



## Chicago Opera Theater Names New GD

By Sarah Shay, *Musical America*

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Lawrence (Larry) Edelson, founding artistic and general director of the American Lyric Theater (ALT), has been announced as the new general director of the Chicago Opera Theater as of July 1. He will now run both organizations.

In Chicago, Edelson succeeds Ashley Magnus, who [announced her departure](#) earlier this year; he arrives as COT prepares to launch its 50<sup>th</sup>-anniversary season. Meaghan Stainback Smallwood has served as interim general director;

she will return to her previous position as COT's director of development on September 1.

The breadth and depth of Edelson's experience is impressive. Since he founded ALT in 2005, the notable opera incubator has spawned over 20 new operas, including *JFK*, *The Golden Ticket*, [The Life and Deaths of Alan Turing](#), which COT premiered earlier this season, and many others. These are an outgrowth of ALT's Composer Librettist Development Program (CLDP), the nation's first multi-year professional mentorship program for emerging opera composers, librettists, and dramaturgs. Another of his ventures—the Opera Writers Diversity and Representation Initiative—gained him Musical America's recognition in 2021 as one of the [Top 30 Professionals of the Year](#).

During his tenure as artistic and general director of Opera Saratoga, between 2014 and 2022, Edelson oversaw a more than 250 percent increase in individual giving and a 60 percent rise in ticket sales. His productions also enhanced the company's national reputation. As a stage director he has worked with great success at Glimmerglass Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, Minnesota Opera, Fort Worth Opera, Virginia Opera, and Florida Grand Opera.

When announcing Edelson's appointment, COT Board President Susan Irion lauded him as someone who "lives COT's core values of artistic excellence, support of artists and diversity, and championing new works." Music Director Lidiya Yankovskaya likewise expressed enthusiasm for his selection, praising "his extensive experience and creative energy."

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