

# McCarter

**MANAGING DIRECTOR  
MCCARTER THEATRE CENTER  
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY**

## **THE SEARCH**

McCarter Theatre Center (McCarter), an independent, nonprofit regional theater located in the heart of Princeton, New Jersey and in close proximity to New York City and Philadelphia, seeks an innovative, collaborative, and strategic leader to serve as Managing Director. McCarter holds a unique place in the performing arts world as both a major producing entity and an equally important presenting organization. McCarter's mission is to create stories and experiences that enliven minds, expand imaginations, and engage communities via the performing arts.

A nationally regarded and Tony Award-winning regional theatre whose work and reputation has positioned it well for the future, McCarter serves as one of New Jersey's greatest cultural resources. Under the direction of Artistic Director Sarah Rasmussen, who was appointed in the Summer of 2020, McCarter is poised to navigate a rebounding theatre industry with new energy and artistic vision. McCarter's programming significantly improves the quality of life for those living in the region by providing an invaluable cultural richness treasured by community members and artists from around the world. Imbedded in all of McCarter is a commitment to the ongoing work of anti-racism, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Reporting to the Board of Directors and working closely with the Artistic Director and McCarter staff, the Managing Director will operationalize McCarter's strategic plan, guide the finances and business strategy, elevate and enhance the fundraising capabilities of the organization, strengthen existing and forge new relationships across the Princeton community and throughout the region, and serve as a tireless supporter and mentor to the staff. A strong working relationship with the Board of Directors and the Artistic Director is essential, as is the need to possess strong financial management and budgeting skills, demonstrating a record of innovative and strategic leadership in a multi-faceted organization. Vital to the Managing Director's success will be a collaborative leadership style along with an entrepreneurial drive and exemplary communication skills. Energy and imagination are essential, as is the fundamental belief that arts and creativity are of great value to society. Above all, the Managing Director will demonstrate a commitment to McCarter's mission and core values of excellence, imagination, community, diversity, and joy.

McCarter Theatre Center has retained Isaacson, Miller, an international executive search firm, to assist in conducting this important search. All inquiries, applications, and nominations for this opportunity should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

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## MCCARTER THEATRE CENTER

[McCarter Theatre Center](#) is one of the country's flagship regional theatres and a key cultural asset for the Princeton community and the region. Centered between New York City and Philadelphia, and alongside Princeton University, McCarter is a creative and intellectual hub that inspires conversations, connections, and collaborations throughout the community and for society. McCarter consistently develops and produces a varied repertoire, ranging from fresh approaches to the classics to world premieres by emerging, established, and internationally renowned playwrights.

Known for its commitment to creativity and excellence, McCarter has provided a home for artists since its incorporation as an independent nonprofit theatre in 1973. The building was constructed in 1929-30 by Princeton University's student dramatic society, the Triangle Club, with funds from University alumnus Thomas N. McCarter, in order for it to serve as a permanent home for the Club's annual show. In 1973, the University transferred the direct operation of McCarter to the independent McCarter Theatre Company, Inc., which was incorporated as a New Jersey non-profit corporation in 1960.

McCarter strives to engage its audiences in a dialogue of ideas and encourages lifelong learning as a core value. Through productions and performances, community engagement and education, McCarter aspires to use theatre to challenge and entertain its audiences while promoting civic engagement and inspiring people to experience the world in new ways. McCarter's mission is to create stories and experiences that enliven minds, expand imaginations, and engage communities via performing arts. McCarter works together with audiences, artists, avid thinkers, and active learners to:

- Explore new stories and perspectives with relentless curiosity
- Champion a more equitable, diverse, inclusive, and accessible future
- Open hearts and minds to the truths in ourselves, our communities, and society
- Share ideas and innovations that expand opportunities to engage with the performing arts

McCarter's work is led by their values of justice and joy, beauty, and belonging.

**Justice:** We bring together diverse perspectives, voices, and generations. Whether it's onstage, behind the scenes, and with audiences, we're championing a fairer future for all of us.

**Joy:** The way we work together is as important as the work we make. We center generosity in all we say and do with each other to create life-affirming experiences that celebrate our shared humanity and help us make meaning of our world.

**Beauty:** We value the multitudes of lived experiences and histories and pursue art that is expansive, essential, and exhilarating. Participating in that which is infused with beauty makes us feel more alive and more deeply connected to one another.

**Belonging:** We strive to bring out the artist in all of us by opening minds and opportunities through the performing arts. We listen to learn and create spaces, places, and programs that empower everyone to be part of our creative community.

McCarter's principal programs currently include its annual [theatre series](#), a four-play season produced by the company, and the [presented series](#), which consists of a range of 40 to 60 world-class performing arts events that include classical, jazz, and world music; ballet and contemporary dance; and a broad spectrum of work that spans most performing arts disciplines. This two-prong approach to arts presenting means that McCarter can both generate production locally, with talent drawn from relationships built with artists around the world and invite others to bring their work to the theatre. McCarter boasts a reputation as a major center for advancing the development and production of new work.

As a major nonprofit center for the performing arts, McCarter also plays a vital role in the introduction, practice, and teaching of theatre skills for K-12 students and adults. Its [education programs](#) serve nearly 10,000 people annually. Classes, camps, in-school residencies, and numerous community partnerships support students of all ages and help prepare them to succeed in a culture and economy that increasingly values creativity and innovative thinking among its workforce.

Since its inception, McCarter has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to and investment in the ongoing work of making its theatre more inclusive, diverse, and welcoming. To reflect the diverse region on stage and behind the scenes, McCarter is committed to the essential work of supporting artists, employees, audience members, and students with diverse cultural backgrounds and lived experiences. McCarter's inclusive workplace promotes new perspectives which contribute to a more creative, innovative, and engaged organization, and it is critical for the Managing Director to be additive to fostering this environment.

McCarter operates on an annual budget of approximately \$14.6 million, derived primarily from ticket sales and philanthropic contributions with an endowment of more than \$25 million. McCarter employs 72 full-time staff members, including 13 Department Heads. McCarter operates under contract in a performing arts facility on the Princeton University campus that consists of [two theatres](#) – the 1,072-seat Matthews Theatre and the 360-seat Berlioz Theatre. In addition to its performance venues, the complex includes rehearsal halls, offices, dressing rooms, and additional support facilities. The company's production departments are housed in a 23,000-square-foot facility located in close proximity to the theatre complex. McCarter is a LORT B+ and C2 member.

## **PRINCETON UNIVERSITY AND McCARTER**

McCarter's relationship with Princeton University distinguishes it from other theatres in the country. Located adjacent to the University's campus, McCarter shares facilities with the [Lewis Center for the Arts](#), a hub for the performing arts that anchors the southwestern edge of Princeton's campus. The programs in Theatre and Music Theatre regularly invite local theatre-makers to teach in their curriculum. The [Princeton Atelier](#), established by the late Toni Morrison and now led by poet Paul Muldoon, invites world-renowned artists to teach for a semester, engaging students pedagogically on work-in-progress. The Atelier and other Lewis Center programs regularly ask artists to present work for campus and public audiences, and engage in the national conversation about arts practice, scholarship, and development. The mutually beneficial partnership between the University and McCarter is full of growth potential and the Managing Director will play a leading role in furthering greater communication and cross-pollination between McCarter and University leadership, faculty, staff, and students.

## LEADERSHIP

### **Sarah Rasmussen, Artistic Director**

Sarah Rasmussen is the Artistic Director at McCarter Theatre Center in Princeton, NJ where she is thrilled to carry on its long tradition of championing innovative art. Prior to McCarter, Rasmussen was Artistic Director of the Jungle Theater in Minneapolis, where in recognition of her directing work she was named Star Tribune's Artist of the Year. Rasmussen also served as Resident Director for Oregon Shakespeare Festival's Black Swan Lab new work development program and Head of MFA Directing at the University of Texas at Austin. She is an alum of the Women's Project, SoHo Rep., and Lincoln Center Directing Labs. She has directed at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Guthrie, Dallas Theater Center, Actors Theater of Louisville and La Jolla Playhouse. She has developed new work with Playwrights' Center, the O'Neill, the Lark, and many others. She was an inaugural recipient of the BOLD Leadership Circle grant and is also the recipient of a Princess Grace Award, an Ivey Award for Overall Excellence, and Drama League and Fulbright fellowships. Rasmussen holds a Master of Fine Arts from the University of California, San Diego and a Bachelor of Arts in English and theater from St. Olaf College.

## STRATEGIC PLAN

To coincide with the arrival of Artistic Director Sarah Rasmussen, McCarter embarked on a strategic planning process. 128 stakeholders representing the full breadth and depth of their collaborators and communities, including trustees, staff, Princeton University administrators and faculty (including representatives from the Lewis Center), national and international peers, artists, corporate and foundation partners, current and prospective audience-goers and supporters, as well as local arts and cultural organizations, businesses, faith-based organizations, and schools were engaged with. McCarter developed key interest areas to focus their work on over the next few years:

- A project-oriented business model where individual projects might require different kinds of resources
- New vectors of growth including: concessions, royalties, digital subscriptions, and partnerships with other entertainment industry leaders/influencers
- A more ambitious fundraising model – treating donors as investors and adding value for them in new ways
- Conceiving of the audience as potential co-creators of the artistic performance
- A willingness to engage in more innovative projects with higher potential payoff
- A collaborative, connected, and mutually valuable relationship with Princeton University

## MANAGING DIRECTOR

The Managing Director, reporting to the Board of Directors, provides strategic leadership for all day-to-day financial and operational aspects of the theatre and serves as a complimentary partner to the Artistic Director. The Managing Director directly supervises the Director of Development, the Chief Financial Officer, the Director of Operations, the Director of Information Technology, the Director of Marketing, the Director of Patron Experience, the General Manager, the Chief of Staff, and co-supervises the Director of

Equity and Organizational Culture, the Director of University and Artistic Partnerships, and the Director of Production.

The position calls for innovative leadership, an understanding of the mission of the organization, and effective partnership with leaders throughout McCarter including the Board of Directors, the Princeton campus, and throughout the region. They will have demonstrated experience developing and implementing strategy; building the financial, operational, and ideological support for its implementation; and skillfully balancing the needs of multiple interests. The Managing Director will have a command of numbers, financial assumptions, including short and long-term projections, to realize the artistic vision. Additionally, the Managing Director will have prior experience with audience development and will be a natural team builder, an excellent communicator, and an eager listener. Energy and imagination will be essential to build McCarter's strategy for the future. A passion for the performing arts is critical to success, as is the fundamental belief that arts and creativity are of great value to society.

### **OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

The next Managing Director of McCarter will be charged with providing leadership to address the following opportunities:

#### ***Support and enhance a dynamic and distinctive vision for McCarter***

McCarter is at a pivotal moment as it works to navigate within a rebounding industry and continues to rebuild institutional infrastructure and programming post-COVID. The Managing Director will assess McCarter's existing operations, programs, and systems with a fresh perspective and provide recommendations and insight on improvements for the organization. The Managing Director will lead organizational strategy to increase McCarter's impact on audiences by developing a roadmap to support the artistic vision of unique and inspired programming that makes the organization a leader in entertainment, civic conversation, and the social good that comes from engaging in compelling art. This work and strategic focus will provide financial stability for McCarter, as well as audience development, effective marketing strategies, and greater regional and national acclaim.

#### ***Ensure McCarter's long-term financial well-being through exceptional management and fundraising***

The success of McCarter is contingent, in large part, on its ability to obtain, secure, and maintain the financial resources to sustain its operations and support its artistic endeavors. While the pandemic has posed many financial challenges to the entire industry, McCarter does possess a sense of stability with resources available to not only operate but explore new operational and artistic endeavors. The Managing Director will display a keen financial acumen and continue to bolster ticket sales and identify and pursue new sources of revenue. Throughout this work, the Managing Director should be a clear and transparent communicator around the financial landscape of the organization.

In addition to overseeing the effective strategy and execution of earned revenue, the Managing Director will be tasked with increasing contributed revenue. The Managing Director, having a deep understanding of fundraising strategies, will work to develop strong relationships with existing donors and partner with the Director of Development to identify potential new donors, leveraging their own professional networks

as well as those of the Board of Directors, to tell the story of McCarter, develop a strong sense of trust amongst those individuals or groups, and build excitement around McCarter and its contributions to the Princeton community and beyond. To audience members, donors, arts leaders, and the larger community, the Managing Director will be a compelling, irresistible advocate, connecting McCarter's stories to their own, and cultivating increased patronage and support. Through these efforts, the Managing Director will ensure the continued excellence and financial health of McCarter.

***Forge a productive working relationship with the Artistic Director and Staff***

To ensure the success of McCarter, it is essential that the Managing Director and Artistic Director work as close, effective partners and in collaboration with each other. While the Artistic Director will provide oversight of the artistic direction, the Managing Director will work to operationalize those ideas and provide leadership in the building of capacity so that the Artistic Director's vision can be realized. The Managing Director will invest time and energy to advance McCarter's reputation nationally and internationally as a creative pioneer, while serving as an inspiring and inclusive leader, with the ability to motivate staff, the board, donors, and stakeholders.

The Managing Director and Artistic Director will direct a team of highly skilled and engaged professional staff in effectively carrying out overall organizational goals and priorities. The Managing Director will serve as an effective leader, coach, and supervisor of the staff within McCarter. Continuing to embrace and foster the strong sense of collaboration that already exists within McCarter, the Managing Director will identify ways to regularly develop, support, and empower the team. The Managing Director will demonstrate a full understanding of their work and prior accomplishments, thereby promoting institutional cohesion and a shared sense of McCarter's future. The Managing Director will provide guidance and support as needed to staff members, ensuring that high standards of excellence are maintained throughout the organization.

***Strengthen McCarter's connection to the University, Princeton, and the surrounding New Jersey area***

Throughout its history, McCarter has played a leading role in the life of the campus and surrounding area, serving as a vital voice and gathering place. Locally, opportunities exist to explore further collaborations with Princeton University when it comes to programming, facility usage, and working to encourage more active participation in McCarter events. Leadership at McCarter desires a re-imagined and enhanced partnership between the institutions and there are a wealth of opportunities to create long-term relationships with faculty and staff.

While McCarter enjoys a strong reputation and support in the Princeton community, other nearby towns such as Trenton and New Brunswick have historically felt less well-served by the theater's programming and presented works. It is expected that the Director will cultivate these new connections to audiences while continuing to help build a fruitful relationship with the University and the greater Princeton community. The Managing Director will be tasked with exploring how to balance the boosting of ticket sales while finding ways to make programming and presented works accessible to aid in further engaging the community.

***Champion the values of equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and anti-racism***

McCarter holds a commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA), and anti-racism as core values. A growing number of artists that McCarter has presented in recent years have reflected the depth of representation McCarter seeks in its programming, and the Board and staff are devoting resources of time and funding to further embed these values into the fabric of the organization. As the organization continues in its commitment to creating a more equitable working environment, identifying areas of potential growth, and promising accountability in its EDIA efforts, it is essential that the performers and performances on stage represent these diverse voices.

***Partner and engage with the Board of Trustees***

The Board of Directors is an engaged group of individuals, passionate about McCarter, ambitious and optimistic about its future opportunities, purposeful about their stewardship of the organization, and committed to its vibrancy. The Board is actively involved with the organization and holds a deep commitment to best practices in governance. The Managing Director will build on this strong foundation and will partner with these community leaders in meaningful ways, communicating effectively, and calling on their talents and resources to ensure success. The Managing Director will find ways to harness the experience and expertise they have and view them as valued partners in the success of McCarter, its operations, and its financial affairs.

## QUALIFICATIONS

The successful candidate will bring many of the following professional and personal experiences, qualifications, and characteristics:

- Passion for and demonstrated commitment to McCarter's mission and vision;
- An inspiring, entrepreneurial, and collaborative leadership style;
- A keen financial eye with a track record of strategic budget oversight;
- Experience leading growth in the not-for-profit theatrical world;
- Familiarity with the work of audience development, community engagement, competitive pricing, and effective marketing;
- Extensive track record of organizational and individual fundraising;
- A commitment to the development of artists and the arts;
- Demonstrated experience advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion, and the ability to articulate the necessity of inclusivity and anti-racism within the work of a regional theatre or related field;
- Ability to be strategic regarding local and national partnerships and understanding of the variety of constituents that McCarter serves;
- Enthusiasm and energy for fostering connections and relationships with community groups, civic and educational leaders, and national arts organizations;
- Eagerness for authentic engagement with the greater community; a visible presence and active participant in a range of events and activities;
- Excellent oral and written skills as well as strong interpersonal skills;
- Collegiality and a pronounced orientation toward teamwork and partnership.

## **APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS**

Confidential inquiries, nominations, referrals, and resumes with cover letters should be sent electronically to:

Ben Tobin, Partner  
David Grimes, Senior Associate  
Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/mccarter-theatre-center/managing-director>

*McCarter is an equal opportunity employer committed to hiring, supporting, and promoting a diverse and inclusive workforce. Please click [here](#) to review their staff-written framing statement on equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.*