



Director of Operations
Passim
Cambridge, MA

THE SEARCH

Passim, a celebrated nonprofit music organization rooted in Harvard Square, seeks a Director of Operations to help advance its mission of providing exceptional live music experiences, nurturing artists at all stages of their careers, and building a vibrant, inclusive music community. With a legacy spanning from the historic Club 47 to its current role as a cornerstone of New England's performing arts scene, Passim engages nearly 30,000 audience members and students annually through a renowned listening venue, as well as its school of music, artist grants, and community-driven festivals and programs.

The Director of Operations will serve as a central leader guiding day-to-day execution across the organization's activities, including concerts and club management, education programs, and community initiatives. This role offers a unique opportunity to strengthen systems and steward organizational culture, drive strategic planning implementation, enhance financial sustainability, and cultivate partnerships that expand both revenue and impact. The ideal candidate will bring strong operational and financial acumen, experience managing teams and complex programs, and a collaborative approach to leading change within a mission-driven arts organization.

ABOUT PASSIM

Passim accomplishes its mission through its legendary listening venue, music school, artist grants, and community programs. As a nonprofit since 1994, Passim carries on the heritage of its predecessors—the historic Club 47 (1958-1968) and for-profit Passim (1969-1994). The Passim of today cultivates a diverse mix of musical traditions, where the emphasis is on the relationship between performers and audience and between teachers and students. Located in Harvard Square, Passim serves Cambridge and the broader region by featuring local, national, and international artists.

Since its start, Passim has been a cornerstone of the performing arts community in New England, fostering both performers and audiences alike. Club Passim has received numerous awards and recognitions, including a spot on the list of Best Venues for Live Music in Boston (Time Out, 2024). Passim maintains an active presence in the Cambridge community throughout the year, hosting outdoor festivals across the

seasons and collaborating with the Harvard Square Business Association, Cambridge Arts Council, Berklee College of Music, and other local partners.

Programs: Passim provides year-round programming through in-person, online, and hybrid formats, reaching nearly 30,000 audience members and students annually. [Club Passim](#) is an all-ages 110-seat concert venue with live music 7 nights per week; nearly all shows are also live-streamed. [Passim School of Music](#) offers classes and workshops to adults in a variety of genres and instruments, including guitar, fiddle, mandolin, harmonica, and voice. [Artist Grants](#) provide financial support to aspiring musicians to enhance their careers and/or aid their community outreach efforts. [Festivals and Concert series](#) include a free summer concert series, Mayfair, Oktoberfest, and BCMFest. [The Folk Collective](#) is a cohort of twelve artists, musicians, and cultural thought leaders involved in an active exchange of ideas and conversation with the Passim community. Passim collaborates with The Folk Collective to present events that welcome and invite diverse audiences and artists to the Passim stage.

Strategic Priorities: The Board of Directors adopted the following five priorities in January 2023 to guide the organization's planning and decisions for the following 3-5 years:

- **Artist development and engagement:** Nurture an inclusive, vibrant, and equitable musical community, amplify diverse voices and talents, and support artists in all stages of their careers.
- **Customer experience (audience and students of Passim School of Music):** Cultivate a connected community across all audiences, students and artists, and expand engagement through music, exploration, and collaboration.
- **Employee engagement and satisfaction:** Build a supportive, diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplace consistent with attracting and retaining talented and dedicated staff and board.
- **Alignment of programming, facility, and resources:** Create an accessible and inclusive space for programming that builds on the pillars of Passim: artistry, community, and collaboration.
- **Financial organizational sustainability:** Establish a long-term financial plan that supports existing operations, enables future growth, and creates financial stability through ongoing operations, fundraising, and endowment.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging: Passim nurtures a welcoming and inclusive community by providing structures and funding to support emerging musicians, and creating learning and relationship-building opportunities for a diverse group of artists to build their careers. In 2024, Passim worked with a consultant to conduct a Climate & Engagement survey to assess the organization's strengths and opportunities for improvement. The resulting report provided insights on how Passim can advance the collective work of "fostering a culture where every voice matters, where passion thrives, and where collective success is inevitable." The ongoing work of inclusive engagement must be increasingly embodied in Passim's day-to-day as well as its overarching policies and structures, addressing DEIB in both internal and external-facing practices of the organization.

Location, Facilities and Accessibility: Club Passim is a 110-seat live music venue and kitchen at 47 Palmer Street in Harvard Square. The offices and School of Music are located around the corner from the Club at

26 Church St on the second floor of the building. The existing space is leased from Harvard University and is not fully ADA Compliant. Given the existing conditions of the building and the lease, Passim has very limited options to upgrade the physical space, and so is continually exploring partnerships and other options to increase the accessibility of their programming.

Board of Directors: The 15-member [board of directors](#) is a dedicated group that represents an array of skills and tenure, and has the fiduciary responsibility to govern the financial health and overall well-being of Passim. The Board of Directors has six meetings per year that include lively open discussions and deliberation. Each Director serves a two-year term, and service is limited to three terms. In recent years the Board has welcomed several new members, increasing the representation of artists and performers on the board. Most board members reside in the greater Boston area, and all are passionate musicians or audience members.

Finances & Fundraising: With an operating budget (FY25/26) of \$2.2 million, Passim relies on a balance of earned revenue from ticket sales, food and beverage, and tuition, plus contributions from individuals, grants, and sponsors. Club Passim produces 430 shows annually for approximately 30,000 patrons a year, which generates nearly 60% of the organization's total income (33% from ticket sales and 25% from kitchen revenues). Memberships and donations make up an additional 25%, and grants and sponsorships contribute approximately 10%. For the 2025 – 2026 year, the School served 679 students and offered 163 classes and workshops, generating about 5% of the organization's total income. Passim has successfully sustained an annual fundraising cycle and is actively working to broaden the local folk community and attract new audiences. Looking ahead, the organization is positioned to increase donors, grants, and partnerships to cultivate more long-term sources of funding.

ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

Passim delivers a busy calendar of over 400 performances a year, alongside education and community programs. The organization, with the leadership of the Executive Director, board and staff, is currently focused on strengthening the funding model and internal systems needed for long-term sustainability. The Director of Operations role is designed to bring senior operational leadership to the organization, so that day-to-day execution is coordinated, communication pathways are clear, teams are well-supported, and priorities move forward with consistency. Additionally, the Director of Operations will be an integral part of building, strengthening, and maintaining the cultural stewardship of Passim, with both the internal and external community.

Reporting to the Executive Director, the Director of Operations will oversee a team of full time and contractor staff that includes the Club Manager, Hospitality Manager, School of Music Manager, Festival Director of the Boston Celtic Music Festival, and Curator of Music and Culture. The Director of Operations will serve on the organization's leadership team, along with the Executive Director, Finance Manager, Development Manager, and Managing Director. The desired candidate will bring knowledge of effective nonprofit and organizational management practices, project management capabilities, the ability to think

through operating models, and build strong relationships both internally and externally. By implementing effective operational infrastructure, the Director of Operations will help expand Passim's capacity for partnerships, audience and community impact, and the fundraising relationships that fuel the mission.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

- **Serve as an operational “center of gravity.”** The Director of Operations will be a key strategic partner with the Executive Director and will take the lead on day-to-day operations so that key priorities and initiatives have clear owners, timelines, and follow-through. This role will also steward effective organizational practices and culture to ensure core policies and processes are standardized to support long-term organizational stability.
- **Maximize partnerships to sustain and grow impact.** The Director of operations will play a key role in determining how to sustain Passim's commitment to paying artists well while balancing the budget and moving major projects along. This means identifying, developing, and nurturing new programs and partners that have potential to be strong drivers of both revenue and impact at a larger scale.
- **Manage strategic planning implementation.** Passim is revisiting its strategic plan and has already begun groundwork, including a brand summit and SWOT analysis with board and staff, in preparation for an update to the plan in the fall. The Director of Operations will join the organization during the strategic planning process, and will be instrumental in translating the strategy into an actionable plan and leading the implementation and ongoing benchmarking.
- **Invest in people systems and culture.** The Director of Operations will strengthen HR policies and core internal practices, while sustaining Passim's close-knit culture. This includes responsibilities such as updating the employee handbook, facilitating a consistent annual review cycle, providing clear expectations and training for staff development, and following through on DEIB commitments.
- **Increase financial clarity and strengthen earned-revenue strategy.** The Director of Operations will bring financial fluency to operational decisions, helping the team to decide where to focus limited resources. This may include program-level cost/benefit analysis, partnering with the part-time finance manager to continue improving budget transparency, and refining revenue models to balance mission and impact with long-term financial health.
- **Lead change management with a spirit of collaboration and learning.** Passim has a deep history, with teamwork and community serving as important pillars. To build a resilient and sustainable organization requires clear processes and thoughtful evolution. The Director of Operations will help lead change in a collaborative, transparent way, clarifying roles, investing in employee development, and following through on key priorities and commitments.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

- Strategic and operational leadership experience in a complex, mission-driven organization
- Strong project management skills, with the ability to move major initiatives from planning to execution
- Financial acumen, including experience reading, building, and managing budgets
- Ability to assess operating models, program mix, and revenue opportunities with a strategic lens
- Experience developing partnerships and earned-revenue opportunities
- Excellent people-management skills and high emotional intelligence
- Ability to navigate change, build trust, and manage through organizational complexity
- Experience strengthening systems, processes, and staff accountability
- Strong communication, listening, and cross-functional collaboration skills
- Commitment to equity, inclusion, and thoughtful organizational culture-building
- Broad generalist experience across operations, strategy, and administration
- Arts administration or comparable mission-driven leadership experience, ideally in a performing arts, cultural, nonprofit, or similar setting
- Familiarity with booking and artist management preferred

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

The salary for this position is \$90,000. While Passim currently offers a fairly flexible work schedule, the Director of Operations is expected to have a regular presence in the office and club, ensuring visibility and accessibility with both staff and the community. Periodic travel for music and cultural events and network building is expected.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/passim/director-operations>

Katie Rockman, Nella Young, Stephen Kalogeras, and Marlyn Desire
Isaacson, Miller

Passim is an equal opportunity employer. We celebrate diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees.

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