



Executive Director Position Description

Title: Executive Director

Status: Half to two-thirds time position, salaried, with the opportunity to transition to full-time given successful completion of strategic initiatives.

Compensation: \$45,000–\$55,000 competitive; commensurate with experience.

Location: Prefer that applicant be resident or willing to relocate to New Orleans. Other situations may be considered.

Start Date: May/June 2022, or successful candidate's earliest availability.

About Birdfoot Festival

Birdfoot Festival was founded on the principle that the dynamic musical culture of New Orleans—characterized by intimate music venues with casual atmospheres yet an engaged listening culture—has something to offer that the future of classical music needs. Birdfoot provides time and space for artists to do their best work, and then brings musicians and audiences together to share meaningful musical experiences.

Recognized for its fresh approach and “youthful, rule-bending style” (The Times-Picayune), Birdfoot is recognized in New Orleans and beyond for its creative programming, its collaborative and musician-responsive ethic, and its diverse audiences. Since its founding in 2011, the Birdfoot Festival has grown rapidly: the festival has presented more than 160 concerts and events, and the 2019 season featured eighteen public offerings, including twelve concerts in addition to lectures, symposia, and other supporting events. In 2021, Birdfoot produced an interactive digital season modeled after the festival’s signature “Birdfoot Backstage” that attracted audience members from across the country and three continents.

In addition to concerts and events, Birdfoot’s programs include an award-winning Young Artist Program, occasional Artist Residencies, and an online calendar of musical events in partnership with New Orleans Public Radio. Contrary to industry stereotypes, Birdfoot audiences often skew young (~55% between ages 18–55) and turn out for adventurous programming. At recent festivals, 10% of audience members were attending their first chamber music concert.

Birdfoot’s mission is to empower artists, inspire audiences, and upend expectations.

Position Summary

The Executive Director (ED) will join Birdfoot Festival at a pivotal moment in the organization's development. In the 10 years since its founding, Birdfoot Festival has grown into a visionary chamber music festival with strong local roots and international recognition. The Executive Director will play a key role in the festival's next chapter, as Birdfoot navigates the retirement of the festival's founding Executive Director and the post-pandemic world. Birdfoot's next Executive Director will work closely with the Artistic Director and the Board to continue the festival's tradition of thinking boldly about the role of chamber music and musicians in the life of the New Orleans community, maintain Birdfoot's unique spirit and values, while helping the organization develop a stable funding base and transition to a professional administrative structure. This position will also take a lead role in development of the festival's next five-year strategic plan, providing big-picture leadership in partnership with the Artistic Director towards Birdfoot Festival's continued growth and success as an innovative organization.

The Executive Director leads, supervises, and oversees the administrative, marketing, and production aspects of the Birdfoot Festival. These include, but are not limited to, fundraising, financial management, marketing, Board relations and development, festival production, and day-to-day operations. Moreover, the Executive Director works closely with the Artistic Director to ensure the festival's continued relevance and responsiveness to the community, and to support and implement festival programming and planning. This position reports to the Board of Directors and works closely with Board members, providing support for Board committees, and participating on committees as needed. The Executive Director additionally supervises one to three part-time administrative, marketing, and production staff members on a seasonal basis and oversees the recruitment and coordination of volunteers.

The ideal candidate will bring a track record in producing/managing projects or organizations of comparable purpose and/or similar complexity, and will bring an ability to communicate powerfully about music and the festival's vision. In addition, the Executive Director will be an out-of-the-box thinker, a creative and effective manager, and an experienced fundraiser who is comfortable with maintaining overview in a fast-paced and collaborative environment.

Essential Functions

The Executive Director will oversee and lead organizational operations as a whole, engaging with community partners, supervising staff and coordinating volunteers, working closely with the Board, and ensuring good communication with audiences and other external stakeholders.

Specific areas of responsibility are as follows:

Development – Play a central role in increasing, strengthening and diversifying the organization’s contributed revenue through careful stewardship of existing donors, cultivation of new donors, and solicitation and management of grants from corporations, foundations and government grantors; establish annual fundraising strategy in cooperation with Board and Artistic Director; oversee and implement a fundraising campaign based on the accomplishments of the festival’s first ten years; produce and oversee the annual Musical Feast special event; and manage annual appeal campaigns.

Board Liaison – Serve as the principal liaison between the Board and the organization, regularly communicating with the President; prepare materials for and participate in Board meetings; support ongoing Board development, cultivating strong relationships with potential board members in coordination with other Board members; and support Board committees, as necessary.

External Relations – Represent Birdfoot Festival before varied audiences (e.g., other cultural institutions, donors, granting organizations, within the community, etc) in individual meetings and public settings. Develop, support, and sustain strategic partnerships, including those regarding residencies, performances, and community education activities as appropriate.

Finance – Ensure diligent and comprehensive financial oversight and management of the organization’s financial and contractual obligations. Develop, analyze, and oversee multi-year budgets; prepare financial reports and analysis, as needed for Board and funders.

Strategic Plan – Partner with the Board and Artistic Director in shaping Birdfoot Festival’s second strategic plan and developing the festival’s Theory of Change, articulating future goals and priorities and developing multi-year implementation objectives.

Other Functions

The ED will also be responsible for implementing the festival's vision and ensuring the success of Birdfoot's programs. These activities will be conducted in collaboration with the Artistic Director, support staff, and volunteers:

Artistic and Production – Work closely with the Artistic Director, local partner organizations, venues, and festival musicians to plan and implement the annual Festival and other initiatives and collaborations. Oversee concert production and operations, including supervision of relevant staff and volunteers.

Marketing and Public Relations – Oversee and lead the design and implementation of brand development, marketing, and public relations strategy to grow local and regional audiences and donors for the annual Festival, as well as promoting the festival's activities beyond New Orleans. Oversee all ticket sales and relevant publicity. Ensure excellence and consistency in quality and brand across all Birdfoot Festival materials, including digital presence.

General Operations and Administrative Duties – Manage/oversee all office and human resource functions as appropriate (e.g., hiring/supervision of staff and volunteers, policy development and implementation, obtaining visas for international artists, management of contracts, insurance policies, venue/space rental, etc.). Plan and facilitate organizational meetings. Oversee and ensure implementation of all other administrative responsibilities as needed. Upon engagement, the ED will be tasked with hiring a support staff person.

Minimum Qualifications

- Previous experience of 3–5 years (minimum) in a non-profit or arts administration role with a demonstrated track record in communicating organizational vision and generating revenue through individual contributions, corporate/foundation grants, and ticket sales; and cultivating artistic and strategic partnerships.
- Demonstrated skills and experience in marketing, communications, and public relations.
- Effective team management and operational oversight experience in a fast-paced, collaborative environment, including supervision of staff and/or volunteers, and financial/budget development and management.
- Outstanding written and verbal communication skills.
- A collaborative approach to management, with the ability to consider diverse needs and perspectives and bring others along when making decisions.
- Experience with non-profit management, best practices, working with nonprofit boards, and the ability to communicate priorities and accomplishments effectively and concisely.
- Knowledge and experience in using technology to work efficiently with a team, including familiarity with Microsoft Office programs, Google Apps (Drive, Docs, Sheets, etc.), Little Green Light (donor management platform), WordPress, and QuickBooks.

Preferred Qualifications (enhancing relevant bullets above)

- Experience in a leadership role for a nonprofit arts or musical organization, with experience working with and/or reporting to a board of directors.
- Familiarity with classical music culture and audiences.

Please submit a letter of interest including salary requirements, CV, and list of three references (including contact information), to search@birdfootfestival.org.

Please consider the following question in your letter: What experience do you have rethinking how an organization operates and engages with its community? How might you apply these experiences to Birdfoot Festival, post-pandemic?

Deadline for application materials: Monday, 4 April 2022.

Birdfoot is committed to creating a diverse environment and is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, age, or veteran status. We work hard to ensure diverse slates of candidates.

Thank you for your interest in Birdfoot Festival!