



**Search for the Executive Director  
Stanford Jazz Workshop  
Stanford, California**

**THE SEARCH**

Stanford Jazz Workshop (SJW) seeks an Executive Director to provide strategic vision and operational leadership to this nationally renowned nonprofit organization in jazz education. Founded in 1972, SJW, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, is recognized for its unique pedagogy that connects young musicians to master jazz performers in an intensive and inspiring workshop setting.

Its core programs during summer include four weeks of immersive jazz education programs for middle school, high school, and adult musicians and the flagship Stanford Jazz Festival. Year-round SJW produces the enduring Monday night jam sessions in Stanford's Coffee House, provides after-school instruction to middle and high school students through their award-winning big band programs, and presents other educational and performance programs. SJW's programming is led by world-class jazz artists and educators, and the educational programs are tailored to student experience and ability, making them accessible to musicians of all ages and skill levels.

The Executive Director is responsible for the overall strategic, operational, programmatic, and administrative management of SJW, as well as the production of the Stanford Jazz Festival concerts and summer programs. The Executive Director supervises the year-round work of up to ten staff and is responsible for 30-40 summer production staff and seasonal employees. SJW is governed by a 14-member Board of Directors, and its 2023 operating budget is \$2.45 million. SJW relies on a balance of tuition and contributions from individuals, grants, and corporate sponsors. The organization is based in Northern California, with an office in San Francisco and a seasonal summer home on the Stanford University campus.

Looking forward, the ED will provide steady organizational leadership while refining the vision for SJW's future. This leader will continue to diversify and grow sources of funding; will optimize operations and nurture a high-performing staff and board; will deepen and manage the ongoing partnership with Stanford University; and will ensure consistent delivery of programming – all while strengthening its equity, diversity, and inclusion work as an organization.

SJW has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this search. All applications, inquiries, and nominations, which will remain confidential, should be directed to the search firm, as indicated at the end of this document.

## **ABOUT STANFORD JAZZ WORKSHOP**

SJW's mission is to educate, entertain, and inspire a community of artists, students, and audience members through the study, performance, and appreciation of jazz — an original American musical form.

Founded in 1972, SJW is a leading jazz education and presenting organization with a national reputation. It is known for its curriculum and educational model in which young jazz musicians study with renowned faculty in an intensive workshop setting. The summer program, in particular, enables students to have tailored learning and one-on-one support, build community, play and learn across generations, and access and interact with jazz masters in informal ways. Started as a weekly forum for conversation and jamming, the organization remains true to its beginnings as a home for music education and creative exchange.

Every year, SJW serves as many as 1,000 students and reaches more than 12,000 audience members. The organization currently employs seven year-round staff, 30-40 seasonal support staff, workshop counselors, and production staff, and 80-120 faculty and concert artists to deliver programming for students ages 10 and up during both the school year and summer. With a 2023 operating budget of \$2.45 million, SJW relies on a balance of tuition and contributions from individuals, grants, and corporate sponsors. Since the pandemic, staff primarily work remotely for most of the year and maintain a full-time presence on campus during the summer workshop period.

### ***History***

Over 50 years ago, SJW was conceived as a weekly Monday evening jam session at the Stanford Coffee House on the Stanford University Campus. It was founded by saxophonist and educator, [Jim Nadel](#), who invited musicians to also join a Tuesday study group to share recordings and discuss approaches to playing jazz. Over time, SJW attracted accomplished musicians and educators to jam and offer lectures. Touring musicians and visiting scholars began to find their way to the Monday and Tuesday evening programs, and SJW gained increased visibility throughout the 1970s. Those early days helped to establish SJW's core pedagogical theory: that there is no one right way to play or teach jazz, and that the best approach is to cultivate an intergenerational community that welcomes multiple approaches and encourages students to find their way through exposure to a wide range of teaching and playing styles.

In the early 1980s, SJW initiated the Speaking Jazz lecture series and offered its first week-long summer jazz residency program on the Stanford University campus. A financial aid fund was established to support accessibility for students with financial need. Renowned artists such as Stan Getz, Eddie Marshall, Victor Lewis, Dizzy Gillespie, George Mraz, and Jim McNeely joined the faculty and performed at featured concerts, bringing attention to SJW. This generated increasing interest in SJW's unique summer jazz intensives, resulting in higher enrollment and expanded programming during the summer season. In 1985,

the Stanford Jazz Camp was established as a second week-long program on the Stanford University campus, and in 1987 the organization became a 501(c)(3) non-profit.

In the 1990s, a third week of Jazz Camp was added to SJW programming, in addition to public school outreach programs during the school year and the launch of a vocal program. SJW continued to expand in the 21st century, adding after-school big bands for middle and high school students, growing to four weeks of summer programming, and increasing accessibility to students underrepresented in many contemporary jazz contexts. In 2006, the organization created the Jazz Mentor Fellowship Program, which provides a two-year training and collaboration opportunity for promising young artist/educators, ages 21-28, to teach, train, and perform along with other faculty artists. In 2017, SJW's 50/50 Initiative was created to address gender inequality in jazz by recalibrating the gender balance on the main stage and with the goal of increasing faculty representation at various levels so that women would make up half of SJW's instructors.

In 2020, SJW suspended all in-person programming during the COVID-19 pandemic. Within a matter of weeks, the organization was able to successfully transition program offerings to an online platform: Jazz Camp Online was attended by hundreds of students and faculty artists in the summer of 2020. In 2021, the after-school Big Band programs continued online via Zoom and restructured summer workshops were held in person with limited capacity in addition to an online option. The summer programs continue to offer an online jazz camp program which includes live online instruction with workshop faculty, participation in virtual ensembles, and access to on-demand content.

In 2022, SJW not only celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, but it successfully hosted a return to a full four weeks of in-person educational summer programs and produced more than four dozen ticketed and free community performances after a two-year hiatus.

See the [2023 Programs](#) page for more on SJW's current programs.

### ***Vision and Values***

SJW's vision is to positively change lives through individual creative expression within a collaborative community that celebrates and perpetuates jazz. The organization's core values guide both the programming as well as the year-round organizational culture:

**Creativity:** Jazz, as an art form, values creative expression. But individual creative expression operates within the context of a community of collaborators whose expressions co-create a whole that is greater than the sum of its individual parts. SJW also values creativity within the context of the jazz tradition itself, which is celebrated even as it is transformed.

**Diversity and Inclusiveness:** Part of the richness of the jazz tradition is that it is diverse. SJW strives for inclusiveness across styles, generations, ethnicities, backgrounds, and gender identities. People of all ages from around the globe value and appreciate jazz.

**Collaboration:** Successful collaboration requires valuing working together and an investment in the group process as well as its individual contributions. This is true both on the performance stage as well as within the work life of the organization itself.

**Respect:** Successful collaboration, especially within jazz improvisation, requires respect for others. This kind of respect requires careful listening and is likewise valued throughout the organization.

**Practice:** Not just practice on one's individual instrument, but the continual improvement in all aspects of the organization, by doing it over and over until we get it right.

### ***Students and Alumni***

As many as 1,000 students attend SJW's programs annually, with about 800 in summer and 200 in after-school bands and instruction. Most of the students attending the year-round programming reside in the Bay Area, but summer programming attracts students from across the United States and internationally. Approximately 17% are in middle school, 60% are in high school, and 23% are adult students; 20-25% identify as female. SJW distributes as much as \$120,000 annually in financial aid for underserved youth to attend camps and afterschool programs. This enables many deserving and talented young musicians to immerse themselves in the study of jazz with some of the leading artists in the world.

Many SJW students return each year for more programming and educational opportunities. Numerous alumni have grown into successful jazz artists and educators, becoming catalysts in contemporary jazz across the country and internationally. Several renowned alumni, including Taylor Eigsti, Joshua Redman, Larry Grenadier, Victor Lin, and Bennett Paster, have remained involved with SJW as faculty and/or serve as advisors to the organization.

### ***Staff and Faculty***

In addition to the Executive Director, the core team of SJW includes the Artistic Director, the Faculty & Camp Director, the Marketing Director, the Controller, the Registrar, and a Program Manager. The Director of Development role is currently vacant, and the new Executive Director will hire for this role. All report to the Executive Director, except for Founder and Artistic Director, Jim Nadel, who reports to the board. Collectively, this team brings decades of experience and leadership in the performing arts and nonprofit sector, and most year-round staff have deep ties to the jazz genre. Since the pandemic, most staff have worked remotely during the year, while some do work from the San Francisco office. All staff maintain a full-time presence on the Stanford University campus during the summer concerts and workshop period.

SJW has proudly welcomed many renowned jazz artists over the years to teach at SJW and perform at the festival, including 63 NEA Jazz Masters. This faculty represents a broad cross-section of jazz styles and

approaches. Many of today's top jazz performers first came to SJW as young students, including Joshua Redman, Taylor Eigsti, Larry Grenadier, Ethan Iverson, Ambrose Akinmusire, James Francies, and many others. These artists regularly return as faculty and performers at SJW, joining colleagues such as Anat Cohen, Wycliffe Gordon, George Cables, and others, and contributing to the rich long-term engagement and intergenerational exchange that the organization is known for nurturing.

### ***Leadership and Governance***

Current Executive Director, [David Miller](#), first served SJW as the Managing Director from 2009 to 2011. After spending several years overseas, David returned to SJW and has been Executive Director since 2017. David manages SJW's day-to-day operations and staff, ensures that the summer programming runs smoothly, and plays a key role in the financial sustainability of the organization and its ongoing relationship with Stanford University. Since the pandemic, David has also spearheaded the organization's grant writing and fundraising activities.

Artistic Director, [Jim Nadel](#), founded the Stanford Jazz Workshop in 1972. Since the organization's inception, he has served as the Artistic Director and was also Executive Director until 2017. Since 1986, Jim has also served as a lecturer in the Department of Music at Stanford University, where he designed the initial jazz studies curriculum for Stanford University's academic jazz program. As SJW Artistic Director, Jim leads the curation of the summer festival programming and engages with many of the musicians to invite them to perform and serve on the faculty. He also has played a pivotal role in the ongoing partnership with Stanford University.

Board Chair, Kären Nagy has served on the board since 2014 and as chair since 2017. Kären is currently the Strategic Initiatives Consultant for the Kronos Quartet/Kronos Performing Arts Association and formerly served as Executive Dean of the School of Humanities and Sciences and Assistant Vice President for the Arts at Stanford. She has spent most of her career working in the arts, library administration, and senior administrative and planning roles in higher education.

SJW is governed by a 14-member [Board of Directors](#), which includes Jim Nadel as founder (who is a lifetime member of the board), SJW alumni, and business, nonprofit, and higher education leaders with professional expertise in law, business, educational management, and the performing arts. The ED is a non-voting ex-officio member. The board meets regularly during the year and Directors serve a three-year term with nine-year limits. Most of the board members reside in Northern California.

## **OPERATIONS AND STRATEGY**

### ***Organizational Finances and Enrollment***

For FY 2023, SJW's annual operating budget is approximately \$2.45 million, and the organization has more than \$1 million in reserve funds. SJW secures financial support from a variety of sources. The balance of earned and contributed revenue has shifted significantly in recent years. Prior to the pandemic, revenue

sources were typically 70% earned and 30% contributed. Approximately 5% of contributed income has come from public funds such as the National Endowment for the Arts and the California Arts Council. In 2019, the last pre-pandemic year, the operating costs were 80% for program expenses, 6% for development expenses, and 14% for management and administration costs.

With a dramatic decline in enrollment during the pandemic, SJW successfully sought funding to sustain the organization, including applying for PPP loans and seeking out other COVID-relief funds. At a time when so many arts non-profits have been struggling to survive, SJW was fortunate to remain financially stable during a time of prolonged uncertainty. In 2022, SJW resumed enrollment for in-person programming, with policies and procedures in place to ensure the safety of community members. While enrollment and audience numbers were significantly lower in 2022 compared to pre-pandemic years, early indications for summer 2023 are encouraging and signal a possible increase in program participation.

### ***Relationship with Stanford University***

SJW is an independent 501(c)(3), with a long track record of partnership with Stanford University, which is host to the organization's programming during the summer. This relationship with Stanford University has roots as far back as 1986 when Jim Nadel became a lecturer in Stanford University's Department of Music. Over the years, the organization has developed an operating agreement with the Stanford Department of Music that is periodically renewed. The SJW staff negotiates annual contracts with the University's dining and conference services to operate the summer residential programs and collaborates with the Stanford University Department of Music to use the facilities during the summer. All summer programming is held in the Braun Music Center, Dinkelspiel Auditorium, and other nearby venues on the Stanford University campus.

Stanford Live, the presenting arm of Stanford University, has co-presented some concerts that are part of the Stanford Jazz Festival. The two organizations occasionally collaborate on other events throughout the year. This relationship between SJW and Stanford University has led to SJW alumni becoming Stanford undergraduate students and active jazz practitioners during their time on campus, while contributing to an increasingly diverse and inclusive academic environment at the university. The SJW Jazz ensemble plays at the university commencement celebrations each year, and there are several other formal and informal ways that SJW takes part in and contributes to the Stanford campus and university culture.

### ***Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion***

For many years, SJW's financial aid and scholarship program has provided support to qualified and deserving students who would not otherwise have the resources to join summer and after-school programs. Just as the musical and pedagogical philosophy has been to encourage and welcome different ways of teaching and learning jazz, as well as different musical sub-genres, so too has the diversity of the student body and faculty – representing different socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnicities, genders, and geographies – created a richer and more fulfilling learning environment and culture. Financial aid has always been an important way to support those objectives.

Recognizing that women and girls have been underrepresented in jazz, in 2017, SJW launched the “50/50 Initiative,” aimed at equalizing the numbers of males and females (and those identifying as such) on bandstands and classrooms. SJW presents an annual concert featuring the SJW 50/50 Jazz Orchestra, a big band made up of equal numbers of men and women musicians. Emphasis is given to presenting women concert headliners – in particular as instrumentalists and vocalists. Faculty assignments, school year clinics, and other programs are viewed through this lens as well, with an effort to continue to provide positive female role models to young musicians. In spring 2023, SJW will host its first “JazzGirls Day,” a free afternoon of classes and clinics open to (and entirely taught by) female, female-identified, and gender-non-confirming students in middle and high school.

In 2017, SJW began a partnership with a school district in East Palo Alto — one of few economically challenged areas of Silicon Valley — to provide after-school jazz education programs and access to SJW summer programs. This initiative, which was provided free of charge to the district and students, helped middle school students gain experience and confidence. The program continued until the spring of 2020, when the pandemic lockdowns forced its closure. The organization has begun to explore similar programs for the future.

The SJW Mentor Fellow program has also nurtured a welcoming and inclusive community by providing a structure to train promising young musician/educators, and to create learning and relationship-building opportunities for many students of color, both male and female. Current and recent staff and board members identify as Asian, Hispanic, African American, and LGBTQ+. However, SJW — as an organization celebrating music with African American origins — recognizes that there are opportunities to continue to diversify its community.

### ***Looking to the Future***

The board and staff of SJW look forward to the organization’s next institutional chapter, which will commence with the hiring of the new Executive Director. David Miller generously extended his leadership tenure to SJW during the pandemic to ensure continuity and stability, and today the organization is poised to bring on a new Executive Director with vision, fresh ideas, and excellent administrative, financial, and operational expertise to guide SJW forward.

As founder and artistic director, Jim Nadel will stay engaged with SJW while the new Executive Director steps into their leadership position, but he will shift away from the full-time role he has played for over 50 years, allowing for the Executive Director to envision and hire for the next chapter of the organization’s artistic direction. As founder of the organization, Jim Nadel will remain on the board and will take on several board-directed projects.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

SJW's next Executive Director will provide strategic vision and operational leadership to the organization, addressing the following opportunities and challenges:

### ***Provide steady organizational leadership while refining the vision for SJW's future***

Building on the more than 50-year legacy of SJW, the Executive Director will provide visionary, strategic, and operational leadership for the organization, and will work to sustain its identity as a leading educational institution and vibrant hub for the jazz community. As this leader guides the organization through a period of significant leadership change, it will be important that SJW staff and board explore who the next generation of jazz practitioners and audiences are, who they want to serve, what they want to preserve and change, and what footprint they aspire to have; all while being cognizant of competition from the other jazz education and performance offerings available. At the same time, it will be critical that SJW continues to center on its core values of providing exceptional musical education; increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion across the organization, student population, faculty, and performers; and continuing to nurture the spirit of collaboration and joy that transcends the staff, alumni, and community of supporters. Together, all these efforts will successfully position SJW as it enters its next institutional chapter.

### ***Continue to diversify and grow sources of funding to ensure long-term sustainability***

As SJW looks to sustain its renowned programming during a period of transition, it is critical that this next leader ensure that the financial resources exist to support talented staff and faculty, scholarships for students most in need, high-quality education and artistic training, and diverse and accessible programming. With the support of a development director, the next Executive Director will have the appetite and entrepreneurial drive to oversee the process of identifying, securing, and sustaining individual donors, grants, and sponsorships. Over the years, SJW has cultivated strong relationships with individuals and organizations who have made contributions over a long-time horizon, ensuring institutional stability. Moving forward, SJW has an opportunity to continue to build out its legacy giving and expand its audience of potential donors and supporters.

### ***Optimize operations and support and nurture a high-performing, diverse staff and board***

The Executive Director of SJW will be an effective leader with the skills to manage the organization internally, including recruiting, developing, and retaining a high-performing team. This leader will be oriented towards continuous improvement of work processes, policies, best practices, and communication channels and will engage all staff as active contributors within the organization, particularly as a distributed workforce. Success in this regard will require a dedication to transparency; a clear articulation of organizational goals, roles, and expectations; and an enthusiasm for supporting staff with a range of tenures and experience. Additionally, this leader will continue to recruit, engage, expand, and diversify the board. It will be essential that the Executive Director participate in and champion the



deeply collaborative, creative, and joyful spirit with which the organization has continually undertaken its work.

***Deepen and manage the ongoing partnership with Stanford University***

Since its inception, SJW has partnered with Stanford University and campus organizations to host the organization's programming. The Executive Director will play a lead role in continuing to work with Stanford University, manage the ongoing Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Music, and negotiate contracts and partnership agreements for festival ticketing as well as with dining and conference services for summer residential programs. The Executive Director will also continue to invest in and develop effective partnerships with the Stanford University Department of Music, which provides office, classroom, studio space, and other resources during the summer and throughout the year.

***Ensure the consistent delivery of exceptional programming and deepen SJW's EDI work***

The Executive Director will have responsibility for ensuring the success of SJW programming throughout the year, including during the intensive summer activities. This includes overseeing the hiring of seasonal staff, supporting the Artistic Director and the Faculty and Camp Director in booking the faculty and performances, and being present and available to successfully address needs that arise in the moment while programs are running. The Executive Director will continue improving and centralizing methods and processes to deliver summer and year-round programming efficiently and effectively. Program priorities should also focus on increasing the representation of BIPOC, women, and non-binary faculty, presenters, and participants. There are future opportunities for SJW to leverage its knowledge of jazz education in creative new ways for broader dissemination and to highlight the historical context of jazz music and the African American roots of the genre.

**QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

The SJW search committee welcomes candidates with experience in non-profit organizational administration and leadership across multiple focus areas, including performing arts, education, and presenting organizations. While no one candidate will embody every quality, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional and personal qualifications:

- A commitment to SJW's mission and values, to providing exceptional youth jazz education and engaging a network of esteemed jazz artists and faculty, along with an appreciation for performing arts non-profit organizations and their distinct culture.
- A track record of providing visionary, strategic, and operational leadership and effectively guiding an institution through leadership and organizational change.

- Demonstrated fundraising experience, including cultivating individual major donors, philanthropic grant funding, and corporate revenue.
- A keen interest in serving as a key external spokesperson and organizational ambassador to a multitude of constituencies, strategic partners, donors, and audiences.
- The ability to manage an organization with both full-time and seasonal staff and contractors.
- History as an effective manager of dedicated staff across departments, with the ability to manage and hold accountable a capable team. Also brings experience partnering with a board of directors/advisory board.
- Success in nurturing and sustaining an organizational culture of collaboration, mutual trust, and accountability.
- Strong business and financial management skills, and experience leading an institution or program to a position of fiscal sustainability. Ideally has experience with a tuition-enrollment driven organization, human resource administration, and contract negotiation.
- Comfort navigating a university environment and/or other large complex institutions, with the ability to develop a successful strategic approach to the relationship with Stanford University.
- Experience and comfort in integrating updated processes, policies, and technology to strengthen workplace activities and program delivery.
- A commitment to the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion, and a record of turning those values into action in an organizational context.
- The ability to see the big picture, and attend to details, along with having excellent judgment and problem-solving skills. A leader who brings creativity, optimism, flexibility, and tenacity.

### **Compensation and Location**

The salary range for this position is \$175,000 - 190,000, commensurate with experience. Stanford Jazz Workshop is based in Northern California with an office in San Francisco, and the majority of staff work remotely during most of the year. Given the hands-on nature of the summer workshop and festival, the Executive Director is required to be present on the Stanford University campus during the peak programming period from mid-June through early August.

### **Applications, Inquiries, and Nominations**

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and resumes with letters of interest should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/stanford-jazz-workshop/executive-director>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

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*Stanford Jazz Workshop is an equal-opportunity employer and seeks to create a diverse and harmonious workplace.*