

HARTFORD SYMPHONY ORCHSTRA
MUSIC DIRECTOR
POSITION DESCRIPTION



THE POSITION

The Music Director of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra (HSO) is the symphony's principal conductor and artistic director, responsible for maximizing the orchestra's artistic potential, shaping its role in the communities it serves, and driving audience development and growth. This includes developing and communicating an artistic vision, programming major concert series, selecting repertoire and artists, and leading rehearsals and performances to ever-higher artistic standards. As the HSO's artistic leader, the Music Director also works to expand the orchestra's visibility and engagement across diverse communities by serving as a visible and present advocate for the organization across the region and state. The role requires close collaboration with the President & CEO, staff leadership, Board of Directors, musicians and their leadership, and community stakeholders, and includes active participation in fundraising. The Music Director position is full-time with a high degree of flexibility, reporting to the President & CEO. A US-based music director is preferred with Hartford-based residency negotiable. The anticipated start date is September 1, 2027.

CANDIDATE PROFILE

The ideal candidate will be a dynamic and inspiring conductor with exceptional musicianship and proven leadership skills. They will bring deep knowledge of orchestral repertoire across a range of cultural traditions and musical genres, along with a passion for exploring innovative and inclusive programming. Outstanding communication and interpersonal skills, a collaborative leadership style, and a clear artistic vision are essential. Prior experience as a Music Director or in a comparable artistic leadership role is strongly preferred. Compensation, including benefits, is competitive and commensurate with experience and qualifications.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Artistic Vision and Communication

Provide clear, compelling artistic leadership that helps define and communicate the HSO's artistic identity. Advance organizational goals in audience development and growth, marketing, and fundraising through inspired programming and effective storytelling.

Musical Excellence and Leadership

Lead the orchestra in maintaining exceptional artistic standards through rigorous rehearsal practices, insightful musical interpretation, and strong podium leadership. Collaborate closely with artistic staff, musicians and others to deliver exceptional performances and experiences that reflect the HSO's mission and vision.

Community Engagement and Institutional Advocacy

Serve as a visible and dynamic ambassador for the HSO on and off the stage. Represent the organization in the community, support education and community engagement initiatives, participate in fundraising activities, and help grow the HSO's presence across diverse platforms, including traditional and digital media, and public events.

ARTISTIC DUTIES

- Curate and deliver exceptional performance experiences across diverse musical genres and concert settings, ensuring the highest standards of artistic excellence
- Take primary responsibility for overseeing the artistic direction and ongoing development of the orchestra, ensuring alignment with the organization's vision and goals
- Plan the overall concert season in partnership with the CEO and Director of Artistic Operations, including but not limited to major concert series, education concerts, chamber ensemble series, special events, etc.
- Select repertoire to be performed in partnership with the CEO and Director of Artistic Operations; solicit input and collaborate with HSO musicians, staff, Board representatives, community partners, and others as appropriate
- Utilize interpretive skills that enable communication of the emotional content of a wide range of music, producing relevant, interesting and compelling performances
- Work with artistic operations to determine stage set-up to maximize acoustic and artistic performance
- Oversee musician personnel decisions including participation in auditions, musician hiring and performance evaluations; communicate artistic expectations clearly and address performance concerns through established processes to uphold the orchestra's artistic standards
- Employ effective baton technique, command of physical gestures and effective verbal communication that clearly and concisely convey musical vision and interpretation
- Assess musicians' individual strengths and weaknesses, build relationships based on respect and trust, create a collaborative environment and inspire orchestra musicians and guest artists to work towards common goals, giving their best
- Select soloists and guest conductors with discernment, ensuring alignment with the HSO's artistic vision and programming goals; the ability to leverage a strong professional network to attract high-caliber talent is highly valued.

GENERAL & ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES

- Engage and inspire audiences of all ages through compelling musical interpretation and effective verbal communication, both on and off stage
- Explore new directions in music-making, new audience development and creative development of HSO musicians and staff
- Research and prepare presentations that serve to elevate audience knowledge, music appreciation and concert experiences
- Serve as a key partner in shaping the HSO's long-term strategic vision, contributing to the development and execution of comprehensive plans that advance the organization's mission and sustainability
- Support fundraising and promotional endeavors by sustaining and enhancing relationships with donors and institutional partners
- Effectively collaborate with the staff, Board and Orchestra Committee as part of a management team; maintain prompt and regular communication including commitments outside the HSO

- Foster an environment of openness and collaboration, valuing diverse perspectives and inspiring creativity within the organization
- Actively champion education and youth programs, regardless of level of direct involvement
- Adhere to the artistic planning schedule outlined in the Music Director contract and operate effectively within established budgetary limits
- Possess a strong understanding of contract negotiations and the nuances of personnel relations; ability to work within the parameters of collective bargaining agreements
- Participate in the HSO's annual performance review process, including completion of a self-assessment and 360 feedback
- Participate in Board of Directors and various HSO committee meetings as appropriate

QUALIFICATIONS

- A minimum of eight years of professional orchestra conducting experience, previous orchestral Music Director or equivalent roles are a plus
- Demonstrated commitment to developing imaginative programming ideas that have significance to the orchestra, special occasions, evolving trends, and local communities
- Experience using multimedia technology in the creation and performance of innovative new works and experiences is a plus
- Demonstrated commitment to community engagement based on shared goals, organizational alliances and personal dedication
- Comprehensive knowledge of the history of music and its relationship to the broader context of the history of civilization, visual arts, literature, drama and popular culture
- An inquiring mind that searches for the best information and research about performance practices, repertoire and artists
- Significant study of at least one instrument and experience actively making music within an ensemble, preferably orchestral
- Confidence and integrity to make difficult decisions and remain true to course
- Self-awareness of personal strengths and areas for growth within the scope of Music Director responsibilities, demonstrated in part by actively seeking opportunities for professional development
- A strong understanding of the HSO as a nonprofit organization, with a deep appreciation for the roles of the Board, staff, musicians, and volunteers in advancing the orchestra's mission

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications must be submitted through the official portal during the designated application window of June 18, 2025, through July 25, 2025. Submissions outside the open period will not be considered. Applicants will receive confirmation upon receipt of materials.

Applications will be reviewed in multiple phases, with increasing engagement as the process advances. The search is being led by a cross-constituency committee including musicians, board members, staff, and community leaders.

Candidates may be asked to submit additional materials. Selected candidates will be invited to interview, and finalists will be scheduled to conduct an HSO performance during the 2026–27 season, with opportunities to interact with the orchestra and broader community.

All candidate submissions and committee communications will be held in strict confidence. Public announcements will be made only at appropriate stages in the process.

For more information and to apply, visit:

<https://hartfordsymphony.org/apply-music-director>

Materials required for submission:

- One-page letter of interest describing the candidate's specific interest in the HSO and vision for the role of an orchestra in the community
- A comprehensive resume or CV
- Four concert programs recently programmed and conducted by the candidate in a variety of styles and genres
- Video links of recent performances totaling no more than 30 minutes, showcasing the candidate's style and versatility. (Please provide any passwords required.)
- Three professional references with phone and email contact information
- Optional: No more than three additional documents of supporting documentation including reviews, published articles, interviews or other media

We thank you for your interest in the Hartford Symphony Orchestra and look forward to learning more about your artistry and vision.