

## Sounds Good Artistic Director



### The Organization

**Sounds Good Choir (SGC)** is the second-largest choir organization for older adults in the USA, serving 600+ singers annually in nine choirs in the city of Chicago and suburbs. SGC provides singers with the unusual combination of working with professional choral conductors and a welcoming, fun, non-auditioned singing environment.

SGC offers two main programs:

- **Sounds Good Choirs** for cognitively healthy adults age 55 “and better”; and
- **Good Memories Choirs** for people with early-stage dementia and their care partners.

Through its free public concerts, the visibility of its leaders, its partnerships, and its acclaimed research program, SGC is a nationally recognized advocate for the well-being of older adults.

### The Position

As the artistic leader of the Sounds Good (SG) Choirs, of which there are currently eight (three in Chicago and five in the suburbs), the **Sounds Good Artistic Director (SG AD)** provides inspiration and vision to many kinds of stakeholders. These include fellow professional conductors and musicians, volunteer choral singers, program volunteers, board members, audiences, and others. The SG AD’s leadership includes the creating and upholding of musical excellence, team building, enthusiasm, vision, role-modeling, and passion for the mission of the entire organization.

With a major new expansion for Good Memories (GM) planned in 2026-30, the previous single position of Artistic Director for the entire organization is being separated into two positions, the SG AD and the Good Memories Artistic Director (GM AD). The new SG AD position will fulfill the recognized need for dedicated program leadership in each of these two main programs. The SG AD will assume leadership of the Sounds Good Choirs from co-founder Jonathan Miller, who will remain with the organization and will become the GM AD at the time the new SG AD begins.

The SG AD will report to the Executive Director, and is a member of the management team, along with the Executive Director, Good Memories Artistic Director, Good Memories Program Director, and the Director of Development. This role demands a high level of collegiality, balancing the needs of singers and music staff with the overall program and organizational goals and priorities.

The successful Sounds Good Artistic Director will:

- Embody the organization’s values, including being encouraging, fun, inclusive and compassionate
- Maintain and foster in others the caring, personal approach to music-making, community-building, and supporting of well-being that defines our culture
- Oversee and contribute to the overall success of the Sounds Good Choir program in both artistic and programmatic aspects

## **Musical and General Leadership**

- Serve as chief artistic officer for the Sounds Good Choir program
  - Manage the SG musical team (currently 9 part-time conductors and pianists, along with a roster of additional freelance musicians). Work with GM AD to determine criteria for biannual performance evaluations of conductors; uphold the integrity of the team and the SG program
  - Manage programming efforts: program SG concerts with the conducting team for Spring and Fall; collaborate with GM AD on choosing “Summer Rocks” repertoire (when both programs do identical music); oversee writing of program notes and spoken concert narration
  - Conduct one or more choirs and hire new conductors as needed
  - Visit all choir locations each session to ensure program quality and build donor and singer relationships

- Serve as staff liaison to the Sounds Good Program Committee, working with committee members to reach program and impact goals in the Strategic Plan and fulfill the committee's charter

### **Musical Operations**

- With Administrative Assistant, create schedule for each choir session
- Supervise Production Specialist to ensure:
  - Timely ordering of sheet music from SG AD's provided information
  - Timely delivery of practice tracks
- Attend regular all-staff meetings (currently bi-weekly in person)
- Coordinate announcements by conductors to all choirs (typically generated at staff meetings) to reinforce essential organization-wide messages

### **Development, Marketing and Advocacy**

- Serve as primary public face of the Sounds Good Choir program
- Nurture long-term relationships with singers across the program to build loyalty and generosity to SGC
  - Work with Development Director to cultivate and encourage SG music staff members' role in fundraising efforts
- Work closely with ED and Marketing Manager on messaging, timelines and promos
- Write periodic blog posts in keeping with goals for program, marketing, and strategy
- Collaborate with the Development Director on the artistic narratives for SG-related grant proposals

### **Research and Evaluation**

- Work with ED and the SG Program Committee to conduct program evaluations to ensure accountability for meeting strategic goals
- Work with Research Director to implement research studies that involve SG choirs
- Be an advocate for research (with external team) and program-evaluation efforts (internal resources)

### **Strategy, Governance and Succession Planning**

- Oversee high-level implementation of the strategic plan's impact and growth goals for the SG program, including growth of individual choirs and expansion of ensembles to new locations
- Governance engagement:

- Attend board meetings on an *ad hoc* basis
- Serve as staff liaison for the SG Program Committee and attend all meetings
- Attend other committee meetings as agreed with ED and board chair

### **Expected Distribution of Broad Work Areas**

- Music-making and related areas (25%): conducting, programming, online rehearsals, special events, overseeing music production
- Managing the musical team (15%): recruiting conductors, visiting choirs, contracts/schedules
- Recruiting (singers) and program expansion (20%): work with SG Program Committee, speaking to community groups to recruit singers and consider new SG locations; new product development (e.g. Rocks all year long, touring choir, group travel)
- Fundraising/marketing/blogging (20%)—some overlap likely with recruiting work
- Coordinating with administrative staff and Good Memories team, planning and evaluation (20%)

### **What Success After 1 Year Looks Like**

- Maintain current enrollment levels and singer satisfaction ratings
- Establish growth targets for new locations, while developing strategies to strengthen smaller choirs to achieve sustainable enrollment levels organization-wide
- Strong leadership in place with the musical team
- Direct experience with visiting all SG choir locations in rehearsal each session
- Collegial relationships established with musical staff, singers, management team, office staff, board members, and volunteers
- Establish credibility as SG program spokesperson
- Successfully cultivate relationships with donors prioritized by Development Director

### **Qualifications and Personal Qualities Needed**

- Bachelor's degree in performance required (conducting, voice, piano, etc.); master's degree preferred
- 7 years' experience as a working professional choral conductor
- Knowledge of the older-adult voice preferred
- Excellent written communication skills
- Superb interpersonal skills, including listening, empathy, conveying a sense of belonging and reciprocity
- A successful and genuine combination of charisma and humility

- Successful experience managing other professional musicians
- Successful experience working cooperatively with nonprofit boards and administration; comfort in the fundraising role that this position includes
- Ability to adeptly manage overlapping cycles of program planning and execution
- Ability to juggle a complex set of responsibilities both operational and strategic
- Ability to work with and to inspire people at all levels of the organization
- The highest level of personal and professional ethics
- Superb sensitivity required in transitioning leadership from the organization's co-founder to ensure continuity while bringing fresh perspectives
- Comfort with technology including Microsoft Office, OneDrive/SharePoint, Slack, web-based CRM (Salesforce), workflow management (Monday.com), and Google Docs; video and audio editing/production experience a plus

**Compensation:** Competitive compensation (\$90,000-\$105,000) with benefits package including generous health insurance premium subsidy on company plan, SIMPLE IRA, and paid time off.

**General:** Following hire, compensation is set by the Compensation Committee. The SG AD will have a 6-month performance review and a yearly review thereafter.

**Preferred Start Date:** July 1, 2026

**Materials to submit in addition to CV:**

- An unedited video of the candidate conducting a choir rehearsal. The video should demonstrate rehearsal technique and musical preparation, ability to diagnose and address musical issues, clear conducting patterns, and expressive leadership.
- An unedited video (3-5 minutes) of the candidate conducting a choral performance.

**Please submit your application by May 8, 2026, to:**

Anne Schankin, Executive Director – [aschankin@soundsgoodchoir.org](mailto:aschankin@soundsgoodchoir.org)