

Chicago Sinfonietta President & CEO

The Board of Directors seeks an arts management entrepreneur to leverage Chicago Sinfonietta, a MacArthur Award-winning, diverse orchestra to:

- **Champion diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging by creating community through curated bold symphonic experiences;**
- **Ensure and inspire a continued investment in diversity and inclusivity in the genre of classical music to promote fairness and equity;**
- **Grow audience engagement, education, and extensive community outreach programs.**

[Chicago Sinfonietta](#) (CS) is recognized as groundbreaking, dynamic, and daring, with core values built around being culturally responsive and advocating inclusivity in all aspects of the 37-year-old organization's work. CS takes pride in leading by example with immersive audience engagement activities, impactful career development, education, extensive community outreach programs, the uniqueness of the culture in Chicago, and the importance of community and constituency.

BACKGROUND

Chicago Sinfonietta is a \$3.3 million organization with an orchestra of 63 musicians, 17 FT/PT staff members, and 13 members of the Board of Directors. The CS has been recognized with numerous industry honors, including a 2024 Silver Anthem Award, a 2022 Mellon Foundation Award, and several National Endowment for the Arts grants. Guided by internationally acclaimed Taiwanese-American conductor and Music Director [Maestra Mei-Ann Chen](#) since 2011, Chicago Sinfonietta is a pioneering organization and positive influence in the orchestral world, renowned for its defiantly different outlook, innovative and collaborative programming, and artistry of the highest caliber.

Founded by [Paul Freeman](#), for the past 37 years the CS has been a source of “community through music,” as well as ensuring and inspiring a continued investment in diversity and inclusivity in the genre of classical music to promote fairness and equity. Chicago Sinfonietta's unrelenting commitment to being at the forefront of innovation drives its high standard of symphonic experiences.

In [2024-25](#), the CS performed five concert-subscription series and one special event concert in the historic Auditorium Theatre in downtown Chicago and Wentz Concert Hall in Naperville, a nearby western suburb of Chicago. The CS recently established the Artist In Residence (AIR) program, now in its third iteration and undertook its first tour in decades, celebrating Homecoming (spring 2024) in partnership with the HBCUs of Atlanta University Center. It also initiated CS 360, numerous symphonic experiences, and a Pay-What-You-Can ticketing model introduced in fall 2021 that has been hailed by the New York Times and Chicago Tribune and adopted across the country, which ensures access to the arts for all. The Board of Directors recently expanded beyond Chicago, reflecting a growing presence in the region beyond the city.

- The Chicago Sinfonietta champions daring, cutting-edge programs ranging from its popular subscription concert series with guests of national and local renown; the organization's commitment to parity and diversity; and education and community programs that are designed to instill and develop a love of classical music in Chicago-area students in 4th and 5th grades.
- CS's nationally recognized Freeman Fellowships offers training and mentoring for young musicians in the areas of administration, orchestral and ensemble performance, conducting,

and composing. The fellowships are designed to help eliminate institutional bias due to factors such as ethnicity, race, and socioeconomic status. During the 2023-24 season, former fellows were named to eight Music / Artistic Directorships and four assistant or associate conductorships, and five notable fellowships were awarded.

- *Sinfonietta In Your Neighborhood* is a free-to-the-public community program that highlights partnerships and great music with performances in neighborhood coffee houses, the Chicago Public Library, and more.

In partnership with the Development Team and key volunteers, the President & CEO will play a significant role in fundraising growth. This growth will enable the CS to increase commissions, launch its ambitious orchestral programs for diverse audiences of young people, undertake national tours and partnerships, and continue expanding the definition of orchestral music through innovative collaborations and immersive performances.

BASIC FUNCTION

Reporting to the Board of Directors through the Chair of the Board and Executive Committee, the President & CEO is responsible for the organization's earned and contributed revenue, overall financial strength, engagement with a diverse audience of all ages and backgrounds, operating infrastructure, contract compliance, information technology, human resources, and all business management functions of an orchestral organization.

Of paramount importance is the relationship between the President & CEO and the Music Director as well as with the Board Chair and the Executive Committee.

The President & CEO has a special responsibility to bind together the organization as an operationally coherent, effective, and ambitious world leader of orchestral music. Just as the Music Director is responsible for the vitality and quality of performances experienced by Chicago Sinfonietta's audience, the President & CEO is responsible for the financial and operational strength of the orchestra.

The President & CEO will be a hands-on and deeply involved fundraiser, audience engager, innovator, leader, and business manager. She/he/they will partner with the Music Director and cultivate an ambitious, high-output environment focused on results achieved through targeted action and staff teamwork.

The President & CEO's immediate priorities will be to:

- Understand all facets of Chicago Sinfonietta, the Music Director's vision, and the Board's priorities, including the organization's history; culture; art and artists; audiences; staff; finances and revenue streams; performances and programming schedule; education and public programs; infrastructure; operations; marketing; diverse regional, national, and international constituencies; and champion diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging by creating community through bold symphonic experiences;
- Build a dynamic partnership with the Music Director, the Board Chair, the Board Members, and the staff;
- Manage the day-to-day business affairs of the Chicago Sinfonietta, including cash flow and expense management, with the intent of accelerating financial, audience, and artistic growth;
- Work with legal counsel and Board to oversee and negotiate contractual matters with the American Federation of Musicians (AFM), guest conductors and artists, vendors, and

strategic partners;

- Help to expand the brand and footprint of the Orchestra and drive increased audience engagement along a broad front, with particular emphasis on young, diverse audiences whose active embrace is critical to the future vitality of orchestral music;
- Serve as the organization's chief fundraiser and marketer responsible for dramatically increasing earned and contributed revenue; work closely with the staff, Board, and advisors to diversify revenue streams and complete the comprehensive campaign;
- Conduct extensive public speaking and community outreach; represent the goals and objectives of the organization and others that are partnered with CS before public bodies, boards, funding sources, and community organizations;
- Work with the staff to understand their contributions, strengths, and concerns; instill a strong sense of partnership and cohesion across the organization; use open channels of communication to reinforce a culture of excellence toward achieving the highest standards of operations.
- Work with the Board to update and implement long-range strategic plans, in the process integrating the organization's shared values of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility into all artistic, business, and governance aspects of the CS;
- Identify and suggest new Board members whose talents, interests, and commitment will help to further the Orchestra's mission and diversity and will help to expand funding opportunities;
- Oversee recruiting, retention, engagement, and evaluation of staff to create a team rooted in mutual respect and appreciation that can meet the multi-cultural complexity of service delivery in Chicago. Support the team's career development plan fully and address staff performance gaps promptly.
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IDEAL EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

The ideal candidate should have the following type of experience and qualifications:

- A management professional with strong staff or board-level experience in the performing arts, ticketed experiences, and in organizations known for innovative programming; sector knowledge in classical music, opera, dance, choral music, or arts education would be a distinct advantage; an international perspective would be useful;
- Strong understanding of production values, budgeting, and technology for the stage;
- A deep understanding of the artists and the international arts ecosystem for orchestral music; connections in the international world of classical music with agents, managers, and arts organizations to create meaningful partnerships locally, nationally, and internationally; and a knowledge of touring and sponsorships is helpful;
- The ability to work successfully with individual, institutional, and business donors to maximize contributed revenue; measurable and successful results in maximizing ticket sales revenue and in identifying, cultivating, and developing other sources of earned income; experience engaging all artistic, staff, Board, audience and education constituents to maximize all forms of earned and contributed revenue;

- Strong understanding of audience development approaches, with a track record of reshaping the audience mix to be younger and more diverse while maintaining existing audiences; demonstrated understanding of the relationship between having diversity within an organization's staff, artistic, and governance ranks and the ability of an arts organization to engage new generations and more diverse audiences;
- A detailed understanding of financial and operations management; the ability to analyze financial reports and develop/monitor realistic budgets and programs; a metrics-driven approach that is ambitious, focused on expansion and accountability, and provides for the balanced risk-taking that keeps arts organizations vital and sustainable;
- Experience working with artists, including artistic directors, singers, musicians, orchestras, conductors, educators, and others; demonstrated ability to forge mutually respectful and effective relationships with a diverse group of personalities to deliver exceptional performing arts experiences to the public;
- Outstanding oral and written communication skills, including the means to address issues in non-confrontational and non-polarizing ways, but nevertheless with determination; excellent public speaking experience; a track record as an effective advocate for his or her organization;
- A leader adept at planning, prioritizing, organizing, and following through; a hard worker with a high energy level who welcomes accountability; a good listener and strategist; comfortable receiving input from many sources;
- Someone who imparts trust, integrity, and solidity and guides others in a similar vein; an ability to disagree without being disagreeable; a team player and team builder; someone who enjoys working in close collaboration with staff, Board, and community members and who is able to connect with a broad spectrum of constituents; a person with a sense of humor and perspective.

Compensation for the President & CEO position is currently set at \$175,000 - \$225,000 with comprehensive benefits. The position works on location, full-time in Chicago.

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Chicago Sinfonietta
December 2024