



# Wichita Symphony Orchestra

## Executive Director

### Organization

The Wichita Symphony Orchestra (WSO), founded in 1944, is one of the oldest and most active arts organizations in Kansas, providing the highest quality musical performances and music education opportunities for its increasingly diverse and adventurous audiences. WSO's annual programming, under the artistic leadership of Music Director and Conductor Daniel Hege, includes the Masterworks and Pops Series Concerts at Century II Concert Hall, Young People's Concerts, and the WSO Youth Orchestra and Ensembles.

Community collaborations embed WSO throughout Wichita offering creative partnerships, free concerts, masterclasses, performances, and programs with a growing array of organizations including Mark Arts, Wichita Art Museum, Botanica, Hutchinson and El Dorado Correctional Facilities, Greater Wichita YMCA, Radio Kansas, PBS Kansas, and Wichita State University.

WSO's Young People's Concerts field trips bring 12,000+ students to the concert hall each year for programming that demystifies and engages students in the classical form. This season included *Saint-Georges' Sword and Bow*, which highlighted the work of Joseph Bologne, the first known classical composer of African descent in performance with actors who took students on a journey to learn about Bologne's life and music.

WSO's performance-based youth programs began in 1947 with the Wichita Symphony Youth Orchestra and have expanded to five performance ensembles: Youth Symphony, Wind Ensemble, Repertory Orchestra, Concert Band, and Chamber Players, serving 300+ student musicians from 23 cities and 64 schools in grades four through twelve. Symphony musicians and faculty of Wichita State University lead the ensembles providing professional instruction, rehearsal, and performance opportunities with challenging repertoire and skill development weekly throughout the school year. With a consistent 100% high school graduation rate and nearly as many attending college, WSO proudly contributes to the high-quality education of the Wichita region. Professional performance opportunities provided to Wichita State University School of Music graduate students are a unique feature of WSO's decades-long partnership with Wichita State University.

WSO's upcoming 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2024-2025 will feature well-known symphonic works such as Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup>, Mozart's Symphony No. 40, and Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, and the work of diverse artists including composers Quinn Mason, Roberto Sierra, Valerie Coleman, and William Grant Still with guest artists Laura Jackson, Stewart Goodyear, and Joyce Yang. Highlights also include master cellist Alban Gerhardt performing Dvořák's Cello Concerto, the U.S. premiere in partnership with the Wichita Repertory Theatre of *War Horse in Concert*, and Wichita favorite Capathia Jenkins returns for WSO's first Pops Concert of the season in *She's Got Soul*.

WSO employs 85 per-service musicians utilizing the Integrated Media Agreement to publicize and distribute its performances, and benefits from a dedicated 120-voice volunteer Chorus under the leadership of Dr. Ryan Beeken. WSO has a 23-member board of directors led by Ebony Clemons and Don Reinhold serves as Chief Executive Officer, oversees a staff of 12, and will conclude his twelve-year tenure in August 2024. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, WSO estimates a total revenue of \$2.3 million with 35% from contributions and grants, 38% from program services, and 27% in interest and other revenues. WSO's permanently restricted endowment stands at \$9 million.

### Community

Wichita is the largest city in Kansas with a population of 650,000 in the metropolitan area and has evolved from its western plains' era, where it served as a critical trading post for cattle ranchers and western migration in the 1860s, to the hub of aircraft production in the early 1920s, to the vibrant and expanding multicultural city it is today. The City of Wichita is home to 389,000 people and includes a diverse population that is approximately 61% white, 17% Hispanic or Latino, 10% Black/African American, 5% Asian, and 7% mixed race.

Wichitans enjoy a high quality of life with an affordable cost of living that is 10% below the national average. Affordable housing options include a wide range of neighborhoods and housing styles from downtown lofts to suburbia. Wichita is home to many of the best primary education schools in the state of Kansas. The region also

features 18 public, private, and technical colleges and universities including the Wichita State University and University of Kansas School of Medicine. The City's Q-Line, Bike Share ICT, and electric scooter transportation system connect Wichita's diverse community. Distinct eateries, breweries, and outdoor spaces abound including the redesigned Naftzger Park in downtown Wichita with numerous gourmet food truck options, and Revolutsia, a shipping container development with shopping and dining.

First Fridays Gallery Crawl highlights and promotes a robust local art scene which earned Wichita a spot in Expedia's list of Most Artistic Towns in the United States. The Wichita Art Museum, Ulrich Museum of Wichita State University, and Wichita Symphony Orchestra anchor organizations complement the growing arts scene that includes Music Theatre Wichita, Mark Arts, Symphony in the Flint Hills, Kansas African American Museum, and the Mid-America All-Indian Museum. Popular multicultural events and festivals throughout the year include the Tallgrass Film Festival, Wichita Jazz Festival, Great Plains Renaissance Festival, Juneteenth Celebration, Riverfest, Paddy Day Parade, and the Prairie Fire Race Series. Wichita is home to minor league favorite Wichita Wind Surge, Wichita Thunder professional ice hockey team, Wichita Thunder indoor football team, Wichita Winger arena soccer league, and hosts the annual PGA Tour Wichita Open.

Wichita remains an active hub for aircraft production and home to over 50 aviation businesses including Textron Aviation (Cessna and Beechcraft), Spirit AeroSystems, Airbus, Cessna, Beechcraft, and Bombardier. Wichita's healthcare industry includes the Kansas Spine Hospital, Wesley Medical Center, Via Christi Health, and Wesley Children's Hospital. Koch Industries and Cargill, the two largest privately held companies in the U.S., are headquartered in Wichita.

Wichita was ranked the #1 Best City for First-time Homebuyers in 2023 by Money Magazine, #1 among Cities with the Lowest Cost of Living in 2021 by Move.org, #2 among Cities with Lowest Startup Costs in 2019 by SmartAsset, and Wichita was among Gallup's Top Cities for Work-Life Balance in 2020. Wichita was most recently named the #4 best city to move to in 2024 by Forbes.

Sources: [wealthup.com](http://wealthup.com); [census.gov](http://census.gov); [Wichita.gov](http://Wichita.gov); [visitwichita.com](http://visitwichita.com); [choosewichita.com](http://choosewichita.com); [money.com](http://money.com); [move.org](http://move.org); [smartasset.com](http://smartasset.com); [forbes.com](http://forbes.com).

## Position Summary

The Executive Director will advance the mission of the Wichita Symphony Orchestra, maintain its fiscal resiliency, and oversee WSO's management team. Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Executive Director will partner with the Music Director to enhance the brand, visibility, and artistic vision of WSO, engage with Wichita's diverse community, and build authentic relationships locally, regionally, and nationally. Actively engaged in supporting current and crafting new partnerships with other artistic, educational, civic, social justice, and other organizations, the Executive Director will be a visible presence and respected community leader. They will be proactive in board and donor relations with a focus on garnering philanthropic support, maximizing earned revenue opportunities and promoting fiscal responsibility throughout the organization. This individual will mentor, coach, guide, and advise a dynamic management team of emerging leaders empowering their professional growth and personal advancement.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Strategic Leadership and Community Engagement

- Guide the strategic vision and planning of WSO's future artistic, educational, and community position within the vibrant Wichita community, the region, and beyond.
- Develop strategies with and oversee implementation by WSO's management team in artistic administration, marketing, development, education, community relations, and finance.
- Innovate and elevate WSO's profile for current and potential new audiences, educators, program participants, community leaders, and donors.
- Nurture and develop robust collaborative partnerships locally and regionally to enhance the artistic, education, and community engagement goals of WSO.
- Actively engage and participate in the League of American Orchestras and similar peer-serving organizations, staying abreast of activities and developments in the orchestra industry, and advising the board on trends and practices that may be helpful to advance the WSO's objectives.
- Embrace other strategic leadership and community engagement responsibilities, as needed.

### **Revenue Enhancement and Board Governance**

- Oversee the development of strategic and innovative fundraising and marketing plans, in collaboration with the Development and Marketing Managers and Board of Directors, to maximize contributed and earned revenues.
- Identify, cultivate, and steward strong relationships with key community leaders and partners to diversify and expand the Symphony's revenue, partnership, and audience base.
- Regularly meet with current and potential donors through symphony program, community, and fundraising events in collaboration with the Development Manager, taking an active role as the primary fundraiser for WSO.
- Build and empower a diverse and inclusive board, representative of the community and reflective of the skillsets needed, who are engaged and empowered to leverage and secure resources and relationships for the Symphony.
- Develop and advise on board orientation, education, and engagement activities, guiding and updating board governance.
- Ensure regular and effective communications with the Board and engage and empower the management team in building direct relationships with the Board through shared reporting responsibilities and board engagement.
- Embrace other revenue enhancement & board governance responsibilities, as needed.

### **Artistic Engagement and Support**

- Serve as the Music Director and Conductor's main point of contact and engage with the musicians regularly in collaboration with the Orchestra Committee.
- Support the Music Director and Conductor in crafting compelling Symphony programs in alignment with programming and financial goals.
- Engage strategically with WSO's current, and lead the development of new, artistic and programming partners.
- Participate in collective bargaining agreement negotiations alongside the Orchestra Committee, building a collaborative relationship and reporting structure with the committee.
- Strategize with the Music Director and Conductor in negotiations with the artist staff, including the Chorus Director and Conductor, and education program artistic staff, including the Repertory Orchestra, and Youth Symphony, Chamber Players, Concert Band, and Wind Ensemble Conductors.
- Embrace other artistic engagement and support responsibilities, as needed.

### **Fiscal Resiliency and Organizational Diversity**

- Guide long-term financial planning and oversight in partnership with the Board of Directors Finance Committee, Controller, and Business Manager, maintaining a transparent reporting process and serving on the Endowment Committee of the Board.
- Steer the development of marketing strategies and action plans for concerts, ticket sales, and patron experience activities with the Marketing Manager.
- Oversee all financial matters including receivables, payables, and internal controls, and ensure strategic budgeting and sound day-to-day financial management.
- Serve as the WSO ambassador, participating in media interviews, public appearances, and presentations, in collaboration with the Marketing Manager and Partner for Audience Engagement.
- Champion organizational diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives with the board, staff, musicians, artists, and audiences.
- Manage health plan coverage and costs, benefit plan administration, employment policies, and employee performance reviews.
- Embrace other fiscal resiliency and organizational diversity responsibilities, as needed.

### **Traits and Characteristics**

The Executive Director will be a collaborative and innovative leader, internally and externally, guiding organizational and community alignment. This individual will embrace growth opportunities measured with a commitment to fiscal resilience. The Executive Director will be instinctive and authentic in establishing, cultivating, and building relationships throughout the region. A people-oriented problem solver who adeptly interacts with diverse individuals and stakeholder groups, the Executive Director will evolve the WSO brand and business model to meet the artistic, educational, and community needs of the diverse constituencies it serves.

Other key competencies include:

- **Creativity and Innovation** – The creativity to explore new approaches, partnerships, and solutions crafted to augment current operations and enhance organizational vision and goals.
- **Leadership and Teamwork** - The ability to organize and motivate others to accomplish goals, share responsibility for success and failure, create a sense of direction, develop a deeply rooted organizational culture, and gain active participation from the board, staff, musicians, donors, and strategic partners.
- **Interpersonal Skills and Customer Focus** – The clarity to demonstrate emotional intelligence and sensitivity when handling challenging issues while communicating effectively, building rapport, listening carefully, and relating well to an array of diverse constituencies.
- **Problem-solving, Negotiation, and Diplomacy** - The capacity to understand diverse perspectives and set a course of action that respects others, treats them fairly, regardless of personal biases or beliefs, and maintains positive and productive relationships in facilitating mutually beneficial agreements.

## Qualifications

A minimum of eight years of progressively responsible senior management experience in financial oversight, strategic planning, and community engagement is essential. Demonstrable expertise in cultivating philanthropic support, maximizing earned revenues, and financial accountability is necessary. A bachelor's degree or equivalent experience is required and a master's degree or relevant expertise in business, the arts, nonprofit management, or a related field is preferred. A passion for and commitment to the performing arts sector, specifically classical music, pops, and adventurous programming is expected. Candidates must have the ability to travel throughout the region regularly and the capacity to attend evening and weekend performances, programs, and events.

## Compensation and Benefits

The Wichita Symphony Orchestra offers an attractive compensation package with a base salary estimated in the range of \$100,000 to \$120,000. Benefits include health & dental insurance provided by Blue Cross Blue Shield with WSO covering 100% of employee premiums, vacation and sick leave, company-paid parking, and mileage reimbursement.

## Applications and Inquiries

To submit a cover letter and resume with a summary of demonstrable revenue, fiscal accountability, and community engagement accomplishments (electronic submissions preferred), please click [here](#) or visit [artsconsulting.com/opensearches](http://artsconsulting.com/opensearches). For questions or general inquiries about this job opportunity, please contact:

Renée Danger-James, Vice President



1040 First Avenue, Suite 352  
New York, New York 10022-2991  
Tel (888) 234.4236 Ext. 212  
Email [WichitaSymphony@ArtsConsulting.com](mailto:WichitaSymphony@ArtsConsulting.com)

***The Wichita Symphony believes a diverse and inclusive team is critical to our ongoing relevance and growth, beginning with the selection process. Therefore, the team is working to ensure comprehensive candidate pools and encourages candidates from diverse backgrounds to apply. The Wichita Symphony is an equal opportunity employer and considers qualified applicants for employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy, age, disability, veteran status, or any other protected factor under federal, state, or local law.***