



# TOM O'CONNOR

CONSULTING GROUP

## **The 5th Avenue Theatre** **Managing Director**

Position Profile

January 2023

## Managing Director

### Position Profile



## About the Opportunity

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The 5th Avenue Theatre in Seattle, Washington seeks its next **Managing Director** to partner with **Producing Artistic Director Bill Berry** in leading a company recognized nationally for its excellence in musical theatre, producing both fresh revivals of beloved classics and exciting new works from the most gifted creative teams working today.

The 5th Avenue Theatre ranks among the nation's largest and most respected non-profit musical theatre producers. In its fourth decade of operations in a landmark facility, the organization served over 300,000 patrons and managed an operating budget of \$25 million in 2019, the last full year of operations prior to the pandemic. Like many of its peers throughout the country, The 5th Avenue managed its way thoughtfully through the pandemic, from the full closure of live performances to a reopening that has been thrilling to experience for both staff and audiences, while also continuing to present challenges from the uncertainties of this re-emerging period. With a talented professional team in place and a committed Board of Directors, the theatre is well-positioned to navigate the unpredictable time to come, under the leadership and vision of Bill Berry and the next Managing Director.

**The ideal candidate for Managing Director** will bring expertise in the non-profit theatre field (including its relationship to creative partnerships in the commercial theatre), with a love for the work on stage and a commitment to generating the resources, empowering the staff, and engaging the audiences at levels necessary to ensure that the art can thrive. The Managing Director will need to have the skills to navigate the complexities of co-leading a large professional regional theatre in a time of significant change while prioritizing the needs and goals of the people central to making The 5th Avenue Theatre such a vital organization – the staff, the artists, the volunteers, and the audience.

### **Desired key skills/experience summary:**

Experienced professional theatre leader ♦ A passion for the musical theatre – classics and new work ♦ Fluent in non-profit financial management best practices ♦ Successful record of leading revenue generation at significant scale ♦ Demonstrated commitment to actions leading to greater equity/inclusion/access/anti-racism in the theatre ♦ A strategic approach to deepening board and civic engagement ♦ Employ a people-centered compass in decision-making.

## About The 5th Avenue Theatre

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*The 5th Avenue Theatre and the communities we serve are on the land and waterways of the Coast Salish people who have continuously inhabited our region since time immemorial. They are the original storytellers and theatre-makers of this place we call home. We also acknowledge and honor the Tribal nations across Washington State and the many Indigenous peoples from across the country who live and work in the Seattle area. We at The 5th Avenue Theatre are committed to honoring their legacies and bringing greater attention to their continuing fight for equity and recognition.*

The 5th Avenue Theatre is known for its world class, critically-acclaimed productions of musicals chosen from the contemporary canon and the Golden Age of Broadway, as well as its development and premiere of new works, many of which have subsequently opened on Broadway. Unique in its historic design, the facility opened in 1926 as a venue for vaudeville and film. The theatre later transformed itself into a popular movie palace. In the late 1970s, The 5th Avenue Theatre fell on hard times. A visionary group of businesses and community leaders joined forces to save the historical building. In 1979, this group formed the non-profit 5th Avenue Theatre Association, and raised \$2.6 million for renovations. The theatre re-opened in 1980 as the non-profit 5th Avenue Theatre and has become Seattle's premier home for producing top-quality live musical theatre. In addition to its main stage productions, The 5th Avenue Theatre is also committed to encouraging the next generation of theatregoers through its extensive educational outreach program that serves thousands annually throughout the state.

### MISSION

To nurture, advance and celebrate all aspects of the great original art form: The Musical. We achieve this by creating extraordinary theatrical experiences that enrich, entertain, and inspire current and future audiences everywhere.

### VISION

To be the pre-eminent musical theatre company in the world - achieving the highest levels of artistic achievement, production quality, audience engagement, and community impact.

### VALUES

- We are committed to the preservation of the historic and irreplaceable 5th Avenue Theatre as a cultural center for the region.
- We are dedicated to achieving consistently high standards of excellence by showcasing world-class performers and creative artists, utilizing full live orchestras, and staging exceptional and imaginative productions. We place special emphasis on the employment of our outstanding regional community of performers, technicians, and theatre professionals.
- Each season, we program a vibrant and dynamic mix of productions that attract, delight, and retain a large and diverse audience and reflect the broad scope and cultural significance of the American Musical – past, present, and future.
- We ensure our future by serving as a creative incubator for the production of New Works, by engaging our community through Educational programming of the highest caliber, and by maintaining exceptional standards of fiscal responsibility.

## EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESS/ANTI-RACISM

- In every season, we commit to programming that represents the diversity of our region with a non-homogenous selection representing a multiplicity of viewpoints.
- In every season, we commit to creative teams having lived experiences of the narrative stories being told and created.
- We continuously work to address access needs to remove barriers to participation.
- We work with our creative teams to build a staffing plan that fully supports cultural specifics of any given production.
- Believing that a wide range of perspectives resulting from diversity and inclusion allows all organizations to be more effective, The 5th Avenue Board is committed to building a more diverse governing body. That body will be comprised of a range of races, ethnicities, gender identifications, ages, religions, sexual orientations, differing abilities, incomes, geographic locations, education, viewpoints and cultures.
- We recognize that racism is part of all societal structures and organizations, including the musical theatre community. We acknowledge The 5th Avenue Theatre's participation in systemic racism and the ways in which both conscious and unconscious bias have created a gap in equitable access to our stage, staff and audience. We exist to hold our organization accountable for our continual progress towards racial equity and inclusion. Using an anti-racism lens, we work to facilitate The 5th's investigation and diagnosis of our current equity practices, eradicate racist policies, and advocate implementation of new best practices and policies.

[Learn more about our EDIA commitments here.](#)

## ABOUT SEATTLE

Colloquially known as the Emerald City, Seattle is an exciting major city of the Pacific Rim, firmly rooted in the Pacific Northwest and all it has to offer while also being an active participant in international business and conversation. Situated in perhaps the most beautiful natural setting of any American city, Seattle's horizons are defined by water and mountains; Puget Sound, the Olympic Peninsula, and the Cascade Mountains serve as its frame. Fortune 500 companies, world class restaurants, major universities and nationally renowned arts organizations share space with urban forests and lakes; it's a truth that fleece and flannel are the local uniform for much of the population, but that comfortably mixes with fashion from leading local designers and international labels, and a significant dollop of personal flare. Seattle is a city of great individuality and a strong collective identity all at once. As with many American cities, Seattle is grappling with some of the most pressing civic issues of the day – from a shortage of affordable housing to the reckoning around racism and structural inequities to climate change impacts. But the city's vibrant culture and commitment to civic engagement gives confidence that the citizens will continue to work together to take steps to make progress on these challenges, and the 5th Avenue Theatre staff and board sees the theatre as a vital partner for the city, contributing to its health in many ways. Seattle has always been home to innovative thinkers and makers, and it's an exciting time to be part of its future.

Some useful links to learn more:

[Life in Seattle: Arts, food, water, mountains.](#) Lots of information on the city's vibrant arts community, food scene, and outdoor activities, among other things.

[The Pros and Cons of Living in Seattle.](#) Seattle has a lot of fantastic reasons to live here, and some challenges, too.

[The Official website of Washington State.](#) Learn more about the state of Washington in terms of services, governance, transportation, etc.

[City Arts Magazine.](#) Coverage of the city's expansive arts and culture offerings.

[Forbes: the Seattle housing market forecast for 2023.](#)

More information about The 5th Avenue Theatre [can be found here.](#)

## Job Description

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The Managing Director reports to The 5th Avenue Theatre Board of Directors and works in close partnership with the Producing Artistic Director. Supervising seven direct reports (the Chief Financial Officer, the Director of Philanthropy, the Director of Marketing, the Director of Facilities, the Director of HR, the Executive Assistant, and the head of IT), the Managing Director's primary responsibilities will be in the following areas:

### *Organizational Leadership & Strategic Vision*

- Along with the Producing Artistic Director, co-lead the company in a manner that centers the art and programs of the theatre while valuing the people who make them possible. This is done through intentional people and culture strategy and a commitment to supporting staff at all levels with the tools and resources they need to succeed.
- In conjunction with The 5th Avenue's Leadership Team, create and lead annual business plans that allow the organization to thrive through a commitment to artistic quality, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and anti-racism.
- In collaboration with the Board of Directors, the Producing Artistic Director and the theatre's Leadership Team, align business strategies with the company goals as articulated in the strategic planning process.
- Directly supervise the Philanthropy, Finance, IT, Marketing, Facilities, and Human Resources departments, including collaborative goal-setting, ongoing coaching, and assisting with problem-solving, as well as annual performance reviews.
- Create and instill throughout the company communication practices that ensure that key stakeholders in all areas of the organization – staff, board and others – are well-served in annual operations plans and long-term goals.
- Work with the CFO on multi-year financial forecasting, development of overall financial strategy, and systems of budget management and accountability.
- Support collaboration among all departments of the theatre by connecting each of them to the central work of the company and through concepts of shared outcomes.
- Be a mentor and advisor to The 5th Avenue Theatre staff, with a focus on recruitment and retention of team members in a challenging era of changing employee expectations and needs.

### ***Culture and Community***

- In partnership with the Producing Artistic Director and the Leadership Team, oversee and model The 5th Avenue Theatre's vision and values in all theatre operations and relationships.
- Co-lead an organizational culture that prizes collaboration, innovation, mutual respect, and creative problem solving—all while centering the artistic quality and financial responsibility needed to support these values.
- Represent The 5th Avenue Theatre as a civic leader, maintaining and building relationships with other leaders from the arts, education, government and business sectors of the city, in line with The 5th Avenue Theatre's role as a significant cultural asset in Seattle.
- Provide leadership, space, and time for long-term planning and goal setting, as part of developing team capacity for growth and change.
- Provide leadership for scaffolding the necessary conversations, training, and evaluation of progress to ensure that company goals around diversity, equity, access, inclusion and anti-racism are kept in focus in the midst of competing priorities.

### ***Resource Development & Board Engagement***

- Provide leadership to the Philanthropy team to generate overall strategy for fundraising and engage in direct personal engagement in major gift cultivation and solicitation for annual funds as well as capital needs.
- Take an active role in fundraising in collaboration with the Director of Philanthropy and manage a portfolio of major donors.
- Provide leadership and support to the Director of Marketing, and be an advocate for the team and its strategic needs, in a company with a significant reliance on earned revenue.
- With board leadership, work to deepen engagement of the board, creating opportunities to grow into an even stronger and more impactful group in support of the work of The 5th Avenue Theatre. Collaborate with board leadership to assess and further develop current board capacities (included but not limited to financial capacity).
- Manage overall administrative operations through the direct reports, including finance, facilities, and HR needs, in order to track the organization's health on an ongoing basis, in both financial terms and in people terms.

### **Qualifications**

#### ***Skills and experience:***

- The ability and desire to work in a collaborative partnership with a co-executive leader; the ability to engage in productive problem solving as a team, while also being a decisive leader in areas of direct responsibility.
- Demonstrated leadership skills in leading a team with distinct areas of expertise and responsibility, while fostering the collaboration among those teams needed to effectively and efficiently fulfill the theatre's needs.
- Strong non-profit financial literacy, with ability to lead budget creation, understand forecasting models, and ensure accuracy of tracking and reporting.

- Experience with or understanding of the role of the non-profit in connection to the commercial producing world, and how those partnerships benefit The 5th Avenue Theatre in the near and long term.
- Comfort and success with fundraising and a strategic fundraising approach that aligns with belief in the impact of The 5th Avenue Theatre both historically and currently, and both locally and nationally.
- A demonstrated commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, access and anti-racism, and a dedication to staying abreast of best practices around creating equity and access and applying them to the work of running a theatre.
- An appreciation for the legacy of The 5th Avenue Theatre, from the historic value of the building and the commitment to its preservation and the rich experience of the space, to its significance as a national home for the Musical Theatre.
- Experience in or demonstrated understanding of the position of an executive in a non-profit organization, reporting to a Board of Directors, holding the organization in trust for the community.
- Experience managing competing priorities in complex, often fast-paced settings.
- Strong and persuasive communication skills, with the authenticity to effectively inspire excitement for The 5th Avenue Theatre across a range of constituents, from board and staff to audiences and the larger community (business/government/education)

***Qualities and Characteristics:***

- Has a genuine love for musical theatre and a belief in the joy it brings to audiences and artists, and in the impact it can make on our world.
- Organized and attentive to deadlines and immediate needs of operations, but also maintains long-term focus to support the vision of the strategic plan.
- Holds an understanding that change brings occasional discomfort but can lead through those times with the larger goal in mind.
- Has an open and inquisitive mind, with a keen desire and ability to listen.
- Ability to build trust and loyalty with multiple stakeholder groups: staff, artists, donors, and the larger community in which the theatre lives, in Seattle and with the national field.
- Believes in the strength of collaboration and is adept in and committed to working in and encouraging collaborative processes.

Not sure you meet 100% of our qualifications? Research shows that men apply for jobs when they fulfill an average of 60% of the criteria. Yet, women and other people who are systematically marginalized tend only to apply if they meet every requirement. If you believe that you could excel in this role, we encourage you to apply.

We are dedicated to considering a broad array of candidates, including those with diverse workplace experiences and backgrounds. So, whether you're returning to work after a gap in employment, simply looking to transition, or taking the next step in your career path, we will be glad to have you on our radar.

## Compensation

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Annual salary will be between \$235,000 - \$250,000 per year.

Benefits include robust medical/dental options, life insurance, retirement plan, and generous time off and holiday allocations.

## Application Instructions

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The search for the Managing Director is being conducted on behalf of The 5th Avenue Theatre by Tom O'Connor Consulting Group, a New York-based executive search and consulting firm specializing in the arts and culture industries. Cynthia Fuhrman, Vice President/Executive Search, is leading the search process, reporting to a search committee made up of a mix of members of The 5th Avenue's Board of Directors, Staff, and other community stakeholders.

Please use your cover letter to tell us about what you hope to bring to this role, and how your background and experience responds to the desired skills and qualities.

To apply, visit the [online application](#) and submit your materials. Your cover letter should include relevant experience, including any direct experience you've had with similar roles and institutions. The priority application deadline has now passed, but applications will still be reviewed until the search is formally closed. No phone calls, please.