

ODYSSEY THEATRE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR JOB DESCRIPTION

Overview of Role

The AD provides creative leadership of the Company. They develop artistic programs and plans to further Odyssey's mandate and mission, and work with the Board of Directors, General Manager and staff to develop short and long-term strategies to achieve artistic goals. They oversee artistic programs and undertake their own artistic work to contribute to the Theatre each season.

Odyssey's Profile

Odyssey makes a unique contribution to Canadian theatre and is widely respected for innovative masked theatre, collaborations with culturally and artistically diverse artists, training and new play development in this field of theatre. The Company has thrived on careful planning, determined growth, and calculated risk taking. Odyssey has been awarded operating funding by the Canada Council, Ontario Arts Council, and City of Ottawa.

Mandate: Odyssey's mandate is to:

- Develop and present masked theatre productions that draw inspiration from fairground arts (including mask, Commedia dell'Arte, puppetry, and international movement theatre forms) and are engaging for contemporary audiences; and within this theatre form, to:
 - o Pioneer new artistic directions;
 - o Create original Canadian plays;
 - o Present world classics to new generations;
- Collaborate with artists from culturally diverse traditions of mask and movement theatre;
- Serve the Ottawa theatre community, artists who work with Odyssey, and artists across Canada who specialize in our field.
- Enrich our audience's experience of theatre, cultivate new audiences, and overcome barriers by bringing masked theatre into the community

Mission: Odyssey is committed to:

- Our role as a significant hub for work in our field;
- Being culturally inclusive through casting, hiring and program development;
- Producing theatre of the high artistic standards and providing artists with the resources to do so;
- Making a unique and innovative contribution to theatre in Canada;
- Developing a national and international profile.

Key Programs:

- Theatre Under the Stars, New Play Development, Artist Training, Public Enrichment, Outreach, Digital Mask Resource Centre

Artistic Director Responsibilities

Key Relationships

- **Board of Directors:**
 - o reports to the Board and is a non-voting, ex-officio member serving on the Board.
 - o presents annual plans and final reports to the Board and monthly artistic updates.
 - o is invited to attend all Board meetings.

- serves on Committees dealing with Finance, Strategic Planning, Archives and Collections,
- **General Manager:**
 - Collaborates with the GM on development of multi-year and annual plans and budgets.
- **Production Manager:**
 - Hires PM jointly with the GM, however the GM manages the PM.

Long-term Planning, Goals, and Policy Development:

- Provides artistic leadership to Board and GM on artistic goals like touring, co-production, and digital programming. Participates in planning processes to bring these goals to fruition.

Annual Planning, Program Management, and Evaluation:

- Develops an annual program of artistic activities for approval by the Board.
- Provides input into the annual work plan and budget to implement the artistic program.
- The AD considers the: contribution of programs to artists, to the development of the art form, to the public, and to Odyssey's profile, along with the artistic and financial and administrative resources available.
- Undertakes an annual review of artistic programs, and recommends changes.
- provides input into annual evaluations of theatre operations.

Artistic Work:

- The AD undertakes artistic work each season to advance their artistic practice and Odyssey's artistic work, enrich Odyssey artists and advance masked theatre.
- Activities may include writing, translating/adapting, collaborative creation, directing, acting, dramaturgy, teaching.
- Develops their artistic practice through: research, workshops, and special projects, subject to Board approval.

Personnel

- Hires all artistic staff. May delegate some hiring, for instance to a guest director, but has final review and approval of all artistic hires.
- Manages artists who provide key services including dramaturges, teachers and directors.
- Ensures that Ottawa artists and Odyssey veterans are prioritized along with introducing new members to the company.

Programs

- **Theatre Under the Stars**
 - A multi-award-winning open-air masked theatre.
 - The AD chooses the production for the season, taking into account its suitability for: Odyssey's mandate; the spirit of open-air performance; attracting new audiences and enriching returning audiences; making an innovative contribution to masked theatre; the Company's technical capabilities and budget; and enriching ensemble artists and attracting skilled artists.
 - Participates in the annual and summer show post-mortems.
- **New Play Creation**
Canada's only program geared to bringing original works of masked theatre and related physical theatre forms to the stage. With support from the Co-New Play Creation director, the AD:

- Recruits new writers and creators for theatre, provides suitable support for their work (including dramaturgy, new play workshops, residencies), evaluates their work as it progresses
- publishes and promotes Odyssey's unique collection of original plays, new translations and adaptations of work designed for masked performance;
- manages Odyssey's Ontario Arts Council Theatre Creator's Recommender Fund, through which we support Ontario artists in our field creating work for Odyssey and those creating independent productions.

Training, Enrichment and Outreach

- **Professional Artist Training:**
Provides mentorship for emerging companies, internships for directors, dramaturges, and artistic directors, classes for professional and emerging artists, training often not available elsewhere in Canada. Focus on special skills in our field. Training provided both live and digitally.
 - The AD proposes a program of training each season responding to needs in the theatre community, and the needs of the Company.
- **Youth Apprenticeship Program:**
Ottawa's only Theatre Apprenticeship program that provides youth the opportunity to train and work with professionals on our summer production. The AD:
 - hires guest instructors to teach workshops;
 - recruits youth and reviews their feedback;
 - attends their performance and participates in their career development seminar
- **Enrichment**
 - Proposes public enrichment activities which deepens bonds with our audiences. Activities currently include Thursday night post-show chats with artists and guest speakers, pre-show chats with donors for Friends night, and a public workshop (like mask making).
- **Outreach**
 - To overcome barriers to attending live performances Odyssey artists take our theatre form into the community and do workshops and facilitate shows. AD selects projects and facilitates them.
- **Digital Programs**
 - Odyssey's World of Theatre Masks: being developed in 2026, to launch in 2027, this digital mask resource center will provide resources for teachers, students, community theatres and community groups across the country to learn about and how to create masked theatre. It is designed to make masked theatre accessible for all, and to heighten Odyssey and its artists profiles.
 - The AD selects annual projects in consultation with the Curator and GM

Financial Management

- The AD works with the GM to develop annual and long-term or special project budgets to review with the Treasurer and present for the approval of the Board.
- Collaborates with the GM and Board prior to any significant shift required in the budget after approval of the annual budget by the Board.

Public Relations & Marketing

- Provides leadership to the Board and GM on the image of Odyssey and its programs that the company presents in all marketing efforts.
- is Odyssey's principal staff person authorized to speak publicly on behalf of the Company.

Fund Raising

- writes the artistic sections of major arts grants and meets with theatre officers as appropriate
- recommends special arts grants and suggests strategies to be used in applications.
- when possible, attends fund raising events, and speaks at such events as Friends Night and the Zonta Club preview.

Developing Community Networks

- develops networks in the arts community to support the Company.
- represents Odyssey in arts industry events and associations.