



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
COLUMBUS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
COLUMBUS, OHIO



columbus
symphony

Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with the Columbus Symphony Orchestra in the search for a Chief Executive Officer.

The Chief Executive Officer, a visionary, strategic, and innovative leader, will play a pivotal role in shaping the Columbus Symphony Orchestra's ascendance—ensuring its continued growth, relevance, and impact within the community and beyond. The Chief Executive Officer will assume a wide range of responsibilities, from strategic planning and fiscal management to marketing, fundraising, and advocacy. The Chief Executive Officer will work collaboratively with key stakeholders to uphold the Symphony's mission and advance its long-term vision. With a blend of strategic vision, financial acumen, and dedication to artistic excellence, the Chief Executive Officer will lead the Columbus Symphony Orchestra towards a vibrant and sustainable future.

Since 1951, the Columbus Symphony Orchestra (CSO) has been proud to serve as central Ohio's flagship music performance organization. Guided by Music Director Rossen Milanov, CSO musicians, conductors, chorus, and renowned guest artists bring extraordinary talent, passion, and the highest standards of musicianship to enrich the community. The CSO's innovative programming spans Masterworks, Pops, Nationwide Picnic with the Pops, Education, and Community Engagement, reaching diverse audiences across central Ohio. The Symphony plays an integral role in Columbus' vibrant art scene, serving over 159,000 central Ohioans, with 2.3 million reached, and impacting 28,000 children, families, and teachers.

Three venues allow audiences to experience world-class music in the heart of Columbus. From classical music to Pops performances, the world's best perform with the Columbus Symphony at the Ohio Theatre. The theatre's lush interior, excellent acoustics, and state-of-the-art stage facilities have made it a favorite of guest artists and conductors. The breathtaking details, including the 21-foot-high chandelier, and opulent Spanish-Baroque architecture and design make any night out at the Ohio an event to remember. The Columbus Commons is nine acres of live, green space located in the heart of Downtown. Featuring the state-of-the-art Columbus Bicentennial Pavilion, it is home to the Columbus Symphony's Nationwide Picnic with the Pops and Popcorn Pops series. The Davidson Theatre is a modern space. This 903-seat facility opened in 1989 as part of the Vern Riffe Center for Government and the Arts. It offers intimate performance experiences including Columbus Symphony Pops concerts.

Making a meaningful impact as the forefront music education resource in the community, the Columbus Symphony Orchestra is committed to educating and entertaining individuals of all ages. The Symphony nurtures talent, cultivates future audiences, supports intellectual development, and ignites creativity in students, families, teachers, and lifelong learners. Each year, thousands of students throughout the greater Columbus area participate in the CSO's Young People's Concert. Concerts are programmed at the Ohio Theatre and are thematically based and grade appropriate. Pre-concert materials are provided for teachers and students based on the Ohio Academic content standards.

Mindful Music Moments is a program that teaches stress reduction and mindfulness techniques through classical music. At the start of each day, students listen to four minutes of recorded classical music and relaxation prompts during morning announcements. Part music appreciation and part stress-reduction techniques, the program offers insight into composers and music history while taking a moment to calm students' minds and prepare them to learn. This program is offered free to all Columbus City Schools and Central Ohio preschools.

The mission of the All-City Program is to give students and teachers the opportunity to connect with the broader Columbus music community by providing access to opportunities with professional musicians, conductors, and venues. New in 2024, the All-City Program has shifted to partner with high school instrumental teachers to offer support and enrichment to music students within the school day for an eight-week-long residency. The culmination of the residency is a Festival Concert with each school performing one selection and a combined performance with the select All City Ensemble Orchestra.

The CSO brings the transformative power of music into the community. Aligned with the Symphony's strategic plan, the CSO strives to be an organization that makes a difference by identifying and advancing new channels of accessibility and developing new opportunities for the dynamically growing community served. Proudly committed to making a difference through music, the CSO extends its reach to diverse locations, including local hospitals, nursing homes, retirement communities, food pantries, correctional facilities, and more. Committed to deepening its service to the community, the Symphony launched its Cares program in 2018. The program is designed to support the missions of Central Ohio social service organizations through the creation of partnerships that bring the power of music to their clients, constituencies, students, and staff. In just its first year, the program served approximately 2,000 people across 18 different non-profit organizations, and since then, its impact has only grown.

Last year, the CSO continued serving the community through "We are here for YOU," an innovative three-year initiative centered on extraordinary and meaningful service, which is making music accessible to all. CSO supports students: 250 students enrolled in four youth orchestras, 5,076 students attended Young People's Concerts, 7,547 students accessed free remote curriculum, and 11,000 students reached at school concerts, and more than 2,500 children ages six to 16 attended Masterworks concerts for free. The CSO performed six free community concerts at local parks in diverse neighborhoods. Nearly 2,000 free tickets were provided for veteran, active-duty military, front-line workers, and families for CSO performances. Ten Ohio counties outside Franklin County were directly served by CSO programs in their communities, reaching 16 zip codes and 14,000 people. And in its efforts to inspire, over 4,000 hospital workers and families were reached during CSO visits.

AN ICONIC PERFORMANCE VENUE

Among the Columbus Symphony Orchestra's most ambitious projects is the construction of a 200,000-square-foot concert hall on the banks of the Scioto River that would provide the city with an iconic performance venue while boosting community and education initiatives.

The venue would feature a 1,600-seat main orchestra hall with exquisite acoustics, education and rehearsal spaces to support the symphony and its outreach programs, a flexible performance space available for use by community arts organizations and the public, and multiple gathering and event spaces ranging in size from an intimate lounge to a large venue with a capacity of 500. The concert hall would serve a multitude of purposes for the community, not the least of which is to be a highly visible space that would put Columbus "on the map" as a major cultural force in American performing arts. The new hall would feature a year-round schedule of performances from the symphony and other interested entities, freeing up its current home, the historic Ohio Theatre on Capitol Square (a 2,800 seat 1920's era proscenium hall equipped for Broadway) to expand its available dates for Broadway shows, Ballet, Opera, and other large performances.

The envisioned hall would be housed in a new building at 181 Washington Boulevard, just south of COSI and the National Veterans Memorial and Museum. It would be the first and only large performance venue in Columbus specifically acoustically calibrated for the live music performances including symphonic music. The symphony has been engaged for over a year in planning efforts for the hall with a team of internationally renowned experts including acoustician Paul Scarbrough (Akustics), theater planning consultant Schuler Shook, theater operations consultant AMS Planning & Research, and Architecture and Engineering firm AECOM. Plans are preliminary and still under development, but the conceptual renderings and promotional materials touting the project's anticipated impact have been extremely well-received by the Columbus community.

Preliminary estimates for the cost of the facility are approximately \$275 million which the Symphony plans to fund with \$135 million of philanthropic donations and \$140 million from various local, state, and federal funding sources. Though still early in the process, the Symphony has already received commitments of nearly \$50 million including \$27 million of private donations and \$20.5 million awarded by the State of Ohio. Significant additional fundraising progress expected in coming months as the public financing model becomes much more fully defined.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Chief Executive Officer will report to the board of trustees and have comprehensive responsibility for all functions of the organization, deciding on its structure. The only position not reporting to the Chief Executive Officer will be the music director, who reports to the board but works closely with the Chief Executive Officer. Additionally, the Chief Financial and finance accounting functions have a dotted line reporting relationship (support provided by CAPA).

FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

As we stand on the cusp of a new era for the Columbus Symphony Orchestra, the opportunity before you is as vibrant and exhilarating as the finest symphony. This is a momentous time to join us, a time when the arts have never been more essential to the fabric of our community. The Columbus Symphony Orchestra is a beacon of culture and education, a gathering of dedicated souls who believe in the transformative power of music. Your leadership will be the baton guiding this orchestra to new heights, fostering an environment where creativity and tradition harmonize in a celebration of timeless artistry.

We are custodians of a legacy that dates to 1951, yet we are ever evolving, striving to reach broader audiences to create meaningful connections, and enrich the community through extraordinary talent, passion, dedication, and the highest standards of musicianship.

As our Chief Executive Officer, you will be at the heart of this evolution, shaping the future while honoring the rich history of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra. Your vision will lead the way in making the Symphony an integral part of our city's cultural landscape, ensuring that the joy and solace found in our music continue to touch lives for generations to come. We invite you to join us in this journey, to share in our passion for music and our commitment to enriching the lives of our community.

—Amy Shore, Secretary, Board of Trustees

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief Executive Officer will

- lead a comprehensive strategic planning initiative to assess the orchestra's long-term health and direction, collaborating with stakeholders to identify opportunities for growth and innovation;
- partner with the Music Director, Board Chair, and Finance Committee to develop the annual budget and establish policies for sound fiscal management while ensuring responsible stewardship of financial resources and adherence to budgetary parameters;
- work closely with Marketing, the Music Director, and the Chief Operating Officer to oversee season planning and implement a strategic marketing effort while driving initiatives to increase subscription and individual ticket sales, special concert events, and other revenue-generating opportunities;
- with the assistance of the VP of Development, serve as a frontline fundraiser for the organization, cultivating relationships with donors, sponsors, educators, government leaders, and partners to secure financial support and advance the CSO's mission;
- build and nurture community relationships across the arts organizations;
- provide the tools and opportunities needed to achieve artistic success within budgetary parameters;
- coordinate programming efforts with musicians to ensure alignment with artistic goals and organizational objectives;
- bring innovative ideas, energies, programs, and initiatives to the CSO, fostering a culture of innovation and excellence across all organizational activities while respecting orchestra tradition of the CSO;
- represent the CSO externally throughout Columbus and the metropolitan area, acting as a visible spokesperson alongside the Music Director;
- position the CSO as a catalyst for engaging future generations of music lovers through education and community engagement programs;
- serve as the primary board advisor and liaison, inspiring and guiding best practice governance, strong participation, diverse appointments, and support of *OneCSO*;
- foster a culture of collaboration among musicians, board, staff, volunteers, and affiliates;

- oversee the hiring and management of the administrative staff, providing leadership and guidance to department heads while supporting and strengthening the CSO's culture of collaboration and inclusion;
- maintain a strong working relationship with musicians with an emphasis on the musician's leadership related to the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), including compliance and documentation; ensure fair and mutually beneficial agreements are reached, addressing any technical or human resources issues that arise, and providing timely and effective resolution; and foster a positive and collaborative working environment by actively engaging with musicians, soliciting feedback, and addressing concerns;
- sustain the CSO's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion as critical to its future success and lead by example in fostering a culture of continual learning and excellence;
- communicate regularly with professional colleagues in the arts community, sharing information and current trends involving symphony orchestras and keeping abreast of existing and emerging artists and repertoire to ensure the CSO remains relevant and responsive to audience preferences;
- manage capital projects related to musician facilities and equipment, ensuring they meet the needs and standards of the musicians and the organization; and
- collaborate with internal stakeholders to advocate for resources and support necessary for musician engagement initiatives and projects.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Columbus Symphony Orchestra is governed by an engaged Board of Trustees, committed to supporting the future of the CSO. Its active committee structure supports key priorities such as strategic planning, community engagement, music education, and audience development. Several board members are musicians themselves and all are passionate about the power of music to bring communities together. The 27-member Board of Trustees is comprised of community leaders from many sectors—business, health care, academia and the judicial system and includes four current or retired CEOs, three physicians, five current or retired C-suite executives, one federal judge, and several owners of or partners in consulting firms. Officers include Chair Stephen E. Markovich, MD, Ohio Health, President and CEO; Co-Vice Chair Robert Morrison, Jr., Midwest Trust & FCI Advisors, Managing Director; Co-Vice Chair Nelson Yoder, Crawford Hoying, Principal; Treasurer Steve Snethkamp, Ernst & Young, Partner (retired); and Secretary Amy T. Shore, Nationwide, Executive Vice President & Chief Customer Officer.

ARTISTIC LEADERSHIP

Rossen Milanov

Music Director

Respected and admired by audiences and musicians alike, Rossen Milanov is currently the Music Director of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra, Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra, Princeton Symphony Orchestra, and Chief Conductor of the Slovenian RTV Orchestra in Ljubljana. Milanov has established himself as a conductor with considerable national and international presence. Past positions include Music Director of Symphony Orchestra of Bulgarian National Radio, New Symphony Orchestra in Sofia, Symphony in C in New Jersey, and Orquesta Sinfónica del Principado de Asturias (OSPA) in Spain. Nationally he has appeared with the Colorado, Detroit, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Baltimore, Seattle, Fort Worth Symphonies, and National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center, Link-Up education projects with Carnegie Hall with the Orchestra of St. Luke's, and with the Civic Orchestra in Chicago.

Internationally, he has collaborated with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra de la Suisse Romand, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Aalborg, Latvian, and Hungarian National Symphony Orchestras, and the orchestras in Toronto, Vancouver, KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic in South Africa, Mexico, Colombia, Sao Paolo, Belo Horizonte, and New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. In the Far East he has appeared with NHK, Sapporo, Tokyo, Singapore Symphonies, Hyogo Performing Arts Center, Malaysian, and Hong Kong Philharmonics.

Noted for his versatility, Milanov is also a welcomed presence in the worlds of opera and ballet. He has collaborated with Komische Oper Berlin (Shostakovich's Lady Macbeth of Mtzensk), Opera Oviedo with the Spanish premiere of Tchaikovsky's Mazzepa and Bartok's Bluebeard's Castle (awarded best Spanish production for 2015), Opera Columbus (Verdi's La Traviata, Aida, Rigoletto, and Tchaikovsky Eugene Onegin). At The Princeton Festival he conducted productions of Britten's Albert Herring, Derrick Wang's Scalia/Ginsburg, and Rossini's Barber of Seville.

Milanov was the recipient of a Columbus Performing Arts Prize by The Columbus Foundation. Under his leadership the Symphony has expanded its reach by connecting original programing with community-wide initiatives such as focusing on women composers, nature conservancy, presenting original festivals, and supporting and commissioning new music.

Rossen Milanov studied conducting at the Bulgarian Music Academy, Tanglewood Music Center, Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, and The Juilliard School in New York, where he received the Bruno Walter Memorial Scholarship.

PREFERRED COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

The Columbus Symphony Orchestra seeks a Chief Executive Officer with

- a commitment to the mission of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra—to inspire and build a strong community through music;
- progressive leadership experience within the arts or non-profit sector in roles that demand strategic planning, fiscal management, fundraising, stakeholder engagement, and team leadership;
- vision, determination, and an ability to lead and inspire teams toward a common goal while fostering a culture of collaboration and excellence;
- strong business acumen and a history of effective financial management and fundraising success;
- experience in budgeting, revenue generation, expense management, and diversifying funding sources to ensure the financial sustainability of an organization;
- an ability to collaborate effectively with internal teams, external partners, and the Board of Trustees to achieve shared goals and objectives;
- experience in team mentorship, talent development, and creating a culture of trust, respect, and collaboration;
- exceptional verbal and written communication skills, with an ability to engage and inspire diverse stakeholders, including patrons, donors, board members, staff, musicians, and community leaders;
- a visionary leadership approach and an ability to develop and execute innovative, forward-looking strategies that advance mission and long-term goals;
- experience in strategic planning, trend analysis, and navigating challenges while identifying opportunities for growth and impact;
- an ability to cultivate strong relationships and partnerships with donors, sponsors, government officials, educators, community organizations, and other key stakeholders;

- experience in stewardship, cultivation, and leveraging networks to support mission and financial sustainability;
- a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion as core values in all aspects of organizational culture, programming, and operations and experience promoting diversity and fostering an inclusive environment where all voices are heard and valued; and
- a deep passion for music and the performing arts, with an understanding of orchestral repertoire, programming trends, and the importance of arts education and community engagement.

A bachelor's degree focused on arts administration, non-profit management, business administration, or music or an equivalent combination of education and experience and at least 10 years of progressive leadership experience in executive roles within the arts or non-profit sector, is preferred for this position. The Columbus Symphony will consider candidates with a broad range of backgrounds. If you are excited about this role and feel that you can contribute to the CSO, 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 \$200,000 to \$250,000 annually. The Columbus Symphony Orchestra offers a comprehensive package of benefits including medical, dental, vision, life insurance, disability insurance, an employee assistance program, 403(b) retirement plan, and generous paid time off.

LOCATION

This position is in Columbus, Ohio. The second-largest city and fastest-growing metropolitan area in the Midwest, Columbus is a vibrant and diverse place to live and work, filled with arts, culture, entertainment, and an energetic workforce. Columbus is centrally located within a one-day drive or one-hour flight to nearly half the population of the U.S. and Canada including Atlanta, Charlotte, Chicago, Nashville, New York City, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Washington D.C., and Toronto. Columbus boasts more than 26 colleges, universities, and technical schools, with the nation's second-highest number of college students per capita. The Ohio State University, located just north of downtown and the Short North Arts District, leads enrollment with more than 66,000 students. The metropolitan area's K-12 education options include schools ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as top U.S. high schools.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. ***Cover letters should be responsive to the mission of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra and the responsibilities and qualifications specified in the position prospectus.*** Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the successful candidate has been selected.

To apply for this position, visit: [Chief Executive Officer, Columbus Symphony Orchestra](#).

To nominate a candidate, please contact Gregory Leet: gregoryleet@aspingleadershipgroup.com.

All inquiries will be held in confidence.