



Position Description

Position Title:	Director of Special Events
Department:	Advancement
Location:	Santa Barbara, CA
Status:	Full-time, exempt

Position Summary

The Director of Special Events is responsible for the strategic planning, execution and oversight of all special events at the Music Academy, including revenue-generating events, donor stewardship initiatives, and campaign-related functions. The ideal candidate is solutions-oriented, resourceful, and thrives in a collaborative and dynamic work environment who takes pride in seeing projects through from concept to completion. This position reports to the Chief Advancement Officer and collaborates with board, volunteers and other departments.

Position Responsibilities

Strategic Event Management and Planning

- Develop and lead the overall strategy for special events to support donor cultivation, community engagement, and revenue generation goals
- Design and implement creative event concepts and experiences for annual Gala, fundraising events, pre- and post-concert receptions, parties, meetings, donor meals, and special outings to strengthen relationships with donors, patrons, and artists
- Serve as a key partner in the Academy's fundraising campaigns by leading the event strategy and execution for campaign-specific initiatives, including public launch events
- Develop and negotiate vendor contracts to ensure cost-effective, high-quality events that support institutional goals

Budget and Financial Management

- Collaborate with the Chief Advancement Officer to develop and manage the annual special events budget exceeding \$600,000
- Analyze and report financial variances and implement cost-saving measures
- Demonstrate sound judgment on budget allocations, cost-benefit analyses, and financial risk assessment for events
- Track donor commitments and RSVPs against revenue goal for fundraising events

Project Management and Operations

- Manage all event logistics, including timelines, work orders, budgets, and in-kind gift solicitations

- Provide detailed project management plans to keep internal teams aligned, with authority to adjust plans and priorities as needed
- Ensure full compliance with all applicable regulations (e.g., city ordinances, ABC permits, Conditional Use Permit, health and safety)
- Attend and provide supervision at all events and be present for all pre and post activities related to the event
- Interact professionally with high-level donors and guests while assuring effective supervision and coordination of event operations
- Partner closely with Academy departments, especially the Facilities team, to ensure successful set-up and execution
- Collaborate with the Marketing team to ensure appropriate event branding, design, and collateral production
- Maintain well-organized, safe and efficient event storage and work areas in accordance with safety standards and Academy policies
- Perform other duties as assigned

Physical Demands:

The physical demands to successfully perform the essential functions of this job may include being able to: regularly stand, walk, use hands and fingers to handle or feel objects, tools, or controls; frequently talk and/or hear; occasionally sit; frequently squat, stoop, or kneel; reach above the head and reach forward; daily use hand strength to grasp tools, supplies and equipment; occasionally climb ladders; frequently carry, lift and/or move up to 30 pounds.

Candidate Profile

The Music Academy values colleagues with diverse perspectives who thrive in a collaborative, highly communicative workplace. Our administration collectively informs and agrees upon the organization's expectations for teamwork, including a positive, goal-oriented environment that positions every employee for success.

The ideal candidate will demonstrate some, if not all, of the following:

- A minimum of 3 years' experience and demonstrated leadership and proficiency in start-to-end event strategies
- Demonstrate ability to exercise sound judgement, problem-solving, and decision-making in complex or high-pressure event environments
- Excellent organizational, interpersonal, and communications skills; experience interacting with high-level donors and stakeholders
- Proven project management skills with experience independently managing budgets, timelines, and vendor relationships
- Positive and professional demeanor appropriate for donor-facing interactions
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team, adapting to changing priorities
- Proficiency with personal computer and software, standard office equipment, event-related tools, AV equipment and various event equipment
- Local candidate preferred

Additional Requirements

- Daytime availability required
- Nights and weekends are required
- Occasional travel between Music Academy's Miraflores campus and off-site venues
- Valid Driver's License with clean driving record required for essential job duties

Compensation and Benefits

This is an exempt, full-time position. The anticipated hiring range is \$80,000-\$90,000 per year. The pay range posted for this position reflects what Music Academy of the West reasonably expects to pay for this position at the time of posting. Actual compensation will vary based on relevant factors such as work experience, education, training, skill level, and market conditions. Music Academy provides a comprehensive benefit package for full-time employees, which includes health, dental and vision coverage, life insurance, paid vacation and sick leave and a 403(b) plan.

The Music Academy is an equal opportunity employer. We aim to create a diverse and inclusive work environment and we value each employee's unique experiences and perspectives.

Application Process

Please email a letter of interest and current resume to hr@musicacademy.org, using the subject header **Director of Special Events** PDF format only. No phone calls, please. A background screening will be performed as a condition of employment.

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Our MISSION

The mission of the Music Academy of the West is to provide classically trained musicians and diverse audiences with transformative educational and performance experiences. We support musicians to expand their talents, inspire each other, and pursue artistic innovation.

About the Music Academy of the West

Located in Santa Barbara, the Music Academy of the West creates a space where exceptional talent can thrive by encouraging artists to stretch, experiment, improvise, and play. The Academy provides classically trained musicians and diverse audiences with transformative educational and performance experiences. The Music Academy's programs include an annual eight-week Summer School & Music Festival (June 15 through August 9, 2025) which trains up to 150 fellows ages 18-34 and presents more than 130 performances and events, competitions, and a fully staged opera; *Sing!*, a children's choir that performs with local, national, and international partners; the innovative Alumni Enterprise Awards; and Mariposa Concert Series.

For more information, please visit musicacademy.org.