



Next Act Theatre, Inc.
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Next Act Theatre Artistic Director Position

Organizational Overview

Next Act Theatre, located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was founded in 1990 upon the merger of two former professional theatres. **Next Act's mission is to engage the hearts and minds of audiences with compelling and intimate theatre productions intended to stimulate thought, foster the exchange of ideas and promote the development of new perspectives and understanding.** Productions, therefore, center primarily on stories that speak to relevant topics, sparking in-depth conversation and debate. Each season combines a healthy mix of timely topics and new and contemporary works, along with one play with broader audience appeal, particularly during the holidays.

Next Act Theatre is a 501(c)3 arts-organization that operates under an SPT Level 8 contract with Actors' Equity Association, producing four full-length, contemporary plays from September to May. The venue, currently in its 12th year of a 20-year lease, features a well-equipped and intimate thrust theatre with 152 seats. Administrative and ticket offices are on-site as is the production area which features the rehearsal hall, dressing rooms, green room, costume shop, utility room and backstage restrooms. The space is fully accessible including a state-of-the-art hearing loop system.

Productions run for 26 performances each and include one pay-what-you-can night. Additional high-school matinees are scheduled as opportunities arise. Pre-show talks and talkbacks are offered liberally throughout the run, encouraging patrons to discuss the play with the artists in order to gain a deeper understanding of their experience. Student, community and special projects as well as readings may also occur throughout the season. Next Act's venue is available for rental to outside organizations and has recently become the artistic home of another Milwaukee-based professional theatre company which produces three productions per season.

Next Act enjoys loyal and long-time patrons who find our work to be "thought-provoking," "relevant" and "stories that stay with [them] long after they've left the theatre." They also remark on the organization's outstanding customer service: from purchasing a ticket to receiving a donation thank-you, patron feedback often mentions how well they were treated. This speaks to the quality of Next Act's dedicated and competent staff of five full-time, three part-time and seasonal part-time employees.

Next Act Theatre's educational programming includes its signature Next Actors: Summer Theatre for Teens program, entering its 25th year; Shakespeare-In-Schools; an annual student project; and in-school workshops that correlate with student matinees. There is no cost to schools or students to participate in educational initiatives. Lunches and snacks are provided during the summer programs. Bus passes are available for students who require assistance in reaching the theatre for activities.

Next Act Theatre currently has a 16-member Board of Directors (out of 20 seats) whose backgrounds reflect legal, educational, business and entrepreneurial fields. They are committed to the fiscal health and longevity of the organization, lending their talents and expertise to achieve those goals. Next Act is a proud Member Group of the United Performing Arts Fund (UPAF) and is firmly rooted in the robust theatre community of the greater Milwaukee area. Next Act Theatre's 2021-2022 budget is \$870,000. A pre-pandemic earned-to-contributed ratio is typically at 40/60.

Next Act Theatre has 1,244 season subscribers, pre-pandemic. Hundreds of high school-aged students attend matinees and educational programming annually.

Leadership Overview

Following the first two challenging years of the newly-merged Next Act Theatre in 1990, the organization was re-structured, to be led by a collaborative management team of Managing Director Charles Kakuk and Producing Artistic Director David Ceccarini (co-founder of Next Act). Over the next 22 years, this management team and a small, talented staff re-built the company and established Next Act as a highly-functional, artistically-sound performing arts organization.

Unfortunately, Mr. Kakuk endured a protracted health battle in the latter years of his tenure. In response to these health-enforced absences, existing staff assimilated many of his tasks and duties. This re-distribution of duties resulted in the Producing Artistic Director, David Ceccarini, maintaining many administrative functions such as payroll, accounting, contracting, government correspondence and other tasks not typically-associated with the role of Artistic Director. Following the death of Next Act's Managing Director, Mr. Ceccarini retained sole Executive authority of the organization, though this authority was implemented with an ongoing commitment to collaboration with colleagues and oversight from the Board.

After 32 seasons, Ceccarini will be stepping out of the Producing Artistic Director role as of the end of this calendar year.

Next Act will re-structure the organization to make way for a new Artistic Director whose responsibilities will be dedicated first and foremost to furthering the artistic mission, vision and reputation of the theatre. This organizational transition has begun with re-assigning administrative duties handled by the current Producing Artistic Director, among existing and augmented staff. The new Artistic Director will share executive authority in a collaborative arrangement with Department heads. Once this new arrangement of organizational leadership has been established (6 months to one year), administrative needs will be re-assessed by staff and Board. Subsequent restructuring will be explored and implemented as required, to ensure continuing success of the organization.

The New Artistic Director Position

The Artistic Director will be charged with embracing the Next Act Theatre mission, and will establish the vision and methods needed to pursue and enhance that mission. The Artistic Director, in collaboration with staff leadership, will share responsibility for all operational aspects of the organization and be collectively accountable to the Board of Directors for artistic and management goals and implementation of Board policy.

The Artistic Director is asked to make the commitment to Next Act Theatre their primary professional responsibility. Residency in the Milwaukee area is a vital aspect of this commitment.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree desirable; or significant, recent artistic and managerial experience in the field.
- Proven record in producing and directing successful live stage productions.
- Ability to articulate and support the vision of the organization through both internal/external communications.
- Demonstrable background in building effective, productive artistic and administrative teams through collaboration; maintaining a positive working culture, granting agency to, and trust in, the existing staff.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Satisfaction in serving as an ambassador of Next Act in business and social settings.
- Familiarity with contract procedures of Actors' Equity Association, USA829 (designers), SDC (directors) and other unions.
- Familiarity with budgeting, focusing primarily on production budgets: prioritization and efficiency as goals.
- Strong interest in the value of arts education programming.

Primary Responsibilities:

Artistic

- Articulate and represent the Next Act mission publicly and within the organization itself.
- In consultation with staff and Board advisors, select production material as guided by and in support of the mission of Next Act.
- With assistance from Production Manager, secure artistic personnel for each season: actors, guest directors, designers, technical staff.
- Supervise and/or approve artistic output: mainstage productions, media representation, education and outreach initiatives and events.
- Represent Next Act onstage through direct artistic participation as actor and/or director.
- Maintain a presence in the professional theatre community, attending general and diversity auditions, plays, talks and meetings. Develop and maintain a strong knowledge of local available talent while keeping a pulse on industry trends.

Administrative

- Work collaboratively with Marketing, Development, Production and Box Office staff to determine and coordinate all necessary means to support the Next Act artistic mission.
- In collaboration with the Executive Board and administrative staff, create and maintain an annual budget, subject to regular oversight by the Finance Committee.
- Assist and support Marketing Director with artistic insights, sales/promotional ideas, copy writing, personal interviews and appearances, etc.
- Assist and support Development Director with artistic mission insights, grant and donation ideas, grant copy editing, donor meetings, company representation at development events.

- Participate in the selection of administrative personnel when necessary.
- Participate in periodic staff reviews with select Board members; monitor recommendations.

Education and Outreach

- Foster the continuing growth of educational programming by supporting the Education Manager's activities.
- Participate in the Inclusion, Equality and Opportunity Paid Internship (IEO) program: assist in identifying candidates and training participants, when areas of interest allow.
- Actively participate in initiatives generated by the Community Liaison to further develop audience, staff and artistic diversity.

Next Act Theatre Offers:

- Annual compensation in the mid-50s.

Benefits Include:

- Health insurance, paid vacation and sick days, paid holidays.
- A friendly, collaborative workplace environment and committed Board and staff.
- The benefits of a long-standing history and positive reputation in Milwaukee's professional theatre community with strong ties to dedicated patrons and donors.
- Additional benefits are negotiable.

Next Act Theatre is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate in its hiring and employment practices against any applicant because of sex, race, color, age, national origin, religion, political affiliation, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identification or any other basis protected by local, state or federal law. Next Act Theatre celebrates diversity and encourages people of all types, ages, ethnicities, genders and abilities to apply to work with us.

How To Apply

Please email a cover letter (no more than 1½ pages), resumé and three to four references to info@nextact.org, by June 30, 2022. The Next Act Theatre Succession Committee plans to conclude this process by September 1, 2022 with a target starting date for the new Artistic Director of October 3, 2022. **No phone calls, please.**

Visit www.nextact.org for more information about Next Act Theatre.