

ASPEN LEADERSHIP GROUP

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
WISCONSIN YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAS
MADISON, WISCONSIN



Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestras in the search for an Executive Director.

The Executive Director will lead Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestras (WYSO) into its next phase of growth and innovation. The Executive Director will play a pivotal role in overseeing the daily operations of WYSO and the WYSO Center for Music, serving as the public face of the organization both within the community and on a broader regional and national scale. This leadership role requires a strategic thinker who can inspire and manage a talented staff, ensuring the continued excellence of artistic programs while fostering a nurturing and collaborative work environment. The Executive Director also will be responsible for maintaining the financial health of WYSO, driving growth in membership and revenue, and overseeing a comprehensive development program to support its mission. Additionally, the Executive Director will build strong relationships with the WYSO Board and its committees, supporting their governance and strategic initiatives, and helping to shape the future vision of the organization in partnership with the Board and Music Director. This is an opportunity for a leader with a passion for youth music education to make a lasting impact on the lives of young musicians and the broader community served by WYSO.

Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestras was established in 1966 by Professor Marvin Rabin of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Music Department. More than 5,000 young musicians from communities throughout south central Wisconsin have participated in WYSO during its 50+ years of existence. Under the artistic direction of Kyle Knox, WYSO includes three full orchestras, two string orchestras, a chamber music program, a harp program, a percussion ensemble, a brass choir program, and the WYSO Music Makers program. WYSO enriches lives by providing transformational musical experiences and opportunities. Through their involvement with WYSO, young people are inspired to sustain a lifelong connection with music and to strive for personal excellence in music as well as in life.

Each year WYSO offers a full array of the finest instrumental training and performance opportunities to young musicians between the ages of five and 18. Three full orchestras, two string orchestras, and a variety of ensemble programs from Harp to Percussion to Brass Choir form the core of the WYSO Orchestral Program.

The *WYSO Orchestra Program* is perfect for the student who has been introduced to an instrument—and loves playing. This extension of school music and private lessons introduces musicians as young as eight years old to a community of players as passionate about music as they are. Students learn and grow alongside other musicians who travel to the Madison area from 19 counties in south central Wisconsin each Saturday for 33 weeks throughout the school year. Performances are integral to the program, from chamber music recitals to full orchestral programs, from the percussion extravaganza to community and international tours.

The *WYSO Chamber Music Program* is often called a conversation among friends as the music is written so that each instrument plays a unique part. Students take turns leading and following and learn to listen closely to each other.

The *WYSO Music Makers Program* supports students who would like to learn instrumental music in a non-competitive environment, regardless of ability to pay. The program provides instruments, music, and instruction to a diverse group of students who may not have any previous instrumental experience. In Music Makers, students find a diverse learning community of other students who are passionate about music. Almost 70% of the students speak a language other than English in the home, and at WYSO they truly discover that music is a universal language.

WYSO orchestras typically rehearse on Saturdays during the academic year, perform three to four public concerts per season, and tour regionally, nationally, and internationally. WYSO's Youth Orchestra has toured to Peru, Italy, Argentina, Central Europe, Canada, Japan, Scotland, Spain, France, Colorado, Iowa, and Washington, D.C.

WYSO alumni are an essential part of the WYSO family. From the first orchestra members in 1966 to the most recent high school graduates, alumni have stayed in touch to share where they are and what they are doing. From musicians to teachers to scientists to politicians, WYSO alumni are making a difference in the world.

WYSO CENTER FOR MUSIC

For the first time in its history, WYSO has its own home at 1118 East Washington Avenue. The new \$33 million building adds to a growing youth arts corridor on the near east side of Madison, and joins the Madison Youth Arts Center, Madison Youth Choirs, and the Children's Theater of Madison. Construction on the project began nearly two years ago, and WYSO was able to begin occupying the building in December 2023. Collectively, philanthropists donated \$22.7 million to the project, with \$5.8 million contributed by 200 other community members. The building's design is intentional, outfitted with community spaces, sound-proofing technology, and rehearsal rooms that have acoustics suited for music-making. From the outside, the 40,000-square-foot structure is reminiscent of the curves of musical instruments. Upon walking inside, the hustle and bustle of traffic from East Washington Avenue fades away. WYSO's new home can accommodate all the organization's programs under a single roof including state-of-the-art rehearsal space for orchestras and ensembles of all sizes; studio teaching spaces for area musicians; administrative offices; a music library; space for all WYSO's current orchestras and Music Makers students; and room to grow programs, as well as welcome arts and community organizations to use the building.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Executive Director will report to the Board of Directors, led by President Mary S. Gerbig, and will collaborate closely with the Music Director, who also reports to the Board of Directors. The Executive Director will supervise five direct reports, the Community Partnerships Director, Development and Communications Director, Facilities Director, Finance Manager, and Operations Director. With the growth of the organization, the infrastructure is evolving.

FROM THE PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In a historic period of growth, the Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestras is embarking on the search for a new Executive Director and collaborative partner.

WYSO has supported youth music education in our community with five incredible youth orchestras, an award-winning chamber music program, a nationally recognized percussion ensemble, and the WYSO Music Makers, a program for students across diverse populations that provides instruments, lessons, and ensemble opportunities.

Our students have achieved critical acclaim in world renowned symphony orchestras, as composers and conductors, as outstanding music educators and as experts in educational policy. We have engaged and committed parents, students, staff, and board members in the WYSO programs. The new WYSO Center for Music is a world class facility that serves as the platform for transformative experiences as students create music together and form new friendships.

We hope you consider applying for the Executive Director position and join us in our mission and vision!

—Mary S. Gerbig, President, WYSO Board of Directors

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership

The Executive Director will

- in partnership with the Board and Music Director, set and implement the strategic vision for the organization;
- oversee the operations of WYSO and WYSO Center for Music;
- develop and maintain a positive culture and promote collaboration and transparency throughout the WYSO organization;
- serve as the face of WYSO, internally and externally, in the neighborhood and community, with members, families, staff, boards, committees, donors, and other stakeholders; and
- represent WYSO locally, regionally, and nationally.

Staff Management

The Executive Director will

- provide support and guidance to the Music Director in the recruitment and supervision of high-caliber artistic staff, as well as supervise staff recruitment, employment relations, retention, and performance management organization-wide; and
- develop and optimize staff infrastructure for organization's growth.

Financial Management and Operations

The Executive Director will

- oversee the financial health of WYSO and WYSO Center for Music;
- prioritize financial resources in support of efficient day-to-day operations and long-term growth;
- oversee growth in membership and other revenue sources, including space rentals;
- develop and manage budgets;
- manage relationships with outside professional and financial organizations; and
- oversee financial reporting including the annual audit.

Fundraising and Marketing

The Executive Director will

- build and guide WYSO's comprehensive development program in order to achieve revenue growth and sustainability, support program operations, maintain strong cash reserves, and build the endowment fund held by the WYSO Foundation;
- work with committees and development staff to strategize and execute fundraising opportunities and campaigns that meet fundraising goals;
- build and maintain relationships with funders and prospective funders with a focus on securing major gifts from individuals;
- help identify grant opportunities;
- serve as the primary contact, secretary, and ex officio member of the WYSO Foundation, a separate 501(c)(3), established for the purpose of accepting and managing gifts, bequests of property, and the income realized for benefit of the WYSO; and
- oversee all marketing programs and activities.

Board Relations

The Executive Director will

- build trusting relationships with the Board of Directors and its committees, serving as the primary contact for the Board and its officers;
- provide the timely and accurate information necessary for the Board to fulfill its fiduciary duties, function efficiently, and make informed decisions;
- support the Executive, Governance, Personnel, Finance, Development, and ad hoc committees;
- advise and support the Board in recruiting, onboarding, and retaining diverse members; and
- collaborate with the Board and staff on implementation of the strategic plan.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestras is governed by an engaged Board of Directors—a close-knit and dedicated group who provide the organization with time, wisdom, and resources. Mary Gerbig serves as President. Other officers include Bruce Matthews, Immediate Past President; Javier Garay, Vice-President; Marie Justice, Vice-President; Karen Renee Kritsch, Vice-President; Nate Boebel, Treasurer; and Kathy Schell, Secretary.

ARTISTIC LEADERSHIP

Kyle Knox

Music Director & Youth Orchestra Conductor

In the fall of 2018, Kyle Knox assumed the positions of Music Director of the Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestras and Youth Orchestra Conductor and Associate Conductor of the Madison Symphony Orchestra. Recent past and upcoming conducting credits include the Milwaukee Symphony (on both their *Family* and *Connections* concert series), the Madison Symphony's *Beyond the Score* (including Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* and Mahler's *Symphony No. 4*), their full annual Education Series (including their *Fall* and *Spring Youth* concerts, *Community Concerts*, *Symphony Soup*, and the *Bolz Final Forte*), as well as *Concert on the Green*. In works for the stage, Kyle led Mark Adamo's *Little Women* for Madison Opera, and later helped coordinate a studio artist showcase in the first ever collaboration between that company and WYSO.

Other stage credits include *Albert Herring*, *The Turn of the Screw*, and *Transformations* with UW Opera, as well as *Die Fledermaus*, *The Gondoliers*, and *H.M.S. Pinafore* with Madison Savoyards. Additionally, he has conducted UW Music Clinic's High School Honors Orchestra.

He was formerly a clarinetist with the Milwaukee Symphony, Santa Fe Opera, and Philadelphia Orchestras, and on faculty at UW-Milwaukee. His festival credits include Tanglewood, Spoleto (Italy), Santa Fe Chamber Music, and Bowdoin Summer Music Festivals, as well as the New York String Orchestra Seminar. He has recorded for the Koch and Naxos labels and has been featured numerous times on NPR's *Performance Today*.

Kyle has premiered works by Osvaldo Golijov, Tan Dun, Sean Shepherd, Huang Ruo, and Jonathan Leshnoff, among many others. Nico Muhly's chamber work *Service Music* (2004) was written for and dedicated to him. His debut album, a recording of Conrad Susa's chamber opera *Transformations* (the work's world premiere recording) will be released soon. He studied clarinet with Ricardo Morales and Yehuda Gilad and conducting with James Smith. He holds degrees from Julliard and UW-Madison.

PREFERRED COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestras seeks an Executive Director with

- a sincere interest in committing to the mission of Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestras—to enrich lives by providing transformational musical experiences and opportunities for young people, inspiring them to develop a lifelong connection with music and to strive for personal excellence in music and in life;
- experience as a visible, inspiring leader with an ability to motivate internal and external stakeholders;
- an ability to work collaboratively and transparently with staff and other stakeholders;
- exceptional financial management and business development skills including experience in budget development and meeting financial goals;
- experience hiring, retaining, managing, and mentoring talented, high-performing staff;
- strategic planning experience including experience growing organizations of similar size and scope;
- fundraising experience including an ability to develop productive relationships with current and prospective funders while leveraging the time and talent of development staff and board members in fundraising activities;
- strong communication skills across platforms, including public speaking and writing;
- a visionary mindset and an ability to serve as an idea generator and problem solver; and
- an ability to relate to diverse populations.

A bachelor's degree in business administration, a degree in arts management, or an equivalent combination of education and experience is preferred for this position, as is at least five years of experience in a leadership role at an organization of similar size, scope, and mission, particularly in the arts. Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestras will consider candidates with a broad range of backgrounds. If you are excited about this position and feel that you can contribute to WYSO, but your experience does not exactly align with every qualification listed above, we encourage you to apply.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

The salary range for this position is \$130,000 to \$140,000 annually. WYSO offers a comprehensive package of benefits.

LOCATION

This position is in Madison, Wisconsin.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. ***Cover letters should be responsive to the mission of Wisconsin Symphony Youth Orchestras as well as the responsibilities and qualifications presented in the prospectus.*** Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the successful candidate has been selected.

To apply for this position, visit: [Executive Director, Wisconsin Symphony Youth Orchestras](#).

To nominate a candidate, please contact Ron Schiller, ronschiller@aspenleadershipgroup.com.

All inquiries will be held in confidence.