



CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
KANSAS CITY SYMPHONY
Kansas City, Missouri
[Kansas City Symphony](#)



The Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with the Kansas City Symphony in the search for a Chief Operating Officer.

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) will ensure the successful execution of day-to-day operations of the Kansas City Symphony (KCS) in line with the organization's vision, strategy, operating plans, and financial resources. The COO will advance a patron-centric culture throughout the organization and facilitate the daily work of the Marketing, Development, Concert Production, and Orchestra Personnel departments. The COO will ensure that each of these departments has the support necessary from one another and integrate well with creative and the orchestra. The COO will identify and clear obstacles from the path of departmental and organizational progress. The COO will oversee KCS facilities and manage key artistic relationships, including those with the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, the Lyric Opera of Kansas City, the Kansas City Ballet, and the City of Kansas City, Missouri. The COO will also oversee the development of revenue-producing performance activities such as pops, specials, fee concerts, and the like.

As a thought partner and trusted advisor of the Executive Director, the COO will engage with him daily to advance the work of the organization. In addition, the COO will ensure successful KCS performances and other public activities, ensuring compliance with collective bargaining agreements, overseeing the master calendar, and creating a work environment that is conducive to the highest professional and artistic standards.

The Kansas City Symphony is the youngest major symphony orchestra in the United States, and one of the most secure. Since its founding in 1982 by R. Crosby Kemper, Jr., the Kansas City Symphony has grown through artistic vision, fiscal discipline, and a culture of trust and excellence in all facets of the organization.

The Kansas City Symphony serves a metropolitan population of 2.1 million people. The orchestra's 80 full-time musicians contribute to the city's exceptionally strong cultural community. During its 42-week season, the Symphony performs a wide variety of concerts including subscription classical, pops and family, film with orchestra, and educational programs. In addition to symphonic music of all kinds, the Symphony has deep roots in chamber music, and travels Kansas City with a mobile stage – the "Mobile Music Box" – throughout the warmer months. The Kansas City Symphony also performs frequently with the Lyric Opera of Kansas City and the Kansas City Ballet.

The Symphony's four auxiliaries, with total membership of nearly 500, raise more than \$1 million annually, making them some of the most successful orchestra volunteer forces in the nation. The Kansas City Symphony has demonstrated a strong commitment to fiscal discipline, in support of artistic ambition. From a budget of \$1.5 million in its first season, the Symphony's annual operating budget has grown to more than \$20 million. More than 1,000 gifts from the Board, local foundations, and members of the community have created an endowment in excess of \$120 million. The Symphony's balance sheet is pristine, with healthy operating reserves and working capital. The Kansas City Symphony is debt-free.

In the summer of 2021, the Symphony will move into its new headquarters, adjacent to the orchestra's world-class concert hall at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. Occupying a storied 19th century icon of Kansas City, this new modern space is being constructed to support the organization's creativity, with space for administrative offices, musician practice, chamber performance, and music education. Formerly a restaurant, the building is complete with a commercial kitchen and an English pub, presenting the Symphony with new opportunities for patron engagement.

The vision of the Symphony's education program is to enable people of all ages in the greater Kansas City area to learn, create, and become inspired through orchestral music. More than 60,000 people participate in Kansas City Symphony education programs annually.

In 2021, the Symphony launched a new video streaming service available at MySymphonySeat.org and through the Kansas City Symphony app on AppleTV, Roku, Amazon Fire, and other SmartTV and mobile device platforms. Video storytelling will play a key role in audience development, and the Symphony has invested heavily in ramping up this capacity for the future.

The Symphony has released seven recordings on the Reference Recordings label: "Shakespeare's Tempest;" the Grammy® Award-winning "Britten's Orchestra;" an Elgar/Vaughan Williams project, "Miraculous Metamorphoses;" an all-Saint-Saëns CD featuring the magnificent "Organ" Symphony; the music of contemporary American composer Adam Schoenberg (nominated for two Grammy Awards); and most recently, Holst's The Planets and a pair of KCS commissions by Jonathan Leshnoff. Additional projects have been recorded and slated for future release, including an album featuring one-movement symphonies by Barber, Scriabin, and Sibelius plus an album of Brahms transcriptions. Highlights of Classical Series performances are broadcast Thursdays at 8 p.m. on Classical KC FM 91.7, Kansas City's new classical music radio station.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Chief Operating Officer will report to the Executive Director, Daniel Beckley and serve on his Senior Management Team. The Vice President, Sales and Marketing; Vice President, Concert Production; and Director, Orchestra Personnel will report to the Chief Operating Officer.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Staff Leadership. The Chief Operating Officer will help foster a patron-centric culture at the KCS by balancing the needs of the marketing, development, and concert production, and orchestra personnel departments, ensuring that individual patron journeys with the organization and the art are optimal for the patron and for the KCS; ensure that these departments are well supported by each other and coordinated with the creative team; meet regularly with the vice presidents of marketing, development, and concert production, and orchestra personnel management and lead cross-departmental meetings of these groups as appropriate; proactively identify obstacles to organizational progress, and help clear them by facilitating communication and problem-solving inside and outside of the organization with staff,

musicians, artists, vendors, contractors, managers, etc.; oversee the budgeting process of these departments, working closely with the Chief Financial Officer to ensure optimal planning and stewardship of the organization's financial resources in accordance with adopted budgets; and ensure high-quality, accurate, and complete monthly forecasting.

Orchestra Management. The Chief Operating Officer will maintain trust and excellent relations with the orchestra as a whole, as represented by the Musicians' Committee (MC) and Artistic Leadership Committee (ALC); with the Vice President of Concert Production and Director of Orchestra Personnel, meet regularly with the MC to ensure open lines of communication, anticipate problems, and negotiate solutions, promptly and competently addressing concerns; ensure that management's rights under the CBA are protected, while also ensuring that musicians are treated with the utmost respect and the working conditions are as optimal as possible in accordance with the CBA and in support of artistic aspirations; and serve on the CBA negotiating committee.

Musician Management. The Chief Operating Officer will negotiate with musicians on their individual contracts; support the Music Director on musician performance management, ensuring prompt and open communication of feedback and concerns; work closely with the Director of Orchestra Personnel on matters of musician leave requests and other such special conditions requiring elevated attention; ensure individual musicians feel properly supported by management, and that they are performing at their best in accordance with the duties of their positions.

Facilities Operations, Events, Food and Beverage. The Chief Operating Officer will oversee the KCS Headquarters building; establish policies and systems for the building's use, and liaise with outside property management services; design and direct the monetization of the food & beverage capacities of the building in support of patron engagement and KCS events.

Revenue-Producing Activities. The Chief Operating Officer will oversee the programming work of the Vice President of Concert Production in the development of non-classical programming, and define and seek ways to optimally monetize such opportunities.

Electronic Media and Music Licensing. The Chief Operating Officer will oversee the orchestra's electronic media activities, and ensure compliance with the CBA and national media agreements; with the Vice President of Concert Production, negotiate as needed with the Musicians' Committee and the national AFM; ensure proper licensing/permissions with publishers, composers, guest artists, and conductors; project manage recordings with engineers, recording labels, etc., ensuring the final product represents the KCS in the best possible way, in collaboration with the Music Director; and manage music licensing needs of the organization for performance and media.

Working with the Executive Director. The Chief Operating Officer will be in daily communication with the Executive Director, working with him on the development of operating plans in support of institutional strategy; brief the Executive Director with regular dashboard reports that effectively synthesize complex and disparate data in an efficient, holistic, accurate, and concise way; oversee staff execution in accordance with these plans and with the general leadership and input of the Executive Director; and work closely with the Executive Director on creative planning, problem solving, strategy development, progress tracking, and tactical refinement.

KANSAS CITY SYMPHONY LEADERSHIP



Daniel E. Beckley
Executive Director

Daniel E. Beckley has served as Kansas City Symphony Executive Director since July 2019. He oversees all administrative and managerial aspects of the Symphony, including operations, finance, marketing, and fundraising. He manages the organization's \$19.8 million annual budget and a full-time staff of 35 professionals, and he works with the orchestra's 80 full-time musicians to present nearly 200 concerts each season. Beckley works closely with Music Director Michael Stern on programming and artistic planning

as well as with the Board of Directors on strategic planning and other initiatives to continue the Symphony's remarkable record of success. Most recently, Beckley served for six years as Vice President and General Manager of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra where he was responsible for orchestra operations, performance and administrative facilities, and the symphony's summer concert and presentation series. Prior to that time, he was Executive Director of the Charleston Symphony Orchestra in South Carolina. His other experience includes serving as Managing Director of BlueKey Web Solutions in Charleston, a company he helped found, and working as a public school orchestra director. Beckley earned a bachelor's degree in music education from James Madison University and a master's degree in music performance from Northwestern University. He received additional training from the League of American Orchestras and the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. In his free time, Beckley enjoys being outdoors with his wife and children. In addition to his continued interest in playing the trombone, he designs and builds custom furniture.



Michael Stern
Musical Director

Music Director Michael Stern has embarked upon his second decade with the Kansas City Symphony, hailed for its remarkable artistic ascent, original programming, organizational development and stability, and the extraordinary growth of its varied audiences since his tenure began. Over the last five seasons, Stern and the orchestra have ushered in a new era and have performed to critical acclaim and sold-out audiences in their performance home, Helzberg Hall at the \$413 million Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts.

To date, Stern and the Kansas City Symphony have successfully partnered with award-winning audiophile label Reference Recordings to produce five albums: *Shakespeare's Tempest*; *Britten's Orchestra*, which won a 2011 Grammy Award in the "Surround Sound Album" category and producer David Frost won "Producer of the Year, Classical;" an Elgar/Vaughan Williams project; *Miraculous Metamorphoses*, featuring the music of Hindemith, Prokofiev, and Bartók; and most recently, Saint-Saens Symphony No. 3, "Organ," which Gramophone Magazine named "Editor's Choice" for September 2015. Reference Recordings has slated two project for future release: Holst's *The Planets* (recorded January 2015) and Adam Schoenberg's *Finding Rothko*; *Picture Studies*, an expressive interpretation of masterpieces at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art; and *American Symphony*, premiered by the Symphony in 2011 (recorded June 2014). Stern led the commissioning of all three Adam Schoenberg pieces. The Symphony and Stern also have recorded for the Naxos label. In July 2012, the Symphony's concerts with internationally celebrated

mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato were broadcast nationally on nearly 400 PBS stations for the PBS Summer Arts Series. The Grammy-nominated audio recording of that concert is available on iTunes.

Stern is also the Founding Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of IRIS Orchestra in Germantown, Tennessee. This unique group, now in its second decade, has been widely praised for its virtuosity and programming, and has produced a string of recordings and acclaimed commissioned new works by American composers. Other positions include a tenure as the Chief Conductor of Germany's Saarbrücken Radio Symphony Orchestra (the first American chief conductor in the orchestra's history) and as Permanent Guest Conductor of the Orchestre National de Lyon in France, a position which he held for five years, and a stint as the Principal Guest Conductor of the Orchestre National de Lille, France.

Stern has led orchestras throughout Europe and Asia, including the Budapest and Vienna radio symphonies, the Helsinki, Israel, London, Moscow and Royal Stockholm philharmonics, London Symphony, National Symphony of Taiwan, Orchestre de Paris and Tokyo's NHK Symphony, among many others.

In North America, Stern has conducted the Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Cincinnati, Houston, Indianapolis, National (Washington, D.C.), Montreal, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Seattle, and Toronto symphonies, the Cleveland and Philadelphia orchestras, as well as the New York Philharmonic. He also appears regularly at the Aspen Music Festival and has served on the faculty of the American Academy of Conducting at Aspen. Stern received his music degree from the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where his major teacher was the noted conductor and scholar Max Rudolf. Stern co-edited the third edition of Rudolf's famous textbook, "The Grammar of Conducting," and also edited a new volume of Rudolf's collected writings and correspondence. He is a 1981 graduate of Harvard University, where he earned a degree in American history.

PREFERRED COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

The Chief Operating Officer will have an infectious entrepreneurial spirit, grounded in personal integrity and will be a proven leader with a track record of vastly surpassing expectations by challenging existing assumptions and ways of doing things. They will have a high degree of intellectual curiosity, and a creative bent that inspires new ways of thinking and problem-solving in colleagues. An analytical skillset is absolutely essential, with the ability to look at a challenge from many different angles in order to develop new insights, and to effectively communicate those insights with others.

The successful candidate will be highly self-aware, and be able to read and respond to verbal and non-verbal cues in others. They will have a commitment to transparency and truth, in a way that both informs and inspires, and will be candid and respectful at the same time. They will not be shy to speak hard truths, and to inspire action in others to promptly address these truths. They will have an unquestioned ability to handle confidential and sensitive information with care and in an appropriate manner at all times.

They will be able to promptly earn the full trust and confidence of the Executive Director by demonstrating outstanding judgment, stable and forward-looking leadership, creative and strategic thinking, insightful analysis, and consistent management. They will foster a business-like culture of thorough advance planning, assumption testing, transparent monitoring, communicative progress tracking, and consistent, patient, and practiced execution.

They will enjoy working as part of a team, and will welcome the creative challenge of implementing the orchestra's long-term vision through a consistent series of short-term actions and behaviors which balance the artistic, logistical, practical, and financial demands of life in the 21st century orchestral community.

Furthermore, the Kansas City Symphony seeks a Chief Operating Officer with

- extensive leadership expertise, demonstrating the ability to consistently motivate others towards ambitious goals and to inspire confidence from subordinates and peers;
- an ability to identify obstacles to team productivity and success, even when those obstacles are not readily apparent to others, and promptly communicate and address obstacles creatively and collaboratively with the affected people;
- an ability to monitor team progress towards goals and work with teams to ensure both focus and results are tracking where they should be at any given point in time;
- an ability to inspire high levels of performance from others by consistently holding them accountable, supporting their professional growth, effectively empowering them to succeed, and modeling desired behaviors including a commitment to excellence, high attention to detail, and a deliberate work ethic;
- superb communication skills through writing, speaking, and visuals (graphing, PowerPoint slides, etc.);
- an ability to distill complex issues and trends through analysis in ways that empower understanding in the intended audience;
- experience with labor relations in a collective bargaining environment; and
- knowledge of orchestral music and of the music industry and its trends, particularly regarding the marketability of non-classical guest artists.

A bachelor's degree is required for this position as is at least five years of experience as the chief executive of a professional symphony orchestra or in a senior operations management position of a major orchestra.

SALARY & BENEFITS

Kansas City Symphony offers a competitive salary and benefits package.

LOCATION

This position is based in Kansas City, Missouri

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. ***Cover letters should be responsive to the mission of the Kansas City Symphony 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 Operating Officer, Kansas City Symphony.](#)

To nominate a candidate, please contact Anne Johnson:

[annejohnson@aspenleadershipgroup.com.](mailto:annejohnson@aspenleadershipgroup.com)

All inquiries will be held in confidence.