

Job Title: Director, Artistic Planning

Reports To: Vice President, Music

The Search

The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra (ESO) and Winspear Centre for Music is seeking a Director of Artistic Planning to help shape the future of this vibrant institution at a pivotal moment in its evolution. The Director of Artistic Planning will be responsible for uniting artistic excellence, audience relevance, financial stewardship, and operational planning to create programming that is bold, meaningful, and sustainable. We are seeking a collaborative team member with strong strategic and fiscal judgment, and the imagination to help evolve the future of the orchestral art form.

Artistic Vision: As a Canadian cultural treasure and the cornerstone of the Winspear Centre, the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra connects diverse communities through a shared musical language, honouring the great works of the past while boldly championing authentic contemporary voices. By passionately sharing orchestral music in its full spectrum of style, tradition and expression, the ESO explores the depth and breadth of the human experience, brought to life in performances which are thrilling, profound and life-changing. In doing so, we keep art alive and thriving as a force which uplifts our city, sheds off the dust of everyday life, and reminds us all of our collective humanity. Rooted in a pioneering tradition, the Winspear Centre for Music and Edmonton Symphony Orchestra have long demonstrated that scale is no barrier to influence, consistently achieving a level of exceptional artistic accomplishment and audience impact that rival organizations many times their size while delivering results that exceed expectations.

About the Organization: The Winspear Centre for Music, home to the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, is a \$20M organization with a strong reputation for artistic ambition, innovation, and thoughtful risk-taking. The organization owns and operates a 1,700 seat concert venue and, through the Tommy Banks Campus, offers a range of music learning and enrichment opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds. With a major facility expansion opening in the 2027/2028 season, including a 550 seat secondary concert venue, we are positioned to continue building our reputation as a local cultural hub and host to a broad spectrum of artistic and community activity.

As the largest northern city in North America, Edmonton has long attracted people willing to push boundaries. The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and Winspear Centre reflect that same pioneering spirit through their artistic ambition and civic impact.

Position Summary and Key Responsibilities

The Director of Artistic Planning is a senior leadership role responsible for guiding our artistic vision and long-term programming strategy in close collaboration with the Music Director and the Vice President of Music and cross-functional teams. The Director leads season planning, cultivates creative partnerships, and ensures artistic activity reflects our values and strategic goals. This role calls for a dynamic leader with deep knowledge of the performing arts and orchestral music, strong interpersonal skills, and the ability to translate creative vision into effective programming with artistic impact.

Key Responsibilities:

- **Artistic Season Planning & Programming:** Develop and implement the ESO's music program schedule and season lineup, working 2–3 years ahead. Curate a balanced, engaging, and diverse repertoire across multiple series and genres (classical, contemporary, etc.), integrating the ESO season and guest artist presentations. Ensuring programming aligns with the organization's artistic vision, quality standards, and audience development goals. Prepare and present programming proposals to senior leadership and, when required, the Board of Directors, adjusting plans based on feedback and strategic direction.
- **Artist & Presenter Relations:** Serve as the primary point of contact for guest artists, conductors, ensembles, and presenting partners. Cultivate and maintain relationships with artist managers, producers, and collaborative organizations. Negotiate engagements and performance agreements, manage booking and contracting of artists and ensembles, and oversee the coordination of artist hospitality and logistical needs (e.g., schedules, travel, accommodation). Ensure positive, professional experiences that encourage artists to return and enhance our reputation.
- **Collaboration with the Orchestra:** Work closely with the ESO's leadership (Music Director, leadership and production teams) to coordinate programming and scheduling. Facilitate collaborative projects between the ESO and other presenters, ensuring synergy in artistic planning. Respect the ESO's artistic autonomy while aligning their season within our broader artistic strategy. Ongoing liaison and consultation with the Programming and Artistic Leadership Committees.
- **Cross-Departmental Coordination:** Coordinate across departments (Production, Marketing, Development, Education, Community Engagement, Box Office, etc.) to ensure smooth execution of artistic plans. Communicate program details, context, and changes promptly to internal teams so that marketing materials, ticketing, technical production, and outreach activities correctly reflect artistic plans. Collaborate on audience engagement initiatives, education programs, and special events to enhance the public's connection to the programming.
- **Budgeting & Contract Management:** Develop and manage the artistic programming budget in consultation with the VP of Music, Artistic Operations and Finance teams. Oversee financial planning for all music events—ensuring programming decisions stay within budget and align with revenue goals. Negotiate contracts and fees for artists, ensembles, and commissioning of new works. Approve expenditures and track artistic expenses, adjusting plans as needed to ensure fiscal responsibility.
- **Equity, Diversity & Reconciliation Initiatives:** Champion the organization's commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and reconciliation in all artistic planning. Ensure the season features diverse artists, cultures, and voices (including Indigenous and underrepresented communities) and that programming reflects inclusive values and the cultural context of the community. Work in alignment with sector best practices and relevant Canadian arts initiatives (such as Truth and Reconciliation calls to action) to broaden the artistic range and audience reach.
- **Strategic & Long-Range Planning:** Provide long-term artistic vision and planning for our music programming. Develop multi-year programming strategies and special projects that advance our mission and reputation. Monitor industry trends, emerging artists, and new artistic opportunities (festivals, collaborations, commissions) to ensure that we remain at the forefront of artistic innovation.

- **Leadership & Team Supervision:** Lead the Artistic Planning team (if applicable) and any direct reports such as artistic managers, coordinators, or production planning staff. Provide clear direction, mentorship, and professional development for staff under the Director's supervision. Foster a collaborative, inclusive, and high-performance work culture
- **Decision-Making Authority:** The Director, Artistic Planning exercises significant decision-making authority in the selection of repertoire, artists, and collaborative projects for the music programming, in partnership with the Music Director and within the strategic and budgetary guidelines set by the Vice President, Music, and executive leadership. The Director makes recommendations on artistic expenditures, season calendars, and programming mix, and has authority to negotiate artist contracts and partnerships. Major decisions (e.g. multi-year artistic commitments or new initiatives) are made in consultation with the VP, Music and in alignment with executive leadership approvals and organizational strategy.

Supervisory Scope:

This position may supervise a small team of artistic or programming staff and contractors (such as Artistic Planning Managers, Artistic Coordinators, or Artistic Operations personnel), depending on organizational structure and management skills and experience of the successful candidate. The Director provides leadership and guidance to these staff, sets goals and priorities, and oversees their performance. Even when the direct reporting team is small, the Director works through influence and cross-functional leadership with various teams (e.g., Production, Marketing, Education, Community Outreach) to achieve artistic and organizational objectives.

The desired candidate will exhibit many of the following ideal experiences and track record:

- **Education & Experience:** University degree in music, arts administration, or a related field, or equivalent professional experience. Typically 7+ years of experience in artistic planning, programming, or administration within the performing arts, ideally including orchestral or classical music. Proven success curating seasons, festivals, or artistic projects from concept through execution.
- **Sector Knowledge:** Deep knowledge of music, performing arts repertoire, artists, and industry trends, particularly in classical and orchestral music, with an appreciation for diverse genres and contemporary practice. Familiarity with the Canadian arts sector and funding environment is an asset.
- **Artistic Vision & Curatorial Insight:** Ability to develop inspiring, cohesive artistic programs that uphold high artistic standards, resonate with diverse audiences, and align with organizational priorities.
- **Budget, Contracting & Business Acumen:** Experience managing artistic budgets, negotiating artist contracts or partnership agreements, and balancing artistic ambition with financial, operational, and logistical realities. Familiarity with unionized performance environments, including collective agreements or artist union rules, is an asset.
- **Leadership & Collaboration:** Proven ability to lead staff and cross-functional teams with a collaborative, trust-building approach. Strong relationship-management skills with artists, colleagues, partners, presenters, and community stakeholders.
- **Communication & Advocacy:** Exceptional written, verbal, and negotiation skills, with the ability to advocate for artistic ideas, present plans to stakeholders, and communicate with diplomacy, professionalism, and clarity across artistic, business, and public audiences.

- Organizational & Project Management Skills: Strong strategic planning, project management, and organizational skills, with the ability to manage multiple projects, timelines, stakeholders, and long-range planning cycles (1 to 3 years) while overseeing current programming needs. Proficiency with standard office and project management tools; familiarity with arts management software or databases is an asset.
- Commitment to Inclusion: Demonstrated commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and reconciliation, with cultural awareness and openness to incorporating a wide range of perspectives and traditions into artistic planning.
- Languages: Bilingualism in English and French, or proficiency in additional languages, is an asset.

Conclusion:

The Director of Artistic Planning plays a crucial role in shaping the artistic identity and success of our music programming. This leader will ensure that the concerts and musical offerings are artistically excellent, varied, and inclusive, meeting both the community's and organization's goals. Through strategic planning, collaborative leadership, and a passion for music, the Director of Artistic Planning will help drive our cultural impact and maintain our reputation for exceptional musical experiences.

This is a full-time position based in Edmonton, Alberta. We operate year-round, with flexible schedules that may include evenings, weekends, and holidays.

Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and applications should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/francis-winspear-centre-music-and-edmonton-symphony-orchestra/director-artistic>

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by the Winspear Centre for Music and the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by the Winspear Centre for Music and the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra would supersede any conflicting information in this document.