

## Cincinnati Opera Names Christopher Milligan as The Harry Fath General Director & CEO

CINCINNATI, OH (December 18, 2019)—Liz Kathman Grubow, president of Cincinnati Opera’s board of trustees, today announced that **Christopher Milligan** has been named the next Harry Fath General Director & CEO of the company. Milligan’s tenure begins March 2, 2020.

A respected arts administrator with more than 25 years of industry experience, Milligan is currently Managing Director of Cincinnati Opera. Having joined the company in 1997, Milligan brings to the role a successful track record of creative and collaborative leadership, a passion for the art form, and a deep respect for Cincinnati Opera, its stakeholders, and its community. As General Director & CEO, he will lead all aspects of the company’s operations, including: artistic and production management, financial management, fundraising, marketing, education, community engagement, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.



**Christopher Milligan**

Milligan’s appointment comes at a historic moment for Cincinnati Opera, which celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020. The company has earned a reputation as a leader in the industry for its exceptional artistic achievements, its commitment to inclusion and public engagement, and its robust fiscal health.

Milligan will succeed Patricia K. Beggs, who previously announced her retirement after 35 years with the company. Upon Milligan’s appointment in March 2020, Beggs will transition to the role of General Director Emerita and will continue with the company through the finale of its 2020 season (June 18-August 1, 2020). Today’s announcement concludes a nine-month international search, chaired by Grubow with participation from the Opera’s board, staff, the Cincinnati Opera Guild, Center Stage Board Associates, and community members, and conducted in partnership with the management consulting firm Arts Consulting Group.

Said Milligan, “I have spent much of my career with Cincinnati Opera, committed to advancing an art form I believe makes our community more humane, connected, and creative. Even today, I am just as excited about this storied cultural institution’s potential as when I started with the company in 1997. I am grateful to Liz Grubow, the search committee, and the entire Cincinnati Opera board, to my colleagues on the staff, and especially to Patty Beggs, my boss and mentor for the past twenty-two years. It’s an honor and privilege to succeed her. I will strive to be a champion for opera that is soul-

stirring, adventurous, ennobling, and accessible. Our company and our community deserve nothing less.”

“We are thrilled to name Chris Milligan as the new General Director & CEO of Cincinnati Opera,” said Grubow. “He has the institutional knowledge of the company and its ethos, and his collaborative leadership style will harness the incredible depth and breadth of talent we have on our staff, in our community and in the opera world. He possesses an unwavering belief that opera can transform lives and touch souls, and he will be relentless in championing the company’s efforts toward producing great work and enhancing its accessibility for all audiences.”

She added, “This search was exhaustive and comprehensive in scope. I can’t thank enough the stellar search committee, staff, board, the Opera Guild, and Center Stage Board Associates, as well as Arts Consulting Group, for their dedication and engagement throughout the search process.”

Said Beggs, “Chris is an integral part of the fabric of Cincinnati Opera, and over our years of working together, he has proven time and again his capability for both visionary leadership and thoughtful guidance through everyday challenges. Chris is a true believer when it comes to the transformational power of art and opera, and I am confident he will brilliantly lead this remarkable cultural treasure into its bright future.”

Marc A. Scorca, President and CEO of OPERA America, praised the company’s selection. “I’ve had the good fortune of working with Chris directly on several industry-wide initiatives,” said Scorca, “and his imprint is on many of the company’s most innovative endeavors. Not only is Chris passionate about opera, but he also believes in pushing the boundaries of what opera can be, and in striving toward authentic connections with all audiences. I look forward to our continued partnership.”

Milligan will work closely with Evans Mirageas, The Harry T. Wilks Artistic Director, to advance the company’s artistic vision. Said Mirageas, “I am thrilled at the prospect of working with Chris as General Director & CEO. From my first visit to Cincinnati in 2004 while I was still a consultant to the company, Chris impressed me with his deep knowledge of the art form. He combines this with a keen sense of what it takes to make opera a financial success. In Chris, I believe we have the ideal balance of passion and savvy to take Cincinnati Opera well into its second century.”

### **About Christopher Milligan**

Christopher Milligan will start his role as The Harry Fath General Director & CEO of Cincinnati Opera on March 2, 2020, after twenty-two years with the company.

Milligan currently serves as the company’s Managing Director, a role he has held since 2010. As part of the company’s executive team, he works closely with the board and senior staff in the management of the organization, the development of programming, and strategic planning. He maintains direct oversight for the functions of marketing, analytics, public relations, community engagement, educational programming, earned revenue, ticketing, and database management.

Milligan’s first position with Cincinnati Opera was as a production intern in the summer of 1989. He joined the company full-time in 1997 as Director of Marketing. In this role, he led a team that achieved record-high attendance for numerous productions, including the 2005 world-premiere production of *Margaret Garner*. Milligan has led the creation and development of industry-leading outreach programs

including Opera Goes to Church, Opera Idol, and the company's one-of-a-kind mobile theater in a truck called The Opera Express. He is a frequent contributing writer to Cincinnati Opera publications and regularly serves as a featured speaker for the company.

Before joining Cincinnati Opera, Milligan was a program director at The Muse Machine in Dayton, Ohio. In this role, he developed and managed arts workshops, tours, and seminars in the Dayton area and beyond for hundreds of junior high and high school teachers.

Originally from Kettering, Ohio, Milligan is a graduate of Miami University. He has served as an adjunct faculty member for the university and as a member of the College of Creative Arts advisory board. He was the first recipient of the Marketer of the Year Award presented by the Cincinnati Chapter of the American Marketing Association, and he is an alumnus of the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber Leadership Cincinnati Class 32.

He lives in Lebanon, Ohio, with his wife, Molly. They have three daughters.

### **About Cincinnati Opera**

Founded in 1920, Cincinnati Opera began its life at the Cincinnati Zoo, where it presented a summer festival of grand opera for more than half a century. In 1972, the company moved to its current primary home, Music Hall, and since 2013, the company has incorporated programming in smaller, second-stage venues as part of its annual summer season. Today, Cincinnati Opera's repertoire includes beloved classics and contemporary masterworks brought to life by some of the world's most dynamic performers and creative teams. The company also presents a robust roster of concerts, educational programs, and community engagement initiatives year-round throughout the region.

Cincinnati Opera celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020 with a thrilling summer season (June 18-August 1, 2020), featuring Gioachino Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*, the world premiere of William Menefield and Sheila Williams's *Fierce*, Antonín Dvořák's *Rusalka*, the world premiere of Gregory Spears and Tracy K. Smith's *Castor and Patience*, and Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida*. Season sponsor for the 2020 season is Huntington. The 2020 season is also made possible with support from ArtsWave, The Louise Dieterle Nippert Musical Arts Fund, The Patricia A. Corbett Estate and Trust, The Harry T. Wilks Family Foundation, Ohio Arts Council, UC Health, Ohio National Financial Services, and many generous individuals, corporations, and foundations.

Cincinnati Opera's mission is to enrich and connect our community through diverse opera experiences.

For more information, visit [cincinnatiopera.org](http://cincinnatiopera.org).

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