



Job Description: **Head Scenic Artist**
Reports To: **Director of Production**

Summary

Des Moines Metro Opera is a major summer opera festival located in Indianola, Iowa. The company produces productions each season in a summer repertory schedule, presented within the intimate 467-seat theatre at the Blank Performing Arts Center. Our 54th season includes three new productions: Puccini's *Tosca*, Floyd's *Of Mice and Men* and Szymanowski's *King Roger*.

Des Moines Metro Opera is seeking to add the position of **Head Scenic Artist** to our full-time, year-round production team in Indianola, Iowa. This position is a recent addition to the organization and will lead the company in all scenic-art for the scenic builds and lead the scenic art team for the festival. The Head Scenic Artist will also need to act as the Head of Props out of the festival season; helping to prepare for the festival properties team to start by sourcing, organizing, planning for the properties. This position will be part of the advanced planning process for the festival and will participate in the hiring of the festival production staff.

Working year-round this position will finish, maintain, repair, scenery and work to better the warehouse and shop spaces. The Head Scenic Artist will be critical for the finished product. This position is not expected to run the shows or expected to participate in repertory changes other than with touch-up / repair work.

This position will work closely with the full-time head scenic carpenter, the festival head stage carpenter, the festival props team as well as the festival associate technical directors and will work year-round with the director of production as well as the assistant scenic carpenter and any overhire scenic artists required.

As an Equal Opportunity Employer, Des Moines Metro Opera celebrates diversity and inclusion. We do not discriminate against any employee or job applicant on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, creed, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, disability, age, veteran status, political affiliation or philosophy. If you are concerned that you don't meet every requirement listed below, we still encourage you to still apply. You may have the skills and experience that compliment others in the department and you could be the perfect addition to our team! We are open to adjustments to best fit people that are interested in being a part of Des Moines Metro Opera!

Engagement & Compensation

Ideally starting in November 2025, this is an on-site position with no ability to remote-work.

This position is full-time (40 hours per week), non-exempt, continuing, hourly position, paid bi-weekly as part of our regular employee pay structure. All overtime is paid at 1.5x the hourly rate for the employee. A generous health benefit package is included, as well as paid time off as per the employee handbook.

The hourly rate for this position will range between \$21.50/hour to \$26.50/hour (\$~45,000—\$55,000/year + overtime)
Candidates can expect a regular 40-hour work week, with possible need for overtime in addition for festival operations during the summer months.

Work Environment

Des Moines Metro Opera owns the scenic shop, warehouses and administration buildings. The performance space is located on the campus of Simpson College. The nature of this position requires candidates to be able to move around a scenic shop and theater space safely. This position will require the candidate to work from ladders, lifts, near stage edges and to be able to lift 50lbs unassisted. This position will require lots of standing, sitting, kneeling and bending.

This position will need some basic computer skills; we use the Microsoft Suite of office tools. While the Candidate does not need to be an expert, they should be able to use computers with ease. Ability to use Photoshop or other editing software would be helpful. The Candidate must be able to communicate effectively: spoken and written.

Qualifications, Responsibilities, Essential Abilities & Mindsets

Des Moines Metro Opera encourages applications from people without formal education in theater – the substitution of experience for traditional educational is perfectly acceptable.

- Diploma or Degree from a Theatre Production Program of study and/or 4 or more years of experience working in a scenic shop.
- Ideally, has experience as the primary scenic artist on several projects of various types and scales.
- Experienced in the accepted practices of theatre methods and with a variety of materials.
- Experience working with a variety of tools, and knowledgeable in the safe operation of standard shop tools/equipment, including equipment like forklifts, personnel lifts, ladders, box/panel trucks with lift gates, etc..
- A high attention to detail is essential; an understanding and willingness to adapt to the needs of the production designs to produce the best outcomes.
- Experience in leading a team, communicating with the team and the ability to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the team. This person should have excellent relationship building skills.
- Someone passionate about the art and someone who shares the belief that the beautifully finished front side of scenery should also have a beautiful backside – clean, labeled – someone who takes great pride in the work of the team.
- Experience in ordering and sourcing materials/products, as well as the ability to monitor spending/reporting spending.
- Experience in multiple techniques.
- Ideally, some experience in carving foam and working with plastics.
- Ideally some experience in prop building, creating, modifying, sourcing.
- Ideally, comfortable driving a 26' box truck if ever needed.
- Willing to help support the touring technicians of Opera Iowa and someone willing to step-in in case of illness.
- Desire to organize and effectively store stage / shop equipment, including equipment from other departments.
- Willingness to help with the odd projects, events, installs, displays and other activities for the company when help is needed.
- This person needs to always behave like a professional and compassionate team-focused leader. The best candidate will have a good sense of humor and a good way of showing pride in the team's work. This person should have a mindset of 'how can I help' and 'how can I improve this for others'.
- This position will receive (if they don't have) first-aid training, OSHA workplace safety training, fall arrest (as needed) training, forklift operation certification and any other safety training deemed necessary. All workplace training will all be provided to the successful candidate at no-charge. Des Moines Metro Opera will make other various professional development available to the successful candidate.

Application Process

Applicants should submit a resume, cover letter and should include 3 references, via email, with the subject line 'Head Scenic Artist' to: production@dmmo.org

Any links to a portfolio should be included in the attachments and not in the body of the email.

For additional information, please contact Clayton Rodney, crodney@dmmo.org

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

Applicant screening process to begin immediately, early application is best.