



Lela Olson is a leader, educator, and actor. Working as Blue Water Theatre Company's Managing Director is the perfect way for her to unite these roles while continuing to serve youth. She has worked as a teacher, teacher leader, and administrator in the field of education for over 20 years. Lela earned bachelor's degrees in Elementary Education and Education of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing at Augustana University in Sioux Falls. She earned a master's degree in Educational Policy and Administration and a PhD in Work and Human Resource Education while attending the University of Minnesota. Lela serves on the Minnesota Boychoir's Board of Directors and leads its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. She is also a trained mediator. No matter what the role, her focus is on helping people and organizations learn, grow, and thrive.

Acting tops the list of Lela's favorite pastimes. Her first role was in *Carousel* when she was in 5th grade, and she's been acting ever since! Being active in theater arts while growing up taught Lela about teamwork, taking risks, and overcoming obstacles. It also built confidence and was the source of great friendships. As an adult, Lela works with several theatres in the area including The Phipps, Lyric Arts, Century College, Lakeshore Players, and Black Dirt Theater. In addition to acting in her spare time, Lela loves to travel internationally. Her favorite destinations are Egypt, Italy, and Peru. She lives near downtown St. Paul and enjoys concerts in Mears Park and regular trips to the farmer's market.