Front of House Ushers
2019

Information pack and job description
Working at the Royal Opera House

Who We Are and What We Do

We are one of the busiest theatres in the world. In a typical year we offer more than 500 performances and 1,000 learning and participation sessions, employing 1,000 permanent staff and generating a turnover of £142 million. We were watched by 1.5 million people in Covent Garden and in cinemas worldwide last year, further extended via broadcasting, digital activity and collaboration with touring companies. Our Learning and Participation programme opens up opportunities to almost 30,000 people each year, reaches many more through digital insights and resources, and enables families, schools and communities to access affordable performances.

We are currently working with more than 44 UK arts organizations ranging from East London Dance to Birmingham Royal Ballet, the London Sinfonietta to the V&A, Gandini Juggling to Opera North, as well as more than 30 international companies and theatres, our partners in Thurrock and numerous schools and colleges.

Our Vision, Values and Priorities

Our aim is to enrich people’s lives through opera and ballet. Home to two of the world’s great artistic companies – The Royal Opera and The Royal Ballet, performing with the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House – we want to be accessible and engaging, to develop audiences across the UK and to break new ground in the presentation of lyric theatre, prioritizing investment in new work.

We want the Royal Opera House to be the most exciting, open and welcoming opera house in the world. We want to be bold, generous, imaginative, collaborative and respectful – for each other, our audiences and participants, our artists and partners – and to promote diversity and equality in all we do.
Visitor Experience at the Royal Opera House
In September 2018, ROH completed its major “Open Up” redevelopment project. The aim of the project was to welcome more visitors, especially during the day, to experience art forms in new foyers with new facilities. The ‘open up’ philosophy extends to ensure that we continually focus on being an externally facing organisation that puts customers at the forefront of service design. The Visitor Experience department encompasses the Front of House and Tours teams alongside the Box Office operation to ensure common high standards and effective resourcing.

The Front of House Team

The work of the Front of House team is to deliver first class customer service. The team ensures that everyone coming into the theatre feels welcome and that patrons, guests and visitors enjoy all aspects of their visit.

This team is also responsible for public safety, and Front of House staff are solely responsible for the safe evacuation of the theatre should there be an emergency situation. The team is made up of Duty Managers, Usher Managers and over 100 Ushers covering all performances and events taking place during the day and in the evening, seven days a week.
JOB DESCRIPTION

Role / Title: Usher
Reports to: Senior Usher Managers
Liaises with: Audiences and visitors; Visitor Experience teams, other staff; visiting companies and event organisers

Background:
The Royal Opera House welcomes audiences to performances of ballet and opera and participants to its L&P programme in excess of 1 million per year. In September 2018, ROH completed its major “Open Up” redevelopment project. The aim of the project was to welcome more visitors, especially during the day, to experience art forms in new foyers with new facilities. The ‘open up’ philosophy extends to ensure that we continually focus on being an externally facing organisation that puts customers at the forefront of service design. The Visitor Experience department encompasses the Front of House and tours teams alongside the Box Office operation to ensure common high standards and effective resourcing.

Across the entire Visitor Experience function, the focus is on ensuring three key deliverables:

- A consistent excellent level of customer service
- A responsive approach in the use of resources to ensure service and safety standards are met whilst optimising efficiency and cost effectiveness
- A positive and supportive experience for all members of the team

Overall Purpose of the Job:

- To welcome all visitors to the Royal Opera House, ensuring they feel welcome and are safe at all times, delivering first class customer service at all times.
- To usher all events and activities at the Royal Opera House and on occasion offsite, giving directions, knowledgeable advice and carrying out emergency procedures when required.
- To sell merchandise.
Key Accountabilities:

Customer Service

- Provide a warm approachable welcome and aim to provide a service that exceeds the expectations of our visitors.
- Be well informed of Royal Opera House policies and procedures, facilities and events to be able to provide a knowledgeable service.
- Ensure you and your area of work are well presented and safe, reporting any issues to a manager. Uniform should be worn as detailed in the FOH dress code.
- Anticipate issues and be a proactive member of the team.

Ushering

- Check and scan tickets and ensure only valid ticket holders gain admittance to the defined areas.
- Greet and attend to latecomers, following the performance's latecomer policy.
- Perform the role of cloakroom attendant taking coats and bags, keeping an organised work environment and ensuimg the correct items are returned to the customer.
- Show people to their seats within the auditoria and monitor audience behaviour, providing assistance and where possible resolving issues.
- Be thoroughly conversant with the Royal Opera House emergency procedures and all fire exit routes and to be ready to implement procedures if necessary.
- Promptly report any incidents potential incidents to management or first aiders.
- Conduct assigned checks with attention to detail, reporting any health & safety, security and presentation issues to the Usher Manager or Duty Manager.
- Carry out bag checks as required.
- Assist with clearing ice cream and other litter as required.

Sales:

- Sell ice cream, programmes and any other items as required, keeping sales areas, as well as stock room areas tidy.
- Accurately keep stock, handle cash, take card payments and the scan vouchers.
- Assist with stock movement and arrangements.

Other:

- Undertake administration work when required
- Carry out any reasonable request as required by the Duty Manager, Senior Usher Manager or Usher Manager
- Work collaboratively as a team, using a positive approach and good communication using the technology provided
- On occasion present flowers on stage – on request

Note: This Job Description reflects the current situation. It does not preclude change or development that might be required in the future.

PERSON SPECIFICATION:

Minimum Skills, Knowledge and Experience:

- Commitment to and proven experience of providing excellent customer service to a wide demographic
- Excellent numeracy skills and confidence in making sales with cash and card
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Proven ability to keep calm under pressure
- Well-presented, organised, with an eye for detail, excellent time keeping and a record of being reliable
- A positive outlook and a solution focused approach

Desirable Skills, Knowledge and Experience:
- A keen interest and knowledge of performance arts, specifically ballet and opera
- Previous experience of working as an Usher/Steward

How we work

Equality and Diversity
At the Royal Opera House our people are as varied as the jobs they do and we think this difference is one of our strengths. The one thing we all have in common is a commitment to excellence. So we are all different, but the same: electricians, scene-movers, apprentices, armourers, wig-makers, fundraisers, digital and technology professionals, ushers, performers.

We value our people and believe it is in the best interests of the Royal Opera House to recognise their talents and develop their potential along their chosen career path. Everyone has a right to be treated with respect and we are committed to providing a harmonious working environment with equality and opportunity for all.

To find the best people and encourage them to join us we operate a fair and transparent selection and recruitment process. Equality, diversity, and inclusion are integral to our role as a national arts’ organisation and we seek, particularly, to employ people with talent and skill currently under-represented in the workplace.

Benefits
The Royal Opera House offers a range of benefits including:

- Membership of the ROH Pension scheme
- Subsidised canteen and coffee bar
- Occasional staff offers on performance tickets and access to general rehearsals
- Discounts on publications, recordings and giftware at the ROH Shop
- Flexible working
- Family Friendly policies
- Childcare vouchers scheme
• Access to our Employee Assistance Programme, providing 24-hour advice and counselling services
• Access to the ROH Benevolent Fund, providing confidential support and assistance
• Special arrangements for Healthcare including a health cash plan for employees and healthcare support for performers
• Discounts on alternative and physical therapies provided in-house
• Discounted staff ballet, Pilates and yoga classes
• Concessions at a wide range of local Covent Garden shops, restaurants and gyms

How to Apply

The Royal Opera House is passionate about giving our audiences and visitors the best possible experience every time, all the time. If you would like to join our dedicated, friendly and professional team of Ushers to work at this exciting cultural landmark in Covent Garden, we will be holding open days (including a group assessment exercise) on 12th, 13th and 14th March 2019 where you can find out more about what it is like to work at one of London’s busiest theatres and we can learn about your exceptional customer service skills. If you are successful at the open day we will invite you to attend an interview on 19th and 20th March 2019.

Am I eligible for the Open Day?

• You must be available for one of the open days - 12th, 13th and 14th March 2019 and one of the interview dates – 19th and 20th March 2019.
• Most of our performances are during the evenings and Saturdays so you must be able to work at these times. The availability to work Sundays will also be a requirement.
• You will start the week beginning 8th April 2019 and must also be available throughout the summer period up to the end of August
• You must be over 18 and have existing work authorisation for the UK.
• You must have a passion for delivering excellent customer service at all times

We actively encourage BAME and disabled applicants and value the positive impact difference has on our teams.

A full job description and information on how to apply for this position are available on our website www.roh.org.uk. The closing date for applications is 4th March 2019. If you are disabled, please let us know any adjustments you require for the open day. If you have any queries about the recruitment process please email hr.recruitment@roh.org.uk.

Once we receive your application we will contact you with a time to attend the open day. Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis and all available times may be taken before the closing date. If so, you will be put on a waiting list but unfortunately you cannot be guaranteed a place. Therefore we recommend you apply early to secure a place.

We look forward to meeting you!

www.youtube.com/royaloperahouse
www.facebook.com/royaloperahouse, @royaloperahouse
Equal Opportunity Monitoring

The Royal Opera House is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate based on a person’s age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity status, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. We actively encourage applicants from diverse backgrounds and value the positive impact that difference has on our team.

Monitoring our workforce profile is part of our Art Council England funding agreement and we report on it regularly to our Board. Asking questions about your personal information tells us more about ourselves as an organisation and helps us understand how successfully we are realising strategies to open up the Royal Opera House to everyone.

You are not obliged to answer the equal opportunities section of the application form, but please be assured that the information collected is kept entirely confidential and retained only in the Human Resources department. Equality and diversity reporting is not attributable to individuals.

If you have any queries or concerns about this process please email the HR team hr.recruitment@roh.org.uk.