



**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
RICHMOND SYMPHONY**
Richmond, Virginia
[Richmond Symphony](#)



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

The Executive Director will be responsible for the total institutional management of the Richmond Symphony, making recommendations to the Board of Directors and its committees on matters of policy and implementing policies as determined by the Board of Directors. The Executive Director will oversee all organizational activities, including budget and finance, concert operations, fundraising, marketing and public relations, labor relations, and strategic planning.

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 on the Move Series (chamber orchestra), a Symphony Pops series, a family Lollipops series, Rush Hour Concerts (one-hour orchestral performances in casual venues), a Summer Series (streamed and in-person), education concerts with full orchestra as well as small ensembles, commissions to notable composers such as Mason Bates, and a myriad of special presentations. The Symphony has a budget of \$6.5 million plus an additional \$2.2 million for the Menuhin Competition.

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 June 2021, 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 Symphony's current [Strategic Plan](#) has recently been extended to 2022, in order to allow the new Music Director and the new Executive Director to start working together 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 Executive Director will report to the Board of Directors through the Executive Committee, led by Chair George L. Mahoney.

PRINCIPAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Richmond Symphony launches its 63rd season this year and is the largest performing arts organization in Central Virginia. It includes an orchestra of more than 70 talented professional musicians (with “core” growth from 36 full-time musicians to 41 at the end of the current contract), the 150-voice Richmond Symphony Chorus, and more than 275 students in the Richmond Symphony Youth Orchestra programs.

The Richmond Symphony is recognized for its successful and growing collaborations with local educational and other organizations, leading, for example, to its successful bid to host the 2021 Menuhin Competition, only the second time this international “Olympics of the Violin” event has travelled to the United States. The Symphony’s fiscal responsibility, strong community ties, and reputation for innovation make it a leader in the arts in Richmond and among all arts organizations across the Commonwealth of Virginia, and its paid streaming and industry-leading online educational program, The Richmond Symphony School of Music, distinguish it in the present COVID environment, uniquely raising its profile and further demonstrating its track record for being both nimble and creative.

Recognizing that it has the ability to change people's lives through the power of its music, the Richmond Symphony is constantly developing new outreach efforts that will allow it to “meet people where they are,” broadening its reach and growing its audiences throughout its region, most notably with its nationally recognized “Big Tent.” As a result, it enjoys strong support from its community, including patrons and local businesses. It recently completed a successful capital campaign, providing an endowment of \$18 million.

The successful candidate in this search has the opportunity to build on the Richmond Symphony’s solid, constructive relations with its musicians and work with its new world-class Music Director, Valentina Peleggi, a strong and energetic staff, and a very engaged Board of Directors (40+ members) to continue to grow and broaden its audiences, experiment with new technology, and further enhance its national reputation, all while working in the increasingly young, vibrant, and diverse community that is Richmond, Virginia.

–George L. Mahoney, Chair, Board of Directors

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Director will

- oversee all organizational activities, including budget and finance, concert operations, fundraising, marketing and public relations, labor relations, and strategic planning;
- hire and supervise senior staff (the Leadership Team) and Executive Assistant;
- develop, recommend, and implement artistic objectives of the Symphony in cooperation with the Music Director and appropriate Board committees;
- oversee all aspects of concert operations, including development of annual schedule for local and out-of-town services, scheduling, production, and labor relations;

- oversee and act a cheerleader for the Symphony’s extensive education and community engagement programs, and its deep-rooted commitment to the communities it serves, including its work in the field of diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- negotiate (or oversee negotiation of) and execute all contracts on behalf of the Symphony, including contracts for guest soloists and conductors, collective bargaining agreements, electronic media contracts, individual musician contracts, contracts for run-out or contractual concerts, and contracts for a wide variety of space, services, and equipment;
- supervise all marketing, promotion, and public relations activities of the Symphony, including development of the annual marketing plans, annual season and single ticket campaigns, media relations, and advertising and market research;
- serve as official spokesperson for the Symphony, interacting frequently with members of the public, community organizations, patrons, corporate executives, university and college presidents, state and local officials, and diplomats;
- supervise and participate as chief fundraiser in all fundraising and development activities of the Symphony, including the Endowment and Annual Fund Campaigns, Foundation and sponsorship solicitations, grant proposals, government relations, and special events;
- prepare, in cooperation with the Leadership Team and the Board’s Financial Health Committee, an annual operating budget for submission to the Board of Directors; monitors revenues and expenses against approved budget and provides monthly reports to the Board of Directors;
- work with the Music Director, staff, and Board Committees to monitor, evaluate, and revise the Symphony’s long-range Strategic Plan;
- implement plans and policies to ensure that the organization is effectively structured and staffed with supremely competent people and ensure compliance with government regulations regarding employment practices;
- develop and implement personnel policies for the administrative staff;
- oversee the operation of the administrative offices to ensure that they are effectively and efficiently run;
- in cooperation with the Board Chair, coordinate the agenda and logistics for meetings of the Board of Directors and its committees;
- represent the Symphony to, and maintain communication and good relations with, other community arts groups, local education institutions, the media, and the general community;
- serve as liaison to all Board committees, to the Richmond Symphony League, and to other affiliation groups as required to maintain open communication and ongoing dialogue; and
- serve as a member of the Symphony Board of Directors and the Foundation Board of Directors.

ARTISTIC LEADERSHIP



Valentina Peleggi
Music Director

Valentina Peleggi is Music Director of the Richmond Symphony Orchestra. Described by the BBC Music Magazine as a “rising star”, Peleggi has led orchestras from around the world, including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Orchestra of Wales, Norrköping Symphony (Norway) and Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. In 2019 she joined English National Opera for 2 seasons as a Mackerras Fellow, conducting Carmen, Bohème, Orpheus in the Underworld and Dido and Aeneas. She returns as a guest in 2021, when she will also debut at Garsington Opera.

In the 19/20 season Ms Peleggi's symphonic invitations included the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony and the BBC Scottish Symphony, in which she was due to premiere a new orchestration of Alma Mahler songs by Roxana Panufnik (specially commissioned by the BBC for Ms Peleggi). Further afield she was invited to the Orchestra della Toscana in her hometown of Florence, Residentie Orkest Den Haag, the Gulbenkian Orchestra and the National Symphony in Dublin. Also, in 2020 her return with the BBC Singers and her first CD released on the Naxos label, featuring a cappella works by Villa Lobos in a new critical edition, guest edited by Ms Peleggi and performed by the Sao Paulo Symphony Chorus.

Last season's highlights included a return to the Baltimore Symphony and a concert for International Women's Day with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, featuring works by the African American composer Florence Price, and the rediscovered French 19th century composer Augusta Holmes. Past guest appearances have also included the Orchestra del Teatro Verdi in Trieste, Omaha Symphony, Orquesta Sinfonica de Valdivia (Chile) and Orquestra Filharmonica de Goias (Brazil); she has also worked with the BBC Concert Orchestra and Tonhalle Orchester Zurich. She has collaborated with soloists such as Baiba Skride, Jan Liesecki, Alexander Melnikov, Louis Schwizgebel, Boris Belkin, Simone Lamsma and Yuri Bashmet.

Ms. Peleggi previously served as Resident Conductor of the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra and Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor of the São Paulo Symphony Chorus. During her years with the Sao Paulo Symphony Peleggi conducted many subscription concerts, created innovative community projects and continues to return as a guest. She won the APCA Prize in 2016 as Conductor of the Year from the Sao Paulo Society of Critics of the Arts and was voted "Young Talent of 2017" by readers of Brazil's specialist music magazine Revista Concerto. She currently holds the position of Guest Music Director of the Theatro Sao Pedro, responsible for Italian opera.

The first Italian woman to enter the conducting programme at the Royal Academy of Music of London, she graduated with distinction and was awarded the DipRAM for an outstanding final concert as well as numerous prizes along the way (Bruno Walter Conducting Prize, Fred Southall Memorial Prize, Gordon Foundation Award, Ernest Read Conducting Prize). She was recently honoured with the title of Associate. She assisted Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Semyon Bychkov, Christian Thielemann and furthered her studies with David Zinman and Daniele Gatti at the Zurich Tonhalle and at the Royal Concertgebouw. She holds a Master in Conducting from the Conservatorio Santa Cecilia in Rome with honours, and in 2013 was awarded the Accademia Chigiana's highest award, going on to assist Bruno Campanella and Gianluigi Gelmetti at Teatro Regio di Torino, Opera Bastille Paris, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Teatro Regio di Parma and Teatro San Carlo. She also assisted on a live worldwide broadcast and DVD production of Rossini's Cenerentola with the Orchestra Nazionale della RAI. From 2005 to 2015 she was the Principal Conductor and Music Director of the University Choir in Florence, and remains their Honorary Conductor, receiving in 2011 a special award from the Government in recognition of her work there. She won the 2014 Conducting Prize at the Festival International de Inverno Campos do Jordão, received a Bruno Walter Foundation Scholarship at the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music in California, and the Taki Concordia Conducting Fellowship 2015-2017 under Marin Alsop. Ms. Peleggi is passionate about the arts and holds a master in Comparative Literature.

Valentina Peleggi is represented by Intermusica worldwide.

KEY COLLEAGUES



George L. Mahoney
Chair, Board of Directors

George L. Mahoney, the Chair of the Board of Directors, has served on the Richmond Symphony Board for more than 10 years. He is the former Chief Executive Officer of Media General, Inc., and before that ran the company's digital operations and developed and led its innovation program, designed to develop new audiences and connect them with advertisers for the company's newspapers and television stations located across the country. For many years before that, George was the company's General Counsel. He previously worked as the Assistant General Counsel for Dow, Jones & Company and was an Associate at the New York law firm, Satterlee & Stephens. He has been involved in the leadership of many not-for-profit organizations in the region. George and his wife, Cindy, have two adult children (Emma and Stuart) and reside in Richmond, Virginia.



Frances Mayhew Sterling
Director of Advancement and Patron Communications

Frances Mayhew Sterling joined the Richmond Symphony in January 2020 as a seasoned marketing and development professional with a British arts and heritage background. Her experience covers both capital and revenue fundraising for historic buildings, artistic, and community programs. She started her career as a theatre and opera producer, raising commercial and donated funds for productions. After 12 years of being Artistic and Managing Director of the historic Wilton's Music Hall she progressed into freelance fundraising for a number of arts and heritage non-profits in London. Frances graduated from the University of Manchester with a degree in Linguistics and is now studying for a Masters in Global Diplomacy.



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*.



Gail Henshaw
Director of Finance & Administration

Gail Henshaw has more than 35 years' experience in the nonprofit, small business, banking and public accounting industries. Prior to her appointment at the Richmond Symphony, she was Director of Finance at Masonic Home of Virginia, a nonprofit continuing care retirement community. In addition, she held various positions at Commonwealth Community Trust, Page Development Company LLC, and SunTrust Bank. A local native, Gail is a co-founder of "I Have A Dream" Foundation – Richmond, an educational nonprofit organization providing tutoring, mentoring, and tuition assistance to City of Richmond students. She also serves as Board Chair on Paws Unleash Potential, a therapy dog group where she and her dog are also a certified team. Gail holds a B.S. in Accounting from Radford University, an MBA from the University of Richmond, and is a CPA.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

The Richmond Symphony seeks an Executive Director with

- an understanding of and commitment to the role of the Richmond Symphony in the community;
- experience in orchestra management and a broad understanding of the symphonic repertoire;
- experience in negotiation, labor relations, and union contracts;
- the ability to collaborate creatively, and work effectively with internal and external partners including staff and board members;
- a record of innovation and a proven ability to be flexible and adapt quickly to changing circumstances;
- the ability to oversee and personally execute tactical activities that accomplish institutional goals;
- effective strategy formulation and disciplined tactical execution;
- a commitment to personal and professional growth and an ability to meet the changing needs of the position;
- 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, a record of delivering on balanced budgets, 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; and

- creative and strategic problem-solving skills, and the ability to work effectively on multiple projects simultaneously in a fast-paced environment.

A bachelor's degree is required for this position. An advanced degree is preferred as is at least ten years of experience in orchestral leadership or arts administration.

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, Kehinde Wiley, and Pablo Picasso; the Institute for Contemporary Art provides Richmond with another internationally recognized arts center. 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 the Richmond Folk Festival and 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:

[Executive Director, Richmond Symphony.](#)

To nominate a candidate, please contact Anne Johnson:

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

All inquiries will be held in confidence.