



Creative Director – Application Pack

Hello,

Thanks so much for your interest in this role. A bit of background for you: In August 2023, Jennie Cashman Wilson stepped down as CEO after founding the Abram Wilson charity and 11 years at the helm.

This is a huge moment for Abram Wilson as we begin the search for new leadership to build on Jennie's successes and take the organisation forward into its next phase. We're proud of all that we've achieved over the last decade and a bit, placing the needs faced by minoritised young people at the heart of our vision and addressing them through our successful music education and career development programmes. For this recruitment process, we are looking for new leadership that shares the passion, commitment and values that have defined our work to date.

Taking inspiration from fellow creative organisations, we've decided to look for two people to take on Jennie's mantle and lead the organisation in its next phase. Recognising that a small arts charity such as ourselves needs both outstanding creative vision and the funding, systems and networks in place to realise this vision, we have decided upon a co-leadership model of a Creative Director and an Executive Director.

We will be recruiting these posts in two phases, with the Creative Director recruited in the first half of 2024 and the Executive Director recruited later in the year, once the new Creative Director is in post. Our Interim CEO Oliver Carruthers will remain in post as Executive Director to support the new Creative Director until the second recruitment phase is concluded.

For the post of Creative Director, we are looking for someone who understands the vitality of our mission to inspire, connect and open doors to the music industry so that minoritised young talent has an equal chance to realise their creative potential. We are seeking someone who either has personal lived experience or direct experience working with minoritised communities.

Leading Abram Wilson comes with challenges – we’re not an Arts Council England NPO nor in receipt of regular core funding, so every penny that we spend needs to be raised or earned. We’re therefore looking for someone who can marry artistic verve with considerable strategic, commercial and fundraising ambition to help make future plans a reality.

The organisation is being handed over in great health. We have adequate reserves in place and while there is a continuing need for fundraising, we have a multi-year programme partnership in place with a leading Academy chain, strong funder relationships and a network of committed individual supporters and artists. We have a strong staff team and an engaged and skilled Board of Trustees.

It’s a great platform from which our new leadership can start a new chapter. We look forward to receiving your application.

Thanks so much,

Collette Philip

Chair of the Trustees

Abram Wilson Charity



About Abram Wilson

Inspired by the late critically acclaimed and award-winning jazz musician Abram Wilson, the Abram Wilson Foundation was founded in 2012 by his wife Jennie Cashman Wilson to celebrate his legacy and to provide opportunities to young talented musicians from disadvantaged and diverse backgrounds to realise their creative potential, and provide visibility, access and career pathways within an industry which is often closed to all but the most privileged.

Our vision is for a music industry that genuinely reflects and represents the best image of our society so any young person is able to recognise it as a place for them and to collectively contribute to the next generation of talent.

To achieve our vision, we deliver two distinct yet interconnected projects:

Future Sound (FS): Our award-winning music education programme working with young people in secondary schools to develop their music skills while also holistically impacting their wellbeing, mental health and academic development. We currently deliver FS in schools in Newham, London and across the North West, where there is an identified need for additional music provision in schools, high rates of deprivation and diverse demographics. We ensure at least 50% of the young people we engage are on free school meals and at least 50% from Global Majority communities.



Career Development Programme: Offers vital 1:1 coaching and mentoring support for emerging musicians and music professionals in the early to mid-stages of their careers across an 18-month period. Our musicians come from across the UK and are offered personalised coaching, online mentoring and career strategy sessions, as well as industry masterclass workshops to strengthen their understanding of the

sector. Many become our Future Sound workshop leaders, helping us to inspire the next generation of diverse young talent.

Our Organisation & Team

Abram Wilson is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee, managed by a dedicated, small team. At present, the core team includes five part time staff roles, including an interim CEO, a programme producer, marketing and communications and a fundraiser.

We are governed by a racially diverse, majority women Board of Trustees, led by our Chair, Collette Philip. She runs award-winning brand strategy consultancy Brand by Me and has worked on the in-house marketing teams for large organisations, including Barnardo's.

Delivering our busy programme of work requires everyone to be collaborative and flexible in taking on different areas of activity and a range of responsibilities, including at executive level. The team regularly expands and contracts around key projects and areas of activity, including a range of casual staff, freelancers and associates.

Among our key stakeholder relationships is Co-op Academies Trust, who are our programme partner for our Future Sound schools programme across the north of England, and Newham Music Service, who are our programme partner for our Future Sound schools programme in London.

Finance & fundraising

Abram Wilson is not an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation and does not receive any regular core public funding. While we currently have a range of smaller project funding agreements in place, sustaining our core organisation and delivering our ambitious programmes of work is dependent on substantial year-round project-based fundraising efforts, led by the senior executive team. This encompasses Trusts and Foundations and individual donors.

Since 2021, our turnover has been around £250,000 annually. This currently comprises approximately 75% income from trusts and foundations, 10% from individual giving, and 15% from partnerships and earned income.

The challenge going forward for our new Creative Director is to to develop impactful programmes that deliver our mission to inspire and support minoritised young talent, which in turn will help to increase and diversify income.



What We're Looking For

We're looking for an ambitious, strategic leader ready to roll up their sleeves, establish a creative vision and take responsibility for leading the team and delivering Abram Wilson's next steps. We need someone who appreciates the practicalities of running a small charity, and who has the insight and appetite for the financial, fundraising and day-to-day operational challenges facing an independent organisation without core public support.

The Trustees are committed to Abram Wilson's focus on supporting minoritised talent, inclusivity, creative risk, but we're also open to new possibilities, giving a new Creative Director scope to define what that will look like.

By the end of 2024, we're aiming for a co-leadership model as we don't expect everything to be achievable by just one person. At the same time, we're open to people with skills that sit across both roles.

Given who we are, we are especially interested in applications from people from minoritised backgrounds. We're also really happy for you to show how you meet the role criteria beyond just your day job (e.g. through volunteer roles or in your personal life).

Creative Director and Joint-CEO

Key Responsibilities

- Defining our creative vision and leading on the development and delivery of our creative projects, educational work and artist development programmes
- Ensuring that our creative projects are sustainable and are able to generate income and/or attract support from funders and partners
- Holding overall responsibility for establishing and leading Abram Wilson's strategic direction and quality of delivery
- Establishing the organisation's cultural voice through the presentation and communication of our work in-person and across all our channels with participants, funders, partners and stakeholders
- Acting as the public face of and ambassador for the organisation
- Co-leadership of the staff team

Key Skills and Experience

- A record of developing and delivering creative programmes and/or cultural activity, whether as an artist/practitioner, producer/venue manager or other role.
- Leadership experience including managing and collaborating with key individuals, teams, partners and stakeholders.
- Understanding and strategic thinking around the current context, challenges and opportunities in the independent arts and music education sector
- An entrepreneurial mindset and approach to creating and delivering programmes
- Music industry experience desirable, a passion for music essential
- Experience working with children and young people and an understanding of schools and the curriculum
- A demonstrable understanding of Abram Wilson's mission either from personal lived experience or from being in tune with the lived experience of our beneficiaries
- A commitment to Abram Wilson's values; creating a caring, inclusive, safe and accessible organisation for minoritised young people, artists, employees and supporters

Key Information

Job Title: Creative Director & Joint CEO

Salary: £50,000 per year pro rata (0.5)

Contract: Part-time (equivalent to 2.5 days per week), permanent

Hours: Core hours are 10am–6pm and we expect the role to be primarily home based. There is some flexibility in hours, and the role will include some early-morning, evening and weekend work.

Probation: 6 months

Reports to: The Board of Trustees

Leave: 5 weeks per year pro rata

How To Apply

Please send your CV and a brief covering letter or email (no more than two pages of A4) explaining why you'd like to apply for the role of Creative Director and how your experience fits what we're looking for, to hello@abramwilson.com. We'd also appreciate it if you could include a completed diversity monitoring form together with your application – this information will be recorded anonymously.

The deadline for applications is **Friday 12th April at 5pm UK time**. First round interviews will take place in late April, with second round interviews planned for early May. All interviews will take place online, via Zoom.

If you have any queries or want to discuss the role further in advance of applying, our Interim CEO Oliver Carruthers and Chair Collette Philip will be available for brief telephone calls. Please contact hello@abramwilson.com to arrange this.

Best of luck with your application. We very much look forward to reading it!

Access

Please contact our Interim CEO, Oliver Carruthers, on oliver@abramwilson.com if you have any access needs that you'd like to discuss either around this application

process, interviews or the roles themselves. We're open to applications being made in different formats and also can provide support at interview stage.