



Executive Director Search  
The Diller-Quaile School of Music  
New York, NY

The Diller-Quaile School of Music (Diller-Quaile), an esteemed community institution on NYC's Upper East Side, is seeking a dynamic, seasoned, and community-minded Executive Director to guide its legacy of fostering lifelong engagement with music. Founded in 1920 by trailblazing musicians and educators Angela Diller and Elizabeth Quaile, the School is renowned for its exemplary programs catering to students of all ages and levels and emphasizing musicianship and expressive teaching. With a \$3.7M budget and an endowment of approximately \$5.8M, the Executive Director will lead a team of 70 faculty and ten full-time staff while concurrently serving more than 900 students annually through in-person tuition-based programs, 1,200 individuals annually through in-person tuition-free community programs, and reaching more than 3,300 individuals annually through online tuition-free community programs.

Diller-Quaile's accomplished, dedicated, and caring faculty and staff are renowned for nurturing the musical potential of children, youth, and adults across diverse programs that range from early childhood arts education to instrumental, vocal, and musicianship training. In particular, the School fosters musicianship and the development of skills, knowledge, and expressivity through responsive teaching. Diller-Quaile offers individual and group music instruction, ensemble and performance opportunities, and teacher-training courses, programs, and professional development onsite, virtually, and within the greater New York City neighborhoods. Diller-Quaile also dedicates significant resources to sharing and preserving music through community partnerships, public concerts, research and publications, and recordings.

Guided by a 14-member Board of Directors, the next Executive Director of Diller-Quaile will bring a proven track record in managing organizations of comparable complexity. They will steer the organization's strategic direction; elevate the School's influence; drive program development and growth; expand and diversify resources; foster partnerships; oversee organizational culture, facilities, and capital projects; and lead, manage, and nurture faculty, staff, and board while ensuring organizational excellence in everything Diller-Quaile does for its students, families, and the community-at-large.

This leadership opportunity arises as Kirsten Morgan, with over 25 years as Executive Director and 42 years on faculty at Diller-Quaile, plans to retire from the School in the summer of 2024. As the School approaches this transition, it offers a unique chance for a dynamic and dedicated leader, musician, and teacher to shape the upcoming chapter of Diller-Quaile's distinguished history.



The Diller-Quaile search committee is comprised of board members, staff, and faculty, and the Board of Directors has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this search.

All applications, inquiries, and nominations will remain confidential and should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## **ABOUT THE DILLER-QUAILE SCHOOL OF MUSIC**

### **History and Foundational Underpinnings**

Founded in 1920 by [Angela Diller and Elizabeth Quaile](#), visionaries passionate about making music accessible to all, The Diller-Quaile School of Music has evolved into a dynamic force in music education. Rooted in the belief that everyone possesses the capacity for understanding and creating music, Diller and Quaile crafted a school dedicated to providing a comprehensive, well-rounded musical experience for all, not just a select few.

The founders envisioned a school that would specialize in the development of musicians, piano instruction, and the training of music teachers. Their innovative approach correlated musicianship and theory classes with piano study and emphasized musicianship as the essential foundation for all instrumental performances. As the School expanded, so did the need for teachers, leading to the establishment of formal teacher-training courses that remain integral to the organization today.

Concerned with the lack of quality materials for beginner music students, Diller and Quaile authored the renowned Diller-Quaile Series, which commenced with the publication of the First Solo Book and the First Duet Book in 1918.

Angela Diller led Diller-Quaile until 1941, which set the stage for a legacy carried on by a lineage of dedicated executive directors. In 1955, Diller-Quaile acquired its current building on East 95th Street and officially became a non-profit corporation in 1957.

Now celebrating its 103<sup>rd</sup> year, Diller-Quaile is recognized as a vibrant community music school, uniting individuals and families from diverse backgrounds who share a love for music and a common goal of musical growth. The School's educational philosophy centers on the synergistic relationship between teachers and students, creating a distinctive, student-centered, and creatively enriching musical environment. Tailored programs cater to individual educational needs and foster a unique and personal journey in musical exploration. Regular parent-teacher engagement and conferences ensure families remain active and engaged in their children's musical work and growth. This collaborative approach nurtures enduring relationships between student and teacher, often commencing in early childhood and persevering through high school and into adulthood, which underscores Diller-Quaile's central role in shaping the musical journeys of its students.



## Programs and Partnerships

Diller-Quaile's commitment to excellence as an organization is evident across its diverse programs, spanning [Early Childhood](#), [Instrumental and Vocal](#), [Adult](#), [The Diller-Quaile Institute: Teacher Training and Professional Development](#), and [Community Programs](#). Designing offerings for learners at every age and stage, the School delivers instrument and voice instruction from beginner to advanced levels. Its comprehensive offerings encompass children, youth, and adults, and it provides a holistic educational music experience through diverse programs, individual instruction, weekly classes, ensembles, chamber workshops, and a High School Certificate Program. Diller-Quaile's impact extends beyond its walls through its community programs and partnerships with public schools, daycares, Head Start programs, and senior centers.

With its reputation as a beacon within the School, teacher training and ongoing professional development play a crucial role in advancing the School's historical roots. The School offers professional development opportunities for musicians, teaching artists, and music educators and extends its influence to elementary educators and early childhood professionals interested in music education.

Dedicated to research, Diller-Quaile also produces recordings and publications tailored for families, musicians, and educators, providing valuable resources, including [The Music for All Library](#) and other online music tools designed especially for early childhood professionals.

## Faculty and Staff

At Diller-Quaile, there is a dedicated team of 84 faculty and staff, including ten full-time staff members, who form the backbone of the School. Comprised of talented professionals, staff and faculty work alongside the Executive Director to foster a spirited collegiality within the institution that is rooted in meaningful connections, mutual respect and admiration, and generosity to one another. This distinctive culture at Diller-Quaile has been instrumental in cultivating an intimate and inclusive school community, not just for faculty and staff but also for students, families, and the many attendees and participants of Diller-Quaile's community events and programs.

The School's diverse faculty and staff come from exemplary conservatories, colleges, and universities, bringing a rich spectrum of expertise and dedication to the institution. Some faculty commit to Diller-Quaile once a week, and others are physically onsite multiple times each week. These accomplished individuals are seasoned teaching artists, caring educators, and distinguished performers devoted to developing a personalized course of study for every student.

The Executive Director works closely with a leadership team comprised of five colleagues: Director of the Early Childhood Program; Director of Instrumental and Vocal Programs; Director of the Diller-Quaile Institute; Director of Development and Communications; and the Chief Financial Officer. Other reports



to the Executive Director include the Rug Concerts Program Director and the Adult Chamber Music Workshop & Camerata Program Director.

### **Board Governance**

Diller-Quaile's Board is comprised of 14 members who reflect a diverse composition of individuals, which include current parents – some of whom are also current or former adult students – and additional expertise comes from board members with backgrounds in finance, business, education, healthcare, and the non-profit sector. Convening six times annually, the Board operates through standing committees such as Finance, Development, and Governance, with additional ad hoc committees as needed, such as Strategy & Growth and Security & Safety. Board terms are strategically staggered, allowing members to serve up to two consecutive 3-year terms, and the Executive Director contributes as a non-voting member of the Board, ensuring a collaborative governance structure.

### **Financials**

Diller-Quaile's financial landscape in 2024 includes an operating budget of \$3.7M and an endowment of approximately \$5.8M. While tuition revenue and fees cover 70% of the School's operating costs, the annual fund, gala, and other fundraising efforts are crucial in ensuring the organization's short- and long-term financial health. The breakdown of revenue sources includes tuition and fees (70%), foundation and corporate support (7%), government grants (2%), individual donor contributions (5%), gala and special events (8%), endowment funding (5%), and other sources (3%).

In 2023, Diller-Quaile experienced robust financial performance, generating an operating excess of approximately \$478K. Noteworthy achievements included surpassing budgeted goals in tuition and fees by 9%, which yielded a surplus of \$205K. Contributed revenue saw a substantial increase of 57% over budget to \$642K. Despite a conservative endowment draw of \$150K (2.7%), below the approved 5%, receiving \$826K in Employee Retention Credits (ERC) in April 2023 bolstered the organization's financial standing. The endowment's total value for FY2023 rose by approximately 6%, reaching \$5.56M.

As Diller-Quaile embarks on 2024, prudent financial management remains a priority, accompanied by the imperative to grow and diversify revenue streams for sustained resource generation.

### **Building and Facilities**

Diller-Quaile is located in a beautiful double townhouse that serves as the backbone of the School's operations. The School acquired the first townhouse in 1955, followed by the acquisition of an adjoining townhouse in 1994. These strategic property purchases laid the foundation for a transformative construction project, which was completed in the fall of 1997, where the buildings were joined together to create a unified school space. The facility now includes studios/classrooms, offices, and a performance space, providing an inspirational and nurturing environment for the community. Recently, the building



underwent upgrades with the installation of four new rooftop HVAC units and resurfacing of the entire roof. Moving forward, there is work to be done on the front façade and exterior of the building that focuses on maintaining accessibility, environmental sustainability, and structural and historical improvements. The work to be performed includes restoring the primary façade; restoring ornamental metal; refurbishing the front windows and restoring frames and fabricating new sashes; replacing the entry ramp; and replacing the sidewalk, while repairing and extending the tree pit. The School has applied for a grant to provide support toward this \$600K+ project.

However, as the School's programs and activities continue to grow, there are constraints on the amount of space available for classes, meetings, and various activities. This has led to the utilization of some staff offices also serving as teaching studios when space is tight at peak times.

### **Accreditation**

Since 2009, Diller-Quaile has been accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Precollegiate Arts Schools. The School is also an accredited institutional member of the National Association of Schools of Music (since 2009) and is a member of the National Guild for Community Arts Education. The organization is also an approved provider of Continuing Teacher and Leader Education, which is recognized by the New York State Education Department.

### **The Current Landscape at Diller-Quaile**

Diller-Quaile's impact as an organization has been far-reaching. Notably, in 2023, the Instrumental and Vocal Department experienced important growth, with enrollment increasing from 362 in October 2019 (pre-pandemic) to 381 by January 2024 (post-pandemic) in comprehensive programs. Among this cohort, 22% are new students, while 78% are returning students. Concurrently, the Early Childhood Program has also been thriving, boasting 378 enrolled students engaged in approximately 35 weekly classes per trimester, as well as a few full-year programs in 2023-2024.

Over many years, the School's commitment to music accessibility through Community Programs, exemplified by initiatives like the [Summer Music Partnership Program](#) and the [Preschool Partnership Program](#), extended its reach to more than 53 centers, providing in-person programming to four centers and virtual programming to at least 49 centers, impacting more than 3,300 children across diverse age ranges over this last year.

Through [Classical Access](#), Diller-Quaile has partnered with five organizations, serving 1,043 students aged 2-11 through in-person programming during the school year. Additionally, the School has engaged with senior citizen communities at the West 74th Street Residence and the Goddard Riverside Community Center.



In March 2020, during the early days of the pandemic, many programs quickly pivoted to provide fully remote instruction for all individual lessons, classes, and ensembles to the end of the school year without pause. In May 2020, the School hosted fully remote concerts, with performers and audience members participating from across the United States and 17 countries. As the pandemic continued, Diller-Quaile was open six days a week from September 2020 onward for in-person, hybrid, and virtual instruction. Presently, the School offers in-person and virtual programming. There is a full schedule of concerts throughout the year, which are held in the School's Performance Space. All concerts are in person.

Financially, the institution invested \$89K in scholarship funds during the 2022-2023 school year, and the 2023 Spring Gala, hosted by Chelsea Clinton, marked a successful return to in-person benefits, raising approximately \$260K.

Diller-Quaile has also embraced new talent with recent additions to staff, teachers, and board members over these past 12 months. Infrastructure upgrades for the School include a new internet phone system, enhanced cybersecurity, a new fire alarm panel, and improved billing and enrollment software, enhancing the organization's overall efficiency. Moreover, the Board approved a 4% increase in teaching pay rates for 2023-2024. Additionally, faculty are compensated for attending meetings, Student Concerts, and performing in Faculty Concerts.

### **Leadership Transition**

In December 2023, Executive Director [Kirsten Morgan](#) announced her retirement from the School after 42 years of dedicated service to Diller-Quaile, with the last 25 years as Executive Director. Kirsten's impact on Diller-Quaile has been extraordinary, dedicating her professional life to the institution. Her unwavering commitment to music, teaching, and excellence, along with her unflappable leadership, has nurtured an exceptional community of talented faculty, staff, students, families, donors, and partner organizations across diverse ages and backgrounds.

### **OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

The next Executive Director of Diller-Quaile will have the opportunity to address the following opportunities and challenges:

#### **Assess the Diller-Quaile of today and begin to chart the School's future direction.**

After years under the leadership of one singular leader, Diller-Quaile has an opportunity to pause for reflection, examining its history, past successes, and current status to chart its future course. The incoming Executive Director will play a pivotal role in shaping the next chapter while preserving the institution's distinct spirit. Collaborating with the Diller-Quaile community, they will lead a strategic planning process, formulating an implementation plan that encompasses educational and artistic opportunities, future



projects, and sustained investment in personnel and culture. The strategic plan will also sustain the School's commitment to collaboration, care, community, and continuous learning.

Developing a long-term enrollment strategy and fundraising plan will also be essential for translating these organization-wide aspirations into tangible outcomes. Fortunately, the incoming leader will benefit from research, data, and insights that have been synthesized. Diller-Quaile is currently working on its renewal of accreditation.

**Elevate Diller-Quaile's impact, reputation, and visibility.**

Given Diller-Quaile's esteemed position as a music school and a community, it is strategically positioned to enhance its local and broader influence. As the primary spokesperson for the organization, the Executive Director will passionately communicate Diller-Quaile's mission, achievements, and unique qualities to diverse external stakeholders. Emphasizing the vital role of music education in enriching lives and fostering community, they will explore innovative partnerships, strengthen existing relationships, enhance virtual presence, and invest in social media for expanded influence and reputation growth.

This dynamic leader will actively engage with prospective and current students, families, nonprofit leaders, community influencers, government officials, funders, media representatives, and corporate entities. Their potential leadership contributions to regional and national arts and education associations would further solidify Diller-Quaile's impactful presence in these realms.

**Grow and diversify revenue streams for sustained financial stability.**

The Executive Director will be key in securing vital financial resources to expand Diller-Quaile's influence. This includes supporting a dedicated staff and faculty, ensuring exceptional education and artistic training, expanding need-based scholarships, and creating tuition-free community programs.

Collaborating closely with the Director of Development and Communications and the Development Committee of the Board, the Executive Director will lead initiatives to identify and secure new sources of income. This involves exploring innovative revenue streams and investing in marketing efforts for sustained enrollment.

Additionally, there's an opportunity to foster an internal culture of fundraising at Diller-Quaile, engaging both the board and staff in resource generation. This collaborative approach is crucial for enhancing the organization's overall financial health and long-term resilience.

**Guide excellence in school operations at Diller-Quaile.**

In addition to serving as Diller-Quaile's public face, the Executive Director will collaborate daily with academic and administrative staff on pedagogy, curriculum, admissions, enrollment, professional



development, assessment initiatives, and personnel and culture-building. This will ensure organizational excellence across programs and departments.

Traditionally, the Executive Director at Diller-Quaile has taught classes to align with their musical expertise, and this opportunity may continue. Yet it is crucial to ensure that there is not an over-reliance on the Executive Director for day-to-day operations. Delegating tasks and strategic hiring, such as facilities management, will be essential for effective and sustainable operations.

Looking ahead, this leader will work to balance a hands-on leadership style with empowering others for additional leadership responsibilities.

#### **Foster Board recruitment, development, engagement, and expertise.**

The incoming Executive Director is poised to sustain a dedicated board committed to fostering collaboration, mission-driven decision-making, and strategic planning. Integral to their leadership will be cultivating an organization rooted in inquiry, mutual respect, transparency, and integrity. The Executive Director will actively support board members in maximizing their professional expertise, philanthropic networks, and connections, enabling them to excel in their ambassadorial roles.

Additionally, this leader will ensure the ongoing diversification and recruitment of new board members while maintaining sustained engagement, continuous learning, and active involvement for every board member.

#### **Nurture and support Diller-Quaile faculty and staff.**

One of Diller-Quaile's defining hallmarks is its exceptional ability to attract and retain dedicated faculty and staff, many of whom have contributed numerous years to the institution. The organization's dedication to faculty is evident through unique initiatives like the Clifford/Levy Creativity Grants, peer observations, and [Faculty Concerts](#). Furthermore, Diller-Quaile maintains a steadfast commitment to prioritizing faculty compensation.

As the organization moves forward, the Executive Director will prioritize the growth and retention of highly qualified individuals—seasoned and dedicated artists, educators, and administrators.

#### **Invest in and enhance the School's building infrastructure and facilities.**

While Diller-Quaile has witnessed remarkable growth in enrollment and program offerings, this success poses challenges due to limited space for lessons, classes, and performances. Additionally, the aging infrastructure requires maintenance, renovations, and upgrades, which are crucial for maintaining distinctiveness and ensuring well-equipped music studios and performance spaces.



As the School aims for further expansion, it must navigate space limitations, potentially requiring a broader footprint beyond its current physical infrastructure. Exploring opportunities in the digital space, extending lessons beyond the School premises, and partnering with organizations possessing more space resources may open exciting avenues. These strategic initiatives have the potential to extend Diller-Quaile's impact beyond physical boundaries, reaching across New York City and beyond.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

The ideal candidate for the position of Executive Director should bring a blend of professional experience and personal qualities that reflect both a reverence for tradition and a commitment to fostering innovation for the School's advancement. While it is understood that no candidate will embody all ideal qualifications, sought-after credentials, and traits include:

- Proven dedication to the mission and values of Diller-Quaile, coupled with demonstrated experience and an unwavering passion for excellence in artistry, musicianship, and teaching.
- Proven experience guiding an organization of similar purpose and complexity and overseeing diverse programmatic and functional teams.
- Robust business acumen, financial management expertise, and a track record of steering an institution in resource-constrained environments toward enduring fiscal sustainability. Ideally, possesses experience with a tuition-enrollment-driven organization.
- Demonstrated capability to provide inspirational leadership and enhance the profile of an organization.
- Proven success in fundraising across individual donors, foundations, and corporate revenue, coupled with a keen interest in fund development.
- Success in recruiting and retaining a high-performing, diverse team of staff and faculty and experience leading, collaborating, and inspiring a board of directors.
- Achievement in cultivating and maintaining an organizational culture rooted in respect, learning, community, collaboration, and a principled commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging.
- Proficient in data-driven analytics, with a proven track record of leveraging technology to enhance workplace activities and community initiatives.



- A capacity to apply one's experience to navigate the distinctive arts and culture nonprofit landscape of New York City.
- Profound listening abilities, inclusive instincts, warm and generous, a decisive, brave leader, embodying a leadership approach that empowers others.

## **COMPENSATION**

Diller-Quaile anticipates an annual salary of \$200,000 for this position, commensurate with experience.

## **APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS**

All inquiries, nominations, and applications (including resumes/CVs and two- to three-page letters of interest responding to the opportunities and challenges outlined above) should be directed in strict confidence. Applications will be reviewed as they are submitted.

Rebecca Swartz, Partner

Ivy Couch, Associate

Isaacson, Miller

[Diller-Quaile Executive Director Position Profile](#)

The Diller-Quaile School of Music is an equal-opportunity employer. All qualified applications will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by law to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to employees at the School.