

BREAD

and roses

Bread and Roses Missouri Seeks Director for 2022 Workers' Opera

About Us

Bread & Roses Missouri is a nonprofit organization that uses an arts lens to examine social and economic justice issues. We believe that cultural and creative expression are a means to effect deep and lasting social change. Bread and Roses Missouri is a celebration of the arts in the lives of working people and their families. As the labor hymn for which the organization is named reminds us, "Hearts starve as well as bodies...give us bread and give us roses."

Bread and Roses seeks a contract director for one of our major programs, the *Workers' Opera*. The *Workers' Opera* is an annual play consisting of a series of collectively written vignettes. The ensemble consists of workers from across industries, who become advocates for social change through community art. The ensemble meets together to discuss racism, poverty, and social and economic justice issues that affect the workers directly.

Working with a writing facilitator who helps them shape their ideas, *Workers' Opera* performers create their own pieces to perform in the Opera. Past topics have included raising the minimum wage, anti-gerrymandering ballot initiatives, Medicaid expansion, and immigration reform. These conversations become the content of the *Workers' Opera* performances. Past scripts developed highlight the history of labor rights in the US, and provide a satirical take on corporations and voting rights.

The *Workers' Opera* is rehearsed over a period of weeks with the director, and performed for public audiences, in union halls, and in other places workers gather. Performances usually include a talk back afterward, where audience members engage with the performers about the issues raised in the performance. All performances are presented free of charge.

The *Workers' Opera* will begin pre-production in Summer 2022, and rehearsal will begin in August, 2022. Public performances are planned for Fall, 2022 and the project will be complete by November 30, 2022.

See a short video about our *Workers' Opera* here: <https://youtu.be/c6FeAd9yYrE>

Responsibilities of Workers' Opera Director

- In cooperation with the Executive Director, who will serve as producer, plan and follow a production timeline
- Recruit and audition ensemble members, as needed, with the goal of assembling a cast that reflects the diversity of St. Louis.
- Lead all Workers' Opera meetings and rehearsals with an ensemble of approximately 10 people composed of workers from various industries (service, food, manufacturing, construction, education, agriculture, transportation, etc.)
- Consider the experiences of workers, who comprise both our ensemble and our audiences, and their families in all components of the program
- Collaborate with a production team that will include a writing facilitator, music director, videographer, musicians, technical supervisor and stage manager
- Direct all vignettes and performance pieces in the Workers' Opera
- Facilitate discussions with ensemble members on issues important to them and their communities to better inform the creative process
- In close collaboration with the writing facilitator, help develop and dramaturg scripts based on ideas presented in ensemble discussions, coaching individual members to encourage their creative expression, autonomy, and engagement in the process; and crediting them for their contributions
- Design a cohesive creative vision for the *Workers' Opera*
- Cast ensemble members for roles that fit their talents and interests
- Conduct rehearsals and provide constructive and encouraging feedback to ensemble members
- Collaborate with producer and production team members to communicate needs in terms of minimal set, costumes, props, sound, lighting and other production needs.
- Collaborate with the videographer and producer on technical concerns for video and audio streaming and/or recording (quality, editing, format, length, etc.)
- Maintain active and timely communication with the ensemble, the production team, and the Executive Director on all components of the Workers' Opera

Qualifications

While Bread & Roses Missouri will consider any applicant who can successfully fulfill the responsibilities above, the following would be beneficial for an applicant to showcase:

- A Bachelor's Degree from a 4-year college or university, preferably with a degree in theatre or performing arts OR
- At least 2 years of equivalent professional performing arts experience as a theatre director, playwright, or producer

- Experience in applied theatre, community-based theatre, and/or devised theatre is highly desirable
- Experience working with community members without theatrical experience who may be new to performing
- A dedication to social and economic justice.

Given our mission, Bread & Roses expects all applicants to have a deep commitment to social justice, community engagement, and truthfully representing the stories of working families. We also deeply value diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in our work and among our staff. Applicants who can speak to personal experience with these issues should emphasize this in their application.

Reasonable accommodations will be made for applicants with disabilities.

Expected Time Commitment

- The Director will participate in weekly pre-production planning meetings with Bread and Roses and Workers' Opera personnel beginning in June, 2022.
- Director will participate in recruiting efforts for Workers' Opera performers, which may include visits to union halls or other gatherings of workers, or leading introductory workshops and/or information sessions for interested workers.
- The Director will meet with the ensemble approximately 10-12 hours/week during the 8-week rehearsal period, and up to 20 hours during tech/dress rehearsal week. Director will also be present for all performances (anticipated one weekend of public performances at TBD venue and 3-4 community performances in church hall, union halls, etc.)
- The Director will need to be flexible in terms of meeting and rehearsal times, as our ensemble members have full time jobs outside of their Workers' Opera commitments. This will include afternoons, evenings, and/or weekends.

Compensation

Bread & Roses is committed to making creative expression and participation in the performing arts accessible and affordable for all community members by removing financial barriers. We are committed to paying artists a living wage. All participants in the Workers' Opera are compensated regardless of their professional status.

The Workers' Opera director will be an independent contractor. Total contract amount is \$5000.

To apply:

Please email Emily Kohring, Executive Director at director@breadandrosesmo.org with the following materials:

- CV or resume (no page number requirement)
- Cover letter expressing your interest in the position (1-page)
- Links to samples (videos or audio clips) of previous performances you have directed, if available

We will begin reviewing applications immediately. Priority will be given to applications received by May 13, 2022.

For more info about Bread and Roses Missouri, visit our website: www.breadandrosesmo.org

Questions? Email Executive Director Emily Kohring at director@breadandrosesmo.org