



Chicago, Illinois

Part-time Position Announcement:

Conservatory Orchestra Director and Large Ensemble Department Chair

Description

Merit School of Music seeks a highly qualified candidate for the position of Orchestra Director in the Alice S. Pfaelzer Conservatory, beginning in late September 2022, and Large Ensemble Department Chair. The successful candidate will teach 5.5 hours of orchestra instruction at Merit's Joy Faith Knapp Music Center. Qualified candidates may also be offered additional teaching opportunities in the Conservatory and/or Merit's Private Lesson Programs.

Merit's Philharmonic and Chamber Orchestra are the most advanced orchestral ensembles at the school. The Merit Philharmonic consists of Merit's top strings, winds, brass, and percussion students. The Chamber Orchestra includes younger students, many of whom are preparing for entry to the Merit Philharmonic. Students in the Conservatory program are intermediate to highly advanced level in grades 6th - 12th.

Organization Overview

Merit School of Music is a community music school located in Chicago's West Loop. Our primary goals are to help young people transform their lives and experience personal growth through music by providing access to sustained participation. For more than 40 years, we have been home to a diverse community of talented young musicians and have acted as a springboard for achieving full musical and personal potential. Our 125 passionate and experienced teaching artists provide access to high-quality music education, engaging over 3,000 students annually at our downtown location and in area schools and community centers.

Our students, who reflect the socioeconomic and ethnic diversity of Chicago, have the rare opportunity to learn together, dream together, teach each other, and broaden their horizons as they build inspiring lives through music. Merit develops musicians and provides young people with the tools they need to excel in life, with virtually 100 percent of our graduates going on to conservatory or college.

Merit School of Music is committed to building a world in which historically underrepresented groups can attain access to quality music education. Simultaneously, Merit is continually working towards becoming an organization that is truly reflective of the demographics of the city and the students we serve. Merit is dedicated to being an inclusive, diverse, equitable, and anti-racist organization and continually examining our efforts in this area.

Reporting Relationship

The **Conservatory Orchestra Director and Large Ensemble Department Chair** reports to the **Strings and Orchestra Program Director**.

Job Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the **Conservatory Orchestra Director** include, but are not limited to:

- Prepare and execute 24 Saturday rehearsals for both Orchestras and dress rehearsals for the Merit Philharmonic
- Prepare both ensembles for winter and spring performances and additional performances as required
- Work with String Department Leadership and String Faculty to provide a clear artistic vision for large ensembles within the department
- Participate in Conservatory Audition committee annually
- The successful candidate may be considered for additional teaching opportunities in other Merit programs or in other areas of the Conservatory

Responsibilities of the **Large Ensemble Department Chair** include, but are not limited to:

- **Faculty Leadership Team – approx. 35%**
 - Regular attendance at department chair meetings and faculty meetings
 - Assist with curriculum development and provide input regarding program evaluation
 - Assist in hiring process for new faculty within their department
 - Provide input regarding faculty assignments & teacher placements when requested
 - Collaborate with Program staff and other stakeholders to guide overall scope and direction of division
- **Mentorship & Professional Development – approx. 25%**
 - Provide mentorship to new faculty regarding Merit's Teaching Philosophy, curriculum, and organizational culture/values
 - Work with Program Director to facilitate professional development opportunities for faculty
- **Faculty Observations – approx. 25%**
 - Conduct regular observations of Merit's departmental faculty, in accordance with Merit's observation policies & procedures
 - Following an observation, conduct a follow-up meeting with faculty to provide evaluation feedback
- **General Program Administration – approx. 15%**
 - Convene a minimum of two department meetings each academic year
 - Communicate concerns from faculty to Merit administration, when needed
 - Other duties as assigned

Personal Skills/Attributes/Qualifications

The ideal candidate would possess the following qualifications:

- Well-versed in orchestra repertoire grades 3 and up, including new and advanced symphonic repertoire from diverse composers and genres
- Proven success working with high caliber high school musicians
- Training in strings preferred but not required
- Responsive and communicative
- A high level of personal musicianship
- Experience working with students of diverse backgrounds
- Ability to collaborate, communicate effectively and work well with faculty, colleagues, and administrators
- Uphold Merit's professional code of conduct: punctual, polite, responsive, collegial, and collaborative
- Strong organizational and administrative skills
- Demonstrable commitment to Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Antiracism work

Educational Requirements

Bachelor's degree in music or equivalent experience/training. Master's degree or higher in Instrumental conducting desirable.

Schedule

- Conservatory Orchestra Director
 - Saturday mornings from 9:40am – 11:10am, Afternoons from 3-6pm
 - Selected Thursday evenings from 6:00pm-8:30pm (two or three throughout the school year)
- Large Ensemble Department Chair
 - ~5-10 hours per month

COVID-19 Precautions

Merit School of Music requires all employees to provide proof of vaccination and booster shot against COVID-19. Please plan accordingly. Merit invested heavily in its HVAC system to improve ventilation throughout the building. Face masks are recommended to everyone who enters the Joy Faith Knapp Music Center. During offsite events, Merit employees must follow the precautions taken by the host institution. This is an in-person role.

Compensation and Application

- Hourly base rates are calculated using a proprietary method that considers years of experience, recruitment/retention skills, studio size, education, and established success as a teacher
 - Base rates range from \$40 to \$80 per hour for private lessons with an additional \$2.00 per hour added to the base rate for group classes
 - Large ensembles pay 1.5x the group class rate
 - Off-site faculty are reimbursed for mileage as calculated from Merit's main campus
- Full-time faculty (780 annual teaching hours) qualify for insurance benefits. 401K eligibility begins at 500 annual teaching hours.

Department Chairs will be compensated with an annual stipend paid out in 12 equal installments (September 2022- August 2023). The stipend amount is determined by department size: number of faculty, students, weekly classes, etc., and total number of scheduled faculty observations for the year. Past stipends range \$1,000 - \$4,600.

To apply, please upload your resume detailing your relevant experience and qualifications for this role [using this link](#). Applications will be accepted through August 9, 2022. Materials should be compatible with Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat PDF. Further guidance and updates about the hiring process by e-mail, with interviews provided for finalists.

ALAANA/BIPOC people, trans and gender nonconforming people, and women are encouraged to apply.

For more information about Merit School of Music, please visit www.meritmusic.org.

Merit School of Music is committed to enhancing the diversity of our musical community, recognizing that by providing a diverse, equitable, and inclusive learning environment for our students, we are preparing them for personal and professional success in an increasingly multicultural and global society. The Merit community recognizes that it has a responsibility for creating and sustaining a learning and working environment where difference is valued, and where equity and inclusion are practiced.