



205 The Argent Centre, 60 Frederick Street, Birmingham B1 3HS
t: 0121 246 6644 f: 0121 246 6633 e: info@birminghamopera.org.uk

PARTICIPATION MANAGER

4 months contract beginning September 2009

Birmingham Opera Company is looking for somebody to join them on a full-time basis between the beginning of September 2009 and the end of December 2009.

Over the last 9 years Birmingham Opera Company has been pioneering a participatory model of professional opera production with considerable success. Led by Artistic Director, Graham Vick, produces professional opera in unusual places involving large numbers of people who live and work in Birmingham. This is not conventional community opera but a means of creating professional opera at a grass roots/street level. The aim is to open up opera to new people and to give some insight into what it is, how it is put together and, through this, for the company to play a more active role in the life of the community and the city.

Birmingham Opera Company has a full-time staff of three working for the company year-round. In addition we retain several people on a consultancy basis who help us with specific specialist tasks such as casting, technical planning and community and outreach strategy. When the company is in production we expand to employ 80+ people – singers, directors, players, technical staff, stage management, marketing etc. The role of Participation Manager is a crucial position in this mix as the point at which the professional and participatory aspects of the overall project come together.

Our next project is Verdi's Othello and work is currently underway to recruit new people from a broad range of backgrounds to come and take part in the production. Othello is a very timely piece for us to explore and perform with its themes of race, culture, ambition and manipulation. This will also be the first professional opera production in the UK with a Black tenor in the title roll in the form of Ronald Samm. We already have a core of committed individuals who have participated in Birmingham Opera Company productions in the past but we are particularly keen to encourage involvement from new groups and communities.

We are looking for somebody with a clear understanding of the dual demands of working in a professional production environment (although not necessarily opera) and facilitating the participation of non-professionals, many of whom will require some support in order to take part. It is a hugely exciting and rewarding role operating as an integral part of the creative team in the making of some of the most outstanding opera productions seen in the UK in recent years.

If you would like to be considered for the post of Participation Manager you should check through the enclosed/attached job description and if you think this might be for you then send us your CV and a covering letter explaining your interest.

Jean Nicholson
General Manager

JOB DESCRIPTION & PERSON SPECIFICATION

17 week contract from September to December 2009

Fee: £6750

This post is both creative and administrative. It involves consultation, prolific delivery and impeccable administration. Based in Birmingham Opera Company's office in the Jewellery Quarter the Participation Manager will follow up on the recruitment process and manage and support local participants in Othello. Many of the participants, especially those who have worked with the company before require little, if any, supervision but we want to make sure that people from the many different communities in the city have the chance to be a part of the project, particularly young adults and they may need additional practical support and encouragement.

There are three clear areas of operation:

1. Recruitment

We have already identified several groups/communities we would like to target for this project. The Participation Manager will be responsible for liaising with key community figures or group leaders to facilitate group activity in the production and to help spread the word about opportunities to be a part of the project and how to get involved.

2. Support & Facilitation

It is vital that we make participation in our projects as straightforward as possible. The postholder will be responsible for ensuring people know where to go for rehearsals/ workshops, help them work out safe and appropriate transport routes, reimburse their fares from the allotted budget and, in some cases, offer a reminder service of when and where rehearsals take place.

3. Collaboration with the Production Team

Birmingham Opera Company productions are directed by Graham Vick, one of the world's foremost opera directors. He founded Birmingham Opera Company (then known as City of Birmingham Touring Opera) in 1987 and has remained Artistic Director since then. He works with a creative team who integrate closely with stage management, production management and the administration of the company (biography and organisational plan below). The Participation Manager is an integral part of that team reflecting the company's policy of education and outreach work being at the very centre of the production process and not an 'add on' function.

In view of the participatory nature of our work and the integral role that the Participation Manager will play we ask that you disclose details of any criminal record. Only relevant convictions and other information will be taken into account so disclosure need not necessarily be a bar to obtaining this position. If you have ever been convicted by the courts or cautioned by the police you should let us know and give details in your application. Please be assured that this information will be treated as strictly confidential.

The main duties of the Participation Manager are:

- Follow up new target participants and group leaders with support of company staff
- Liaise with the production team on developing ideas for participants contributions to the overall production
- Motivate and support the community participants
- Provide up-to-date information about participants to Director/Assistant Directors
- Update and maintain databases of participants in partnership with Administrator
- Maintain regular contact with participants
- Maintain register of participants attendance at rehearsals

- Keep statistical information for evaluation
- Make payments and maintain records of travel expenses reimbursed to participants in partnership with Administrator
- Attend all rehearsals involving the community company
- Attend production meetings as appropriate
- Liaison with staff in the production team to co-ordinate costume fittings and additional rehearsal calls for the community cast

Essential skills:

- A sound understanding of community participation in arts activities
- A sound understanding of both equal opportunities and general health & safety issues.
- Good communication skills across a wide variety of situations
- Self-motivation and self-discipline
- A keen interest in performing arts and a shared commitment to the company's stated aim that opera can be socially inclusive

Preferred skills:

- Experience of working as an integral member of a team
- Experience of working with diverse communities and ages
- Experience of delegated responsibility
- Experience of working in the arts and an understanding of the special pressures which are inevitable during a production period
- A knowledge of the education/outreach/community arts sector in Birmingham and/or the West Midlands

Please submit a c.v. with 2 referees and covering letter outlining relevant experience. Applications can be emailed to opportunities@birminghamopera.org.uk or sent by post to 205 The Argent Centre, 60 Frederick Street, Birmingham B1 3HS. Referees will be contacted only after consent given.

The closing date is 5pm 19th August 2009. Interviews will take place in Birmingham on the afternoon of 21st August 2009.

Graham Vick – biography:

Graham Vick is one of the foremost opera directors working in all the world's leading opera houses with conductors such as Muti, Levine, Mehta, Gergiev, Ozawa, Haitink and Sir Andrew Davis. He was Director of Productions at Scottish Opera (1984-1987) and Glyndebourne Festival Opera (1994-2000). His production of Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* was the last production at the Royal Opera House before its refit and his *Falstaff* opened the newly renovated theatre. La Scala has just taken his productions of *Otello* and *Macbeth* on tour to Tokyo in September this year conducted by Riccardo Muti. His many awards include the Premio Abbiati (three times), The South Bank Show Award (twice) and a Royal Philharmonic Society Award. He is a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres, Honorary Professor of Music at the University of Birmingham and Hambro Visiting Professor of Opera Studies at Oxford University. Graham was awarded a CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list 2009.

Birmingham Opera Company – Othello organisational plan:

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Artistic Director: | Graham Vick |
| Administration: | General Manager: Jean Nicholson Associate Artistic Director: Richard Willacy Administrator: Samrina Mir |
| Creative Team: | Director: Graham Vick Designer: Linbury Biennial Design Prize Winner Lighting Designer: Giuseppe di Orio Choreographer/Movement Director: Ron Howell Associate Director: Richard Willacy Associate Director: Iqbal Khan Assistant Director: Omar Shahryar Conductor: tbc Orchestra: Birmingham Opera Company Orchestra |
| Cast: | <i>Othello</i> Ronald Samm <i>Desdemona</i> Stephanie Corley <i>Iago</i> Keel Watson <i>Emilia</i> Antonia Sotgiu <i>Cassio</i> Joe Guyton <i>Roderigo</i> tbc <i>Lodovico</i> Robert Winslade Anderson <i>Montano</i> Byron Jackson |
| Participation Manager: | tbc |
| Technical Team: | Project Director: Sheelagh Barnard Costume Supervisor: Caroline Mirfin Stage Manager: tbc DSM: Caroline Weavis ASM x 3: tbc Technician: tbc |
| Consultants: | Casting: Sarah Playfair Technical: Sheelagh Barnard Press: S&X Media and Arthur LeonePR Design & Web: tbc |