The Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with the Symphony of Northwest Arkansas in the search for an Executive Director.

The Executive Director will assume responsibility for managing all human and financial resources needed to achieve the symphony’s mission. The Executive Director will be the "face" of the Symphony of Northwest Arkansas (SoNA) in the community and serve as its chief fundraiser. Many of the most prominent and influential community members are connected to SoNA, and the Executive Director will benefit from a supportive, diverse, and highly skilled network. The successful candidate will forge new relationships and build SoNA’s visibility, impact, and financial resources while implementing and realizing SoNA’s comprehensive strategic plan to achieve ambitious fundraising goals. The Executive Director will be a fierce advocate for SoNA’s mission, vision, and values, as well as a thought leader for the arts in Northwest Arkansas.

Founded in 1954, Symphony of Northwest Arkansas has provided 69 years of performances and educational opportunities and has become a cultural leader in the region. The Resident Symphony of Walton Arts Center, SoNA presents classical and pops concerts at Baum-Walker Hall, as well as performances at the Walmart AMP. Under the musical direction of nationally recognized Paul Haas, the orchestra has emerged as a noteworthy regional orchestra that presents a wide variety of rigorous contemporary and classical concerts, as well as pops and family-friendly concert experiences. With classical, holiday, and pops programming, SoNA's symphonic performances annually reach over 25,000 people of all ages across Northwest Arkansas.

Launched in 2021, SoNA moves beyond the mainstage through SoNA Beyond, collaborating with vital nonprofits and cultural leaders throughout the region to rethink the boundaries of what a symphony can do. Producing over 10 diverse community experiences through SoNA Beyond a year, SoNA aims to innovate the art form, include new voices, and immerse SoNA in the Northwest Arkansas community—to give audiences an expansive view of what classical music is and who it serves. Collaborations include the Ra-Ve Cultural Foundation, local public libraries, Crystal Bridges, the Martin Luther King Council, and other leading cultural organizations.

SoNA is dedicated to ensuring the future of classical music and equitably reaching students to inspire the next generation of artists, audiences, and culturally minded leaders. SoNA supports local students and music teachers through SoNA Mentors, a program serving wind band and orchestra programs across Northwest Arkansas, including Bentonville, Springdale, Fayetteville, Bella Vista, and Rogers. Through SoNA Mentors, orchestra musicians provide performances, sectionals, masterclasses, pre-college career guidance, and more for emerging musicians. In 2023, SoNA will also begin a new pilot through SoNA Mentors to provide one-on-one lessons to music students who otherwise cannot afford them. SoNA also produces symphonic and chamber music concerts for youth and provides free tickets to mainstage shows for youth under 18. Through SoNA Mentors and performances, SoNA reaches over 2000 youth annually.
SoNA’s commitment to its mission has generated support from a broad array of community members. Philanthropic organizations who support SoNA include the Walmart Foundation, Walton Family Foundations, the Baum Charitable Foundation Trust, Arkansas Arts Council, Alice Walton Foundation, Bozie Family Foundation, Willard and Pat Walker Charitable Foundation, the Arkansas Community Foundation, CACHE, and many other impactful philanthropic individuals and institutions.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Executive Director will report to the incoming Chair (effective July 1, 2023), Board of Directors, Marti Sudduth.

FROM THE CHAIR

Thank you for your interest in working with SoNA. The search for an Executive Director for the Symphony of Northwest Arkansas is coming as we have successfully completed the first year of our exciting three-year strategic plan. Our vision remains strong as we work to be a trailblazing orchestra expanding possibilities of what an orchestra can be. We know that lives can be changed by increasing interest and equity in the arts through outreach, education, collaboration, and performance. SoNA wants to creatively honor the past, present, and future of our art form by fostering the highest levels of artistic expression.

The impact that we wish to work towards is the opportunity to reach a larger and more diverse cross section of Northwest Arkansas; foster the creative development of our musicians and shake up narratives of who classical music is for; and be a force for good in our community.

SoNA will aid both middle and high school wind, band, and orchestra programs across Northwest Arkansas and allow local young musicians and teachers to be inspired and effective in their musical journey. SoNA can help bridge the gap in music education where resources are needed, working to create a more equitable system where all students can learn and experience orchestral music.

As we break out of our shell and better communicate our vision to reach region-wide brand recognition and impact, we ask you to consider joining us on this path to generate support with a variety of new and existing philanthropic forces that will allow our symphony to serve our community in increasingly powerful ways for years to come.

—Marti Sudduth, Board Chair

SYMPHONY OF NORTHWEST ARKANSAS’ COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are top priorities at every level of the organization. SoNA is actively working to focus efforts on furthering diversity, equity, and inclusion with the Northwest Arkansas community. This includes the formal adoption of a DEI action plan and organizational values, and the launch of SoNA Beyond programming.
Symphony of Northwest Arkansas' values are:

**Inclusivity and Equity**
SoNA centers anti-racism and anti-oppression as essential guiding values which enable the best work from its artists and staff and create a welcoming environment where the entire community can meaningfully engage with music. It aims to celebrate commonality and embrace differences.

**Accessibility**
By striving for cultural relevance and reducing barriers to access, SoNA is able to reach a wider audience that is truly representative of the Northwest Arkansas community.

In this executive search, considering a diverse slate of candidates is very important to SoNA. SoNA welcomes guidance and best practices on how to make this a truly diverse and inclusion-driven search and workplace. SoNA expects the new Executive Director to center the aforementioned values in executing the responsibilities of the role.

The Symphony of Northwest Arkansas does not discriminate against employees or applicants on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin, marital status, political affiliation, or reasonably accommodated physical handicaps.

**PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Executive Director will

- support, communicate, and advocate for the mission and vision of SoNA;
- enhance and enable the future of SoNA through strategic relationship building, community collaboration, and participation;
- implement and track SoNA’s multi-year strategic plan, taking into account the changing realities of the environment, locally, regionally, and nationally;
- in partnership with the Board of Directors, make changes and create new plans as needed or when the current strategic plan expires;
- seek out, cultivate, and steward relationships with potential and existing donors, including individuals, foundations, and corporate partners;
- serve as a key strategist and partner in the cultivation, stewardship, solicitation, and retention of individual and institutional fund development and planned giving, and related meetings and activities;
- oversee administrative staffing to ensure that the organization is effectively structured and staffed;
- act as administrative lead, ensuring proper filings with the city, the IRS, the Secretary of State, business filings, and other essential business functions to run the organization.
- provide leadership to staff to ensure maximum effectiveness through coaching, feedback, staff planning, support, and accountability;
- assist Board committees in developing and implementing their goals and objectives;
- develop strategies to inspire, mobilize, and utilize non-Board volunteers in support of SoNA and its programs;
- provide leadership for the organization to meet standards of excellence in governance, fiscal responsibility, and human relations;
- actively participate in Board meetings and key committees;
- maintain a strong working knowledge of symphonies, innovations, and new trends in the field for arts organizations;
• maintain positive relationships with orchestra personnel and partners;
• ensure a strong multi-year budgeting and forecasting system, including programming costs, operating, and capital expenses;
• review and prepare quarterly financial statements including variance reports and work closely with the Finance Committee to monitor and project financial health;
• ensure all financial policies and procedures are followed, including audit recommendations;
• provide regular and persuasive internal and external communications to increase enthusiasm for SoNA activities among stakeholders and new audiences;
• supervise the Music Director, including working with the Musicians Committee and staff to present a 360 annual evaluation;
• monitor the Music Director’s contract and make decisions about contract renewal as needed in collaboration with the Musicians Committee and the Board of Directors; and
• serve in partnership with the Board Chair and Music Director as the primary spokesperson in the press and community in advancing SoNA’s mission and vision.

ARTISTIC LEADERSHIP

Paul Haas
Music Director

Paul Haas was at the start of a promising conducting career when he devised and produced a concert project called REWIND in 2006, featuring composer and musician colleagues and violin soloist Anne Akiko Meyers. REWIND was a reaction against the staid nature of the standard classical music performance: audience members surrounded the performers, then left and started playing behind the audience on all sides. There were mirrored sculptures by Kate Raudenbush hanging from the ceiling, interacting in multifaceted ways with the subtle theatrical lighting design. Music started before the audience arrived, and it continued without pause—even between pieces—until after the audience left. A laptop artist injected samples of the orchestra and the audience into the texture.

The success of REWIND prompted Haas to found Sympho, an organization devoted to the creation and performance of symphonic experiences in unusual venues. The inspiration for Haas’ work comes from a wide array of spiritual and ecological sources, including a longstanding meditation practice and a deep connection to the Earth that finds Haas, along with his wife Suzette and two young girls, in the process of beginning an organic homestead that aims eventually to be self-sustaining.

One result of Haas’ immersion in this creative process is his emergence as a composer: over the last decade, fifteen commissions have come in from a wide variety of iconic venues, including the Park Avenue Armory and Rubin Museum of Art in New York, Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, the Anchorage Museum of Art in Alaska, and the Fay Jones School of Architecture and Design in Arkansas.

Haas is the first artist ever to receive two separate commissions from the Oliver Ranch Foundation in Sonoma County, California, creating installations for Ann Hamilton’s groundbreaking Tower. An equally rich part of Haas’ professional life is his service as Music Director of SoNA, a position he has held since 2011.
Haas is a graduate of Yale University and The Juilliard School, where he studied conducting as a Bruno Walter Fellow with Otto-Werner Mueller. His other conducting teachers include Michael Tilson Thomas and Leonard Slatkin. He also studied opera conducting in Dresden, Germany, at the Hochschule für Musik. Haas is currently Music Director of the Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra. He resides in Germantown, New York with his wife and three children.

LEADERSHIP

Marti Sudduth  
Chair, Board of Directors  
Arts Advocate  
Marti Sudduth retired in 2009 from the University of Tulsa where she served for 24 years as Assistant Director of University School, a private school program for gifted children ages three through 8th grade. Upon her retirement and relocation, she immediately focused her energies on the arts communities of Northwest Arkansas. Marti has served on the Walton Arts Center Board for 10 years, Crystal Bridges Van Cliburn Advisory council for seven years, and SoNA Board for eight years, serving this year as Board Chair. In 2023 the Governor’s Arts Awards recognized Marti and her husband Kelly with the Patron Award describing them as generous people, who have made an indelible impact toward sustaining the arts in Northwest Arkansas.

Mike Russell  
Vice-Chair, Board of Directors  
Senior Partner, Simpactful  
Mike Russell joined Simpactful, a network of industry leaders who have come together after leading, innovating, and making their own impact at top corporations, after 37 years at P&G including 25 years leading the Walmart business as team leader of the Walmart and SAMS business. Mike is known for his leadership and selling skills as a collaborator and negotiator focused on the shopper and holistic business planning. With a long history of working with Walmart, he has deep and wide knowledge of what it takes to win with the world’s largest retailer. Mike received P&G’s 2017 Lifetime Achievement award for his results in leading the company’s largest global customer.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

Symphony of Northwest Arkansas seeks an Executive Director with

- a resourceful and entrepreneurial perspective and the ability to work in a collaborative style and maintain balance in a demanding and fluid environment;
- exemplary communication skills and the ability to communicate effectively, build rapport, and relate well to people with varying ages and values;
- a commitment to consistently placing a high value on SoNA’s extensive network of internal and external stakeholders with a keen focus on listening to, understanding, and appreciating feedback;
- a demonstrated ability to connect dots, see the big-picture, and recognize long-term effects and future trends;
- a demonstrated ability to oversee major gifts cultivation, stewardship, and solicitation; and
• a demonstrated ability to prioritize and complete tasks necessary to meet or exceed the mutually agreed upon expectations while being accountable for personal and professional actions.

A bachelor's degree is required for this position. Five to seven years of management experience, including front-line, major gifts fundraising experience in a performing arts institution, is highly preferred.

**SALARY AND BENEFITS**

The salary range for this position is $85,000 to $97,000 annually. Symphony of Northwest Arkansas offers a comprehensive benefits package.

**LOCATION**

This position is in Fayetteville, Arkansas in the northwest of the state that includes Washington and Benton counties, and the cities of Fayetteville, Bentonville, Springdale, Siloam Springs, Bella Vista, and Rogers-Lowell.

**APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. Cover letters should be responsive to the mission of Symphony of Northwest Arkansas. Preference will be given to applications received by August 11. Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the successful candidate has been selected.

To apply for this position, visit: Executive Director, Symphony of Northwest Arkansas.

To nominate a candidate, please contact Anne Johnson: annejohnson@aspenleadershipgroup.com.

All inquiries will be held in confidence.