



Musical Director Recruitment

August 2025

Candidate Information Pack

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in applying for the role of Musical Director (MD)/Conductor with the Wessex Concert Orchestra, to start in January 2026. We are excited about the future and keen to ensure that we find the right candidate to work with us. We have compiled this Candidate Information Pack to introduce you to us and give you information about the role.

This pack includes:

- Background information about the orchestra.
- Programme and rehearsal schedule for the 2025-26.
- MD job description.
- Person specification.
- Contractual information and expectations.
- Thoughts from some orchestra members.
- Recruitment process details, including the timetable and how to apply.

We hope that you find this pack useful. Thank you again for your interest, and we look forward to receiving your application.

Wessex Concert Orchestra Background Information

The Wessex Concert Orchestra (WCO) is one of the oldest amateur orchestras in the area. The orchestra was founded during the Second World War as part of the Westinghouse Company in Chippenham and was known as the Westinghouse Concert Orchestra. The orchestra relaunched in 2004 as the Wessex Concert Orchestra. Since our relaunch we have offered members a challenging and enjoyable environment in which to explore a wide variety of music, ranging from light music and film works through to challenging classical pieces, symphonies and concertos.

We are a community orchestra, welcoming musicians with a range of musical backgrounds and abilities. We aim to offer an environment where all players can feel challenged, supported and inspired, whatever their level and experience. The orchestra continually pushes itself to develop musically and is proud of its progress and standard of playing.

We enjoy offering members the opportunity to take part in different events and concerts. Since the relaunch, we have taken part in collaborations with professional orchestras, recorded for the BBC, held workshops with guest musicians and taken part in large-scale 'Proms' style concerts. Many of our members also enjoy playing in other orchestras, taking part in summer schools and attending play days run by professional orchestras. We are very keen to build on this tradition of providing different and exciting musical opportunities.

You can find out more about the history, aims and activities of the orchestra on our **Website**.



Rehearsals

WCO rehearses every Monday, between 19:30 and 21:30, during school term times at **Monkton Park Primary School** in Chippenham. We generally continue rehearsals through half term holidays but break for the main school holidays.

Our terms for 2025-26 will run between the following dates:

Autumn Term	08 September 2025 to 08 December 2025
Spring Term	05 January 2026 to 30 March 2026
Summer Term	13 April 2026 to 06 July 2026

We hold a full day rehearsal before each concert, generally two weeks before from 10:00 to 13:00 and 14:00 to 17:00. This gives players the opportunity to work in detail on pieces in sectionals in the morning and full orchestra in the afternoon. Additional rehearsals may be arranged from time to time at alternative venues as and when deemed necessary by the MD.

A full rehearsal schedule is available on request.

Concerts and Venues

The WCO season runs between September and July every year. WCO performs three concerts per year towards the end of each school term: usually in March/April, July and December. Further musical events, such as chamber concerts, collaborative concerts, workshops, involving the MD may take place, subject to prior agreement.

Our venues reflect our name and take us across the Wessex region. Our main venues are:

- Chippenham: St Andrew's Church
- Chippenham: St Paul's Church
- Malmesbury Abbey

Our Spring 2026 concert is booked to take place in St Paul's Church, Chippenham, on Saturday 28 March 2026. The programme has not yet been selected.

Orchestra Management

WCO is managed by a committee comprising members of the orchestra elected each year and is governed by its constitution. The Conductor is an *ex officio* member of the committee.

Repertoire

WCO aims to provide a broad and varied repertoire to stretch and inspire members. The orchestra's roots are in light music, but since our relaunch we have pursued a broader programme, encompassing larger scale classical works as well as music from film and stage. In previous seasons we have performed a more 'classical' programme of symphonic works and concerti in spring, a lighter-style concert in summer, and a



mixed programme, Christmas programme or family matinee in December. However, we are very open to new ideas and look forward to making changes alongside our new Musical Director.

Details of WCO recent concerts and programme content can be found in our **Concert Archive**.

Musical Director Job Description

This Section describes the duties and responsibilities of the Musical Director (MD) of the WCO for the duration of his/her employment with the orchestra. This Job Description may be changed from time to time as deemed necessary to meet the requirements of the orchestra.

The WCO rehearsals, concerts and venues are as described in previous Sections.

Programming for concerts is developed by the WCO Repertoire Group in conjunction with the MD and Orchestra Leader. Programming and scheduling for the next September to July concert season will typically be finalised early in the calendar year.

Programming will be consistent with the skills and interests of the WCO membership. It aims to provide challenge, variety and enjoyment to our members. It will consider the musical interests of the community at large and work to stimulate interest in a variety of music styles.

The WCO works with local media to publicise its performances. Such publicity may include (without limitation) photographs, interviews, audio and video recording of selected rehearsals and performances. The MD will allow such activities and make a reasonable effort to participate in marketing efforts as well as being an advocate for the orchestra and assisting with fundraising events.

Specific duties: The MD will:

- Provide the orchestra with musical direction to develop the skills and abilities of its members and achieve the highest possible musical standards, while ensuring that rehearsals and concerts are an enjoyable experience for everyone involved.
- Conduct all concerts, in agreement with the committee. The orchestra may, on occasion, wish to bring in a guest conductor for a term or specific concert.
- Conduct all rehearsals, including some sectional rehearsals, and to arrange for suitable deputies under exceptional circumstances if he/she cannot be available.
- Prepare for each rehearsal to ensure that a thorough approach is taken to the preparation of the music for each concert.
- Agree in advance with the committee a detailed rehearsal schedule for each concert, taking into account players who may not be featured in all works.
- In consultation with the committee, plan and agree the annual musical programme for the orchestra. This programme should balance challenge, enjoyment and musical development for all players, while also considering the practicalities of ability, budgets and audience appeal.
- Help create a long-term vision for the development of the orchestra alongside the committee.
- Help the committee to seek and provide opportunities for the orchestra to take part in different musical experiences either alongside or as part of the standard concert schedule.
- Attend committee meetings when invited by the committee and to provide advice and recommendations on musical matters.



- Attend the orchestra's AGM and any other special meetings that may be called.
- Help develop, advocate for, and participate in activities that promote WCO, including fund raising.
- Define musician requirements for specific programmes and work with the committee to meet those requirements.
- Work with the committee to ensure that the selection of soloists, costs for music, and other expenses remain within budget limitations.
- Work with nominated WCO members and committee members in the preparation and staging of concerts.
- Participate in promoting attendance at concerts.

Pay will be as specified in the employment agreement between WCO and the Musical Director.

Person Specification

Please ensure that you have all the essential requirements before applying.

Essential	Desirable
• A track record of recent orchestral conducting experience • Experience of working as a musical director to oversee the development and progression of an orchestra • The ability to inspire, enthuse and develop players in all sections and of all abilities • The ability to make rehearsals and concerts a rewarding and enjoyable experience • Effective preparation and organisational skills • Excellent communication and interpersonal skills • The ability to work constructively with a committee in managing an orchestra • The willingness to work with the committee to drive ideas about the future direction of the orchestra • Reliability and commitment	• Formal conductor training • Extensive knowledge of the orchestral repertoire • The ability to engage with audiences • Significant, varied orchestral conducting experience at both amateur and professional level • Experience of working with and conducting professional concerto soloists • Contacts with potential soloists, both locally and nationally



Contractual Information

- You will not be an employee of the Orchestra. You will be engaged on a self-employed basis and therefore expected to account for your own income tax, VAT and Class 4 National Insurance contributions.
- The engagement will commence from 05 January 2026.
- There will be a probationary period of two terms with a formal appraisal discussion, after which the appointment will be confirmed for a further year, with yearly appraisals, or notice of termination given.
- If approved, you will be on a renewable annual agreement:
 - Either party may give to the other no fewer than three months' notice of their intention not to renew the contract.
 - Either party may terminate the agreement immediately if the other commits any serious or permanent breach of these terms; and
 - The Orchestra may terminate your engagement immediately if sickness or injury prevents you fulfilling your duties for 60 consecutive days.
- Remuneration consists of fixed rate fees:
 - £80 for each Monday rehearsal.
 - Pro-rata at £160 for the all-day rehearsal: £80 morning + £80 afternoon.
 - £160 per concert day: £80 Rehearsal +£80 Concert.
- It is not our policy to pay expenses for routine rehearsals and concerts.
- Remuneration is reviewed periodically in the light of the Orchestra's finances.
- If you are unable to attend a rehearsal other than because of illness, you must give at least one month's notice to the Administration Manager and must arrange a suitable replacement.

Current Orchestra Members Views

We routinely survey orchestra members, to understand better what they are looking for from WCO. The following are highlights from the most recent survey:

- Members enjoy playing symphonies, film music, popular classics, concertos and contemporary music.
- Members want to be musically challenged and have fun at rehearsals.
- They are interested in other musical opportunities such as play days with other musical groups and weekend workshops.
- There is a strong feeling of community spirit within the orchestra.

A few comments:

- "Provide an environment for players of differing standards to play together. Ensure there is a balance between playing and socialising at rehearsals."
- "Probably one of the friendliest orchestras I've played with in a while, with a great culture. I like the idea of themed concerts, even if a little tenuous at times!"
- "Selection of a wide range of music, welcomes new members , people enjoy rehearsals."
- "Makes us improve and challenge ourselves."
- "I love WCO."



Making an Application

The timetable for the application process will be as follows:

Application Deadline	31 August 2025
Shortlisting	14 September 2025
Auditions	06 or 13 October 2025
Appointment	01 November 2025
Role Commences	05 January 2026

Submitting an Application

Please apply by email, including an application letter and a CV. Your letter should outline:

- Your qualifications and experience in conducting and directing a musical group such as WCO.
- Your vision for the orchestra and how you will satisfy the requirements of the job description.
- Your fee requirements.

If you would like an informal chat before submitting your application, please email us and we will arrange for this to take place with our Orchestra Manager, Hannah Robertson.

Applications should be e-mailed to wessexconcertorchestra@gmail.com by midnight Sunday, 31 August 2025. Your application will be acknowledged. If you have not received an acknowledgement by 07 September 2025, please contact Hannah Robertson at wessexconcertorchestra@gmail.com.

Auditions/Interviews

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend an audition and interview on either 06 or 13 October 2025, between 19:30 and 22:00 in Chippenham. Details of the audition, including work to be rehearsed/interview, will be notified to shortlisted candidates two weeks in advance.

Thank you for your interest in the Wessex Concert Orchestra. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us. The orchestra has a great history, a fantastic team spirit, plays to a high standard and is excited about new challenges ahead. We hope you will want to become part of this future, and we look forward to receiving your application.