

# Position Specification

President & Executive Director

Buffalo, NY

May 2026



**BUFFALO  
PHILHARMONIC  
ORCHESTRA**



## President & Executive Director

<b>Reporting To</b>	Chair, Board of Trustees
<b>Direct Reports</b>	Associate Executive Director & Vice President, Development; Vice President, Artistic & Orchestra Operations; Vice President, Education & Community Engagement; Vice President, Marketing & Communications; Vice President, Finance & Administration; General Manager, Kleinhans Music Hall
<b>Location</b>	Buffalo, NY

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## Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra

For more than ninety years, the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra (“BPO”) has stood among the most respected American orchestras, distinguished by its musical accomplishments, recording legacy, and deep connection to the Western New York community. Founded in 1935, the Orchestra has been led throughout its history by an extraordinary lineage of internationally renowned Music Directors. Today, the BPO remains both a nationally regarded artistic institution and one of the most significant cultural organizations in Western New York, serving as an enduring source of civic pride for Buffalo and the region at large.

Since 1999, the Orchestra has been led by Music Director [JoAnn Falletta](#) — hailed by *The New York Times* as “one of the finest conductors of her generation” — and has experienced an era of remarkable artistic growth, national recognition, and organizational stability. The Orchestra has released more than fifty recordings during her tenure, earning multiple GRAMMY Awards and widespread critical acclaim while expanding its profile through broadcasts, touring, and innovative programming. Equally important, Falletta’s deep engagement within the Buffalo community has helped shape a culture of consistency, intention, and relevance that distinguishes the BPO within the American orchestral landscape.



The BPO performs in the iconic Kleinhans Music Hall, a National Historic Landmark widely regarded as one of the finest acoustic concert halls in the world. Opened in 1940, the approximately 240,000-square-foot facility includes a 2,400-seat main auditorium, the elegant Mary Seaton Room utilized for chamber performances and special events, and an on-site restaurant. Recent renovations have enhanced the patron experience while preserving the hall’s internationally celebrated acoustics and architectural integrity. Owned by the City of Buffalo and overseen by a volunteer advisory board, Kleinhans is operated by the BPO, which provides the

Orchestra priority access to performance and rehearsal dates within one of the world’s truly great concert halls.

The BPO presents a robust portfolio of year-round programming anchored by its Classics, Pops, Rock, and Movie series, along with a Children’s series, Summer series, and varied special events. Recent years have seen the expansion of audience engagement initiatives such as the immersive UpClose programs, intimate Candlelight Concerts, and Musician Nightcap gatherings with Orchestra members following select performances. Collectively, these programs attract a loyal audience base that includes approximately 5,300 subscribers and more than 42,000 single-ticket buyers annually.



The Orchestra's commitment to education and community engagement is equally central to its mission. Each year, the BPO serves over 35,000 students from K-12 through a broad portfolio of initiatives designed to inspire the next generation of music lovers and learners. Through youth concerts, Side-by-Side performances, masterclasses, collaborations with schools and community organizations throughout the region, and more, the BPO has become a vital civic and educational resource across Western New York.

The BPO operates with an annual budget of approximately \$15 million supported through a balanced combination of earned and contributed income, endowment income, and government support. The Orchestra benefits from exceptional financial stewardship, including a strong endowment, providing an important foundation for long-term sustainability and ambition. Governed by a dedicated 34-member Board of Trustees and supported by a loyal subscriber and donor base, the organization enters its next chapter from a position of genuine institutional strength.

This is a pivotal and exciting moment in the history of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra. Few American orchestras can claim the BPO's unique combination of musical distinction, financial stability, recording capacity, institutional momentum, and community affection. With more than two decades of exceptional continuity under JoAnn Falletta's leadership, the Orchestra stands not in a period of rebuilding or reinvention, but in one of opportunity — an opportunity to build upon an extraordinary legacy, expand the Orchestra's impact and visibility, and help shape the future of one of America's most respected cultural institutions.

## About Buffalo: Historic Character, Contemporary Energy



Set along the shores of Lake Erie and at the gateway to Niagara Falls and Canada, Buffalo combines the cultural assets and architectural character of a major American city with a quality of life increasingly difficult to find elsewhere. Once defined primarily by its industrial past, Buffalo is now experiencing a period of renewed energy and investment, attracting national attention for its affordability, livability, food scene, and cultural vibrancy. In 2024, [Money Magazine](#) named Buffalo one of the “Best Places to Live” in the United States, citing the city's revitalization, growing momentum, and exceptional value.

Buffalo boasts a vibrant arts and cultural ecosystem anchored by institutions including the Buffalo AKG Art Museum, Shea's Performing Arts Center, and the Burchfield Penney Art Center. The city is equally renowned for its architecture, featuring celebrated works by Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis Sullivan, H.H. Richardson, and Frederick Law Olmsted, whose extensive parks and parkway system continue to shape the city's identity and livability. Neighborhoods throughout Buffalo blend historic homes and buildings with a growing collection of acclaimed restaurants, cafés, breweries, galleries, and small businesses that contribute to the city's distinctly authentic character and strong sense of place.

Residents enjoy a highly accessible lifestyle marked by short commute times, attainable housing, and easy access to outdoor recreation and waterfront amenities. Beyond its physical attributes, Buffalo is defined by a strong sense of community and civic pride. Neighborhoods, cultural institutions, and local businesses benefit from deeply engaged



residents who actively support and participate in the life of the city, creating a community that feels both connected and invested in its future.

## Scope and Responsibilities

Reporting to the Board of Trustees, through the Chair, the President & Executive Director (“ED”) directs, plans, and evaluates all major activities of the BPO. The ED works closely with the Music Director (“MD”), the Vice President of Artistic and Orchestra Operations, and the Artistic Advisory Committee to ensure that the highest quality music is presented with a diverse range of programs relevant to the Orchestra’s constituents and to contemporary life. The ED works collaboratively with all internal stakeholders to ensure the future health and growth of the Orchestra. The ED is the key external representative and spokesperson of the organization to many of the major individual donors, the business community, philanthropic and community partners, media and to the government. Overall, the ED plays a critical role in elevating and sustaining the life-changing impact of the BPO.

This is an extraordinary opportunity to help shape the next era of a beloved and world-renowned orchestra in a vibrant community, with a 91-year history of excellence and impact. The next ED will inherit an exceptional artistic product, brand, and legacy and will be supported by a dedicated board, staff, and philanthropic partners. Among the many exciting opportunities and responsibilities for the ED, include:

### Specific Responsibilities

- Partner with the MD and Board of Trustees in setting and achieving a strategic vision that expands the BPO’s reach, revenue, and relevance;
- Through collaboration, innovation, and a data-informed perspective, design and drive a comprehensive business plan that aligns artistic ambition with financial sustainability for the entire organization;
- Represent the BPO externally throughout Buffalo and Western New York and, along with the Music Director, act as a visible spokesperson for the Orchestra;
- Build and motivate a high-performing professional management team, recruiting, mentoring, and empowering talented professionals to achieve organizational goals;
- Monitor, evaluate, and report progress toward strategic objectives, providing solutions and adjustments as needed;
- With the assistance and collaboration of the Vice President of Development, serve as the front-line fundraiser for the organization, ensuring the continued success of the annual giving, planned giving, and other special campaigns;
- With the support of the Board, MD, and others, spearhead the identification, cultivation, and solicitation of gifts from individuals, foundations, and corporations; The ED will personally manage a portfolio of key major donors and high-potential prospects;
- With the assistance and collaboration of the Vice President of Marketing & Communications, oversee the execution of a long term, strategic marketing effort that capitalizes on the brand of the BPO and results in increased subscription and individual ticket sales and expanded audiences;
- With the Vice President of Finance and Administration and the Finance Committee of the Board, develop the annual budget and set policies that result in sound fiscal management and operations;
- With the Vice President of Education and Community Engagement, advance an outreach strategy that maximizes impact and achieves desired outcomes in education, audience development, and funding;
- Direct operations of Kleinhans Music Hall, partnering with the City and the Board of Directors to maintain its facilities, sustain its National Historic Landmark status, and optimize its benefit to the BPO;
- Work closely with the Board Governance Committee to recruit and introduce new board members to the BPO and ensure current Trustees remain engaged;
- Facilitate the BPO’s culture of trust, transparency, and collaboration among musicians, board, and staff;
- With the Vice President of Artistic and Orchestra Operations, work in a collaborative fashion with the musicians on individual and collective matters, including union contracts and labor activities;



- Sustain the BPO's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion as critical to the future success of the organization;
- Through example, ensure that the BPO is a continual learning organization, striving for excellence in all of its internal and external activities;
- Communicate regularly with professional colleagues in the Western New York arts community and share information and current trends involving American symphony orchestras;
- Keep current with existing and emerging artists and repertoire.

## Key Selection Criteria

The next President & Executive Director of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra will be a strategic and visionary leader with the depth and breadth of experience required to assume responsibility for the varied and complex functions of this role with confidence and agility. They will be an expert partner to the Music Director and Board in sound decision-making and demonstrate exceptional business acumen, coupled with the entrepreneurial ingenuity to diversify and expand earned revenue streams. This person must demonstrate a keen skill and desire to be the chief fundraiser for the organization and comfortably and effectively represent the BPO to a broad spectrum of audiences and stakeholders. This person must have an acute understanding of and proven track record of success with the unique and intricate business model and collective bargaining dynamics of the American symphony organization to expertly interpret financial data and make sound decisions. An inspiring and motivating manager, this person must collaborate with and maximize the potential of each team member. Ideally, this person will have direct experience with and exhibit a high level of competency in optimizing the earned revenue capacity of a performance hall. A love and knowledge of classical music repertoire is essential to be most effective in this role, as is the immersion into Buffalo and embrace of its culture and community spirit

## Personal / Professional Attributes

- Visionary thinker combined with a practical approach to problem solving
- Comfortable and confident as the face of an organization, visible in the community
- Strategic mind with an openness toward innovation, creativity, and boundary testing
- Unquestioned integrity and personal conduct above reproach
- Poised, polished, and diplomatic with exceptional emotional intelligence
- Proactive and forward-thinking; exhibits a sense of urgency paired with calm, steady judgment
- Synthesizes and interprets data quickly while maintaining sight of “the forest for the trees”
- Charismatic leader with ability to inspire, empower, and unify teams
- Indefatigably optimistic and endlessly enthusiastic

## Compensation

Base salary for this position is estimated at \$300,000–\$350,000, commensurate with experience and qualifications, plus benefits.

*Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or protected veteran status.*



## Contact Information

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