

**WP Theater
Position Specification
Board of Directors
2021-22**

**WP Theater
2162 Broadway**

POSITION SPECIFICATION

Position	Board of Directors
Company	WP Theater
Location	New York, NY
Website	<u>https://wptheater.org/</u>

COMPANY BACKGROUND & CULTURE

WP THEATER (Lisa McNulty, Producing Artistic Director; Michael Sag, Managing Director) is the nation's oldest and largest theater company dedicated to developing, producing, and promoting the work of Women+ at every stage of their careers.

WP empowers Women+ artists of all kinds to reach their full potential, challenging preconceptions about the kinds of plays they write and the stories they tell. For more than four decades we have served as leaders of a global movement towards gender parity, and the example we set and the artists we have fostered have grown into a robust, thriving community in theater and beyond.

Founded in 1978 by Julia Miles as Women's Project Theater, WP Theater has earned acclaim as a home for Women+ theatermakers, historically marginalized in the field, to hone their craft while becoming leaders, change-makers, and advocates in the industry. To date, we have produced more than 600 mainstage productions and developmental projects and published 11 anthologies of plays by Women+ artists. WP Theater is proud of the ways in which we have made a difference in the artistic landscape of New York and beyond, and we continue to forge forward by offering these artists a platform to develop and present their stories.

WP Theater received a 2018 Lucille Lortel Award and a 2019 Obie Award, both for Outstanding Body of Work; and a 2020 Special Drama Desk Award recognizing WP and its founder, Julia Miles. As the premier launching pad for some of the most influential artists in theater, television, and film, our work has a significant impact on the field. Nearly every notable female theater artist has been through our doors, including: 2019 Tony Winner Rachel Chavkin; two-time Pulitzer Prize Winner Lynn Nottage; 2018 Pulitzer Prize Winner Martyna Majok; 2018 MacArthur "Genius" Grant Winner Dominique Morisseau; 2013 Tony Winner Pam MacKinnon; and 2013 Tony Winner Diane Paulus. At WP, these powerful women found an early artistic home and are a testament to our role as a driving cultural force.

When we say Women+ we mean: cis women, trans, non-binary, or gender-nonconfirming people and all gender identities which have been systematically oppressed throughout history in the theater and beyond.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

<u>Productions</u>
<u>Pipeline Festival</u>
<u>Domestic Partner Program</u>
<u>WP Theater Lab</u>
<u>Trans Lab</u>

FINANCIAL POSITION

In 2017, WP Theater emerged from a period of fiscal uncertainty and is now in a period of stability and growth. WP has, over a period of four years, shifted \$600,000 in surplus funds into our Board designated fund, bringing the balance of that fund up to \$925,000. In addition, WP currently has \$250,000 in interest-free debt, and a line of credit of \$150,000 through our bank. Our budget has increased by 46% since FY17, including a 150% increase in foundation funding and large increases in individual, trustee, and government giving. Over the same four years, we've increased our staff from four people to ten. WP has received increased support from many of our major donors across all contributed income lines and aside from the effects of Covid-19, we are poised to continue this growth trajectory.

COMMITMENT TO CHANGE

WP Theater is reckoning with the way that this institution has failed to support BIPOC artists, particularly BIPOC Women+, and has perpetuated white supremacist structures on our stages, in our office, in our board, community and the culture at large. We are listening, we are working for change, and we are taking action against injustice in our communities, and naming the places where inequity and bias exists within our own organization. Please [CLICK HERE](#) to visit our website and read WP's full **Commitment to Change and Action** and for a list of **Anti-Racism Resources & Info**.

POSITION SUMMARY

The WP Theater Board of Directors is responsible for contributing to the board's effectiveness by safeguarding and promoting the organization's mission; by ensuring WP Theater's financial health; and by overseeing its operations and general condition.

While board committees, which shall be delegated authority commensurate with their responsibilities, perform a significant amount of the governance work, the full board performs an important oversight function.

One of the board's foremost responsibilities is to secure adequate resources for the organization to fulfill its mission. Each board member is expected to personally contribute their time, expertise, and financial support.

The board is also the primary catalyst for attracting supporters to WP Theater. A board member must recognize that fundraising is as much an art as a science and that each board member will have preferences as to how they participate in the process; the following activities are suggested ways to get involved:

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES/ACCOUNTABILITIES

- Give or secure \$10,000 each fiscal year (July 1- June 30), including a personal financial commitment of \$2,500 or more to the annual campaign as part of the total "give/get" requirements. Special consideration is given for directly securing significant corporate grants or additional outside contributions to supplement personal gifts.
- Attend fundraising events such as the annual gala. These are important network building opportunities for the organization, and board members play an integral role by bringing potential supporters to these events.
- Volunteer to contribute to areas where you have specific expertise or knowledge by serving on a minimum of one board committee, attending and actively participating in committee meetings, and contributing to projects set by the committee.
- Be a frequent attendee at WP Theater presentations including bringing guests for cultivation purposes.
- Share new fundraising ideas and techniques with WP Theater that others have effectively employed to expand their fundraising efforts.

- Be an advocate for WP Theater with family, friends, and the community at large, and introduce new potential donors to the organization and assist in converting potential donors to active contributors.
- Be available to participate as a host and advocate at events designed to bring in new donors or further strengthen relationships with existing donors.
- Participate with staff in solicitations of potential donors.
- Agree to contact existing donors by phone, mail, or in person to thank them for their contributions and support.
- Determining mission and purpose. The board, together with WP's staff leaders, is responsible for approving a statement of mission and purpose that articulates the organization's goals, means, and primary constituents served.
- Selecting, supporting, and evaluating the Producing Artistic Director and Managing Director. Boards must reach consensus on the primary staff's responsibilities, undertake a careful search to find the most qualified individual for each position, and ensure that each have the moral and professional support they need to further the goals of the organization.
- Building a successful board. All board members have a responsibility to articulate prerequisites for candidates, orient new members, and periodically and comprehensively evaluate their own performance.
- Regularly attending board meetings. There are a minimum of four board meetings per year, each member should attend as an active participant and contribute to discussions, deliberations, and decisions of the board. When attendance is not possible, make a reasonable effort to inform yourself about the substance of the meeting.
- Staying informed. It is each member's duty to be up-to-date on the strategic issues and opportunities facing the organization as well as the details of the financial condition and the shorter-term progress in achieving major tactical goals.
- Protecting assets and providing proper financial oversight. The board must assist in developing the annual budget and ensuring that proper financial controls are in place.
- Ensuring legal and ethical integrity. The board is ultimately responsible for adherence to legal standards and ethical norms, and Board members must avoid any semblance of a conflict of interest between themselves and WP Theater.

- Enhancing the organization's public standing. The board should clearly articulate the organization's mission, accomplishments, and goals to the public and garner support from the community.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Passion for theater!
- Passion for elevating Women+ voices!
- Strong interest in the arts and culture of NYC
- Curiosity for new work and up-and-coming talent
- Commitment to gender and racial equity in theater and in your own life
- Strong interest in collaborating with Board Members across many disciplines
- Commitment to protect, advocate for, and grow WP Theater

ARTIST/JUNIOR BOARD SEATS

In an effort to further diversify our board, WP has designated 6 board member seats out of 30 as follows:

- 3 board member seats to engage with WP artists.
- 3 board member seats to engage with younger patrons (18-35).

NOMINATING PROCESS

Board membership usually starts with an initial conversation with a current board member, identified as the “primary relationship”. The chair of the governance committee then provides the prospective board member with this Board Position Specification document. Prospective board members will be given an opportunity to meet a minimum of two board members, in addition to the primary relationship, the board president and staff leaders. This is a chance to ask follow-up questions, and get to know one another in addition to the organization. During this time, prospective board members will also be invited by the primary relationship to special events occurring at the company - readings, first rehearsals, donor cultivation events. The final step is a group conversation with the governance committee, which then officially nominates the prospective board member to the full board for election.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you are interested in learning more about Board service at WP Theater, or discussing other ways of getting involved, please contact Michael Sag, Managing Director, at 212.765.1706 or Michael@wptheater.org. Thank you!