



**Search for the Vice President of Development  
Saratoga Performing Arts Center (SPAC)  
Saratoga Springs, NY**

**THE OPPORTUNITY**

The Saratoga Performing Arts Center (SPAC) seeks an experienced and entrepreneurial Vice President of Development to provide leadership, vision, and direction for all philanthropic activities. For nearly 60 years, the SPAC has cultivated and fostered appreciation, understanding, and love of the performing arts for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. With an abundance of multidisciplinary arts initiatives and a robust educational program, SPAC ensures that people have the opportunity to experience the life-changing power of the arts. In its work on behalf of art, artists, and the community, SPAC helps to educate, reveal, inspire, and serve the beauty in the world that connects, respects, and elevates all human beings.

Set in the awe-inspiring landscape of Saratoga Spa State Park, SPAC is a destination like no other. Known for world-renowned residencies featuring the New York City Ballet, The Philadelphia Orchestra, the Saratoga Jazz Festival, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, as well as popular concerts presented by Live Nation. SPAC now also offers year-round programming at Spa Little Theater and SPAC School of the Arts.

Over the last seven years, SPAC has been on an exciting and ambitious trajectory under the transformational leadership of President and CEO, Elizabeth Sobol including expanded year-round programming with new initiatives designed to attract younger and more diverse audiences. Under her leadership, SPAC's education program has gone from serving 5,000 students to 50,000 individuals throughout the Capital Region and beyond, and in 2021, SPAC opened a new SPAC School of the Arts. She has even expanded the vision of SPAC's physical campus with several major capital improvements: a \$10 million project to completely renovate the aging campus with new visitor facilities; a year-round community and education space; and a new Pavilion that serves as a community gathering space. As part of Sobol's vision to transform the Saratoga Spa State Park into a year-round eco-cultural tourism destination, she has been leading a major capital initiative to renovate, repurpose, and reimagine historic buildings in the park into year-round gathering spaces for the arts, making the Capital Region an epicenter for eco-cultural tourism and an even greater economic driver for the region.

Reporting to the President and CEO and serving as a key member of the senior management team, the Vice President of Development will define and implement a strategic vision for fundraising at SPAC that will contribute to the expansion of donors at all levels, including major gifts and corporate partnerships, and support the long-term sustainability of the organization. The Vice President (VP) will work closely with the Board of Trustees and its Development Committee to ensure that philanthropic goals are aligned with SPAC's ambitious goals for the future. They will cultivate strong collaborative relationships across the organization and bring strong management skills. The VP will bring demonstrated success in a wide range of fundraising practices, a deep appreciation for the performing arts, and the mission and values of SPAC.

SPAC has retained the national executive search firm, Isaacson, Miller, to assist in this important recruitment. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document. The target salary for this role is \$175,000-200,000 and will be commensurate with experience.

#### **ABOUT SARATOGA PERFORMING ARTS CENTER**

The Saratoga Performing Arts Center, located in the historic resort town of Saratoga Springs in Upstate New York, is one of America's most prestigious summer festivals. Its tranquil setting in a 2,400-acre park preserve surrounded by hiking trails, geysers, and natural mineral springs draws vacation crowds and arts connoisseurs each year for metamorphic performances by resident companies New York City Ballet, The Philadelphia Orchestra, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and the Saratoga Jazz Festival. These residencies continue to serve as a foundation of SPAC's classical programming, yet SPAC has markedly evolved to serve a wider and more diverse audience, having presented more than 1,000 performances of best-in-class artists across genres over the years. In addition to its imaginative programs in the culinary, literary, visual, and healing arts; popular concerts in partnership with Live Nation; and a year-round slate of fresh and diverse musical, dance, and theatre artists in the Spa Little Theatre, SPAC hosts collaborative programming with local partners such as Caffè Lena and The Tang Teaching Museum at Skidmore College. For nearly 60 years, SPAC has cultivated and fostered appreciation, understanding, and love of the performing arts for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. With an abundance of multidisciplinary arts initiatives and a robust educational program, SPAC ensures that all who visit have the opportunity to experience the life-changing power of the arts. In its work on behalf of art, artists, and community, SPAC helps to educate, reveal, inspire, and serve the beauty in the world which connects, respects, and elevates all human beings.

#### *History*

Key to SPAC's founding were commitments from New York City Ballet founder George Balanchine and The Philadelphia Orchestra's longtime maestro Eugene Ormandy to establish summer residencies, with Ormandy predicting SPAC would become "one of the great summer festivals of all time." Thanks to the support of Governor Nelson Rockefeller, New York State Commissioner Harold Wilm, Balanchine, Ormandy himself, and the generous Saratoga Springs community, he was right. By the summer of 1963,

contributions from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and New York State supplemented community support to create the Saratoga Performing Arts Center. In June 1964, Governor Rockefeller mounted a bulldozer to break the first yard of ground. In July 1966, the New York City Ballet presented 21 performances during a four-week season. The Philadelphia Orchestra season commenced on August 4, 1966, with an Overture from Beethoven's *The Consecration of the House*. SPAC began breaking barriers early on and is proud to have had Harry Belafonte grace the amphitheater stage as its first non-classical performer in 1967. A vibrant and enduring summer home for music among the pines, oaks, and blue jays, SPAC's legacy lives on in the enduring residencies of the New York City Ballet and The Philadelphia Orchestra, while unceasingly transforming to entice new audiences with diverse and expanding offerings, now all year long.

### *The SPAC School of the Arts*

The SPAC School of the Arts (SOTA) is a multidisciplinary arts school that was founded in 2021 to further SPAC's longstanding mission to ensure that students of all ages have the opportunity to experience the transformative power of the arts. SOTA operates out of the Lewis A. Swyer Studios – a state-of-the-art facility located behind the National Museum of Dance in Saratoga Springs, NY. The SPAC School of the Arts guides all students towards self-empowerment through artistic discovery and arts education in a welcoming and joyful environment. Dedicated to changing the face of arts education in our region by valuing the creative process and the enrichment of each individual artist, classes are taught by qualified teaching artists who challenge students to explore diverse topics and cultures, connect with others, learn new perspectives, and discover passion, confidence, and a deeper sense of self. SOTA is committed to continually researching current best practices for providing inclusive arts learning, and to advancing arts equity by overcoming barriers that often prevent access. Over the last seven years, SPAC has significantly expanded its educational impact from serving 5,000 students to now serving 50,000 students; from 30 classes, presentations, performances, and events to 400; and from 27 school and non-profit organization partnerships to 120. They have also added a broad range of new innovative programs including Summer Nights at SPAC, the Festival of Young Artists, Summer Arts and Rec. Camp, and SPAC Dance Residencies in Schools.

### *Spa Little Theater Renovation Project*

The Spa Little Theater is a historic building with 500 seats that is close to 100 years old. It was originally designed and built as a lecture hall but over the years it has become known for high caliber performances in theater and dance. In 2022 SPAC began full-time operation of the Little Spa Theater and since that time has offered over 50 public and private events with over 17,000 attendees. SPAC programming in the Little Spa Theater has included a mix of genres and artists including music, dance, and theater. It is also a space for robust cultural and community partnerships including Opera Saratoga, Saratoga Book Festival, New York State Parks, and more. The new SPAC programming in the Little Spa Theater has generated substantial new ticket buyers and attendees with over 2,000 ticket buyers new to the Little Spa Theater and over 1,000 ticket buyers new to SPAC and an overall 22% increase in attendance from 2022-23 to 2023-24. Spa Little Theater also serves as a year-round hub for SPAC's ever-growing arts education

initiatives, which provide free programming to over 50,000 young and underserved people across the greater Capital Region each year. The proposed renovations to the theater will maintain the historic integrity of the space and evoke the state park and surrounding natural environment. The renovations will improve accessibility for patrons and performers and add acoustical treatments to help with amplified sound. In addition, there will be significant improvements to the lobby, general public concessions, and VIP concessions space – all of which have significant potential to increase revenue by improving the patron experience, creating special event space, and new multipurpose rental space. The total cost of the project is \$12M with a public funding goal of \$6M. Fundraising for this project is already well underway with a goal to have the project fully funded by early in 2025 in order to have the renovations completed by October 2026 in time for the celebration of SPAC's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## LEADERSHIP

**Elizabeth Sobol**, President and CEO of the Saratoga Performing Arts Center (SPAC) joined the organization in October 2016 after decades of artist management and recording industry experience in both the classical arts and mainstream entertainment.

Over the course of her seven years at the helm of SPAC, Sobol has expanded programming with new initiatives and year-round initiatives designed to attract younger and more diverse audiences: Live Sessions at the Jazz Bar, CulinaryArts@SPAC, SPAC on Stage. Under her leadership, SPAC's education program has gone from serving 5,000 students to 50,000 individuals throughout the Capital Region and beyond. In 2021, SPAC opened a new SPAC School of the Arts. She has spearheaded partnerships with cultural organizations such as Caffe Lena, Skidmore College/The Tang Teaching Museum, Saratoga Shakespeare Company, and Opera Saratoga, in addition to business and community organizations including the New York State Parks Recreation & Historic Preservation, Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce, Discover Saratoga, and more. She has expanded the vision of SPAC's physical campus with several major capital improvements: a \$10 million project to completely renovate the aging campus with new visitor facilities, year-round community and education space; and the construction of a Pavilion that serves as a community gathering space. As part of Sobol's vision to transform the Saratoga Spa State Park into a year-round eco-cultural tourism destination, she has been leading a major capital initiative to renovate, repurpose, and reimagine historic buildings in the Park into year-round gathering spaces for the arts. The project will broaden and synchronize the programming and marketing of the cultural entities, historic structures, healing springs, and other natural splendors, making the Capital Region an epicenter for eco-cultural tourism and an even greater economic driver for the region.

Prior to joining SPAC, Sobol served as the President and CEO of Universal Music Classics and Managing Director of IMG Artists in North/South America. As Managing Director of IMG Artists North/South America (IMGA) Sobol managed artists such as Itzhak Perlman, Joshua Bell, Renee Fleming, Emerson String Quartet, James Galway, Hilary Hahn, Evgeny Kissin, and Dame Kiri Te Kanawa. Sobol created the IMG Artists Dance Division, which grew into the most prestigious roster of dance clients in the industry, representing The Bolshoi Ballet, Bill T Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company, Pilobolus, Les Ballets Trockadero

de Monte Carlo, Lyon Opera Ballet, and Miami City Ballet, among others. Sobol also created and oversaw IMGAs initiatives and growth in the areas of world music, jazz, contemporary music, and music/dance theatricals. She was co-producer of the off-Broadway production and international tour of Jam of the Groove, the first Hip Hop musical, sponsored by Calvin Klein; a co-producer of Bill T Jones's ground-breaking, internationally heralded production Still/Here; a co-producer of the award-winning Noise of Time, a collaboration between the Emerson String Quartet and Simon McBurney/Complicite about the life of Shostakovich; and Sobol was co-creator and co-producer of Miami Libre, a Cuban music & dance theatrical which ran for five sold out weeks at Miami's Arsht Center for the Performing Arts.

## **FINANCIAL AND FUNDRAISING OVERVIEW**

SPAC is a 501c3 nonprofit organization. SPAC has a \$13.5M annual budget of which 50% represents earned income (ticket sales, Live Nation rent, and other sources) and the remaining 50% must be raised through donations from board members, individuals, corporations, foundations, and government funders. SPAC receives little or no city, state, or federal funding for operating expenses.

SPAC-contributed income typically includes:

- 60% from Individuals (including Board)
- 20% from Corporations
- 12% from Special Events and Galas
- 8% from Foundations and Government

## **ROLE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR DEVELOPMENT**

Reporting to the President/CEO and serving as a key member of the senior leadership team, the Vice President for Development is responsible for setting the overall vision and direction of SPAC's development team with a focus on expanding the donor base and supporting the continued ambitious growth trajectory of SPAC. In addition, the Vice President for Development will be expected to:

- Build an inclusive and effective culture of philanthropy at SPAC, working closely with the board, staff, and volunteers so donors are an integral part of the organization's ongoing success.
- Manage, train, mentor, and support four full-time development staff positions and key volunteers to maximize their talents and skills and to help define and achieve goals.
- Devise and oversee a comprehensive, goal-driven fundraising program that deeply engages loyal SPAC donors, recaptures lapsed leads, and attracts new prospects alike.
- Diversify philanthropic sources and raise donor count.
- Build relationships with every major Community Foundation in the Capital Region where SPAC can demonstrate a strong base for customers, artists, and/or students.
- Build relationships with Corporate C-Suite leaders in the Capital Region; organize new volunteer leadership councils to expand SPAC's funding reach (i.e., Corporate Council of the Capital Region).

- Be a frontline major gifts solicitor and ambassador to the philanthropic community on behalf of SPAC's mission, programs, events, and leadership.
- Devise a strategy to offset the structural deficit and build reserves.
- Create a tiered menu of sponsorship opportunities for restricted programs and series for donors to adopt, name, and underwrite.
- Create an annual fundraising plan, with a timeline, activities, and financial goals for board gifts, grants, patrons/membership, special/major gifts, planning giving, corporate sponsorship, and government partnerships.
- Guide development-focused marketing and PR efforts to ensure donor interests.
- Continue to grow the institutional grant program that strategically engages family foundations, corporate foundations, and other institutional grant-makers.
- Oversee all processes and policies to identify, cultivate, solicit, and steward gifts.
- Create, manage, and evaluate fundraising schedule of activities and appeals, spanning virtual, direct mail, events, applications, major donor meetings, etc.
- Design and oversee a calendar of special events.
- Set the solicitation strategy for board and non-board volunteers, encouraging them to open doors throughout the Capital Region.
- Prepare and accompany the President/CEO and board members at donor meetings.
- Serve as staff liaison to the Development Committee of the board.
- Formulate development budgets, track financial performance, prepare interim reports and fundraising projections, and monitor expenditures.
- Set the department on track to design and mount an eventual Capital Campaign to raise mixed-use support for construction projects, programs, operations, and endowment.
- Prepare high-quality, high-touch donor communications as lift pieces (such as direct mail, brochures, solicitation letters, grant proposals and reports, project budgets, acknowledgment letters, etc.).
- Prepare and present reports to the board on fundraising.
- Oversee production and materials of an annual report.
- Ensure appropriate recognition and stewardship of donors.

## **KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR DEVELOPMENT**

### **Develop and implement a strategic vision for increasing donors at all levels.**

The VP will partner with the President/CEO, the board, and the development team to expand major gifts and corporate sponsorships both within the Capital Region and nationally. The VP will hone and refine the membership structure and launch new and innovative strategies for identifying and acquiring prospective donors, increasing donor retention, and upgrading and renewing existing donors. All of this should be reflective of best practices, consistent with SPAC's mission and core values, and designed to produce sustainable long-term growth in philanthropic contributions.

**Continue to raise the visibility of SPAC as a non-profit.**

While SPAC is a beloved and well-known organization, many do not realize that they are a non-profit organization that heavily relies on philanthropy. For example, the high-profile “Live Nation” concert series is often conflated with SPAC which leads to confusion about SPAC’s need for fundraising. The new VP will help continue to educate potential donors and make the case for SPAC’s need for support.

**Expand support for SPAC School of the Arts and Education Programs.**

An important part of SPAC’s mission and recent growth has been focused on its education programs and overall outreach. The VP has the opportunity to partner closely with the Vice President of Education to seek out funding to support these programs and the School of the Arts. Many of these initiatives focus on making the arts and arts education accessible to children and families that would not otherwise be able to have these experiences.

**Lead the campaign for the Little Spa Theater renovations.**

Fundraising is already well underway in support of the Little Spa Theater renovations. This exciting capital project expands the opportunity for year-round programming at SPAC and will also create new spaces that can be utilized for special events and rentals. The VP will ensure that the fundraising goal is met for this project which will also serve as a cornerstone of the celebration of SPAC’s 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**Assess current development office structure and roles to maximize impact.**

SPAC has a deeply dedicated team who are passionate about the mission of the organization. As SPAC has grown there has not been an opportunity to take a holistic look at roles and responsibilities to make sure they are amplifying strengths and supporting the broader strategic goals. The new VP will have the opportunity to evaluate the current structure and decide how best to align and evolve it to meet current and future needs including exploring efficiencies in data management and record-keeping. The VP will also provide mentorship and opportunities for professional development to the team in support of their growth.

**Cultivate strong mutually beneficial collaborative relationships across SPAC.**

The VP will partner closely with staff across SPAC, including Marketing and Communication, Membership and Box Office, Education, Events, the President/CEO, and the senior leadership team to broaden the culture of philanthropy and promote collaboration among these key stakeholders and the development enterprise.

**QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

The successful candidate will bring many of the following competencies and characteristics:

- Minimum of 10 years of nonprofit fundraising expertise.
- Minimum 5 years leading a development department or a major gifts program in a mid to large cultural nonprofit organization.

- Excellent management skills (i.e., people, projects, and budgets).
- Strong knowledge and proven skills in a wide range of fundraising practices.
- Deep appreciation for the performing arts and the mission and values of SPAC.
- Proven track record in setting and achieving revenue targets.
- Demonstrated ability to be an effective frontline major gifts solicitor.
- Superb written and interpersonal communication skills.
- Capital Campaign experience is highly desirable.
- Commitment to the Association of Fundraising Professionals code of ethical conduct, National Committee on Planned Giving ethical practices, and the Donor Bill of Rights.
- Bachelor's degree required.
- Master's degree a plus.

### **Compensation and Location**

This is a permanent, full-time position in Saratoga Springs with a starting salary range of \$175,000-\$200,000 and will be commensurate with experience.

### **Applications, Inquiries, and Nominations**

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/saratoga-performing-arts-center/vice-president-development>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Karen Avery, Partner  
Liz Braun, Senior Associate  
Caroline Corry, Senior Search Coordinator  
Isaacson, Miller

### ***Diversity at SPAC***

*We are strongly committed to diversity and continuing to increase workforce diversity at SPAC. It is a priority and one that is integral to our mission for an interconnected world. We value and are committed to a host of diverse populations and cultures not limited to just those protected under the law. SPAC is also committed to providing access and will provide reasonable accommodation considerations in its application process and on-going work environment to individuals with disabilities that request such accommodations.*



***Non-Discrimination Policy***

*SPAC will not discriminate in the recruitment or selection of employees, or in any other area of employment, on the basis of age, sex, race, national origin, religion, religious belief, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression and veteran status or any category protected under the law. In this regard, opportunities for advancement will be made available without bias. SPAC is also subject to state and federal laws, supports efforts to attract and retain fully qualified women and other minority group members for positions. SPAC will comply with all State and Federal laws and applicable orders pursuant to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO). We encourage people from marginalized identities to apply.*