



**PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**  
**[AMERICAN PIANISTS ASSOCIATION](#)**  
**Indianapolis, Indiana**



The Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with the American Pianists Association in the search for a President and Chief Executive Officer.

The President and Chief Executive Officer will provide visionary and strategic leadership to the American Pianists Association (APA), ensuring the fulfillment of APA's mission to discover, promote, and advance the careers of young, American, world-class classical and jazz pianists. The President and Chief Executive Officer will provide leadership for all aspects of the organization and should be an exceptional leader with intellectual breadth, a creative mindset, and experience building partnerships, leading teams, and raising funds. The President and Chief Executive Officer will demonstrate a commitment to furthering APA's dedication to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging and an ability to continue the path forward toward more diversity and inclusion through meaningful improvements while supporting the professional growth and development of all members of the organization.

The American Pianists Association supports aspiring young artists through unique classical and jazz competitions. Based in Indianapolis, Indiana, the APA nurtures the artistic growth of America's top young pianists by focusing on creative expression and career development. The largest and most prestigious support is given through a biennial competition known as the American Pianists Awards. Since its founding in 1979, the American Pianists Association has supported 48 American Pianists Awards winners.

The American Pianists Awards are held every two years, alternating classical and jazz, to discover the best aspiring young American pianists. These unique and innovative competitions span 13 months and provide a platform to deeply engage musical artists in a variety of creative formats and settings. With a cash prize and two years of career advancement and support valued at over \$200,000, the American Pianists Awards offers one of the most coveted prizes in the music world and the largest for American jazz pianists. Part of the American Pianists Awards competition requires every finalist to complete a residency with a high school orchestra or jazz band. Residencies span three days and culminate in a joint public performance with school musicians. Known as Concerto Curriculum, this program brings the beauty of world-class music to new audiences and non-traditional venues, provides pedagogical growth for developing artists, and inspires new generations of young musicians.

In addition to residencies in schools, American Pianists Awards winners often perform on college campuses, regularly conducting master classes in conjunction with their performances. The American Pianists Association also partners with Eskenazi Health to produce a concert series featuring American Pianists Awards finalists. Exposure to music is soothing and can act as a healing influence for the body and soul, and these free concerts allow patients, families, and staff to experience world-class music while providing pianists with additional opportunities for artistic growth.

The American Pianists Association also hosts Grand Encounters, quarterly concert performances by world-renowned pianists, and Music Matters, in-home concerts and lectures in Indianapolis as 'friend-raising' events during non-competition years.

## REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The President and Chief Executive Officer will report to the Board of Directors led by Chair William C. Sando, M.D. The President and Chief Executive Officer will lead an Executive Team comprised of the Artistic Adviser, Director of Advancement, Director of Marketing, and General Manager.

## FROM THE CHAIR

*What is your story? Where do your passions lie? Your talents? If, as you read below, they seem to be a "glass slipper" fit (we are fine with "at least close") for a President and Chief Executive Officer leadership position with the American Pianists Association, we want to meet you.*

*Currently we seek a leader who loves music and whose life has intersected meaningfully with music, who has charisma and vision that inspire, who speaks credibly to invite trust, and who engages easily in an open, nonjudgmental fashion that draws others into active dialogue.*

*Who is the American Pianists Association? We are passionate advocates of APA's mission to discover and promote and advance the careers of young pianists, with a clear vision to be the preeminent competition for American pianists, recognized and supported around the world. Our Board is a singularly passionate group, unified by a love of the piano, several members having either pursued and mastered the piano professionally, or at the least having carried fond memories of childhood playing. Our office staff is an intimate, dedicated core of talented people. Our immediate and diverse community likewise are ardent fans of the instrument and its music. As the world of music is a globally shared expression of the human soul, as diverse as humanity itself, music's artistry feeds quite naturally our view of invitation and equity for all. We affectionately term our supporters the APA "family."*

*Despite our closeness, APA thinks and acts BIG. Starting in 1979 as a brainchild of the brilliant Victor Borge and friends, it underwent dramatic changes within only a few years from the Beethoven Society to the American Pianists Association, NYC to Indianapolis, in 1992 morphing from classical only to alternating classical and jazz, rapidly earning acclaim as the premiere American competitions in each, and spawning literally a pantheon of artists, teachers, and thought leaders. It is unique among competitions in that the format for its five finalists is an extended, eight-month multi-venue sequence, as well as teaching in local high schools, with presentation to all finalists and winner of phenomenal cash awards, and for the winner, additional cash, career assistance in recording and performance contracts both stateside and abroad, agency management and marketing, and a university artist-in-residence appointment. All finalists are lodged for each visit to Indy with the same host family, with the natural development of close personal and community ties. The planning and logistical coordination of these activities for both artists and judges is daunting: timetables, travel planning, publicity, hotel accommodations, provision of host families, etc., a process which repeats every two years as alternating classical and jazz. It is unavoidable that there must be simultaneous thoughtful planning of both near-term and future competitions. Of course, all these transformations have been products of visionary courageous and capable leadership and faithful community, private, and institutional support. APA enjoys a large endowment which has provided the organization great financial stability, amidst these many changes.*

*How about now? Our staff realize that APA is now poised on the cusp of many new, exciting changes and challenges. As a natural consequence of our growth, our national footprint is enlarging. One challenge is that we must, during this expansion, continue to nurture our local ties. The recent pandemic necessitated outside-the-box creativity, which included remote-site adjudication of performances, extensive streaming, as well as adjustment of award distribution to maximize living support for contestants who could not perform during the extended lock-down.*

*We received international praise for these innovations, all accomplished under budget. Now we have the resultant "norm" of reliance on expertise in staging for digital transmission and archiving, event format and scheduling flexibility, and adjustment of public health precautions.*

*Also noteworthy is that in the past one and a half years, APA has shifted its lens toward greater inclusivity and has welcomed a more diverse pool of participants with impressive improvements in the competition, work with which I have been actively engaged. We are growing in the realm of advancement with talented new leadership and the adoption of specific metrics and the development of a burgeoning "family" of support which now includes national and international relationships. We have been expanding our marketing approaches including social media. We now have built a reputation as "the" American piano competition, and actively seek to foster a position of authority and excellence in pianistic repertoire, history, and performance.*

*We are seeking a visionary helmsperson to steer us through this growth and into our future. Immediate next steps will include the task of developing a bifurcated President and CEO-Artistic Director leadership arrangement after 22 years of single-hat leadership. We seek a person who has sufficiently deep national contacts to identify, hire, and work with a renowned artistic director who will report to the President and CEO. A new strategic plan, new website, and new IT programs for ticketing and sponsorship tracking are other in-the-wings projects for President and CEO and staff. To accomplish these exciting things the general competencies which we expect our new President and CEO to possess include staff development and management, artful public speaking, good time management, thoughtful strategic planning, timely task completion, financial acumen and discipline, experience serving a Board of Directors, successful fundraising, working knowledge of current marketing strategies, and IT platform experience. Our choice must desire to passionately live into our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusivity and share our strong belief in the mission, vision, and future of APA.*

*What are your story, your passions, your talents? We invite you to consider this opportunity with us.*

—William C. Sando, MD, Chair, Board of Directors

### **AMERICAN PIANISTS ASSOCIATION'S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND ANTI-RACISM**

Music is the artistic language of APA contestants, shaped by the diversity of the world around them. It delights, informs, and inspires. The American Pianists Association pledges to create an environment for its artists, audiences, community partners, Board, and staff that is based on the values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice. Further, it commits to enacting strategic and annual plans that provide focused, measurable strategies for living out these values every day. The organization has an active Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee and has taken tangible measures to increase the diversity of its staff and Board including the onboarding of four new Board members in 2022, all women, two of whom are people of color. The CEO Search Team is comprised of five members, three of whom are women, one of whom is a person of color. The Association's five jazz piano competition finalists are superb artists, but are also diverse, three of whom are from traditionally marginalized constituencies. It is in this spirit that the American Pianists Association actively welcomes people of all races, ethnicities, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, and gender identities, as well as people living with disabilities. The Association commits to learning from diverse talents, ideas, and voices.

## **PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Vision, Strategy, and Leadership**

The President and Chief Executive Officer will

- serve as APA's visionary leader, working with the Board and staff to develop and implement a plan to grow APA both locally and nationally;
- lead the Executive Team (Artistic Adviser, Director of Advancement, Director of Marketing, and General Manager) to ensure coordination among departments in the service of APA's mission and strategic plan;
- work with the Board and staff to continue development and implementation of the organization's DEI plan;
- foster a positive and collaborative work environment;
- serve as chief spokesperson for the organization, providing a visible presence at local, regional, national, and international piano and music events;
- create and maintain strong ties with government leaders, decision makers, and the arts community, working to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes;
- develop and support strategic partnerships and negotiate contracts with new and existing organizations; and
- embrace a transparent leadership approach in collaboration with the Board, committees, community partners, staff, and other stakeholders.

### **Philanthropic Support**

The President and Chief Executive Officer will

- serve as the organization's most visible philanthropic spokesperson;
- inspire stakeholders to support APA's fundraising efforts; and
- in collaboration with the Director of Advancement, cultivate institutional, corporate, and individual funders.

### **Effective Governance**

The President and Chief Executive Officer will

- establish a strong working relationship with the Board, stirring their passion for APA's work and encouraging all members to actively engage with their roles;
- in collaboration with the Board, particularly the Board Chair and Executive Committee, ensure effective governance;
- assist in the recruitment and cultivation of new Board and committee members;
- provide concise, relevant, and timely information to the Board so that it can fulfill its policy and decision-making responsibilities; and
- prepare the CEO's report, highlighting activities, accomplishments, finances, issues, and other relevant matters to the Board on a quarterly basis.

### **Financial Oversight and Accountability**

The President and Chief Executive Officer will

- lead financial planning and ensure APA's fiscal well-being and sustainability; and
- lead the development of a biennial budget, in collaboration with the General Manager, and monitor income, expenses, annual fund, grants, sponsorships, and investments.

## PREFERRED COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

The American Pianists Association seeks a President and Chief Executive Officer committed to discovering, promoting, and advancing the careers of young, American, world-class classical and jazz pianists. The successful candidate should possess significant knowledge of the music industry and deep relationships within the industry nurtured over time. The President and Chief Executive Officer should be able to navigate *all things musical* to successfully lead the Association's biennial competition, the American Pianists Awards, while hiring and onboarding the Association's next Artistic Advisor. The President and Chief Executive Officer should be able to fluently articulate the meaning of music in their lives—a love of and appreciation for music being a critical component of the necessary skillset for this role.

Furthermore, the American Pianists Association seeks a President and Chief Executive Officer with

- experience as a skilled team builder including dedication to the professional growth and development of each team member;
- a commitment to centering diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging and an ability to continue the path toward more diversity and inclusion through meaningful actions;
- an ability to craft a strong vision for APA that will enable it to stay relevant as well as an ability to engage the Board and other key stakeholders;
- an ability to build strong relationships with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, Board members, donors, artists, and community partners in order to foster a culture of collaboration and support;
- a desire to invest in new partnerships with major orchestras, music festivals, and recital series in the United States and internationally;
- experience sufficient to understand and oversee the financials of APA, to make judicious and well-informed decisions, and maintain the organization's financial health and sustainability through budgeting, fundraising, and invested funds;
- an ability to design, implement, and support overarching goals and convictions, flexibility in the methodologies used to determine success, and an ability to pivot as needed;
- an ability to develop and execute effective marketing and fundraising campaigns that support the organization's programs and initiatives;
- the experience needed to lead the Board and staff into the next chapter of APA life, respecting and building upon the organization's foundations;
- a deep understanding of the arts, performing arts in particular, and an ability to discern and support exceptional artistic standards in artistic programs;
- well-developed communication skills, both spoken and written, sufficient to articulate the APA mission in a passionate, clear, and compelling manner to all stakeholders, potential donors, institutional partners, and the public;
- an understanding of current best practices, issues, and challenges in the arts and sufficient vision, imagination, and entrepreneurship to move the organization forward in a positive and effective way; and
- emotional intelligence, sincerity, confidence, and friendliness with an ability to manage conflict while giving and receiving constructive criticism in a respectful and productive manner.

A bachelor's degree or an equivalent combination of education and experience is required for this position as is at least seven years of nonprofit leadership experience. Experience within a performing arts environment is highly preferred.

### **SALARY & BENEFITS**

The salary range for this position is \$150,000 to \$200,000 annually. The American Pianists Association offers a comprehensive package of benefits, including health and life Insurance, paid time off, retirement plan, and relocation allowance.

### **LOCATION**

The President and Chief Executive Officer will be required to take residency in Indianapolis.

### **APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and resume. ***Cover letters should be responsive to the mission of the American Pianists Association as well as the responsibilities and qualifications stated 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:*

*[President and Chief Executive Officer, American Pianists Association.](#)*

*To nominate a candidate, please contact Anne Johnson, [annejohnson@aspenleadershipgroup.com](mailto:annejohnson@aspenleadershipgroup.com).*

*All inquiries will be held in confidence.*