



Media Contact | Frank Luzi | Luzi Media | frank@luzi.media | 215.779.7614

Austin Opera Appoints Nationally Respected Arts Administrator Cory Lippiello as Chief Producing Officer

(Austin, TX, Thursday, Aug. 20, 2026) — **Austin Opera** today announced the appointment of **Cory Lippiello** as its new **Chief Producing Officer**, a key executive leadership position responsible for overseeing the company's Artistic and Production departments. A widely respected leader in the opera field with more than 25 years of experience in artistic administration, casting, production, and strategic planning, Lippiello joins Austin Opera this fall following an accomplished stint with **Lyric Opera of Chicago**, where she served as Director of Artistic Programs.

In her new role, Lippiello will lead Austin Opera's artistic planning and season programming at Austin Opera's Sarah and Ernest Butler Performance Center and the Long Center, working closely with General Director & CEO **Annie Burridge** to shape the company's long-term artistic vision while ensuring operational excellence on and off the stage. In collaboration with Music Director **Timothy Myers**, Director of Production **Vince Herod**, and Curator for Latinx and Hispanic Programming and Artistic Administrator **Claudia Chapa**, she will lead cross-departmental collaboration and the execution of the company's growing artistic programming.

Lippiello arrives in Austin after more than a decade with Lyric Opera of Chicago, one of the world's leading opera companies. During her tenure, she played an integral role in principal artist casting and producing for the company's internationally acclaimed opera and musical theater productions, adventurous interdisciplinary commissions, and community engagement programming. She also produced several acclaimed filmed productions and digital performances during the pandemic, helping sustain artistic engagement during a transformative period for the field. She won an Emmy Award for producing the company's 2021 film of Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*, starring Russell Thomas and Ailyn Pérez.

Prior to joining Lyric in 2015, Lippiello served as Director of Artistic Planning for The Atlanta Opera following a decade as Artistic Administrator for New York City Opera. Her career also includes leadership and artistic positions with Wolf Trap Opera, the New York Philharmonic, IMG Artists, OPERA America, and Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. The first casting director from the opera world elected to the Casting Society of America, she is a frequent speaker and mentor, and has served as an adjudicator for the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and as a grants panelist for the

National Endowment for the Arts. She is a graduate of Vassar College.

"Cory is one of the most admired artistic administrators in American opera, and I have long respected both her extraordinary breadth of experience and her thoughtful, collaborative leadership," said **Annie Burrridge**, General Director & CEO of Austin Opera. "She has earned the trust of artists, directors, conductors, designers, and colleagues throughout the industry because she combines impeccable artistic judgment with genuine warmth, curiosity, and integrity. As Austin Opera continues its trajectory, bringing together our artistic and production teams under Cory's leadership positions us to dream even bigger, work even more collaboratively, and deliver exceptional experiences for our audiences. We are absolutely delighted to welcome her to Austin."

Lippiello said Austin Opera's artistic momentum and reputation for innovation made the opportunity especially compelling.

"At a moment of profound change and possibility for our field, Austin Opera is leading with creativity, ambition, and purpose," said Lippiello. "The new Butler Performance Center gives us even more freedom to imagine the kinds of work we can make, and I'm especially excited by the creative challenge of exploring all that this modern opera company can be for the many audiences it serves. The opportunity to do that in the Live Music Capital of the World, drawing on Austin's extraordinary diversity of music, artists, and performers is all the more thrilling. I am honored to join Annie and Tim and this exceptional team to help shape the company's next chapter alongside the remarkable artists, artisans, staff, and supporters who make its work possible."

The creation of the Chief Producing Officer position reflects Austin Opera's continued investment in organizational excellence as the company expands its artistic impact, strengthens its national profile, and advances its long-term strategic vision. The 2026-2027 season begins in October with the company's first world premiere commission, ***Ofrenda***, with music by Jorge Sosa and a libretto by John de los Santos. The 90-minute chamber opera performed in English and Spanish will open the company's new **Sarah & Ernest Butler Performance Center**, bringing year-round community-centric programming to the city. The season continues with three additional productions at the Long Center for the Performing Arts: an epic staging of Jules Massenet's ***Thaïs*** (November 13 & 15) starring soprano Nicole Heaston in the title role; the Texas premiere of the renowned love story ***Fellow Travelers*** by Gregory Spears and Greg Pierce (February 6-7); and Verdi's timeless ***La traviata*** (April 18, 22 & 24, 2027) starring soprano Sara Gartland and tenor Kameron Lopreore as doomed lovers Violetta and Alfredo.

ABOUT AUSTIN OPERA

Under the visionary leadership of General Director & CEO Annie Burrridge and Music Director Timothy Myers, Austin Opera has become one of the most innovative and community-centered performing arts organizations in Central Texas. Since its founding in 1986, the company has evolved into a vibrant cultural force, inspiring more than 30,000 people each year through world-class performances, transformative educational programs, and meaningful community engagement.

Each season, Austin Opera brings extraordinary stories to life through a dynamic lineup of productions presented at the iconic Long Center for the Performing Arts and the new Butler Performance Center. Featuring internationally acclaimed artists alongside exceptional local talent from the Austin Opera Orchestra and Chorus, our productions offer fresh perspectives on beloved classics while championing bold contemporary works that demonstrate opera's power to reflect and shape the world around us.

Austin Opera's commitment to audience engagement extends far beyond the stage. Signature programs, including *Conductor Cues*, *Opera Overtures*, *Coffee and Conversations*, and *Masterclasses with the Artists*, invite audiences behind the scenes, creating memorable opportunities to connect with artists, explore the creative process, and deepen appreciation for the art form.

At the heart of Austin Opera's mission is a commitment to cultural connection and storytelling that reflects the diverse communities we serve. Through initiatives such as *Concerts at the Consulate*, produced in partnership with the Consulate General of Mexico in Austin, the company has created meaningful opportunities for cultural exchange and celebration. The Butler Fund for Spanish Programming guarantees at least one Spanish-language production each season, while the Curator of Hispanic and Latinx Programming and the Residency for Latinx Creatives support the development of the next generation of artistic voices. Continuing this momentum, Austin Opera has commissioned *Ofrenda*, a new bilingual opera that will receive its world premiere in October 2026 at Austin's newest cultural destination, the Butler Performance Center.

Education remains a cornerstone of Austin Opera's impact. Since 1991, the company has introduced more than 200,000 students to the transformative power of the arts through innovative school partnerships and curriculum-based programming. By aligning educational offerings with Texas education standards and bringing live performances directly to students, Austin Opera helps spark creativity, build confidence, and expand access to arts experiences for young people across Central Texas.

The opening of the Butler Performance Center marks a bold new chapter for Austin Opera and the cultural life of the region. Located in Southeast Austin, the Center is designed as a welcoming home for creativity, collaboration, and community. In addition to serving as Austin Opera's headquarters, the facility will provide affordable rehearsal, performance, and gathering spaces for local artists and organizations while expanding access to arts experiences for thousands of residents. Opening in October 2026 with a weekend-long community celebration, the Butler Performance Center will feature a 190-seat theater, flexible rehearsal studios, and event spaces that will foster artistic innovation, cultural exchange, and community connection for generations to come.

Today, Austin Opera is not only producing exceptional opera—it is building a cultural ecosystem where artists, audiences, students, and communities can come together to experience the power of live performance and shared storytelling.

To learn more about Austin Opera, visit austinopera.org or follow along on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#), at [@austinopera](#).