



ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OPPORTUNITY

PLEASE APPLY BY JANUARY 10, 2025

CreativeEvolutions.com/OpenPositions

NashvilleChildrensTheatre.org

Nashville Children's Theatre creates artistic experiences for everyone.

Theatre can change the world, one person at a time. Our performances and classes help kids process real-world situations and build a foundation of empathy for their relationships and actions, now and in the future. And that means a better, kinder world for everyone.

Who We Are

Nashville Children's Theatre (NCT) is the country's oldest youth-centered professional theater, providing nationally recognized family-friendly programming with professional, high-quality productions by trained actors, and a range of powerful educational experience in the theater, the classroom, and beyond.

The opening curtain for "Aladdin and His Wonderful Lamp" in 1931 marked the beginning of our incredible journey as Nashville Children's Theatre. Those early audiences were the first to experience our founders' wish, which became our first mission: **to bring transformative theatre experiences to young people across Davidson County and Middle Tennessee.**



With the departure this year of previous Executive Artistic Director Ernie Nolan, NCT is returning to a co-leadership model that it has utilized in past iterations of leadership. This model includes an Artistic Director and a Managing Director, who will collaborate closely and report jointly to the Board of Trustees.

Dr. Marti Cantrell, a longstanding Nashville educator and principal from Metro Nashville Public Schools, left her role on the Board to serve NCT as Interim Managing Director in the fall of 2024. She will remain in the role at least through the Artistic Director hiring process and transition in 2025.

The Board of Trustees includes over 35 engaged and passionate members of the Nashville civic community, and is led by Board Chair Amy Willoughby Bryant, Vice Chair Kim Honiball,

Secretary Jayme Yeo, and Treasurer Phillip Branch.

Beyond the Artistic Director and Managing Director, NCT employs thirteen ongoing staff, and dozens of contracted artists, technicians, and teaching artists throughout the year. NCT's theatrical productions operate under ongoing agreements with Actors' Equity Association, United Scenic Artists, and the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society.

NCT currently operates on an annual budget of approximately \$2.6M. In FY 24, about 40% of all revenues came from contributed income, 40% from ticket sales to theater productions, and the remaining 20% mostly from tuition and fees for educational programming.



Dr. Marti Cantrell

Our Mission

The Nashville Children's Theatre creates artistic experiences for everyone.

Our Vision

The Nashville Children's Theatre aims to provide unparalleled artistic experiences through a profound commitment to accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Our Core Values

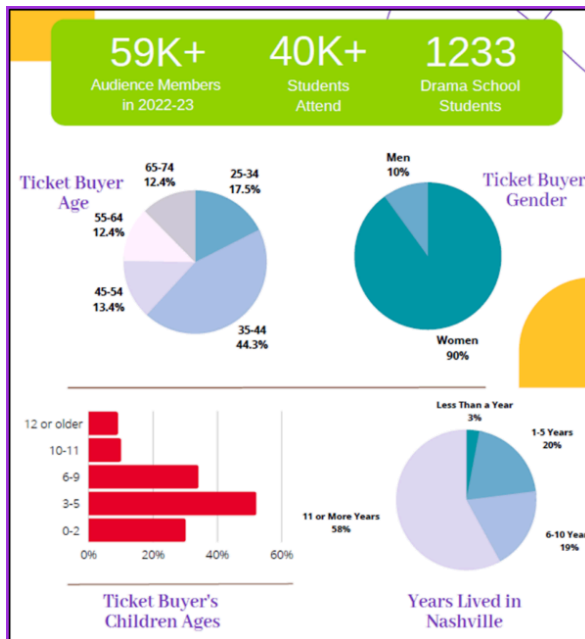
- Collaborative
- Engaging
- Enriching
- Inspirational
- Meaningful
- Transformational
- Uplifting



Anti-Racism, Equity, and Inclusion Commitments

Nashville Children's Theatre is the city's theatre - a place of and for the community we celebrate, aiming to be a safe and brave space for all. Because we acknowledge every young person's creative and personal potential as well as practice mutual respect, our institution is dedicated to Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility. We will further establish internal organizational systems, processes, structures, and an equitable culture so all feel welcome. We are devoted to anti-racism because it is our mission to reflect our beloved, evolving community and we fervently believe everyone has a story.

You can read NCT's full statements on accessibility, anti-racism, and diversity on the [website here](#). We encourage regular detailed discussion on these policies with the staff and board.



What We Do

NCT's School Performance Series

NCT's School Performance Series is Nashville's most established and broad-based education program, designed to enhance and expand arts education curricula while also stimulating students' creative problem solving and critical thinking skills.

Each year, NCT presents a six-play season (two of which are Snuggery shows) that reaches tens of thousands of audience members of all ages. NCT presents treasured classics, new works, and commissioned pieces that reflect our community. Over the last seven years, NCT has produced over 20 world premiere productions for the Nashville community. Several of those scripts have gone on to have successive productions in other theaters

around the country. (A full history of NCT's productions through 2019 can be found in [this archival report](#).)

Last season, the first season back at full capacity since the pandemic, more than 40,000 students from all cultural and economic backgrounds attended NCT professional productions. The performances are augmented with show specific curriculum guides provided to teachers to help integrate NCT performances into their classrooms.

Each play in NCT's season is brought to life by the finest professional theatre artists in the Middle Tennessee region and from across the country. NCT provides subsidies for students or schools facing financial challenges through various external support programs, as well as generous contributions which offset the cost for economically disadvantaged children so they are able to participate. In FY23, NCT provided more than \$350,000 in subsidized tickets to families in Nashville and to Nashville public schools.

In a typical season, NCT offers over 300 performances for more than 200 schools. NCT performs up to eight performances per week (10:00AM and 11:45AM Tuesday through Friday) for school audiences.



Performance Spaces:

NCT's larger productions take place in the historic Hill Theater, that seats over 540 audience members and includes a one-of-a-kind Sensory Room integrated into the theater itself to provide access to neurodivergent audiences.

NCT also opened a second black box space (capacity 150) called The Copeland in recent years to specifically create theatrical events for children ages 0 to 5. A journey through the experience of a Snuggery show [is available here!](#)

Both spaces connect to dressing rooms, green rooms, rehearsal spaces, and an on-site scene shop and technical storage. The full facility was renovated in 2006, and is owned by Metro Nashville.

Educational Programs and Community Initiatives

NCT'S educational programs and community initiatives reach beyond the theater building — bringing the transformative magic of the arts directly to those who need it and ensuring its programming is accessible to ALL. This includes:

School Arts Partnerships: NCT partners with Napier Elementary and Jones Paideia Elementary to provide whole-school arts support, including after-school drama clubs, in-school instruction, field trips, professional development for educators, and scholarships for students.

After-School Arts Residency Programs: NCT collaborates with Nashville nonprofits and schools to deliver transformational Teaching Artist residencies to historically-marginalized youth after-school. Partnership examples include organizations serving low-income households like Martha O'Bryan Center and immigrant and refugee youth like Nashville International Center for Empowerment.

Inspired Arts Integration: NCT provides professional development for educators and youth development professionals as well as detailed curriculum guides for each mainstage production. As a member of United Way of Greater Nashville's CORE Network and Raising Readers initiatives, NCT is dedicated to improving educational outcomes through the arts. Recently, NCT was chosen to expand its STEAM-based in-school drama workshops for select MNPS Schools of Innovation, providing arts enrichment during crucial teacher professional development sessions.

Inclusive Arts: As a founding member of the All Access Inclusion Network (AAIN) through Vanderbilt's TRIAD, NCT supports neurodiverse children with resources like a state-of-the-art Sensory Room. We offer internships for students with intellectual disabilities through partnerships with Vanderbilt's Next Steps and Lipscomb's IDEAL programs. NCT also supports LGBTQ+ students via collaborations with the Safe Place Program and the Just Us program at Oasis Center. Our commitment to anti-racist practices includes the Teaching Artists of Color program to enhance classroom diversity.

Family Access Membership (FAM): NCT's FAM program provides access to camps, classes, and productions through individual applications and collaborations with agencies serving families in need. In the past year alone, NCT awarded over \$71,000 in scholarships for drama classes and camps and over 270 free or greatly-reduced tickets. By joining efforts with local and community stakeholders, we aim to elevate and support our community.

What We Are Looking for in Our New Artistic Director

NCT is a dedicated and talented team of people with skills ranging across business operations, artistic production, and educational development. In seeking our next Artistic Director, we are looking for a visionary leader who will complement, inspire, and uplift the team to new heights.

While the new Artistic Director may not currently live in Nashville, they will have a clear ability to learn about new people, a new city, and a new organization and gain an appreciation of what makes us distinct. Our Artistic Director will also have a clear national perspective that will be invaluable to us as we expand our national presence.

Most of all, they will love the specific family-focused artistic aesthetic that makes NCT special, and will have a clear vision for how that art adds to the broader theater landscape of Nashville and beyond.

Human Expectations and Personal Values

The next Artistic Director for Nashville Children's Theatre will be a unifying force, collaborating closely with the board and Managing Director to develop a cohesive vision that spans the theatre's work on stage, in classrooms, and throughout the community. This leader will value the collective power of diverse perspectives, cultivating an environment where each team member feels heard, respected, and empowered. With a commitment to transparency and trust-building, the Artistic Director will be instrumental in bridging any gaps in understanding or values within the organization, ensuring that all voices—from staff to board to artists—are part of shaping the theatre's future.

We seek an Artistic Director who approaches challenges with empathy, addressing conflicts or differing values in a way that reflects an unwavering commitment to inclusivity, equity, and cultural humility. This leader will actively listen to the needs and concerns of the team, using each conversation as an opportunity to strengthen organizational alignment and unity. Through deliberate, inclusive practices, they will foster a supportive space where everyone, regardless of background or role, can contribute meaningfully to the theatre's mission and impact.

Where Our Artistic Director will be Exceptional

Above all else, our next Artistic Director will be a **collaborative leader** who is energized by the opportunity to shape the theatre's next chapter. This individual will possess a balance of **creative vision** and **strong financial acumen**, with the ability to **inspire across departments and unify staff, artists, and board members** under a shared mission.

We expect them to be a **skilled theatre director with a strong artistic sensibility for theatre for young audiences**, who will direct many productions during their tenure, and who will be able to authentically and creatively hire, support, and guide other artists, technicians, and educators throughout the year. This leader will cultivate a shared and growing understanding of NCT's artistic purpose, empowering artists to flourish in their own creativity while focusing their efforts on transformative experiences for children and their families.

What Our Artistic Director Will Handle Directly

The NCT team brings many capabilities to the table, but there are specific tasks and responsibilities that our Artistic Director must be able to handle personally, bringing particular strengths and skills to these areas.

These include:

- **Season Planning and Stakeholder Engagement.** Our Artistic Director will lead season planning with insight and openness, engaging with the input of stakeholders across NCT to ensure the selection of works offer relevant and meaningful stories for the children, families, and schools of Middle Tennessee. They will interweave artistic ambition with community relevance and organizational goals, and will prioritize illuminating their choices to board, staff, artists, and community so everyone can understand and invest in the arc of NCT's artistic journey. This leader will bring both creative vision and a practical approach to planning, crafting seasons that are engaging, impactful, and reflective of NCT's diverse audiences and children of all ages.
- **Collaborative Production Models and Team Dynamics.** As NCT emphasizes teamwork across all departments, the Artistic Director will need a solid grasp of collaborative models and how to foster positive team dynamics. While production staff, artists, and educators bring deep expertise, the Artistic Director should be skilled in facilitating collaboration, promoting open communication, and creating a unified vision that brings out the best in each team member.
- **Educational Perspective.** The Artistic Director will embrace that NCT's mission includes both theatrical productions and vibrant work in classrooms and throughout the Nashville region. They will collaborate actively on educational programming that enhances the learning experiences of children and fosters a love of theatre within the community. By collaborating with the Education team to develop a cohesive vision, the Artistic Director will help NCT become a stronger educational resource and civic pillar for Nashville and Nashville schools.
- **Production Oversight and Team Leadership.** Our Artistic Director will oversee the entire production process from concept to curtain, ensuring each show meets the highest artistic standards while supporting the people behind it. This includes guiding directors, designers, actors, and technical staff, providing clear communication and fostering an environment where everyone feels valued and supported. By monitoring production timelines, creative collaboration, and quality, the Artistic Director will ensure that the experience of each production is intentional, cohesive, safe, respectful, and resonates with audiences.
- **Budget Management and Financial Stewardship.** Responsible for the artistic budget, the Artistic Director will develop and manage financial resources to support all stages of production and aspects of educational programming. Working closely with the Managing Director, they will have fiscal responsibility while allocating resources intentionally to best serve each element of programmatic vision. Their financial oversight will be used to inspire creativity rather than

restrict it, and they will understand how to balance the resources of money, time, and people to achieve transformational experiences while being financially and operationally sustainable.

- **Industry Relations and Organizational Partnerships.** The Artistic Director will nurture relationships with artists, theatres, unions, and vendors, both in Nashville and throughout the country. This includes being a primary leader responsible for negotiating and overseeing NCT's union agreements, and growing NCT's pool of artistic voices. These connections will help sustain NCT's production needs, offer professional growth opportunities for the team, and keep the organization aligned with industry standards and requirements. Through ongoing industry relationship development, the Artistic Director will also enhance NCT's reputation and influence within the national TYA and professional theater community.
- **Directing and Teaching Opportunities.** In addition to their executive responsibilities, the Artistic Director is expected to take on multiple directing roles within the season, bringing their artistic vision directly to the stage. By participating in creative processes as a director and a teacher, they will deepen their connection with the NCT team and audiences, embodying the values of NCT. By participating in direct engagement with students at performances and through educational events, their connection to NCT's primary constituents will be visible and inspiring to the rest of the team.

What Our Artistic Director Needs to Understand

Working with and alongside the rest of the team, there are important areas where we do not expect our Artistic Director to be more knowledgeable and capable than other people in NCT, but where we do need them to have enough expertise to collaborate with us effectively.

These include:

- **Educational Theatre and Youth Programming.** A foundational understanding of educational theatre and youth programming will be essential as the Artistic Director collaborates with the Education Department. While they don't need to be an expert in educational pedagogy or come from a teaching background, they need to appreciate [our teaching philosophy](#) and know how to support educators for all kinds of children. A sensitivity and awareness of how experiences need to adapt to different children in different environments will allow them to support education-focused initiatives and understand how to align the company as a whole across all of its programming.
- **Nonprofit Financial Management.** Though primarily responsible for programming budgets for productions and educational activities, the Artistic Director should understand the basics of nonprofit financial management, especially as it applies to supporting sustainable artistic initiatives. Familiarity with budget constraints, unexpected financial challenges, and growing revenue streams will equip them to work effectively with the Managing Director and Board, helping to make strategic choices that balance creative ambitions with fiscal responsibility.

- **Community Relations and Stakeholder Engagement.** NCT's impact extends beyond the stage, requiring the Artistic Director to have a foundational understanding of community relations and stakeholder engagement. While they do not have to be the primary strategist or driving force on engagement or relationship building in Nashville, they should be prepared to interact with patrons, donors, and community members when asked and deeply appreciate how these relationships contribute to NCT's mission and growth. This will allow them to collaborate meaningfully with development and marketing teams and to represent NCT with authenticity and enthusiasm in public forums.
- **Equity, Inclusion, and Cultural Literacy.** A commitment to equity and inclusion is central to NCT's values, and the Artistic Director must understand the importance of cultural literacy within the organization and the community. While others within NCT may lead specific DEIJ (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice) initiatives, the Artistic Director should have a working knowledge of these principles to integrate them meaningfully in clear actions and behaviors in their day to day. This perspective will ensure that NCT continues to nurture a welcoming and inclusive space for all.

How We Will Support Our New Artistic Director

We know that the arrival of a new collaborator at NCT means everyone will need to adapt to new ways of working and a different collaborative partnership. As we discover that together, it is important that our new Artistic Director feels supported and engaged from all sides of the company.

To that end, NCT commits to providing:

- Starting annual salary of \$85,000
- Benefits include:
 - Medical, Dental, Vision
 - Vacation/Sick Leave
 - Extended Medical Leave
 - 11 paid Holidays
 - Bereavement Leave
 - Jury Duty Leave
 - Voting time
 - Other unpaid leaves of absences
 - Professional development opportunities are available and can be negotiated based on budgetary considerations.
 - National travel support is offered, contingent upon budget availability.
 - A moving stipend for out-of-town candidates is negotiable.

- A dedicated office space in the Nashville Children's Theatre building.

- An onboarding and transition plan, developed by the team and ready to adapt to the realities of the Artistic Director.

- Commitment to regular meetings and active collaboration from the Board Chair and Managing Director.

- Mentorship or Advisory support during the first year with Creative Evolutions and industry peers (see the Search Process below).

How this Search will Operate – Values, Communication, and Compensation

Overall Estimated Timeline:

- Preferred Application Period: **Nov 25, 2024 - Jan 10, 2025**
After the end of the application period, please reach out if you are still interested and we will let you know if there is still an opportunity for consideration.
- Initial Candidate Meetings: **Jan 6 - Jan 31, 2025**
- Semi-Finalist Meetings (Virtual): **Feb 5 - 20, 2025**
- Finalist Meetings On-Site in Nashville, TN: **March 2025**
- Employment Begins: **April/May 2025**

After an initial submission of interest, selected candidates will be invited for a virtual Candidate Meeting with Dr. Kim Davis, Rebecca Novick, Calida Jones, and/or Doug Clayton from Creative Evolutions. Following the initial meetings, a group of candidates will be advanced to a virtual Semi-Finalist round. Candidates who advance as Finalists will be invited to come to Nashville in March to tour the theater and meet the team in person.

Semi-finalist candidates will all be compensated \$300 for their participation.

Finalists will be compensated an additional \$1,250 plus reimbursement of their reasonable travel, lodging, and food expenses for their trip.

This search process is rooted in values shared by Nashville Children's Theatre and Creative Evolutions, and will include the following elements:

- It is important to us that you are treated with respect and are appreciated for the value you create for NCT through your participation in this process. Candidates who do not advance will be notified promptly.
- Throughout the process we commit to active communication with you, so you are never wondering what is happening or where things stand with your application or the hiring process.
- It is important that the full company, including the staff, board, and artists, participate in the selection process. Final candidates will have the opportunity to come on site and meet the team before a hiring decision is made.

In addition, Creative Evolutions is engaging paid Industry advisors who will be collaborating with Creative Evolutions to design and conduct the Deep Dive sessions as part of the process. These advisors will provide their perceptions and evaluations to the board and will also commit to be available for quarterly calls each for the selected Artistic Director during their first year of employment at NCT. This ongoing support is intended to strengthen NCT as an organization and to provide strong collegial or mentorship support to the new Artistic Director during the transition period.

How to Express Your Interest

Apply through the [Creative Evolutions online portal](#). Throughout the process, you will be in communication with [Dr. Kim Davis, Douglas Clayton, Calida Jones, and Rebecca Novick](#). You will not at any time go more than two weeks without an update on where you are in the search process.

With your submission, please include:

- **Your resume.** The resume can be of any length and style, though we encourage you to adjust it as appropriate to help us see how your history and experience connect to the current circumstances, intentions, and hopes for NCT. If you have a more management-oriented resume and a more artistic-oriented resume, please submit them both together as one document!
- **Instead of providing a standard cover letter,** please provide written responses (through the portal) to answers to the following questions:
 - Tell us about who you are as an artist and a leader. What unique qualities or experiences would you bring that excite you to lead a prominent TYA theatre company?
 - How do you balance creative vision with financial responsibility in your approach to artistic leadership, and can you share an example of a time you achieved this balance in a past role?
 - How do you approach bringing intentional community engagement, educational programming, and full productions into a unified artistic vision?
 - Describe a time when you encountered differing values or priorities within a team. How did you approach these differences, and what strategies did you use to foster unity?
 - NCT places a high value on collaboration, inclusivity, and cultural literacy. What specific action-based practices have you used in past roles to cultivate an inclusive environment?
- If you wish, feel free to share how you self-identify so we can honor your preferences and perspectives in our communications with you!

If possible, please have any attachments be included in pdf format.

If you have any questions about the position or your submission, please feel free to e-mail and we will be happy to discuss with you at any time!

Dr. Kim Davis - kimberly@fivesixteenconsulting.org

Douglas Clayton – Douglas@CreativeEvolutions.com

Calida Jones - Calida@CreativeEvolutions.com

Rebecca Novick – Rebecca@CreativeEvolutions.com

About Creative Evolutions

As an ecosystem of people who create human-centered actionable solutions for creative individuals and organizations, the team at Creative Evolutions believes deeply that individuals and organizations can be brought together in mutually supportive ways so that the advancement of one becomes the advancement of all. All of our processes and recommendations, including in hiring and staffing, come back to these concepts of ecosystem building, adapting in response to the moment, and putting human beings first.

In Executive Search support, Creative Evolutions has pioneered new processes that include commitments to active communication, paying semi-finalist and finalist candidates for the value they create, engaging paid industry advisors as part of the evaluation process, building onboarding and mentorship into hiring, and structuring executive positions around healthy organizational team dynamics. Each hiring process is different, and the toolbox of approaches for engaging new people into teams expands with each process we support.

www.CreativeEvolutions.com