



General Manager

February 2026

About J & A Beare

For over 130 years, J & A Beare has built a reputation as the world's most respected violin dealer and expert through buying, selling, authenticating, valuing, making, repairing and restoring instruments and bows of exceptional quality. In addition, they have gone on to establish initiatives that support young musicians.

Over the last century, many of the world's leading artists and collectors chose to acquire their instruments through J & A Beare due to their expertise and history within the industry. In recent years, J & A Beare has completed the sale of more than sixty instruments by Stradivari and Guarneri del Gesù, in addition to hundreds of other fine examples by Italian and European makers. In 2012, Beare's set the then world record price for a violin with the sale of the 'Vieuxtemps' Guarneri del Gesù for more than \$16m.

The Beare's International Violin Society

In 2011, Steven Smith, Managing Director of J & A Beare and his wife Professor So-Ock Kim, established the Beare's International Violin Society, with the aim of supporting young talented musicians by finding generous benefactors who can loan them fine stringed instruments. Since then, the Society has completed some 250 projects and created a community of patrons who frequent the performances of the artists they support.

The J & A Beare Cultural Trust

The J & A Beare Cultural Trust is a beloved independent charity helping young musicians from all backgrounds navigate the initial stages of their careers. Its activity includes concerts with children as young as seven, but its flagship programme is the specialist chamber music coaching initiative. This has recently expanded to benefit a cohort of around 60-80 talented musicians aged 14-24. The success of the J & A Beare Cultural Trust can be seen in public performances, culminating every two years in the Beare's Chamber Music Festival. The festival brings top international soloists to London stages, while offering close-up opportunities for young musicians to meet and learn from these global stars. Artists who support the charity include Janine Jansen, Quatuor Ébène, Ning Feng, Clara-Jum Kang, Kian Soltani, Timoty Ridout and many others.



Beares Publishing

The publishing division of J & A Beare has completed several projects which aim to expand the knowledge of classical music-related subjects through the offering of specialised publications. First among them, the team has recently published “Antonio Stradivari: The Complete Works”, a six-volume, definitive catalogue documenting all known instruments made by Stradivari and his workshop. Ten years in the making, it is the first-ever publication of its kind and in many ways will be Beare’s ultimate legacy to the world of fine violins.

Letter from Steven Smith

Hello,

Thank you for your interest in joining us. This is a unique opportunity to work with an organisation that has been at the forefront of the fine instrument world since 1892 as we continue to expand both our scope and scale. Today, we focus on the purchase, sale, and certification of the world’s rarest and most important instruments, underpinned by rigorous research and a world-leading restoration team. Our clients include leading international soloists, major orchestras, foundations, and private collectors.

As Managing Director and owner of the business, I have been closely involved in many of the firm’s most significant milestones, including several record-breaking transactions and the continued expansion of our global client base in an ever-expanding market. I pioneered and realised many new projects, all unique in our industry, such as the “Stradivari” catalogue, the Beare’s Stradivari Price Index, our Research and Conservation Department, the Society, the Trust, the “12 Stradivari” album, the Beare’s Chamber Music Festival, as well as developed and strengthened ongoing sponsorships with prestigious orchestras and organisations in Germany, Hong Kong, the United States, Korea, Australia and of course the United Kingdom.

Looking ahead, the appointment of a General Manager is a key step in strengthening our operational leadership and ensuring the firm is well positioned for long-term success and further global expansion.

The role requires a combination of strategic judgement, operational excellence, and cultural sensitivity. It is essential that you understand the importance of discretion, trust, and excellence in our field, while also bringing the leadership and capability needed to advance our systems and processes. We look forward to hearing from you.

With kind regards,

Steven Smith
Managing Director
J & A Beare Ltd



The Role

Role:	General Manager
Location:	Marylebone office, London, with some travel.
Contract Type:	Permanent, five days per week. Flexibility will be required to work some evenings and weekends.
Salary:	£120,000 plus performance based bonus

Job Summary

J & A Beare are seeking a skilled, experienced, and people-centric General Manager to lead the day-to-day operations of their high-value business. This is a rare and unparalleled opportunity to join an industry-leading, unique and prestigious business, where you will directly help shape the global fine instrument market, contribute to cultural heritage, and nurture musical talent.

The General Manager will play a critical role in updating organisational structures and processes, implementing digital solutions, and strengthening the sales and workshop teams, while providing dependable operational leadership. In this role you will work closely with the exceptional and entrepreneurial owner of J & A Beare, Steven Smith, whose expertise, vision, and deep client relationships are central to the business.

This role is ideal for someone who has experience in international operations and logistics, who understands the importance of a top-tier service, and brings a flexible approach, along with a sense of humour and, ideally, an enjoyment of classical music.

Responsibilities

- Running the day-to-day operations of the organisation, leading staff across different functional areas (sales, marketing, IT, operations, HR, workshop) and ensuring efficiency, clarity, and accountability. Note, this role is not responsible for financial management, but will work closely with the Finance Director.
- Trial, design and introduce appropriate systems and new technology to enable international business expansion and the growth of the global customer base.



- Implement and embed business processes to support sales, client communications, logistics and project management.
- Organise and develop the sales and marketing function, driving performance targets and instilling a results-oriented, collaborative culture. You are not required to sell directly.
- Manage, structure, and support the instrument workshop function, ensuring consistent standards, and teamwork.
- Act as a trusted partner to Steven Smith, enabling him to focus on deal-making, business development, and strategic initiatives. Support his creative approach as a stabilising counterpart.
- Work with Steven to manage communications with the broader team, ensuring expectations are clear, morale is high, and team members are empowered.
- Foster a positive, inclusive, and high-performance culture across the business.
- Oversee human resources and specifically lead recruitment, onboarding, and professional development of staff as needed for organisational growth.
- Contribute to strategic planning, growth initiatives, and ongoing business improvement, including collaborations with other businesses to achieve commercial objectives.

Person Specification

- Demonstrable experience in senior operational or general management roles, with direct experience of managing people in technical and functional roles across a business.
- Experience in relationship-driven businesses with high-value products or services.
- Proven ability to introduce and lead organisational change in dynamic, evolving business environments.
- Strong commercial acumen, with experience of developing and implementing sales strategy, as well as measuring sales performance.
- High emotional intelligence and excellent people management skills. You will be capable of motivating, holding accountable, and getting the best out of people.
- Financial literacy, with experience preparing and delivering business and financial reports to leadership.
- Experience of working with complex logistics and examples of integrating new CRM, IT, and operational systems to improve efficiency.
- Experience of working with entrepreneurial and founder-led small and medium sized businesses is strongly preferred.



How to Apply

Queries

All correspondence, at this stage, should be via Oxford HR, J & A Beare's executive search partner. We highly recommend speaking to us before applying for this role. For an informal discussion, please email Zoe Greenwood, lead consultant (zgreenwood@oxfordhr.com) to schedule.

Applications

To apply for this post, click on the "Apply" button on the job advert page, complete our online application form, and submit your CV and cover letter as two different documents, which should be prepared before applying as they will be considered in the application process.

The cover letter should be no more than two pages long and explain why you are interested in this post and how your skills and experience make you a good fit.

The document should be saved in PDF in the following format: Your First Name-Your Last Name-Documents Name-Date (mmyy)-JABeare e.g., Pat-Jones-CV-0226-JABeare or Pat-Jones-CoverLetter-0226-JABeare.

Please note that all our clients recruiting in the UK are legally obliged to confirm that the appointee is eligible to work in the UK. As of 1 January 2021, the government's new regulations will apply. For further information visit the Home Office website at <https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/work-visas>.

Timeline

Closing Date: 29th March 2026, candidates will be informed before end day 24th April 2026

First stage interviews: Week of 27th April 2026

Final interviews: Early May 2026

Equality Statement

Equality and diversity are at the core of J & A Beare's values. Staff are expected to work collectively and individually to promote a constructive and sensitive approach to others from a



variety of backgrounds and create an environment where the work of others is valued and respected.

About Oxford HR

Exceptional leaders can inspire change and propel purpose-led organisations towards reaching their world-changing goals. Finding such leaders can be a challenge; and yet their transition into leadership is vital to an organisations mission and success.

Oxford HR is a global leadership consultancy dedicated to searching for and supporting remarkable leaders and teams in purpose-led organisations.

We understand the nuances of purpose-led leadership because we've worked in organisations across the breadth of the sector ourselves. We've also worked with such organisations since 1995; so we appreciate just what benefits impactful people can bring.

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