



Conservatory Concert Band Director

Part-Time Position Announcement

Chicago, Illinois

DESCRIPTION

Merit School of Music seeks a director for the Concert Band in the Alice S. Pfaelzer Tuition-Free Conservatory. The Conservatory provides advanced musical training to Chicagoland's most promising and dedicated young musicians who successfully audition for the program. For 26 Saturdays during the school year, students receive instruction in classical or jazz from Chicago's finest teaching artists, with a focus on technique, music theory, chamber music, large ensembles, and more. This high-level music education experience is valued at more than \$3,500; however, Merit underwrites the cost, and students only need to pay a registration fee to attend the Conservatory.

The Concert Band is Merit's entry-level wind band in the Conservatory, consisting of most middle school and early high school students with at least two years of experience on their instruments. The Concert Band Director is expected to lead all rehearsals, teach fundamental pedagogy to students, and prepare the ensemble for two performances throughout the year. All rehearsals occur on Saturday mornings at Merit's Joy Faith Knapp Music Center, located at 38 S. Peoria St., in Chicago's West Loop neighborhood.

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 100 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 Chicago's socioeconomic and ethnic diversity, 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 nearly 100 percent of our graduates attending a conservatory or college.

Merit School of Music is committed to building a world where historically underrepresented groups can access quality music education. Simultaneously, Merit is continually working towards becoming an organization that reflects the city's demographics 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 Concert Band Director reports to the **Band Program Director**.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES

Responsibilities of the Concert Band Director include, but are not limited to:

Teaching and Instruction - 85%

- Deliver high-quality music instruction commensurate with Merit's curricula, teaching philosophy, mission, and values.
- Teach weekly band rehearsals to students assigned to the Concert Band in the Conservatory.
- Prepare the Concert Band for at least two performances throughout the year.

Administrative Duties - 15%

- Attend Merit faculty meetings (typically once a year) and department meetings as scheduled.
- Assist in the Conservatory audition process by helping to select audition materials, sitting on the audition panel, and ensemble placements of auditioning students.
- Other projects as assigned.

SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

Must-Have Characteristics

- Bachelor's degree in music or equivalent experience and training.
- Demonstrated track record of success teaching wind band literature to students and directing a band ensemble at the middle school or high school level.
- Effective classroom management and ability to cultivate student leadership skills.
- A high level of personal musicianship.
- Punctual, professional, collegial, responsive, and communicative with a flexible and adaptive disposition.
- Ability to represent Merit professionally in all settings, including counseling families and students to pursue their musical studies at the deepest levels, and acting as an ambassador for the school.
- A commitment to dignity-centered communication and the ability to connect with Merit's students across varying lines of difference.
- Ability to reliably travel to Merit.

Preferred, But Not Required

- Experience working with staff and administration to support programming.
- Bilingual or multilingual (Spanish preferred).



SCHEDULE

- The Concert Band Director will be hired in early August and will start prep work leading up to the start of the Conservatory year. Teaching begins on **Saturday, September 12, 2026**.
- The Concert Band Director will teach **1.5 hours per week** at Merit's main campus, the Joy Faith Knapp Music Center, located at 38 S. Peoria St., Chicago, IL 60607.
- Concert Band rehearsals are held on **Saturdays from 8:00- 9:30 am**, running September through April during the Conservatory year. The 2026-2027 Conservatory season runs **September 12, 2026 through April 10, 2027**.
- The Concert Band performs twice throughout the year at the Conservatory's winter and spring concerts with the Symphonic Band and Wind Symphony. Performance dates for the upcoming season are **Friday, December 11, 2026**, and **Friday, April 9, 2027**.
- Conservatory auditions are held in late April and early May. Exact dates for the 2027-2028 auditions are yet to be determined.

TECHNOLOGY IN HIRING

At the Merit School of Music, we believe in a human-centered recruitment process. While our team occasionally leverages generative AI tools to assist with administrative tasks, such as formatting job descriptions or summarizing interview notes, we do not use algorithms, automated screening software, or AI platforms to evaluate, rank, or screen applicants. Every application and hiring decision is reviewed and made entirely by human hands and minds.

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.
- Faculty who work in the Merit Music in Communities Program (in schools and community centers) 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 after one year of employment.
- Personal days and sick days are earned and used in compliance with the Chicago Sick and Safe Leave Ordinance.

To apply, please upload your resume detailing your relevant experience and qualifications for this role [using this link](#). Please apply before **Monday, June 22, 2026**. Materials should be compatible with Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF.

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

For more information about the 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 its responsibility to create and sustain a learning and working environment where difference is valued and equity and inclusion are practiced.