

Stephanie Matthews: Job Description

QUESTION: What would your ideal job description for an opportunity in an orchestra look like?

Where I live is important because it determines my quality of life. Keeping that in mind, the most attractive orchestra opportunity for me would be with a Los Angeles-based orchestra seeking classically trained musicians from various social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. LGBTQ+ musicians should be encouraged to apply and individuals with strong connections to the Latino and/or African American community AND are actively working toward empowering those communities should be strongly encouraged to apply. An orchestra whose core orchestra roster (not including auxiliary musicians) and administrative hires in no way reflects its surrounding community is not an organization I'd want to work for.

This orchestra would need to effectively communicate its desire to hire a highly qualified candidate who fundamentally believes that the role and duty of an artistic organization is to reflect and address today's society. This organization would be passionate about the modernization and reform of the traditional orchestra model by addressing and serving the needs of the surrounding community through various community and educational outreach programs, and through relevant, dynamic programming which reflects the times and champions diversity, especially that of its immediate community. This organization would be actively (and successfully) broadening its audience, cultivating mutual engagement and building stronger relationships between the audience and organization.

There MUST BE opportunity for artistic and financial growth. The position must offer a starting salary of \$100K+ for it to be a viable and attractive option for me at this stage of my career. Passionate musicians would be able to participate in educational and community outreach/engagement activities (ie. teaching, masterclasses, chamber music coaching, nursing home, hospital and prison outreach performances, etc). Additionally, I would have the opportunity to influence programming. An example of this could be a musician-led programming committee (whose members would receive additional compensation) who would assist with identifying viable artistic collaborations and partnerships, with input from members of the surrounding community. The ideal opportunity would offer a competitive benefits package including health, vision, dental, life insurance, 401K, paid vacation, child care, and student loan forgiveness for musicians with a music degree from a 4-year college/university/conservatory.

This organization does NOT tolerate harassment or discrimination based on gender, religion, race, age, etc. and can effectively prove this through their organizational policies and mediation strategies.

I would ask the following questions during the interview process:

1. Are you aware/informed of the topics or recent events that are of immediate concern to the communities you seek to engage? (ie. El Paso Walmart shooting (hate crime toward Latinos in Aug 2019 representing the deadliest attack on Latinos in modern history; Ryan Twyman murder in LA, highlighting the ongoing racial profiling in black and brown communities; police brutality, mass incarceration, etc.)
2. Are these topics important to your organization and/or do these issues affect the individual members of this organization personally?
3. If not, why not? If yes, what is your organization currently doing to address these concerns (either through programming and/or outreach initiatives)?