



OPERA GRAND RAPIDS

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Opera Grand Rapids Appoints New Executive Director Emilee Syrewicze

GRAND RAPIDS – The Opera Grand Rapids Board of Trustees has named Emilee Syrewicze the new Executive Director of Opera Grand Rapids.

Syrewicze's background as an executive director, combined with a deep passion for promoting community-based arts programs, will help to further advance the mission of the organization that celebrated its 50th anniversary last year. "We are thrilled to welcome Emilee as our new Executive Director," says Diane St. Claire, Opera Grand Rapids Board of Trustees President. "She will bring experience, enthusiasm, great communication skills and a fresh air to our organization. We feel very lucky to have found her and look forward to a successful and invigorating season with her at the helm."

When Syrewicze assumes the role May 1, she will manage all day-to-day operations for West Michigan's leading professional opera company, known for its grand opera performances and its education and community programs. Syrewicze will also lead fundraising programs, as well as marketing and community engagement initiatives.

"As a native of West Michigan, I consider Opera Grand Rapids my home opera company. I'm thrilled to lead one of Michigan's most elite performing arts organizations and help bring this complex and beautiful art form to a broader audience," says Syrewicze.

Syrewicze currently serves as the Executive Director of the Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation in Charlotte, North Carolina. Prior, she was Executive Director of the Northwest Michigan Supportive Housing (NMSH) in Traverse City, Michigan. Syrewicze, a classically trained pianist, earned a B.A. at Alma College, Alma, Michigan, in Political Science with concentrations in chemistry and music and a J.D. with a focus on nonprofit and environmental law/policy at Vermont Law School in South Royalton, Vermont. During law school, Emilee clerked for the Center for Environmental Law & Policy in Seattle, Washington

Syrewicze will oversee the remainder of the company's 2018-19 Season, which includes the [Night with the Opera Gala](#) on May 10 and Giuseppe Verdi's [La Traviata](#), June 14th -15th. "We have every confidence that she will bring a firm commitment to excellence, the hallmark of our company," says James Meena, Artistic Director. "Opera Grand Rapids continues to move forward as a vibrant and important regional cultural institution, and with our new Executive Director in place, the company can excel for the benefit of our entire community for years to come."

Syrewicze succeeds Interim Executive Director Win S. Irwin, long-time patron and former Opera Grand Rapids Board of Trustees member, who assumed the role in May 2018 after the departure of Anne Berquist.

Opera Grand Rapids

Located in the heart of West Michigan, Opera Grand Rapids is the state's longest-running professional opera production company. Opera Grand Rapids was founded in 1967 as the Opera Association of Western Michigan. Through the creativity and excellence of this timeless art form, Opera Grand Rapids enriches the West Michigan community and provides unique and powerful experiences that move people of all ages and backgrounds. Opera Grand Rapids' productions are produced and presented locally in West Michigan. For the productions, Opera Grand Rapids engages a cast of internationally-acclaimed artists, stage directors, conductors, choreographers, set designers, costume designers, and others, in addition to the regional Grand Rapids Symphony, and Opera Grand Rapids Chorus and Children's Chorus. Its mission is to foster and fulfill demand for high quality live opera in West Michigan.

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