

Organization

The Nashville Symphony (Symphony) is one of the most artistically ambitious and community-rooted orchestras in the United States, dedicated to inspiring and engaging a diverse and growing audience through extraordinary live music experiences. With a mission to entertain and educate, the Symphony is recognized for its innovative programming and its commitment to American music, including works by underrepresented composers. Founded in 1946 by World War II veteran Walter Sharp, the Symphony has grown into a leading cultural institution in the South and throughout the nation.

The Symphony owns and operates the iconic Schermerhorn Symphony Center (Schermerhorn), which is fast approaching its 20th anniversary in 2026. Located in the heart of Music City, the building's neo-Classical architecture and acoustic excellence make it one of the finest concert halls in the country. The 1,844-seat Laura Turner Concert Hall features soundproof windows, a 3,500-pipe concert organ, and a convertible seating system that allows the space to transform from theater-style seating to a ballroom configuration. These features support the Symphony's wide-ranging programming, which includes more than 150 concerts annually.



The Symphony's programming spans genres and generations, and the 2025–2026 season showcases its artistic breadth and commitment to innovation. The Classical Series features masterworks such as Beethoven's *Symphony No. 5*, Holst's *The Planets*, Verdi's *Requiem*, Mozart's *Symphony No. 41* ("Jupiter"), Dvořák's *Symphony No. 9* ("From the New World"), and Brahms' *Piano Concerto No. 2*. The season also amplifies underrepresented voices with works by Carlos Simon, Caroline Shaw, Julia Perry, Arturo Márquez, and Brian Field, including the world premiere of Field's *Everything Hurts*, which sets poetry by Amanda Gorman to symphonic music. Guest artists include Renée Fleming, Edgar Meyer, J'Nai Bridges, Zlatomir Fung, and Time for Three, with guest conductors such as Teddy Abrams, Gemma New, Jonathan Rush, and Robert Spano.

Education and community engagement are central to the Symphony's mission. Each year, the Symphony reaches tens of thousands of children and adults through free and low-cost programs such as Young People's Concerts for K–12 students, sectionals, and lessons for band and orchestra students, and Community Concerts throughout Middle Tennessee. Signature initiatives like "Is It a Fiddle or a Violin?", a collaboration with the Country Music Hall of Fame® & Museum, help bridge cultural traditions. The Accelerando program prepares young musicians from underrepresented ethnic communities for collegiate study and professional careers in orchestras, reflecting the Symphony's commitment to equity and access.

The Symphony's Pops and Special Events Series continues to blur genre boundaries, featuring performances with Dolly Parton (*Threads: My Songs in Symphony*), Jamey Johnson, Ben Rector, Michael Feinstein's tribute to Tony Bennett, The Secret Sisters, Cody Fry, and the U.S. Naval Academy Glee Club. The Movie Series returns with live orchestral scores accompanying *Frozen*, *Home Alone*, and *Star Wars*. The Jazz Series includes appearances by the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis, while the Ann & Monroe Carell Family Trust Family Series offers four Sunday afternoon concerts designed to introduce young audiences to orchestral music.

The Symphony remains one of the most prolific recording orchestras in the country with more than 40 releases on labels such as Naxos, Decca, and Deutsche Grammophon. These recordings have earned 14 GRAMMY® Awards and 27 nominations, including recognition for works by iconic artists such as Joan Tower, Stephen Paulus, and Michael Daugherty. The 2025–2026 season includes live recordings of Bates' *Passage* and *The Rhapsody of Steve Jobs*, as well as Jonathan Leshnoff's *Sacrifice of Isaac*, continuing the Symphony's legacy of championing contemporary American composers.

The Symphony employs a range of 74 to 83 full-time musicians, including two full-time librarians, and one long-term principal keyboard over a 44-week season under the Nashville Musicians Association, Local 257, Master Agreement of the American Federation of Musicians that evolves through July 31, 2029. Currently under the direction of Music Advisor Leonard Slatkin, the Symphony is in the midst of an international Music Director search. It otherwise employs 55 full-time and 152 part-time administrative and managerial employees, with Alan D. Valentine, President & CEO, concluding a pivotal 28-year tenure at the end of the 2025-2026 season. The Symphony Board of Directors includes 51 voting members and is led by Mary Cavarra, Chair, with Teresa Sebastian as Chair-Elect. Its Associate Board of Directors—a group of young professionals who support the Symphony's mission through networking, fundraising, and volunteer activities, particularly by leading the Crescendo Club to engage the next generation of supporters for the Symphony—consists of 24 members and is led by Courtney Orr, Chair, with Steven Attorri as Chair-Elect.



For the fiscal year ending July 31, 2026, the Symphony anticipates total revenues of approximately \$27.5 million with 50% from program services; 36% from contributions and grants; 9% from events and food & beverage; and 5% from investments and other income. It is currently supported by total endowment of \$28 million consisting of an \$18 million internal endowment and approximately \$10 million in endowment funds held at the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee with an integrated capital, artistic initiatives, and endowment campaign on the horizon subsequent to a recently completed 20-year capitalization needs assessment for the Schermerhorn.

Community

Home to more than two million people, the Nashville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is one of the fastest-growing areas in the United States and serves as a cultural and economic anchor for Middle Tennessee. The region is the ancestral homeland of the Mississippian peoples and later the Cherokee, Chickasaw, and Shawnee nations. Today, Nashville is a thriving, diverse metropolitan area celebrated for its creative industries, entrepreneurial energy, and distinctive Southern character. The population is increasingly diverse, with new immigrant communities contributing to Nashville's evolving cultural landscape. Its youthful energy and rapid growth make it an attractive destination for professionals, artists, and families alike.



The City of Nashville (Nashville), the capital of Tennessee, has a population of nearly 700,000 residents. Established as Fort Nashborough in 1779 along the Cumberland River, it grew from a river trading post into a rail and commercial hub and eventually became known worldwide as Music City. While the music and entertainment sector remains a powerful economic driver, generating roughly \$8.6 billion annually and supporting more than 80,000 jobs, Nashville's economy is broad and resilient with major activity in tourism, healthcare, higher education, technology, media, and professional services.

Nashville is home to over 20 colleges and universities, including Vanderbilt University, an R1 research university, Belmont University, Fisk University, and Tennessee State University. Over 500 healthcare corporations and institutions operate in Nashville, which contributes over \$97 billion in economic development to the region. Other prominent industries include advanced manufacturing, distribution & logistics, and technology.

Nashville's cultural life is vibrant and accessible. Major institutions such as the Frist Art Museum, Nashville Ballet, Nashville Opera, Nashville Repertory Theatre, National Museum of African American Music, and Tennessee Performing Arts Center anchor a growing ecosystem of visual and performing arts, supported by public art initiatives and festivals across the City. Walkable historic neighborhoods, leafy residential districts, and a growing network of greenways and riverfront parks give residents ample opportunities to enjoy everyday life. The city's rich food scene, live music venues, and year-round cultural offerings combine with a warm climate and central location to create an engaging and dynamic environment for creative professionals committed to community and impact.

Sources: censusreporter.org; coli.org; nashvillechamber.com; healthcarecouncil.com/health-care-industry/economic-impact

Position Summary

The President & CEO will be a visionary who guides the strategy, planning, and implementation of the unique Symphony-Schermerhorn business model in an iconic music, arts, and entertainment destination. Reporting to the Board of Directors and responsible for overall revenue generation, capital and artistic initiatives campaign, community engagement, musician relations, and managerial direction, the President & CEO will align the Symphony's mission, vision, and values with its artistic, educational, strategic, and financial goals in and for a rapidly evolving community. The President & CEO will ensure fiscal resiliency and facility vibrancy in leading significant programmatic and revenue initiatives that promote artistic excellence and impacts locally and nationally while distinguishing the Symphony's artistic caliber and the Schermerhorn as an international destination.

An external networker and public advocate for the importance of the arts and culture sector, the President & CEO will actively engage in the cultivation and stewardship of donors to sustain the Symphony's significant infrastructure and ensure its legacy. Enthusiastically representing the Symphony and promoting its role as a leading community asset that drives artistic, educational, social, and economic vitality, they will continue to foster authentic and deeply collaborative relationships with other arts, social, educational, and business organizations. The President & CEO will guide and inspire artistic and managerial team members to explore new opportunities that expand access, increase audiences, and ensure the Symphony's long-term success. They will foster a welcoming culture consciously designed to promote teamwork, unity, collaboration, innovation, adaptability, equity, and inclusion throughout and across the Symphony.

Roles and Responsibilities

Visionary Leadership and Business Model Innovation

- Lead the innovative application of a strategic plan that ensures the resilient growth, sustainability, and relevance of the Symphony in the dynamic community in which it exists and serves.
- Partner with the Board, artistic leadership, executive team, and community to define and achieve long-term artistic, educational, and financial goals.
- Collaborate with and support artistic leadership to design programs that highlight symphony musicians, guest conductors, and guest artists, where they can achieve the highest quality programs and performances.
- Leverage artistic, educational, community, and programmatic objectives by empowering innovative program concepts, audience engagement activities, revenue diversification opportunities, and special events that are in alignment with financial capacity.
- Guide artistic planning, programming, and production strategies while ensuring alignment with human, financial, and technological resources capabilities and community relevance.
- Expand and support impactful education and outreach programs that address and reflect community needs and promote music literacy and appreciation.
- Champion the Symphony's role in education, development, access, and inclusion, especially through programs like Accelerando and other community engagement initiatives.
- Oversee labor relations, including negotiation and administration of collective bargaining agreements.
- Embrace other visionary leadership and business model innovation responsibilities as needed.

Revenue Enhancement and Financial Resiliency

- Serve as the Symphony's primary ambassador in partnership with the Board, artistic leadership, and staff to advocate for institutional investment and advancement.
- Energetically and creatively identify, cultivate, and solicit major individual gifts, endowment contributions, corporate sponsorships, foundation support, and government grants.
- Strategize and implement effective capital, endowment, and planned giving campaign efforts with the Development team.
- Drive innovative and proactive marketing designed to elevate the financial success of both revenue generating programs and donor programs.
- Prioritize revenue diversification streams that align with the brand and impact of the organization and its venue.
- Proactively guide and support the Development and Marketing teams in meeting and exceeding annual and long-term contributed and earned revenue goals.
- Oversee all aspects of the Symphony's financial health, including budget development, cash flow, and compliance.

- Ensure transparent financial reporting and strong internal controls.
- Embrace other revenue enhancement and financial resiliency responsibilities as needed.

Board Relations and Community Engagement

- Be a visible and active presence as an ambassador and political advocate for the Symphony throughout the region.
- Establish, build, deepen, and broaden relationships with donors, civic and business leaders, the press, music industry executives, public agencies, community partners, and potential volunteers, among many others locally and nationally.
- Act as the primary liaison to the Board of Directors, partnering on policy, governance, community ambassadorship, and financial resiliency.
- Identify, cultivate, recruit, and onboard qualified, diverse, and actively engaged Board members in collaboration with the Board Governance Committee.
- Prepare reports and presentations for all Board and Executive Committee meetings in collaboration with the senior leadership team and the Board Officers.
- Serve as a voting member of the Board and all Board committees with staff liaisons that support each committee's goals and activities.
- Leverage digital technologies, partnerships, and innovative practices to extend the Symphony's reach and impact.
- Foster partnerships with schools, arts organizations, and nonprofits to extend the Symphony's impact.
- Embrace other board relations and community engagement responsibilities as needed.

Team Empowerment and Organizational Leadership

- Ensure strong, respectful relationships among musicians, artistic staff, guest artists, production, and administrative staff.
- Build, mentor, and lead a high-performing senior artistic and managerial leadership team, creating positive workplace environments, fostering inclusion, and ensuring accountability for best practices.
- Inspire internal staff teamwork and esprit de corps, which promotes a one-team ethos of collaboration across all internal staff administrative departments.
- Design effective recruitment, retention, and professional development practices for musicians, production, executive, and administrative staff.
- Embody and cultivate a positive and healthy organizational culture that prioritizes effective communication, team performance, cross-team collaboration, and mutual respect.
- Ensure the Symphony's physical infrastructure is well-maintained, safe, and actively utilized.
- Embrace other team empowerment and organizational leadership responsibilities as needed.

Traits and Characteristics

The President & CEO will be an inspirational leader with excellent communication skills and a strong ability to lead, motivate, and collaborate across artistic, administrative, and community spheres. They will be passionate about the mission and core focus of the Symphony, whose core repertoire is classical music. An individual with high emotional intelligence, this enthusiastic force will bring a strong aptitude to engage with various stakeholders on a regional, national, and international level. The President & CEO will model integrity, collaboration, empathy, and transparency while being accessible to the Board, staff, musicians, and community members. They will be active listeners who know how to encourage and embrace ideas, questions, and concerns from a wide array of stakeholders and stakeholder groups, and then translate those into actionable reality. A unifying and aspirational leader, the President & CEO will elevate the importance and impacts of the Symphony that reverberate broadly and deeply.

Other key competencies include:

- **Futuristic Thinking** – The ingenuity to envision, project, and/or create aspirational initiatives that are based on realistic strategies as a champion for initiatives that have specific, measurable, attainable, reviewable, and time-sensitive outcomes based on audience and market needs.

- **Leadership and Professional Accountability** – The ability to inspire and organize others, demonstrate appropriate levels of responsibility, embrace empathy, create a sense of purpose, be accountable for and hold others accountable to changing organizational needs and stakeholder expectations.
- **Decision Making, Time and Priority Management** – The dexterity to make decisions in a timely manner to balance and deliver desired outcomes within allotted time frames that are aligned with realistic human, financial, and technological resource investments and capabilities.
- **Influencing Others and Diplomacy** – The capacity to build trust, alliances, and networks of influence through active listening while seeking and appreciating multiple perspectives; developing and nurturing positive relationships with people across cultural, socioeconomic, and educational backgrounds; and demonstrating sensitivity and creativity in addressing challenging issues.

Qualifications

A minimum of 10 years of relevant senior management experience in maximizing philanthropic support, increasing earned revenues, designing resilient business models, and engaging deeply with a variety of constituencies and communities. Demonstrated strong results in individual and institutional donor cultivation, as well as overall financial and facility stewardship, are expected. Experience in effective strategic partnerships and active community participation is needed. Exceptional writing and verbal communication skills are required, as is the capacity and enthusiasm to attend evening and weekend performances and events. A master's degree or equivalent experience in business, arts administration, nonprofit governance, or a related field is preferred. A deep understanding of producing, presenting, or touring in the performing arts sector or related creative industries is valued but not necessarily required. A candidate who does not meet all the qualifications but possesses transferable or equivalent skills, experience, or education is encouraged to inquire or apply while highlighting those relevant areas.

Compensation and Benefits

Nashville Symphony provides a competitive and equitable compensation package with an estimated base salary in the range of \$350,000 to \$400,000. Benefits include medical, dental, and vision insurances; flexible spending account (FSA) for medical, dental, vision, and over the counter expenses; dependent care FSA for eligible childcare or eldercare expenses; 403(b) retirement plan with discretionary employer match; life and disability insurance; additional voluntary benefits such as accident insurance, critical illness and cancer coverage; a generous paid time off policy, and 14 paid holidays annually. Other perks include free 100% employer-paid parking, flexible work schedules, and an employee assistance program, along with the quality of life and vibrancy that Nashville offers.

Applications and Inquiries

To submit a cover letter and resume with a summary of demonstrable accomplishments, please click [here](#) or visit ArtsConsulting.com/OpenSearches. For questions or general inquiries about this job opportunity, please contact:

Bruce D. Thibodeau, Founder & Senior Advisor
Josyanne Roche, Vice President



292 Newbury Street, Suite 315
Boston, MA 02115

Tel (888) 234.4236 Ext. 201 (Thibodeau) and Ext. 245 (Roche)

Email NashvilleSymphony@ArtsConsulting.com

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