



Mercury Soul Executive Director Position Description

Painter Executive Search is supporting Mercury Soul in a search for an entrepreneurial Executive Director to buildout the newly envisioned business model, grow funding and operational capacity so that new and previously initiated audiences can meet classical music in wholly new ways.

Mercury Soul, a San Francisco based 501c3 nonprofit founded by Grammy-winning composer Mason Bates, is both a presenter and a producer that uses vibrant production to integrate different aesthetics into immersive experiences. Working in nontraditional spaces and with creative technologies, Mercury Soul creates uniquely new experiences bringing audiences together in fluid, social environments with live classical performance, digital music, and high production values. The mission of Mercury Soul is to animate classical music with the energy of the digital age.

Based in San Francisco, Mercury Soul has produced shows in major cities across the country working with a variety of artists including DJs such as Rob Garza from Thievery Corporation and premiere classical artists such as Gil Shaham and Philharmonia Baroque. The artistic range is eclectic from Burning Man artists Pink Mammoth and leading LED sculptor Christopher Schardt to groups such as Jazz Mafia and the Del Sol String Quartet. Mercury Soul works at the center of the San Francisco music scene to mount shows at venues such as DNA Lounge, The Great Northern, Public Works, Monarch, Halcyon, and The Midway, as well as in partner cultural institutions across the country.

Mercury Soul has built a strong following over the last decade. The recently adopted Strategic Plan expands on this success and will enable Mercury Soul to retain its current low-price points which intentionally reduces the economic barrier inherent in typical live concert experiences. In addition to exploring larger venues, which will require additional marketing and sophisticated outreach, Mercury Soul is pursuing increased earned revenue from Mercury Soul Productions, a newly cast production consulting group to complement its mission-centric programs.

The Executive Director's role is the first of its kind for the organization; a combination of traditional fundraiser, organizational development guru and savvy business developer. The Executive Director will work adjacent to the co-founder and Artistic Director Mason Bates, former composer-in-residence of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Bringing the complementary skills of the Executive Director and the Artistic Director together, Mercury Soul hopes to exercise the creative capacity of their broad network of brilliant artists and creative partners in order to present classical music in ways that make it as visceral and immersive as rock concerts or live sports. They envision a time when concerts become dynamic experiences, the program book becomes cinematic, and information becomes ambient.

POSITION OVERVIEW

The Executive Director (ED) is the primary fundraiser, strategy animator and operational core for Mercury Soul. Reporting to the Board of Directors through the Chair of the Board, the ED will be responsible for building and implementing the process and program interfaces that allow Mercury Soul to achieve its vision. The ED, in collaboration with the Artistic Director, Board of Directors, project and contract production staff, partners and others will build the scaffolding upon which the creative endeavors can be executed. The ED has overall responsibility for the organization's financial and operational health and planning. Organizational development skills and ability to build flexible frameworks and dynamic structures to support new ideas will be important skills for the new ED. The ED will need passion for the mission and the emotional intelligence to navigate between the creative and the possible.

The priorities for the Executive Director include:

- Develop infrastructure and organizational practices that will bring to life the Strategic Plan
- Create and execute a fundraising strategy that grows the donor base and extends the capacity to produce innovative work
- Facilitate and actively cultivate the institutional and corporate partnerships required to grow Mercury Soul Productions
- Redefine and refine Mercury Soul's education program to increase its impact.

The Board of Directors of Mercury Soul is a small well-networked group committed to bringing classical music forward in new ways. This new Executive Director role is the result of a 3-year Board commitment to grow the organization. The Board, in addition to its fiduciary role, provides deep sector knowledge, connections and advice to Mercury Soul as it continues to evolve.

Mercury Soul is a small organization where the ED is expected to be very hands-on. Working knowledge of presenting and producing events and exposure to light and sound technology will be highly valued as would having a finger on the pulse of the San Francisco Bay area arts and music scene.

BACKGROUND

Founded in 2008 by composer/DJ Mason Bates, conductor Benjamin Schwartz, and visual designer Anne Patterson, Mercury Soul first launched at San Francisco's famed Mezzanine club where it brought over 1,400 people to experience a unique combination of imaginative stagecraft, substantive programming, and engaging electro-acoustic interludes linking DJ'd and classical sets. The San Francisco Symphony subsequently invited Mercury Soul to curate several After Hours events at Davies Hall. The project continued and produced events in San Francisco's bustling club circuit.

Mercury Soul reimagines the concert experience in both live events and digital content, using production to animate the performing arts for new audiences. Mercury Soul uses production not merely as a cosmetic dressing, but as a key component in pushing the artform into the 21st Century. Lighting, stagecraft, sound design, and ambient information seamlessly integrate in Mercury Soul's work.

Mercury Soul works in a variety of ways. Self-produced shows are held in club environments with a headlining DJ. These events allow for maximum creative freedom but require a large administrative lift and costs are high. Mercury Soul also works in partnership with other cultural institutions (most recently the de Young Museum and Saint Joseph's Society for the Arts) to produce original content that benefits both partners. These shows, core to delivering the mission, meet the audience where they are, with imaginative shows that bring classical music to life in places that are already familiar to the audience—social spaces that have yet to be animated. Looking ahead, Mercury Soul is investigating relationships with artist management firms to increase access to venues and larger crowds. Occasionally Mercury Soul develops work for cultural or corporate clients on a project basis and it is this work that they hope to expand through Mercury Soul Productions.

The vision for Mercury Soul Productions is a distinct product line that increases earned revenue and elevates the Mercury Soul brand. Mercury Soul Productions is an outgrowth of several successful projects during the pandemic including the development of an opening act featuring DrLupo for *Intel Gamer Days* which merged a live orchestra performance with live Destiny. This event and other video work for cultural organizations has set the foundation for expansion into full-service production consulting, from building thrilling classical arrangements for e-sports, to providing immersive, creative experiences for tech conferences.

Mercury Soul operates broadly interpreting its mission through its values; Mercury Soul values:

- **Creative Technology:** Mercury Soul believes in pushing creative boundaries to redefine both the live and digital experience. They believe that technology and art should have a symbiotic relationship: one humanizing and the other modernizing.
- **Exceptional Production:** Mercury Soul creates not concerts but immersive experiences, using spectacular production as a means to bridge aesthetics and cultures; to guide the audience; and to reduce barriers to entry.
- **Communal Experience:** Mercury Soul believes non-seated, fluid events create the fun social atmosphere that today's audiences crave, and which brings together diverse groups of people.
- **Accessibility:** Mercury Soul believes in leveraging the scaling potential of clubs and digital productions to reach large numbers of people, allowing for lower ticket prices that increase access.

EDUCATION

For the past five years Mercury Soul has focused its education programming on teens by integrating them into vibrant club shows that occur in the afternoons before main events. This teenage demographic, an age group traditionally left out of music outreach programs, is exposed to DJs and classical musicians through special arrangements with commercial clubs and provide an experience not available to them otherwise. However, this approach faces challenges such as an inconsistent experience, covid safety issues, and a large administrative lift for both schools and Mercury Soul.

The Executive Director will work with the Artistic Director and the Board to reexamine the Education Program, making it less resource-intensive while maintaining its impact. Within the vision of the buildout of Mercury Soul Productions is the opportunity to mentor students in technical production

skills, from live sound to lighting to film storyboarding. Additionally, Mercury Soul hopes to develop partnerships with other youth-serving nonprofit partners who have complimentary missions.

Executive Director

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership and Strategy

- Together with the Artistic Director fully develop and execute a business plan that sets operational goals for Mercury Soul Presents and Mercury Soul Production and builds the foundation for long term organizational sustainability;
- Grow the Mercury Soul's visibility and build enthusiasm for the mission;
- Work with the Board of Directors; regularly report progress toward goals, overall financial condition and bring forth issues of importance to the operations and strategy of the organization for their insights and consideration;
- Work with the Artistic Director to ensure clear alignment on creative and organizational goals and build strong and positive relationships with artists, venues, consultants, contractors, and partners;
- Develop and foster new business development opportunities with corporate and nonprofit leaders.

Fundraising, Business Development and Marketing

- Build out the revenue plan for both earned and contributed revenue; maximize the organization's networks, develop process and practices that increase and grow relationships with key targets and prospects;
- Actively participate in fundraising including growing support through sponsorship, individual and corporate donors and build foundation relationships to support program and operational needs;
- With support from others, secure major donors; ensure that donors feel appreciated, are acknowledged, and invited into the work of Mercury Soul;
- Ensure effective communications with all donors and partners; build and maintain relationships with previous and potential supporters and key partners;
- Establish pitch materials for Mercury Soul Productions and craft awareness campaigns and business development activities;
- Oversee all public relations and marketing including all organization and program communications, marketing collateral, social media, and digital marketing with support from external Design and Marketing Consultants;
- Manage all grants for the organization, art, and education programs;
- With support from a contracted Social Media Manager, grow social media presence;
- In consultation with an outside Marketing Associate, analyze marketing analytics and grow awareness and audience.

Operational Management

- Provide leadership in developing programmatic, organizational, and financial plans in partnership with the Artistic Director and the Board of Directors and together with them and contracted partners execute those plans;
- Build the day-to-day operations so that programs are smoothly and effectively administered; oversee the website, databases, technology, and office equipment;

- Manage Mercury Soul’s external operations consultants including a bookkeeper and CPA, marketing, design and organizational consultants, IT professionals, and website, database, and email hosts;
- Work with the external accountant to manage and oversee expenditures, approve budgets, and track financial status and records; provide the information required produce accurate financial statements;
- In collaboration with the Artistic Director secure and manage contracts for project teams, artists and collaborators, venues, equipment, and technology for events. Contract artists and outside production teams and with the Artistic Director manage their contributions;
- Monitor and ensure organizational transparency and compliance with California statutes and IRS regulations governing non-profit corporations, ensure accurate records for payroll and 1099s; ensure that Mercury Soul is complying with laws and regulations regarding events;
- Participate and support the Artistic Director in show design and programming providing financial, organizational, and logistical oversight of projects including booking venues and coordinating with venue personnel.

POSITION REQUIREMENTS

Experience

A successful Executive Director candidate will likely have:

- Experience and grounding in classical music forms and enthusiasm for high-quality event production and technology;
- Experience in building financial support for a project or organization, ideally strong individual fundraising for a nonprofit organization;
- Evidence of developing and implementing effective strategy; able to take ideas from inception to execution;
- Demonstrated leadership- able to hold the center during show development; have well-developed interpersonal skills and superior project management skills;
- A history of strong collaboration; someone who enthusiastically seeks strategic partnerships and develops effective relationships;
- Strong oral and written communication skills, able to present ideas clearly and persuasively;
- Solid organizational development and management skills—capable of building new processes and procedures to enable work to develop smoothly and efficiently;
- Experience with effective marketing and communications, particularly in strategies and tactics that result in increases in attendance and support;
- Familiarity with Bay Area performing arts & electronic music communities.

Attributes

- A builder—someone who is comfortable dissecting what is needed to make ideas come to life;
- Someone who highlights and supports the successes of others, can easily share the spotlight, and celebrate shared accomplishments;
- Emotionally mature, someone who truly enjoys working with people; builds effective and lasting relationships;
- Unflappable; a good planner who responds clearly and gracefully to the unexpected;
- Solutions-oriented with attention to detail; pragmatic with an eye to the whole and to the future possibilities;
- A good listener and strategist; comfortable receiving input from many sources while retaining the ability to act decisively when required;

- A hard worker; a 'doer' with a willingness to work hands-on with a high energy level;
- Resourceful—able to bring the resources of others to collective work and build broad engagement;
- Demonstrates an awareness and sensitivity to the needs and concerns of individuals from diverse cultures, backgrounds, and orientations;
- Creative and forward-thinking; curious and informed about the cutting edge of hybrid music presentation;
- Exercises high ethical standards.

This position is a full-time role with a salary range of \$90K-\$120K and a stipend for benefits.

The position requires occasional nights and/or weekend work but has significant flexibility in daily schedules including remote work within the greater Bay Area.

For additional details or to submit your experience for review, please contact;

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