



DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT & PATRON COMMUNICATIONS
RICHMOND SYMPHONY
Richmond, Virginia
[Richmond Symphony](#)



The Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with the Richmond Symphony in the search for a Director of Advancement & Patron Communications.

The Director of Advancement & Patron Communications will build on successes of recent years and position the Richmond Symphony for continuing long-term growth. As the senior leader in the organization responsible for all of the Symphony's marketing and fundraising functions, the Director of Advancement & Patron Communications will plan and supervise all activities related to ticket sales and other revenue development as well as delivering the Symphony's brand, promotions, public relations, patron relationships, sponsorship, and any additional support for all of the Richmond Symphony's artistic, education, and community programs and initiatives, consistent with Board of Director policies and long-range objectives. The Director will oversee all patron relationship management including overall marketing and fundraising strategies; public relations; advertising; social Media and Digital advertising and promotion; and media relations.

The Director will provide leadership across the organization and represent it within the community, creating, monitoring, and protecting the Richmond Symphony brand as necessary. The Director will work closely with Board members, the Executive Director, and the Symphony's Leadership Team, and will directly supervises a team of nine staff in the department, plus additional contracted team members as needed, and will work directly with and help to oversee the new Major Gifts Officer position recently established by the Richmond Symphony Foundation.

The Richmond Symphony sits at the center of the vibrant cultural life of Richmond, Virginia. Its musicians serve as links throughout the community and the orchestra itself provides a vast array of concerts for all musical tastes and ages, including a Masterworks series, The Metro Collection Series (chamber orchestra), a Symphony Pops series, a family Lollipops series, Rush Hour Concerts (one-hour orchestral performances in casual venues), education concerts with full orchestra as well as small ensembles, and a myriad of special presentations.

The Richmond Symphony's home since 1983 has been the Carpenter Theatre. Designed originally as a Loew's movie palace in 1928, the historic venue was purchased by the Symphony in 1981, before being renovated and reopened in 1983.

In addition to its performances in the Carpenter Theater at the Dominion Energy Center, the Symphony purchased the "Big Tent" in 2015, a mobile stage with a large and beautiful canopy, which enabled the Symphony to perform at the opening ceremony for the UCI Road World Cycling Championships for over 12,000 people. This unique performance venue has since provided the Symphony with the ability to perform in surrounding diverse communities for various festivals and celebrations throughout Virginia. In

the City of Richmond, these various performances, which take place within community festivals created by the Symphony, have created proceeds specifically to fund the purchase of musical instruments for local public schools, with over \$400,000 already raised for the purpose since 2015. By September 2020, with the Big Tent having been to every district of the City, every single one of the 32 elementary and middle schools will have received enough donated instruments to be able to teach orchestra, and to make instrumental instruction available for every Richmond Public Schools student, creating systemic change.

The Richmond Symphony is comprised of 69 professional musicians, with a core of 38 full-time positions due to expand to a core of 41 within the next four years. The 2019/20 season, informally titled the year of “welcome,” is a most exciting year of transition. In September 2018 it was announced that the Richmond Symphony had selected a slate of five diverse and outstanding candidates for the position of Music Director. Each of the finalists is participating in a two-week residency and the selected candidate will succeed Steven Smith, who completed his term as Music Director at the end of the 2018-2019 season, after almost ten years. The second life-changing event in 2019/20 is that the Richmond Symphony will welcome the Menuhin Competition to Richmond in May 2020, considered by many to be the Olympics of the violin – pushing its annual operating budget in FY20 from \$6 million to over \$8.5 million. The Symphony also benefits from a growing endowment overseen by the Richmond Symphony Foundation, with its separate Board supported by staff, that is expected to reach \$20 million in 2020/21.

The Symphony’s current [Strategic Plan](#) has recently been extended to 2022, in order to allow the new Music Director to start work and get acclimated before participating in the writing of the new Plan. The current Plan has five Strategic Goals focused on Artistic Excellence; Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Public Relevance; Audience Building; and Financial Health.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Director of Advancement & Patron Communications will report to the Executive Director, David Fisk.

PRINCIPAL OPPORTUNITIES

A time of stability, transition, and great opportunity

Stability. *The Richmond Symphony is an institution in strong shape by any measure. The quality of the orchestra is exceptional. Its Board of 42 is at full capacity and every member is engaged. (Every member of the Board subscribes, donates, and participates in the Symphony’s fundraising efforts in individual ways). Numerous staff members, volunteers, and musicians have been with the Symphony for many years, and all are deeply committed to its success. Internal relations among constituencies are vibrant and healthy; support of the Symphony’s marketing and fundraising efforts is ‘baked’ into the Union contract and is carried out each year by individual members of the orchestra on a voluntary basis. The Symphony’s brand and reputation are highly respected in the City and the metropolitan region, across Central Virginia; its donor base and audiences reflect target demographics. The organization operates on a balanced budget, and its cash flow is healthy.*

Transition and fresh energy. *The Symphony is currently in the midst of a search for a new Music Director. (The previous incumbents each served 10 years, with intentional succession planning). The [five top candidates](#) represent a more diverse mix of artistic leadership than the Symphony has previously seen. The Symphony’s 2020/21 Season will be one of transition, enabling the Symphony’s leadership team, including the Director of Advancement & Patron Communications, to be involved in setting a new path of renewed*

artistic vision and vigor when the new Music Director is appointed in May 2020. Recent appointments in other leadership and staff positions have brought fresh energy and new ideas to the organization too. The new Director will also be able to reap the benefit of arriving at the organization with an endowment campaign recently completed, and as the Symphony Foundation Board is expanding with intent to engage a Major Gifts Officer, in whose appointment the new Director will naturally participate with the Executive Director, enabling them to forge a strong fundraising partnership from the outset. Building on the 'afterglow' of the Symphony's hosting of the Menuhin Competition in May 2020, the new Director will have great material with which to work, for further growth of both audiences and the donor base. The 2020/21 Season is being fashioned to enable such progress to be realized.

Great opportunity. *Riding the wave of Richmond's rise, as a capital city and a region on the ascendant, and the Symphony's position at the heart of its vibrant arts community, the new Director of Advancement & Patron Communications will have the opportunity to make their mark and burnish their reputation in heading the Richmond Symphony's marketing and fundraising efforts. (Two former incumbents of the position have gone on to do great work elsewhere, having been seen to accomplish much in their 5-6 years at the Richmond Symphony: one to become Director of Individual Advancement at the Smithsonian Institution; the other most recently to become Executive Director of the Library of Virginia Foundation). Taking advantage of the combination of stability and transition underway in the organization, and leading a strong team of staff, the new Director of Advancement & Patron Communications is being set up for success and for the opportunity to make a deeply significant impact in this major arts organization on the cultural life of the Commonwealth and on the communities the Symphony seeks to serve.*

–David Fisk, Executive Director

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Marketing and Public Relations

The Director of Advancement & Patron Communications will

- create and implement long- and short-term, pro-active marketing and public relations plans and strategies in coordination with the Executive Director and Board of Director;
- work with the Executive Director and Board of Directors in setting an annual marketing budget, sales goals, ticket prices, and concert packaging;
- produce reports related to ticket sales income, projects, and analyses ticket sales, and maintain historic and comparative data related to ticket sales;
- conduct and direct market research projects;
- create and supervise the production of marketing collateral;
- contribute advice and information on artistic programming as related to market trends and demand;
- negotiate contracts as needed with outside vendors for the provision of direct mail, marketing research, design, and printing services; and ensure competitive pricing and the quality of their work; and
- develop relationships and partnerships with external cultural, educational, and business organizations as related to audience development and corporate image.

Advancement

The Director of Advancement & Patron Communications will

- prepare an annual development plan for the Symphony, including monetary goals and a system for management;

- participate in the development and implementation of long-range plans for the Symphony and develop long-range fundraising goals;
- provide direct management of planned giving programs and endowment campaign activities;
- maintain a close and positive relationship with all constituencies of the Symphony, including the Board of Directors, Foundation Board of Trustees, administrative staff, Donor Advisory Board, Richmond Symphony Orchestra League, Community Council, sub-committees, business, professional, and civic leaders;
- serve as the Symphony liaison with the Revenue Development Committee, Public Relevance Committee, Audience Building Committee, and Special Events Committee, and sit on several other Committees of the Board;
- represent the Symphony at local, state, and national professional meetings, as well as at cultural and social activities;
- maintain a visible presence at concerts and other Symphony related events;
- coordinate activities of the Advancement & Patron Communications Department with all other Richmond Symphony departments as necessary; and
- act as Front of House Manager as needed.

KEY COLLEAGUES



David Fisk
Executive Director

David Fisk joined the Richmond Symphony as its Executive Director in 2002. Born in England, he became a US citizen in 2014. Before moving to the States, David was Chief Executive of the Ulster Orchestra in Belfast, the national symphony of Northern Ireland. Prior to that, he led a chamber orchestra in London, a sculpture park in Yorkshire, and an international arts festival in Manchester, England. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in 2001.

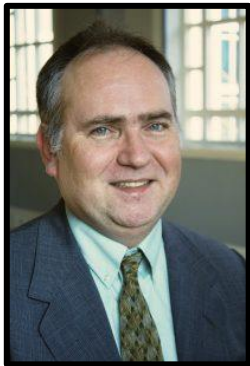
David began his musical life at the age of 8, singing in the choir for 5 years at St. Paul's Cathedral in London. He holds a degree in music from Manchester University and a postgraduate diploma from the Royal Northern College of Music, specializing in piano accompaniment. David continues to give public concerts frequently as a collaborative pianist, often in chamber music recitals with members of the Richmond Symphony. His volunteer service currently includes the Community Board of VPM Public Radio and the Executive Committee of Virginians for the Arts, for which he chairs the statewide legislative committee, and leadership of the Group 3 symphonies in the League of American Orchestras.

David Fisk is married to the Irish opera singer Anne O'Byrne. They live just by the James River in the Woodland Heights area of Richmond with their 21-year old daughter Finn and 18-year old son Oliver.



Jennifer Arnold
Director of Artistic Planning & Orchestral Operations

Jennifer Arnold, Director of Artistic Planning and Orchestral Operations, joined the Richmond Symphony in September 2019. She served for two seasons as the Director of Artistic Operations for 45th Parallel, a chamber music collective in Portland, Oregon while performing as a violist with the Oregon Symphony for 14 seasons. She currently serves on the programming committee for the Gateways Festival Orchestra in Rochester, New York, and is on faculty at the Sphinx Performance Academy, the summer camp of the Sphinx Organization. Jennifer is a vocal advocate for diversity and fair practices within the orchestral industry and has been a panelist at SphinxConnect, Gateways Music Festival as well as serving on the ICSOM Diversity Committee.



Walter Bitner
Director of Education & Community Engagement

Musician and writer Walter Bitner is Director of Education & Community Engagement for the Richmond Symphony. A performing musician since childhood, Walter is a multi-instrumentalist and singer, teacher, arranger/composer, and conductor. He has performed and studied a wide variety of music from nearly all periods of the Western art music tradition on piano, harpsichord, lute, recorder, and as a singer.

His teaching career (1991-2014) spans public and private schools in New York, Florida, and Tennessee – from Kindergarten through 12th grade – and included a broad array of music education formats including general music, choir, strings, piano, and music theory. He taught at alternative and progressive schools, traditional college preparatory schools, and a public arts magnet high school. He is Conductor Emeritus of Music City Youth Orchestra, which he founded and directed from 2007 to 2012.

Walter served as Director of Education & Community Engagement for the Nashville Symphony from 2014 to 2019, where he established the award-winning *Accelerando* program designed to prepare gifted young students of diverse ethnic backgrounds for pursuing music at the collegiate level and beyond. He writes about music and education for national magazines and on his website *Off The Podium* at walterbitner.com.



Gail Richmond Robinson
Director of Finance & Administration

Gail has served the Richmond Symphony in this position since 2009, overseeing the finance and human resource needs of the Symphony, including budgeting, cash flow forecasting, and compliance issues. A CPA with over thirty years of experience, she began her career with the then big-eight accounting firm Price Waterhouse, working in their audit and tax practices. Other experience includes serving as Finance Director of Virginia's Assistive Technology Loan Fund Authority and managing as a sole proprietor a small individual income tax practice. Gail graduated cum laude from Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania with a degree in Economics.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

The Richmond Symphony seeks a Director of Advancement & Patron Communications with

- a high level of strategic marketing and fundraising expertise, the ability to collaborate creatively, and work effectively with internal and external partners;
- the ability to oversee and personally execute tactical activities that accomplish departmental and organizational goals;
- effective strategy formulation and disciplined tactical execution;
- a commitment to personal and professional development and an ability to meet the changing needs of the position, and undertake such other duties;
- the ability to work effectively with limited resources;
- proven supervisory and interpersonal skills and dedication to a collegial and collaborative working environment;
- excellent negotiating skills;
- financial acumen and the ability to work with high level budgeting;
- the ability to communicate clearly and persuasively, in both written and verbal forms, with a wide variety of constituents, maintaining appropriate confidentiality and discretion;
- an aptitude for long-term planning;
- creative and strategic problem-solving skills, and the ability to work effectively on multiple projects simultaneously in a fast-paced environment;
- computer literacy and the ability to work with Microsoft Office software systems;
- an ability to read and accurately interpret union contracts; and
- expertise in organizing details and mathematical aptitude.

A bachelor's degree is required for this position. An advanced degree is preferred as is at least five years of fundraising, marketing, performing arts or related experience.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

The Richmond Symphony is committed to reflecting the communities it seeks to serve. The Symphony is deepening its geographic footprint in Virginia in ways that are strengthening its visibility and its connections with new constituencies, enabling new collaborations, and positioning it for long-term audience growth and more broad-based community support. The Symphony is working to instill its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee's focus throughout all constituencies of the organization. A Community Council was established in 2017 to create a group of ambassadors for the Symphony and of the communities the Symphony seeks to serve. Members of the Symphony's leadership team, especially the Director of Education & Community Engagement and the Director of Artistic Planning & Orchestral Operations, are viewed as leaders in the field of DEI work.

SALARY & BENEFITS

The Richmond Symphony offers a competitive and comprehensive salary and package of employee benefits.

LOCATION

With an abundance of visual arts, theater, music, and dance, Richmond is more than the political capital of Virginia – it is also the arts capital. The city's low cost of living combined with the presence of the University of Richmond and Virginia Commonwealth University's School of the Arts has encouraged the growth of an exciting, dynamic, and boundary-pushing arts community. The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, one of the nation's top art museums, is an anchor for the community, attracting high-profile exhibitions of work by internationally renowned artists such as Dale Chihuly and Pablo Picasso; the Institute of Contemporary Art provides the city with another powerhouse museum. The city has also developed a flourishing street art scene, most notably represented by the five-year Richmond Mural Project and the colorful former GRTC bus depot, a product of the 2013 Richmond Street Art Festival.

In the performing arts, the City also boasts the Richmond Ballet, the State Ballet of Virginia, and Virginia Opera (for both of which the Symphony plays, as a key partner) as well as more than half a dozen independently operating theaters, including Virginia Repertory, central Virginia's flagship professional theater, and the Richmond Triangle Players, a leading voice in the LGBTQ community. Dominion Energy Center for the Performing Arts, one of the city's largest performing arts organizations, offers touring and local theater, dance, and opera performances at the fully restored 1928 Carpenter Theatre, including select performances through the University's Modlin Center for the Arts. The historic Altria Theater (formerly known as the Mosque and the site of the famous "The Kiss" photograph of teen heartthrob and musical icon Elvis) faces Monroe Park.

Richmond also has a reputation for fantastic restaurants, including one of *Bon Appetit's* top 10 new restaurants in America, and is home to over 30 craft breweries. Richmond, Virginia was named a *Travel + Leisure* Top Destination and *National Geographic* highlighted Richmond as a top place to travel for food.

The James River lies at the heart of Richmond's vibrant outdoor culture. Kayakers and other thrill-seekers flock to the river to take advantage of its Class IV whitewater rapids, with excitement peaking at the boatercross and freestyle competitions of Dominion Riverrock, an annual festival celebrating Richmond's wide array of outdoor recreation. *Outside* magazine named Richmond as its 2012 "Best River Town."

Beyond the riverbanks, climbers can enjoy scaling the walls that surround the old quarry pond on Belle Isle, while hiking enthusiasts can hit the dirt of the Buttermilk and North Bank trails, which provide surprising oases of unspoiled nature in the middle of the city. Maymont Park, Byrd Park, and Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens offer acres of outside space for reading, pick-up games, and concerts, while tiny pocket parks dot the medians and alleys of the historic Fan District.

Richmond is the recipient of numerous accolades including a "Best Places to Live" by *U.S. News & World Report* (2017); one of "Spith's Best Cities" by *Southern Living Magazine* (2017); one of *Zagat's* "U.S. Most Exciting Food Cities" (2017); one of *the* "Coolest U.S. Cities to Visit" by *Forbes* (2018); and *Frommer's* named Richmond as a world "Top Ten Designation" in 2014.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. **Cover letters should be responsive to the mission of Richmond Symphony.** Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the successful candidate has been selected.

To apply for this position, visit:

[Director of Advancement & Patron Communications, Richmond Symphony.](#)

To nominate a candidate, please contact Anne Johnson:

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

All inquiries will be held in confidence.