



ARTISTIC DIRECTOR POSITION

ABOUT LIVE ARTS

Powered by more than 1,200 volunteers, a staff of 10, and an 18-member Board, Live Arts has become a national model for engaged community theater. For three decades, we have dedicated ourselves to the mission of “forging theater and community.” It’s an investment that has paid off. Our engagement in the communities runs deep, and the caliber of our volunteer-staged productions rivals that of professional theaters. We are the anchor tenant in a four-story performance space in the heart of downtown Charlottesville and attract participants and audiences from across Central Virginia.

Programming

Live Arts is a hub for creativity, theater education, and community connection. In a typical year, we present a compelling season of seven mainstage plays and musicals. We welcome hundreds of people to our year-round education workshops and youth summer camps. We run a lab that helps local playwrights develop their work. And for nearly two decades, we have provided tech support to high school and college theater companies performing at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland.

At the start of the pandemic, we pivoted our entire 2020-21 season to live but digital performances. The first half of our reimagined Forging Ahead Season featured weekly arts programming anchored by online versions of mainstage plays. The second half of the season replaced weekly programming with monthly, locally inspired plays from a diverse roster of playwrights. As a nonprofit, our season is supported by season pass and single ticket revenue, sponsorships, grants, and individual giving. Most programming is available to community members on a pay-what-you-can basis to ease the financial and emotional hardships caused by COVID-19.

As a scrappy, resourceful, wildly inventive community theater, we are constantly adapting to the challenges and opportunities presented by the pandemic and re-ignited social justice movement. For more information about our Forging Ahead Season, please visit LiveArts.org.

Impact of COVID-19

When COVID-19 hit in mid-March, we closed the theater to the public and canceled shows, summer camps, our Fringe Festival contract, and education programs. We responded by reducing expenses, finding new sources of earned income, seeking grants, and asking patrons to donate their unused tickets. Almost 85% did—a testament to their genuine affection for Live Arts. In early April, we launched a successful \$250,000 Forging Ahead Campaign to close our income gap. More than 800 people contributed, enabling us to finish our fiscal year with a modest surplus.

At the same time, we looked beyond financials to our role in forging personal connection in a time of physical isolation. On May 1, we launched a free, live-streamed “30 Plays in 30 Days” theater retrospective to mark our 30th anniversary. More than 13,100 viewers from 24 states and provinces watched the episodes.

Advancing Social Justice

After the deadly Unite the Right protests in Charlottesville in August 2017, we engaged the community in ongoing conversations about diversity, equity, and inclusion. For the last two years, we have flipped our programming model to center the work of underrepresented playwrights—specifically playwrights of color and women.

This year, we committed ourselves to dismantling the systems, policies, and practices that have reinforced institutional racism to the detriment of many Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC). For starters, we mobilized a 14-person DEI Strategy Team charged with drafting a DEI Strategy Action Plan and developing a DEI training program for staff and volunteers. In addition, we are participating in a Nonprofit Clinic run by the University of Virginia School of Law that is reviewing all policies with an equity lens. We are also active in the newly revived Central Virginia Theater Alliance, an anti-racist theater coalition committed to supporting, centering, and amplifying the voices of our community.

Strategic Plan

Two years into our five-year strategic plan, we have affirmed the priorities of engaging our community, pursuing equity and inclusion, developing the human and financial resources necessary to include all, and being a home for people pursuing personal creativity, intellectual expression, and the pleasure of being part of an artistic team. This plan is revisited at every Board of Directors meeting and is currently being revised by the DEI Strategy Team.

ABOUT THE LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

A direct report to the executive director, the artistic director is the artistic leader of Live Arts and is accountable for the overall success of theater productions. The artistic director oversees all creative and production aspects of our organization. Artistic, production, volunteer, and facilities staff report to them.

The executive director reports directly to our Board of Directors and has primary responsibility for the day-to-day management and fund development of the organization. We expect the two leaders to work collaboratively to advance Live Arts’ mission, impact, and relevancy.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Vision, Artistic Programming, and Production

The artistic director is responsible for setting our artistic vision. They oversee performance and production-related activities, artistic and production aspects of special events, and volunteer engagement. They determine and maintain our artistic standards, systems, and guidelines—always with an eye to advancing equity. While championing the mission of forging theater and community, they work to inspire excellence, creativity, and collaboration among all our stakeholders.

The artistic director creates a welcoming home for transformational experiences onstage and off; engenders a spirit of community, artistic possibility, and risk-taking; and encourages a deep commitment to our mission. Specifically, the artistic director:

- Draws upon input from constituencies to deliver a mission-driven, distinctive season that enhances our strong artistic identity and is relevant to the communities we serve.
- Manages all production staff and contracted production personnel.
- Oversees production of all artistic endeavors within the parameters of the approved budget: facilitates casting; approves production designs and final outcomes; attends production meetings, rehearsals, and tech rehearsals as appropriate; and manages and empowers staff and volunteers
- Typically directs one show per season while reserving the rest of the directing opportunities for volunteers.
- Strives to align all work with our artistic, audience development, fiscal, and volunteer engagement goals.
- Actively scouts for new material and techniques to inform the season planning and production.

Volunteer Engagement

The artistic director supports all aspects of the Live Arts volunteer experience.

- Nurtures relationships with artistic and production volunteers.
- Actively cultivates a culture of volunteerism in the community.
- Supports the production coordinator and staff in broadening, deepening, and diversifying our pool of engaged volunteers.
- Creates a positive volunteer experience for everyone involved while encouraging the pursuit of the highest artistic standards.
- Maximizes the number of experiential opportunities available to volunteers.
- Facilitates on-going volunteer education and mentorship in all areas of production, including equity training.

Management, Fiscal Stewardship, and Operations

The artistic director works closely with the executive director to create and manage the annual budget.

- Prepares appropriate expense budgets for Board approval and manages these budget areas throughout the year.
- Participates in setting revenue goals for each production or performance event and shares accountability for reaching ticket sales goals.
- Identifies capital needs as part of capital campaign planning and execution.

Human Resources

In consultation with the executive director, the artistic director manages all production-related employees.

- Is responsible for hiring and terminating, developing position descriptions, setting compensation, managing performance, maintaining accurate personnel records, and ensuring compliance with organizational policies and practices in accordance with federal and state requirements.
- Supervises, coaches, and mentors our staff and volunteers.

Education Program

The artistic director consults with the education director on the artistic and programming aspects of our education program.

- Supports program planning that responds to identified community needs and enhances revenue.
- Works with the executive director and education director to evaluate, improve, and expand programs.

Fundraising

In partnership with the executive director and Board leadership, the artistic director actively participates in fund development initiatives to maximize revenues and encourage mission buy-in.

- Works with the fundraising event chair, executive director, Fundraising Committee, staff, and volunteers to reach fundraising goals.
- Meets with and supports the cultivation of donors at all levels.
- Contributes to grant proposals as needed.

Community Relations & Marketing

Along with the executive director, the artistic director represents and promotes Live Arts in local, regional, and national arts communities.

- Supports and/or attends local theater events to engender community and engagement.
- Builds and maintains positive relationships with the Central Virginia Theater Alliance, the Charlottesville arts community, BIPOC community leaders, University of Virginia, the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County, state and local government representatives, and other important constituencies.
- Provides input and support to marketing efforts.
- Participates in outreach activities such as personal appearances, speaking engagements, teaching opportunities, and media interviews, as time allows.
- Participates in strategic planning and goal setting in concert with the executive director and Board.

Facilities

The artistic director ensures that performance, rehearsal, and production spaces are safe, well maintained, well run, and well used.

- Helps achieve maximum utilization of the facility as a center of educational and artistic activities for the Charlottesville community.
- Cultivates collaborations and co-productions with other theater and artistic organizations in the region.
- Accommodates the paid use of the space by outside groups as a revenue source.
- Works with the production coordinator to maintain safety and sanitation standards in compliance with VOSHA, the CDC, and local health and safety authorities.

QUALIFICATIONS

The successful candidate will possess the following attributes, skills, and qualifications:

Attributes

- An appreciation for Live Arts' mission, eclectic programming, and legacy as a volunteer-powered community theater.
- A love of theater and the people who make it.
- A clear artistic vision and an openness to other points of view.
- An abiding commitment to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion at Live Arts and in the community.
- A strong interest in community engagement and involvement.
- High emotional intelligence and an ability to build relationships of trust.
- A collaborative, transparent management style.
- A positive, can-do attitude.
- A curious mind and a vivid imagination.
- Willing to be a hands-on, working leader

Skills

- Strong communication skills, both oral and written.
- Excellent organization skills and ability to meet a deadline.
- Ability to give feedback effectively and be "counsel to the directors."
- Ability to inspire, empower, and develop people of all skill levels and backgrounds.
- Innovative problem-solving skills with an aptitude for mediation and conflict resolution.
- Highly developed listening skills, kindness, and empathy.

Required Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in theater, arts management, or related field
- Four-to-six years of artistic leadership experience with at least two years of direct management experience.
- Volunteer management experience.
- Experience in community theater.
- Experience in directing shows and leading artistic teams.
- Budget and/or financial experience with decision-making authority.

Preferred but Not Required Qualifications

- MFA or advanced degree.
- Experience with the technical aspects of theater production.
- Experience in arts education, either production or instruction.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

This is a full-time, exempt position. The salary range is \$50-60,000, based on experience.

Benefits include the following:

- Medical insurance funded by employer (after 45 days)
- Dental insurance funded by employer (after 45 days)

- Paid vacation and sick leave
- Eight paid holidays each year (Thanksgiving Day and day after, Christmas Eve and Christmas, New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, and Fourth of July)
- At least one “dark week” per year
- Subsidized parking

PROCEDURE TO APPLY

To be considered for this position, please attach a current résumé; a cover letter of no more than two pages outlining your experience and desire to be considered for this position; and three professional references.

Materials and inquiries should be directed to anne@livearts.org by no later than January 8, 2021. Applications will be reviewed beginning January 15. Interviews will be conducted via Zoom to protect the safety of the candidates and search committee, with a final decision by April.

Live Arts is an Equal Opportunity Employer. BIPOC candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.