

Mississippi Symphony Orchestra (MSO) President and Executive Director

MSO seeks a business professional who will partner with veteran Music Director & Conductor Crafton Beck to deliver exceptional orchestral music experiences and education programs that engage and include Mississippi communities throughout the state.

Founded in 1944, the [Mississippi Symphony Orchestra](#) is the cornerstone of Mississippi performing arts and has a long [history](#) of innovation, creativity, and excellence. Led by Music Director [Crafton Beck](#) and based in the City of Jackson, MSO is an innovative regional orchestra that presents orchestral music performances, programs and education of the highest quality to residents and visitors of Mississippi. Known as the “Birthplace of America’s Music,” Mississippi has shaped the course of modern music with its contributions to blues, jazz, rock, country and gospel.

BACKGROUND

MSO has acted as a cultural trailblazer since its founding. As the largest professional performing arts organization in the state, the financially stable MSO performs approximately 30 concerts and approximately 100 full orchestra and small ensemble educational performances statewide for more than 30,000 Mississippians each year. The Selby and Richard McRae Foundation Bravo Series is MSO’s banner classical series of 5 concerts which are annually performed along with the 2 concert Pops Series at the 2,000 seat Thalia Mara Hall in downtown Jackson, while an equally successful Chamber Orchestra Series of four concerts is performed in intimate venues throughout Jackson and the region and the popular Pepsi Pops concert is performed at a local outdoor venue. MSO tours statewide as a full orchestra, chamber orchestra in three resident ensembles - Woodwind Quintet, Brass Quintet and String Quartet with annual and bi-annual visits to Vicksburg, Greenville, Kosciusko, Brookhaven, Poplarville, and other cities.

MSO administers contractually based educational initiatives with three central Mississippi school districts. The programs, which vary from district to district, enable 800-1000 school children to receive group instruction in violin, viola, and cello and also include school ensemble visits and full orchestra education concerts. MSO performs annually for over 16,000 elementary school children, including 8-10 full orchestra concerts and approximately 90 small ensemble visits. In addition, MSO administers a three-ensemble [Youth Orchestra](#) program to provide ensemble experiences at the primary and secondary levels and a

week-long summer string festival ([Premier Orchestral Institute](#)). MSO desires to continue to develop these programs with the goal of expansion in the near future. MSO has an annual operating budget of \$2.3 million and a \$3.6 million endowment, with nearly \$1.4 million (60%) coming from contributed income, \$706,000 (31%) from ticket sales and contracted engagements, and \$200,000 (9%) from the endowment. MSO is led by 42 Board members, 5 full-time and 3 part-time staff members, and 85 musicians. In addition, there are 100 volunteers who serve hundreds of thousands of stakeholders. MSO is supported by the Jackson Symphony League, which is its largest donor via projects such as the annual symphony gala and the Sub Deb program. The Orchestra performs from September to May.

There is a sense of intense artistic growth and a firm purpose of esprit de corps within the Orchestra. Long-term initiatives toward increasing fundraising, realizing earned income potential and greater service to community of education programs, seeking more grant and state funding, diversifying programming, repertoire, soloists, and lifelong learning for a more diverse society shape future seasons and orchestra initiatives.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Reporting to the Chairperson of the Board of Directors and working in partnership with the Music Director & Conductor, the President and Executive Director will be an entrepreneurial leader who will lead MSO in achieving its artistic, financial, community relations, educational, and DEIA initiatives. The scope of responsibility will be to partner with the Music Director to realize his creative vision for a 21st-century orchestra by maximizing contributed and earned revenue, providing staff leadership and mentorship, spearheading strategic short- and long-range planning, and cultivating all audiences, locally, regionally, statewide, and nationally.

As the leader of a dynamic and community-focused symphony orchestra, the President and Executive Director is expected to work closely with the Board, staff, and musicians to:

- Build a dynamic partnership with the Music Director to develop an artistic vision of programs and presentations that can be administered within appropriate budgetary constraints, and that will inform, attract, and engage the interest of the diverse City of Jackson and regional public while also securing recognition nationally;
- Identify stakeholders, develop strategies, and define how key messages will be delivered to various individuals and institutions to maximize visibility, brand, and most importantly, contributed and earned revenue opportunities;

- Serve as the chief fundraiser and spokesperson for the organization; provide direction and impetus to the fundraising activities of the Board of Directors and staff for all aspects of major gift cultivation and solicitation;
- Communicate the accomplishments, artistic and education mission of the organization to the general public through the media and at public speaking engagements in tandem with the Music Director and Chairperson;
- Work with the Board to oversee and negotiate contractual matters with the Musicians' Union, vendors, and strategic partners;
- Provide guidance that best utilizes the talents and resources of the Board, stimulates involvement, and works closely with the Board to ensure fiscal health and practical policy setting, community ambassadorship, and general governance of the organization;
- Build a working vision of regional relevance to meet and serve the State of Mississippi;
- Be a strategic thinker, planner, collaborator, and partner;
- Influence others to enrich their lives and impact the state regionally.

IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES

The President and Executive Director's immediate priorities will be to:

- Understand all facets of MSO, including the organization's history, culture, staff, finances, programming schedule, education, public programs, infrastructure, operations, endowment, and capital campaign; understand the diverse local and regional constituencies in the Jackson and Mississippi community;
- Understand and show demonstrated experience and success with diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility for the audience, board members, education, musicians, staff, and the general public;
- Understand today's multi-media and internet technology and its potential impact;
- Build a dynamic partnership with the Music Director & Conductor to develop an artistic vision of programs and presentations that can be administered within appropriate budgetary constraints, and that will inform, attract and engage the interest of a diverse Jackson public while also securing recognition regionally and nationally;
- Manage the business affairs of MSO, including cash flow and expense management, with the intent of supporting the mission and goals while achieving greater financial growth, funding diversity, and supporting

- permanent sustainability;
- Review the current status of the organization’s mainstage season and education programming, and take charge of in-process work related to current and planned events, performances, and school programming;
 - Serve as the chief fundraiser and marketer for the organization; work closely with the staff, Board, and advisors to expand and diversify revenue streams; work with the Board and staff to complete the fundraising for a future capacity building and endowment campaign;
 - Build on the organization’s strong reputation by continuing to cultivate relationships with existing and new key stakeholders in the community to enhance and develop support for programs, including partnership opportunities with other regional and national arts, educational and cultural institutions;
 - 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 performing arts practice;
 - Work with the Board to update long-range strategic planning and implement MSO’s shared values, mission, and vision;
 - Work in concert with the Board to articulate its role and fulfill its governance responsibilities; help build strong relationships among Board, staff, musicians, volunteers, donors, and subscribers; identify and suggest new Board members whose talents, interests, and commitment will help to further MSO’s mission, and will help to expand funding opportunities;
 - Join other arts, cultural, and educational leaders in the region to advocate for increasing public support of a growing regional arts culture and community that has gained national prominence.

PREFERRED EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

The preferred candidate has the following experience and qualifications:

- Arts professional with management experience in a performing arts organization known for innovative programming, artistic excellence, inclusion, and strong ties with the community; an extensive background or passion for performing arts and educational & public programming would be an advantage; knowledge of current trends and developments in the performing arts that will develop new and younger audiences;
- The ability to realize earned income opportunities through education programs and summer festivals to diversify income streams thus supporting both the education and artistic arms of the organization;

- The ability to work successfully with donors, community members, performing artists, educators, and the organization's Board of Directors to strengthen the Orchestra; measurable and successful results in selling tickets and raising funds and in identifying, cultivating, and soliciting donors and other sources of revenue and in managing change;
- A detailed understanding of operations and financial management and ability to analyze financial reports and develop and monitor realistic budgets; experience in a performing arts organization or similar environment would be an advantage;
- Experience working with musicians, orchestras, conductors, educators, and others as active and valued collaborators; demonstrated ability to forge mutually respectful and effective relationships with a diverse group of personalities to deliver exceptional performing arts experiences to the public
- A passion for orchestral music and connecting the public with MSO and the performing arts, including members of the Jackson metro area and surrounding communities, as well as visitors to the region;
- Outstanding oral and written communication skills, including the means to address issues in non-confrontational and non-polarizing ways, but nevertheless with determination;
- 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 is able to connect with a broad spectrum of constituents; a person with a sense of humor and perspective.

For additional information or to apply, please contact Lee Kappelman (410-218-1953) or Dennis Hanthorn (404-805-2724) or send an email to KappelmanConsulting@gmail.com.