

**Christopher Libby
Managing Director
Skylight Opera Theatre**

Christopher Libby arrived in Milwaukee in 1994. Armed with an Arts Administration Degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the advice to seek mentoring and employment at Skylight Opera Theatre, he was hired as Artistic Administrator by Managing Director Joan Lounsbery. By 1999, after years of tutelage from Lounsbery and stints as Managing Director for Trinity Irish Dance Company and General Manager of the University of Chicago's Court Theatre, he was hired as Managing Director following Lounsbery's departure.

Since then, Libby has secured the company's position as both one of most dynamic and the most financially stable arts organizations in Milwaukee. Fiercely committed to the idea that the arts must survive as a business to thrive as an art, Libby has continued the string of positive financial results and has posted three of the company's most successful seasons on record. In addition, under Libby's leadership the Skylight has paid off the mortgage on its \$7 million facility, built endowment and strengthened its cash reserves.

Support for artistic and educational initiatives has been another hallmark of Libby's tenure at Skylight Opera Theatre. Beginning with support of Skylight's first commission of *Ballymore*, Libby has supported an expanded program of premiere productions by Skylight Opera Theatre. Since *Ballymore*, Skylight has produced regional, state and local premieres of *Floyd Collins*, *The Spitfire Grill*, *The Tender Land*, as well as ambitious re-workings of *Romeo and Juliet*, *Don Giovanni*, *Madame Butterfly* and *The Turn of the Screw*. In addition, a commitment to expanding the Skylight's reach in the community has resulted in the first three television broadcasts of Skylight productions: *Ballymore*, *The Tender Land* and *The Mikado*. Most recently, Skylight expanded its profile nationally with *The Little Prince*, by Rachel Portman and directed by Francesca Zambello in collaboration with Houston Grand Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, and Tulsa Opera.

Skylight's first Education Director was hired as one of Libby's first acts as Managing Director, drawing together the varied outreach activities of the Skylight under one department. Since then, the Education Department has expanded to partnerships with 10 area schools and has garnered the support of numerous local foundations, as well as recognition from MPS and the National Endowment for the Arts for its innovative programming and support of underserved populations. With the addition of the Resident Artist Program in 2001, the education programs of the Skylight have expanded ten-fold since Libby's arrival.

Libby has served the Wisconsin Arts Board as a panel member and steering committee member, serves as Skylight's representative to Theater Wisconsin and is Past-President of the Third Ward Arts Association. In addition, Libby serves as a member of the Board of Directors for the Historic Third Ward Association, and is a member of the Milwaukee Downtown Rotary Club. In 2001 Libby was recognized by the Milwaukee Business Journal as one of "40 under 40" business executives to watch.

Libby is twice a graduate of Iowa State University, first in 1990 with a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and again in 1991 with a Bachelor's Degree in Theater. He is also a graduate of the Master's program at the Bolz Center for Arts Administration at the University of Wisconsin-Madison; the nation's oldest advanced degree program for arts administrators.

Married to photographer wife Michelle since 1994, Libby is the father of daughter, Faith and son, Roan.