



Position Description

Position Title: Vice President of Artistic Planning
Department: Artistic Operations
Location: Santa Barbara, CA
Status: Full-Time, Exempt

Position Description

The Music Academy of the West seeks a collaborative thought leader to be its next Vice President of Artistic Planning, guiding the artistic programming of its acclaimed Summer Festival & School, as well as year-round engagement. The ideal candidate will be a creative, artistic partner with experience in the development of classically trained artists. Reporting to the President & CEO, and collaborating with teaching and guest artists, and colleagues across the organization, the ideal candidate should have long-range vision, a strong track record of innovative artistic programming, deep and broad knowledge of repertoire, and commitment to community partnerships and audience development. As the Music Academy advances plans for its downtown Music Education Center, this person will be a key contributor to the development of the facility's artistic and programmatic development.

Position Responsibilities

The Vice President of Artistic Planning (VPAP) oversees all artistic operations of the Music Academy's programming, including the Summer School & Festival, the Sing! youth choral program, year-round community engagement, and opportunities to continue supporting alumni professional development. This includes oversight of program development, repertoire selection, recruitment and engagement of faculty, guest artists and conductors, staging and production, contract negotiations, and budget. This role is highly collaborative, ensuring the programming and curriculum meets the expectations and needs of students.

The Vice President of Artistic Planning reports to the President & CEO, and manages a department that includes 5 full-time staff, 10 part-time, and 20 seasonal summer staff. This position also oversees over 50 faculty teaching artists and works closely with senior department managers, board members, and outside independent contractors. The VPAP manages a budget of ~\$3 million. The Artistic Operations team collectively executes production at onsite and off-site venues, and maintains the Academy's teaching studios, music library, and instrument inventory, including an all-Steinway piano fleet.

The VPAP's primary goals are to:

- **Cultivate, curate, and grow the Academy's artistic programs in collaboration with the administration and teaching artists**

The Music Academy attracts top-tier fellows ages 18 to 34 from the most reputable music programs in the world. It will launch a new High School Intensive in 2026 to serve students ages 14 to 18. Beyond the summer months, the Music Academy presents the Mariposa Series, highlighting MAW alumni, and provides community outreach activities, including *Sing!*, a

free, after-school, choral program for children from 1st through 9th grades. The VPAP is responsible for developing and implementing this artistic strategy while continually growing and enhancing the Summer Festival. This requires a diplomatic approach to the unique needs of fellows, faculty, administration, and local and international constituencies. The VPAP must also balance the Academy's rich history with a proactive approach to innovation. The VPAP will maximize educational goals while keeping in mind work-life balance for fellows, faculty, and staff. Serving as de facto dean of the faculty, the VPAP is responsible for recruiting and retaining exceptional instructors, world-renowned conductors, talented guest artists, and composers.

- **Foster a culture of collaboration**

With the significant volume of events and number of stakeholders involved, it is crucial that the Vice President of Artistic Planning be a proactive and transparent communicator. The VPAP works with faculty committees to develop repertoire and pedagogical goals for the Lehrer Vocal Institute, orchestral, and chamber music programs. The VPAP should seek input and feedback from appropriate parties, engage in active listening, and empower others to take ownership of the Academy's artistic vision and mission to develop compelling and innovative artistic instruction and programming. As a leader and mentor, the VPAP will also provide thoughtful support and guidance for artistic program staff and professional development opportunities.

- **Develop programs that attract audiences and create new revenue streams**

The Vice President of Artistic Planning will design a robust artistic program that generates broad audience excitement and donor engagement. This entails the selection of diverse repertoire incorporating canonical pieces, contemporary music, and commissions to appeal to a broad audience. Further, the VPAP will have strong fiscal acumen and budgeting skills, and be able to forecast finances accurately, particularly when it comes to establishing new artistic programs. The VPAP will partner with the Chief Financial Officer to build a reasonable and sustainable budget. This role will also collaborate closely with the Advancement team and participate in fundraising and donor cultivation efforts where appropriate.

- **Develop partnerships, community outreach programs, and a 12-month calendar of programs increasing the visibility of the Academy**

The Academy's reputation has grown exponentially in recent years, and the VPAP will play an instrumental role in ensuring that the Academy continues this upward trajectory. This role will have an extensive network of artistic contacts and be able to effectively advocate for and represent the Academy on local, national, and international stages. Given the success of past partnerships with the New York Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, and Young People's Chorus of New York City, the Academy aspires to continually develop mutually beneficial national and international collaborations. In concert with the CEO, the VPAP should be forward-thinking around developing strategic partnerships that will advance the Music Academy's mission.

Candidate Profile

The Music Academy values colleagues with diverse perspectives who thrive in a collaborative, highly communicative workplace. Our administration collectively informs and agrees upon the organization's expectations for teamwork, including a positive, goal-oriented environment that positions every employee for success.

The ideal candidate is a professional in the classical music industry with a minimum of eight years of experience working with distinguished musicians and/or faculty, administration, and students in a high-level training and/or programming environment. This person will combine broad knowledge of orchestral, chamber, and vocal repertoire with the ability to engage

artists and develop creative programs for concerts, recitals, and special events. Such knowledge will form the basis for the development and implementation of the artistic direction of the institution.

The ideal candidate will demonstrate some, if not all, of the following professional experience, skills, and personal qualities:

- An advanced degree in music, music education, administration, or related field
- A demonstrated track record of artistic planning in a performing arts or non-profit arts organization
- A strong appreciation for the mission and culture of the Music Academy
- A demonstrated commitment to collaboration and the ability to cultivate trust and credibility with colleagues
- Experience as a fair, respectful leader, as well as a proven ability to manage resources—human, financial and physical—to maximize productivity and assure the highest quality work
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- A bright, inquisitive, and agile mind
- An ability to work successfully in a complex and fluid environment demanding self-reliance combined with team spirit, outstanding judgment, and outstanding interpersonal skills
- Commitment to developing programs and opportunities that support diversity, equity, access, and belonging

Additional Information

- The 2026 Summer School & Festival will run from June 15 - August 8, 2026

Compensation and Benefits

This is a full-time, exempt position. Annual compensation is \$150,000-\$190,000, commensurate with experience. Music Academy provides a comprehensive benefit package for full-time employees, which includes health, vision, and dental coverage, life insurance, paid vacation and sick leave, and a 403(b) plan.

Application Process

Please email a letter of interest and current resume to hr@musicacademy.org, using the subject header **Vice President of Artistic Planning**. PDF format only. No phone calls, please.

The Music Academy is an equal opportunity employer. We aim to create a diverse and inclusive work environment, and we value each employee's unique experiences and perspectives.

About the Music Academy

Located in Santa Barbara, the Music Academy of the West provides classically trained musicians and diverse audiences with transformative educational and performance experiences. As part of its annual Summer Music Festival & School, the Academy presents the Fellowship Institute, which trains up to 150 fellows ages 18–34, alongside the new High School Intensive, a two-week program for 105 gifted musicians ages 14–18. Year-round programs include *Sing!*, a youth choir that performs with local, national, and international partners; and the Mariposa Concert Series, featuring Academy-affiliated artists. Each summer, the Festival showcases more than 100 performances and events, including masterclasses, competitions, and a fully staged opera. The 2026 Summer Music Festival & School will run June 15–August 8, 2026. The Festival lineup will be unveiled in early 2026. Learn more at musicacademy.org.