve as representative of the GAD on BLO matters and execute special projects on their behalf.
- Deliver BLO metrics and information to the board and prepare reports for board meetings in collaboration with the Senior Leadership team and RADAR.

- Attend all board meetings and serve as executive liaison to the Executive Committee, Finance Committee, Audit Committee, and Venue Task Force, in conjunction with the GAD.
- Provide authoritative guidance to internal departments on BLO goals and objectives related to contract and calendaring activity.
- Serve as Executive Company signatory on contracts and financial accounts.
- Manage relationships with insurance providers and secure all certificates of insurance to satisfy contracts and agreements.
- Partner with RADAR in managing BLO's financial operations.
- Work closely with the Senior Director of Administration in managing human resources operations.
- Provide leadership, direction, and oversight to all direct reports, in coordination with RADAR, and manage in-house financial staff.
- Coach and mentor an administrative and business operations team that is the foundation of BLO and support the overall effectiveness of the organization.
- Establish and enforce process management and continuity of terms and conditions across departments.
- Build, lead, mentor, coach, and motivate an effective, high-performing diverse team, providing strong support for growth and development and modeling best practices and current standards within the opera, music, and theater fields.
- Embrace other operational excellence and governance duties as needed.

Traits and Characteristics

The COO will be a people-focused leader and strategic thinker who sets and accomplishes clear and measurable goals. Seen as a trusted advisor on operational and financial matters, this individual will have a sense of urgency and deep understanding of how resources must be managed in a nonprofit arts organization. They will be receptive to new ideas and will work collaboratively both internally and externally using past experiences and knowledge to guide their decision making. They will be able to work within tight deadlines and balance multiple priorities. The COO will have a passion for BLO's work and a desire to play a vital role during a crucial period in the organization's history.

Other key competencies include:

- **Self-Starting, Problem Solving, and Time/Priority Management** – The adeptness to take initiative and demonstrate self-control while defining, analyzing, and diagnosing key components of a problem to formulate a solution, factoring in time and priorities.
- **Personal Accountability** – The ability to be answerable for personal actions and decisions.
- **Diplomacy** – The capacity to listen to multiple points of view, tactfully handling sensitive or difficult issues and facilitating beneficial outcomes that are mutually satisfactory.
- **Flexibility and Resiliency** – The ability to readily respond and adapt to change with minimal renitence while recovering quickly from adversity.
- **Planning and Organizing** – The aptitude to analyze all aspects of a situation to make consistently sound and timely decisions, including addressing difficult situations head-on, and to establish forward-looking courses of action to ensure that longer-term efforts are completed effectively and efficiently with appropriate participation from the entire team.

Qualifications

Qualified applicants will have demonstrated senior management experience in a complex nonprofit operational environment, ideally in the performing arts. A master's degree in arts administration, business, or nonprofit leadership or at least 10 to 12 years of relevant experience is required. Previous opera experience is a desired but not required. Knowledge of and passion for the arts is critical, as is experience negotiating and operating under collective bargaining and/or union agreements, including AGMA, IATSE, AFM (including EMA/IMA), or comparable agreements. Candidates must possess exceptional communication skills to articulate and lead BLO's mission and vision and represent the organization in public speaking engagements. The selected COO must be willing to work special events, including weekends and/or after regular business hours, and travel as necessary to meet essential strategic initiatives.

Compensation and Benefits

BLO offers a competitive salary range of \$140,000 to \$160,000 and a comprehensive benefits package that includes medical, dental, and vision insurance; life and disability insurance; and generous paid time off and holidays.

Applications and Inquiries

To submit a cover letter and resume with a summary of demonstrable accomplishments (electronic submissions preferred), please click [here](#) or visit artsconsulting.com/employment. For questions or general inquiries about this job opportunity, please contact:

Wyona Lynch-McWhite, Senior Vice President



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BLO values diversity and is committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees. All qualified candidates will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, age, veteran status, or any other protected category. BLO is an equal opportunity employer.