

# MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS FOR THE ARTS

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EXECUTIVE SEARCH • PLANNING • ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS

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## POSITION PROFILE

**Wharton Arts**

**Executive Director**

*Berkeley Heights, NJ*

## OPPORTUNITY

Wharton Arts seeks ambitious, driven, and entrepreneurial minded individuals interested in facilitating the continuing growth of this highly regarded youth performing arts organization to serve as Executive Director. With a talent for identifying and securing new financial resources through an expansive approach to friend and fundraising, the Executive Director will lead the Wharton Arts team and Board in making new connections within the region that will support Wharton's aspirational plans to grow and offer deeper impact in the area of youth arts training and performance. The new Executive Director will work in partnership with Wharton Arts' talented Artistic Director as a true collaborator who will take ownership of aligning vision with organizational capacity. High emotional intelligence, a love of performing arts education, strong management skills, and talent formworking with a Board and Staff to build and execute strategically focused plans are all essential priorities for the next Executive Director's leadership focus.

## BACKGROUND

The mission of Wharton Arts is to provide accessible, high quality performing arts education that sparks personal growth and builds inclusive communities. Wharton Arts is guided by a vision to provide transformative performing arts education in an inclusive community that is accessible to everyone.

Wharton Arts believes in performing arts education to the tune of **EXCELLENCE**, **ENRICHMENT**, and **EQUITY**. The impact of a Wharton performing arts education influences a student's engagement and performance in school, work, and beyond. Students at Wharton Arts gain creative and cognitive skills and an outlet for self-expression, within a community that fosters their growth.

As New Jersey's largest independent non-profit performing arts education center, Wharton Arts serves nearly 2,000 students on an annual basis through tuition based and free and reduced fee based instruction and programming. Wharton Arts is organized around 4 core programs: the Performing Arts School, New Jersey Youth Symphony, Paterson Music Project, and New

Jersey Youth Chorus. Our programs include private lessons and group classes, high-level ensembles and educational experiences, and exceptional performance opportunities for students of all levels, ages, and socio-economic backgrounds.

**The Performing Arts School (PAS):** This tuition-based school provides high-quality instruction in musical arts and theatre to students outside of a traditional academic environment. The PAS was founded by Judith Wharton in 1985 as the Suburban Music Center in New Providence and eventually moved to its current home in Berkeley Heights, NJ in a stand-alone facility featuring dozens of teaching studios and a black-box theatre that it leases. The only requirement for admission to PAS is a desire to learn and be immersed in engaging group classes or private lessons taught by professional educators and musicians. Instruction is offered in individual and group settings for students ages 3-18 as well as adults. The PAS serves nearly 600 students annually and is committed to providing access to a broad range of young people by offering tuition assistance through a need-based scholarship fund.

**New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJYS):** NJYS is a premiere regional youth orchestra experience for young musicians in grades 3-12 who are serious about high level challenge focused on top-tier musicianship. NJYS' main base of operations is located in a well-appointed leased facility in New Providence, NJ. Its fifteen ensembles and programs perform regularly throughout New Jersey, in national and international competitions, tours, and in an annual Playathon fundraiser. Its most advanced orchestra, Youth Symphony, was awarded first place in 2014 and 2017 in the prestigious Summa Cum Laude International Youth Music Festival and has appeared in such internationally renowned concert halls as Carnegie Hall in New York City, John F. Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. and Musikverein in Vienna. Participation in NJYS is determined through audition, and if selected, young musicians pay tuition for the privilege of studying and performing under the skillful guidance of esteemed conductors and coaches. There is a substantial need-based scholarship program for competitive students. NJYS was founded in 1979 as a program of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra. It ultimately was spun off as its own stand-alone organization before merging with Wharton Music Center (now Wharton Arts' Performing Arts School) in 2012 to come under the full Wharton Arts umbrella.

**Paterson Music Project:** Based in Paterson, NJ, PMP is an El Sistema-inspired program that uses music as a vehicle for social change by empowering and inspiring children through the community experience of ensemble learning and playing. PMP provides intensive, low-tuition musical training to students throughout Paterson after school. Students study a primary instrument and participate in ensemble practice and instrumental sectionals. Students perform frequently for the school and community. PMP also offers a Saturday Community Music Program which includes a string orchestra and choir. PMP now serves over 500 students in grades 1-8 from five Paterson Public Schools including the Community Charter School of Paterson, School 1, School 26, School 15, and Norman S. Weir Elementary School. The program presents over 30 performances annually, and is proven means of improving overall student performance and social and emotional development.

**New Jersey Youth Chorus (NJYC):** As a tuition based choral opportunity defined by five performance ensembles, NJYC provides premiere performances opportunities while inspiring young singers to discover, learn, and perform beyond their expectations. NJYC is home to 3rd to 12th-grade singers from communities across the state of New Jersey. Choristers achieve musical excellence while building friendships, fostering self-expression, and experiencing once-in-a-lifetime performance opportunities. The philosophy and goals of NJYC revolve around our choristers and the music. It is far more than singing: *we teach values, we nurture, and we inspire.*

As New Jersey's largest nonprofit community performing arts education provider, Wharton Arts attracts students from 13 counties in New Jersey, with a concentration from Union, Morris, Essex, and Somerset counties. With the administration of PAS located in Berkeley Heights, operations for NJYS and NJYC in New Providence, and PMP firmly situated in Paterson, Wharton Arts' geographic reach is wide, with programs operating independently in each separate location.

Wharton Arts is governed by a dedicated Board of Trustees composed of community leaders invested in promoting meaningful performing arts education experiences for youth in the region. Wharton Arts' core activities are located in some of the most densely populated counties in the country, a mix of high wealth neighborhoods and marginalized communities located an hour outside of New York City. Helen Cha-Pyo has served as Artistic Director of Wharton Arts and Conductor of NJYS since 2018. Peter Gistelinck has served as Executive Director since 2019 and has departed the organization to pursue new professional and personal opportunities. The organization currently operates on a budget of around \$4 Million, the majority of which is derived through tuition fees. More information can be found at Wharton Arts' website at <https://whartonarts.org/>.

## **CURRENT ENVIRONMENT AND THE FUTURE**

The new Executive Director will come into an organization that is actively working to address the following important questions:

- How can Wharton Arts increase revenue with expansion in fundraising and incremental growth in tuition based programming?
- With the prospect of building a new center for youth performing arts education, what is Wharton Arts' capacity to take on a major capital campaign in the coming years alongside building up general operational revenue?
- How might Wharton Arts align operations to enhance sustainability across the organization?
- How might Wharton Arts distinguish itself more fully in the regional performing arts education sector?

- How might Wharton Arts leverage its assets to attract an even broader group of dedicated leaders to serve as Trustees and higher-level supporters?

Wharton Arts adopted a strategic plan in 2021 that is focused on sustainability and growth. Like many other organizations, Wharton Arts navigated the challenges brought on by pandemic related shutdowns by tapping into available resources from the federal government and other funding sources as a bridge to the future. With those opportunities no longer available, Wharton Arts has an immediate need to address gaps between revenue and expenses to continue to provide the highest quality of performing arts education. The next Executive Director will need to focus on immediate budgetary needs alongside a longer term strategy for capacity building.

Building consensus among the various constituents contributing to Wharton Arts' success will continue to be a priority for the Executive Director. At the same time, a more proactive approach to fund development and strategically focused resource development is desired as the new Executive Director helps chart the course of the next phase of Wharton Arts' growth, one that must fundamentally be focused on offering the best and most rewarding musical performing arts education opportunities to youth served through its programs.

## **POSITION AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Executive Director will serve in a co-leadership capacity with Wharton Arts' Artistic Director and report directly to the Board of Trustees. The Executive Director will lead with authority and a collaborative spirit, promoting an atmosphere of inclusion, passion for performing arts education, and high-level artistic accomplishment. Expanding Wharton Art's base of financial resources and ensuring that the organization is appropriately organized and prepared for further growth will be leading priorities for the next Executive Director. Essential responsibilities will include:

- Serve as a primary fundraiser for Wharton Arts and build a strong development program for future expansion.
- Find new resources for traditional and new sources of contributed and earned revenue.
- Develop and communicate Wharton Arts' vision in a manner that honors the organization's rich history, takes in input from multiple sources, and keeps an eye towards an even brighter future.
- Excite the community-at-large about all of Wharton Arts' offerings.
- Develop budgets and lead all operational planning.
- Establish structures and systems to more nimbly report and track all expenses and revenue and forecast the financial position of Wharton Arts' core programs and activities.
- Strategize on new ways to engage with students and their parents for a richer, mutually beneficial experience.
- Lead a tightly connected staff with support, mentorship, and a collaborative sense of purpose.
- Serve as a spokesperson and advocate on the local and regional scene.

- Constantly challenge assumptions and monitor programmatic successes and failures to improve upon all activities.
- Ensure compliance in all legally binding contracts and financial matters of the organization.
- Help to ignite increased Board development and participation in governance and oversight.

Ideally, the successful candidate will possess these skills and experience:

- Proven talent as a fundraiser focused on entrepreneurial opportunities for growth.
- A fundamentally strategic thinker with strong attention to detail.
- Knowledge of and passion for music and performing arts education in particular.
- Senior management experience with a track-record of progressive responsibility in an environment of creativity and innovation.
- A skill for collaboration, putting the good of the organization first and foremost in all discussions of programs, staffing, and new initiatives.
- Demonstrated skills in budgeting and administration of budgets.
- An ability and desire to do forensic evaluation of all operations to gauge effectiveness and impact of programs and how sustainable models can be fostered that support Wharton Arts' mission.
- Ability to interact effectively with a voluntary Board of Directors.
- Clear and effective communication skills.
- Problem solving skills in a calm and tactful manner.
- Experience in the not-for-profit arts sector preferred.

The following personal attributes are also desirable:

- Integrity and honor as a guiding force for life and work.
- An open heart and mind.
- Humility and a sense of humor.
- A ferocious love of learning and exploration of new ideas.
- A great work ethic that values balance for a rewarding life alongside the rigors of work.

### **COMPENSATION AND START DATE**

The annual salary range for the Executive Director role with Wharton Arts starts at \$125,000 and includes a benefit package commensurate with similarly sized non-profit organizations. The company hopes to make its decision by early Fall of 2023 with the chosen candidate transitioning into the position shortly thereafter.

### **HOW TO APPLY**

Jonathan West from MCA is facilitating this search. Interested and qualified candidates should submit the following items for consideration:

- A current resumé
- Cover letter (no more than 1 ½ pages)

- Four professional references
- Salary expectation

All documents should be in .pdf format and have the candidate's name as part of the file name.

Submissions should be made through Management Consultants for the Arts' website at:

<https://www.mcaonline.com/searches/executive-director-wharton-arts>