

ORCHESTRA OF
The Swan



CHIEF EXECUTIVE

RECRUITMENT PACK

orchestraoftheswan.org



Recruitment Pack Index

	Page
Welcome from the Chair of the Board	4
About Orchestra of the Swan	5
Our Mission and Vision	6
Our Artistic Vision	7 - 9
Strategic Partnerships	10 - 11
Funding, Finance and Strategic Objectives	12 - 13
Job Description	14 - 19
Application process	20

***"It is extraordinary how complete Lee's story and character feels,
in such short moments. But each is amplified by the music between ...
The orchestral arrangements by LePage – from Vaughan Williams to Rossini
and Britten – are careful, fitting every moment ...
Altogether, it's a lovely thing. If you can catch it, do."***

Libby Purves, theatreCat, on Red Sky at Sunrise

September 2025

A note of welcome from the Chair of the Board

Heartiest thanks for expressing your interest in the post of Chief Executive at The Orchestra of the Swan. The trustees and the executive team know we are at a moment of truly exciting possibility, one which offers our new CEO a rare opportunity to build on the creative innovation that has become the orchestra's hallmark in these years of change. While we are confident and proud of the directions we are taking, we want our successful candidate to play a central role in an ongoing process of reappraising and reshaping them as we move forward in a changing environment.

Please do read on: it is our sincere hope that your interest will be even more deeply engaged, for on the present UK arts scene this position has exceptional potential.



Simon Littlewood,
Chair of Trustees



About Orchestra of the Swan

Founded in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1995 and now based at its residency at the Warwick Schools Foundation, The *Orchestra of the Swan* offers a new and unique blend of traditional classical performance with some of the most innovative and creative programming to be heard on the current musical scene, as well as offering hundreds of workshops annually to people in Midlands communities who live with forms of disability and social isolation. We are highly active, too, in primary, secondary, tertiary and SEND educational outreach, which includes our new initiative *The Swan Youth Orchestra*, drawing school-age players from across the local counties. Reflecting changes in the funding environment, the balance of our work has shifted somewhat from the traditional classical repertoire to embracing multiple genres, blending jazz, folk and rock with classical, and thus offering both our live and digital audiences new ways of experiencing orchestral music.

We have developed a range of themed live performances involving twelve or fewer players, as well as a *Words & Music* series featuring four giants of English literature, where eight or so players are fronted by a celebrity actor. Performances across the country, including London, have found and appealed to enthusiastic audiences combining concert- and theatre-goers. These ensemble series have drawn high praise for the quality of performance, together with a perception amongst some commentators that The Swan lies in a small group of the most innovative orchestras in the UK. Further shows are at the planning stage, and the way now lies open for us to build on this reputation and create partnerships with venues and promoters which may in time enable us to re-expand the numbers of performances utilising larger forces, once funding is procured.

The Swan has a firm commitment to creating digital assets. As well as digital concerts, six cross-genre albums (initially a creative response to the Covid-19 shut-down) released from January 2021 onwards, reflect our programming innovation, and have audio-streamed over 15 million times globally, positioning The Swan in a unique place in relation to other UK chamber orchestras. Here we work alongside international jazz and folk artists, with Artistic Director David Le Page arranging pop & rock tracks interwoven with classical pieces for our orchestral forces.

This varied range of musical activities offers diverse and rewarding opportunities to our players.

Our Mission

We seek to astonish, transform and inspire through the highest quality live, recorded & digital performance, accessible to all at an affordable price.

We address the lack of diversity and remove barriers to participation in orchestral music among audiences, performers, and workshop participants. We break down some of the traditional formalities of concert performance, blur the lines between genres, and work hard to mitigate the lack of opportunity for people living with dementia, for primary, secondary & SEND state school pupils, for the visually impaired, and for young people living with complex disabilities, to experience and benefit from orchestral music; all whilst maintaining the highest artistic standards.



Our Vision

We are a dynamic and inclusive chamber orchestra with regional, national and international recognition. We reflect the diverse social and economic environments of the communities in which we work, and the individuality of the venues where we play. We are respected by our peers for our pioneering work, embrace innovation and creative risk, are open, accessible and confident.

"As usual, The Orchestra of the Swan makes me think about a piece of music I've heard before in a new way. The narrative content particularly appeals to me too. Excellent musicians and Anton Lesser ... frankly, what's not to like."

Audience member, Interstellar June 2025

Our Artistic Vision

David Le Page, Artistic Director

Orchestra of the Swan is a daring, innovative, inclusive and versatile arts organisation that has recognised and embraced the sweeping cultural shifts of the past ten years. We have successfully adapted to a challenging funding landscape and evolving audience tastes, all while maintaining a unique artistic identity - an achievement that continues to serve us well in this third decade of the 21st century.

We recognise and respect the 500-year canon of classical works but are not constrained by its inherited rituals or the unhelpful attitudes they can sometimes foster. The great works are programmed throughout our artistic seasons, but often within an unexpected context. At the heart of our programming is a core ethos: to transform lives, challenge perceptions, and promote emotional and physical well-being through music. Whether we're performing a silent disco at Stonehenge, illuminating Shakespeare's resting place with light and sound, or staging an eight-night residency in London's oldest music hall, *Orchestra of the Swan* creates unforgettable, magical experiences.

Our performances are not simply 'classical concerts' but sublime and illuminating cultural events which aim to alter the way people perceive their lives and to reconnect them with the radical mystery which lies at the heart of all great art.

Dynamic, bold and emotionally-driven performances are the lifeblood of *The Swan*, with an exceptional and committed group of players - developed and nurtured over the last seven years - who truly engage with audiences on a deep personal level. From our astonishing Words & Music series and our larger scale concerts at Warwick Hall to our *Earthcycle*, *Entranced*, *Revolutionaries*, *Renegades & Visionaries* programmes, and our hugely successful mixtape albums, we continue to redefine what 'classical' music can be - especially in a sector often marked by low streaming figures.

There has never been a better time to engage with *The Swan*. We are actively and creatively shaping the future of classical music and its audiences. Passionate and unashamedly inclusive, **we believe the music we create is for everyone.**

Our Values

We value everyone, irrespective of race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or socio-economic group. While remaining vigilant across all groups, we have increased the prominence given to people from diverse ethnic backgrounds amongst our performers, composers, audience, staff, board, and workshop participants. We have performed more works by female composers, and made our music more accessible to those from less privileged socio-economic backgrounds and to communities historically underserved by cultural organisations.

Our Programmes and Performances

Alongside the dynamic 'Words and Music' series described above, which has featured such outstanding actors as Anton Lesser and Dame Harriet Walter, we have established certain key strands of activity which are continuing to raise the profile of The Swan, generate funding, and instil confidence in our ability to engage with our communities:

1. **A series of regular concerts** in Warwick, Stratford upon Avon and Pershore. This season has seen a shift from self-promoted to fee-paying engagements that appeal to a wider audience, with 77% of concert activity fully funded and generating a valuable contribution towards staff and central overheads.
2. **Our community and educational workshops** in the Midlands which express our brand identity through creating opportunities for participants to engage with orchestral music, whether in partnership with the Warwick Schools Foundation, with Sense TouchBase Pears, with the Heart of England Music hub or the Courtyard, Hereford. Importantly, all activities are fully funded, generating a contribution towards central overheads. The main components are:
 - a. Our Warwick Schools Foundation residency, a key development strand of our work and vital to attracting a younger audience, where we share the outstanding facilities of Warwick Schools with the wider regional state school community; aiming not only to build the reputation of Warwick Hall as a high-quality concert venue (with up to four annual concerts), but to provide children across Warwickshire state schools with the opportunity to interact with high quality orchestral activity. We inspire them to learn an orchestral instrument, introducing them to orchestral repertoire, conducting and composition - all this through activity in their own schools as well as organised activities on the Foundation premises.

- b. *Music without Barriers*: our work in Birmingham for people with complex disabilities at Sense (including special needs pupils from nearby Fox Hollies SEND school), at Acorns Children's Hospice and at Priestley Smith School for the visually impaired.
- c. *Café Muse*, a participative music-led dementia café which has operated weekly in Hereford, and monthly in Stratford upon Avon since August 2021, extended during 24/25 to Sense Community Centre in Birmingham. Further music-led activity for people living with dementia takes place in regional care homes.
- d. The formation of the *Swan Youth Orchestra*, enabling up to 75 pupils per weekend course from Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull who have achieved Grade VI or higher on their respective instrument, to benefit from learning alongside professional players, led by a conductor with an international reputation. Two weekend courses take place per academic year (October & February) on the Warwick Schools Foundation campus.



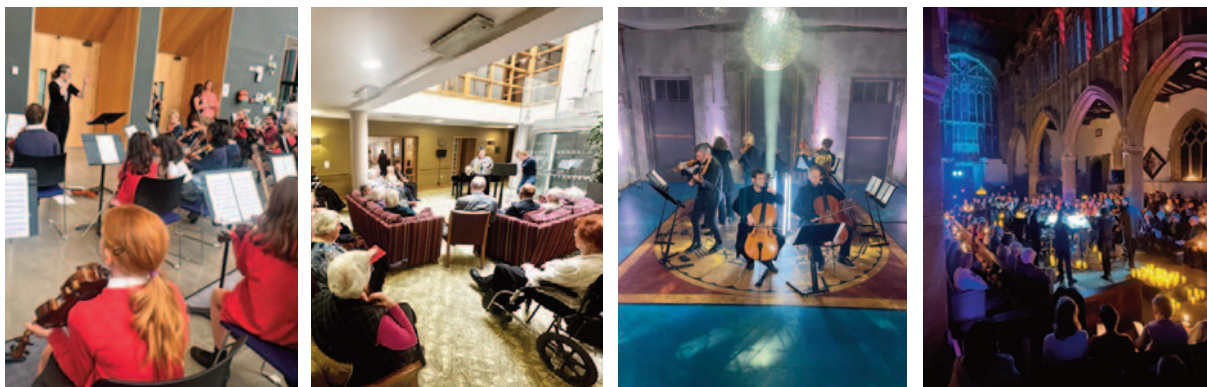
- 3. **The release of seven albums** on the Signum Classics label since January 2021, designed for the global audio-streaming market, which have now achieved over 15 million audio streams; complementing the 27 mainstream recordings released over the previous two decades and generating circa £8k in streaming revenue per year.

Describing the Words and Music productions, Anton Lesser says...

“Words and Music is a kind of unique genre, neither pure reading, nor acting, but with an immediacy that comes from the huge emotional impact the music has upon the words, and vice versa, and the interplay we as actors enjoy with the musicians on-stage. Quite simply, it’s the most enjoyable thing I’ve ever done!”

Strategic Partnerships

- **Warwick Schools Foundation** - see page 8.
 - **Hamblettts** – The production company run by Judy Reaves & David Hamblett, with whom we have developed our successful Words & Music programmes: *Red Sky at Sunrise* (Laurie Lee), *A Beautiful Thread* (Thomas Hardy), *A Christmas Carol* (Charles Dickens) and *GEORGE Eliot*.
 - **Signum Classics** – The record label that has released our 7 cross-genre albums since 2021 generating 15 million audio streams. Prior to this, they released two of our most popular classical albums with soloist Tamsin Waley-Cohen.
 - **Hereford Courtyard** – An orchestral residency from 2018 to 2025, which continues to host our weekly music-led dementia and PTSD café for the Armed Forces Community - *Café Muse* – providing the studio space free of charge.
 - **Heart of England Music Hub** – The combined music hub for Warwickshire, Coventry & Solihull state schools, which supports and promotes the *Swan Youth Orchestra* to its pupils.
 - **Sense TouchBase Pears** – a community centre based in Selly Oak which specialises in providing support for people living with complex disabilities, particularly the DeafBlind, combining health and social care services with arts, sports and wellbeing activities. A key part of the partnership has been the training of Swan players to deliver music-led workshops to this community. Funded through applications by The Swan to Trusts and Foundations.
 - **Orchestras Live** – a national producer, creating inspiring orchestral experiences for communities across England. They have previously supported our concert series at the Hereford Courtyard but have shifted their focus to direct funding of our more experimental output, including work with Able Pioneers in Mansfield, potential support for a new digital/live installation *Symphony of the Harmony of Celestial Revelations*, and the networking of our *Entranced* programme.
 - **Mindsong** – a Music Therapy charity based in Gloucester who have partnered with The Swan since 2015 to provide dementia training to our players; alongside regular evaluation sessions with players to ensure they are kept abreast of the latest developments in delivery for people living with dementia. Funded through applications by The Swan to Trusts/Foundations.
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- **Priestley Smith School for the Visually Impaired in Birmingham** – providing training for our players since 2018, with provision of an annual 10-to-12-week summer series for the entire school. Funded through applications by us to Trusts/Foundations.
- **Royal Birmingham Conservatoire** – From 2018 to 2020, The Swan was in residence performing three or four matinee performances per year. Performances did not resume post covid, but we have maintained a good relationship, delivering a composition workshop series and an improvisatory based workshop series (*Burning Swan!*) annually, paid for by the Conservatoire, led by Prof Joe Cutler (Head of Composition).
- **Coventry University** – This relationship began in 2021 when our residency at Drapers Hall in Coventry included the performance of three new commissions by composers linked to the University. Subsequently, an annual MixUp composition series has celebrated composition students, led by Dr Tom Williams (Senior Teaching Fellow), and funded by the university.
- **Pershore No.8** – a regular concert venue since 2015, with 2 annual concerts on a ticket share basis.

*"I love music and it was so nice to hear it played live.
It sounded like an opera played on instruments."
"It made me feel like I was inside a space shuttle."
"I felt like the music was like vines growing, twisting and turning."
"It was mesmerising; it didn't even feel real (in a good way.)"*

*Pupils, The Croft Primary School,
following an open rehearsal for Holst Planets*

Funding & Finance

Since 2018, the orchestra's approach to fundraising has been significantly professionalised, with systems and procedures in place and targets set, the delivery of which has stabilised and strengthened the organisation. The majority of funding in the last financial year has come through fee-paying engagements (33%), while Trusts & Foundations make up the next largest tranche (28%). Fundraising is a key priority for the incoming Chief Executive, as the business model currently depends on raising in excess of £350k per year from Trusts, from individuals and through sponsorship. A modest surplus has been generated every year (other than the year ending Aug 31st 2020, during Covid 19), with current reserves of £84k. The Board has set a new target of generating a £10k annual surplus to build reserves to the required 3-months' running costs (£100k), against a total turnover of circa £700k. Detailed financial information is available online from the Charity Commission.

Strategic Objectives

1. Become recognised nationally for our outstanding small-scale ensemble performances (up to 15 players), building fee-paying revenue year on year with national promoters, and garnering national critical acclaim: ensuring 90% of concert activities are fully funded with a 30% contribution to overheads by 2028.
2. Deliver larger orchestral concerts and recordings when financial conditions allow.
3. Retain our current audiences alongside developing live and digital performances that increase the younger audience demographic in the 45-65 age range, while building social media followers by 20% annually.
4. Embed EDI principles into our programming and recruitment processes, that can in turn permeate all our community activities, ensuring **Inclusivity and Relevance** underpins all our work.
5. Ensure that *The Swan Youth Orchestra* flourishes at the heart of our educational outreach.
6. Build more partnerships, with venues such as Compton Verney and community organisations such as the Grace Academy, Orchestras Live and Hallmoor SEN school.



7. See a 25% increase in audio streaming revenue per year.

8. Build our reserves to £100k by 2028.

"I just wanted to say a massive thank you to the two musicians that came and spent the afternoon with some of our children and families. It was such a lovely experience, the joy and relaxation it brought to our children. We really do appreciate it and would love you to visit again."

Charlotte Denny, Acorns Children's Hospice staff

Job Description

Job Title	Chief Executive
Reporting To	Chair and Board of Trustees
Responsible For	Administrative team (Finance Manager, Head of Marketing and Communications, Orchestra/Development Manager, Head of Community Engagement, Accounts Assistant, 2 x zero hours workshop coordinators)
Working alongside	Artistic Director
Hours of Work	The organisation embraces flexible working, recognising at the same time that senior leadership positions require in-person attendance and contact. Some evening and weekend working is essential to support performances and projects.
Location	The office is on the Warwick Schools Foundation premises, with working from home for part of the week available as an option to all staff.
Salary	Circa £55,000 (full time salary) plus 3% pension contribution

Main purpose of the role

The Chief Executive is responsible for leading the strategic direction of the organisation and supporting the Artistic Director in his creative role, whilst providing effective financial and operational management. The role provides leadership for the staff team and freelance musicians, inspiring and motivating them to work independently and effectively. The Chief Executive is also the public face of Orchestra of the Swan, representing it across the classical music and wider arts sectors.

Key Relationships

- Orchestra of the Swan Chair and Board of Directors/Trustees
- Staff team and retained freelancers
- Friends of the Orchestra of the Swan, our Patrons and loyal audiences
- Arts Council England
- Association of British Orchestras
- Musicians' Union
- Venues and other partner organisations, in particular
 - Warwick Schools Foundation
 - Heart of England Music Hub
 - Sense TouchBase Pears
 - Courtyard, Hereford
 - Orchestras Live

Core Competencies/Capabilities

- Leadership – to offer clear, motivational leadership, leading, inspiring and empowering staff, instilling a strong sense of team.
- Delivery through people-management - to achieve the organisation's objectives through managing a team.
- Strategic Thinking - to combine business and financial planning with a key contribution to the orchestra's creative programming in support of the Artistic Director; all informed by a strong awareness of the changing environment and the need for innovation.
- Communication skills - to speak (including in public) and write to different audiences and interlocutors, always finding the right tone and content, and keeping colleagues fully informed.
- Teamwork - we need a team player, managerially and also in relation to the Artistic Director, Board Chair and Trustees.
- Networking – to take a highly visible role in fundraising; actively seek out new performance opportunities; build new partnerships.

Key Responsibilities

Leadership

- Provide strategic leadership and direction to both staff and freelancers across all areas of the organisation, imparting a shared sense of commitment to the agreed mission and strategy.
- Drive the annual process of updating the Business Plan, including artistic, operational and financial elements.
- Inculcate a team goal to raise the profile of The Swan nationally and internationally, seeking new opportunities to develop the organisation.
- Drive the orchestra's marketing and PR activity in order to maximise concert attendances, increase understanding of our audience profiles, and expand brand recognition.

Artistic

- Work with the Artistic Director to shape and realise our overarching artistic strategy while ensuring funders' requirements are met.
- Secure fee-paying engagements, and broker broadcasting opportunities, recordings and tours in the cause of raising the orchestra's profile and broadening its activities.
- Create new relationships with venues/promoters/artistic organisations that will enhance our ability to fulfil our mission.
- Work with the Head of Community Engagement on projects that serve the community objectives of our Business Plan.

Operational

- Manage relationships and negotiate agreements with key partner organisations.
- Manage members of staff to ensure they are working effectively and are fulfilled and

motivated in their roles. As necessary, deal with issues that may require disciplinary measures or any grievances that are raised.

- With Peninsula, our HR consultancy, ensure adherence to HR and Health and Safety requirements, and that policies are updated annually - Child and Vulnerable Adults, Conflict of Interest, Environmental, Equal Opportunities, Ethical Fundraising, Finance, Information Security, Privacy, Safeguarding, Whistleblowing, Health and Safety.
- Ensure best practice in all areas of governance and employment law, negotiate the annual Musician's Union agreement, and recruit new staff members as required.
- Liaise regularly with the Chairman of the Board; set Board meeting dates, prepare Board papers so that Trustees can carry out their responsibilities from an informed position, and ensure appropriate frequency of sub-committee meetings.
- Negotiate rent, leasing, IT, contractors, insurance and subscription fees.
- Represent The Swan at relevant sector consortia – including the Association of British Orchestras – and keep the organisation abreast of developments in the sector.
- Ensure compliance with reporting requirements for funders.
- Lead the organisation's delivery of the Diversity, Inclusion and Relevance strategy.
- Ensure that staff absences and holidays are covered.
- Attend concerts, VIP receptions, Friends events, and recording sessions where possible.
- Sit on the Marketing, Strategy, Remuneration and Inclusivity & Relevance sub-committees.

Financial

- Oversee the financial aspects of the organisation to ensure the orchestra remains financially viable.
- Drive the artistic planning and the scheduling of all community activities in order to expedite the production of an annual budget.
- Create the annual budget with the Finance Manager for approval by the Board in accordance with agreed deadlines, setting targets for fundraising and for fee-paying engagements.
- Monitor the annual budget and oversee periodic reforecasts, adding in new engagements as they are confirmed, and approving additional expenditure as required, with Board endorsement.
- Work closely with the Finance Manager to ensure financial processes are best suited to The Swan's needs, ensuring timely production of quarterly management accounts and cashflow projections for each Board meeting and nominating concerts for the Orchestra Tax Relief (OTR) claim.
- Quote for fee-paying engagements, providing contracts as required.
- Work closely with the Development Manager to make applications to Trusts and Foundations, expand the Friends and build online donations, ensuring sufficient funding is in the pipeline to meet annual fundraising targets. Where possible, create proposals for multi-year funding.
- Lead the process for grant applications to Arts Council England.
- Write the Annual Report to accompany year-end accounts.

Desirable Experience

The ideal candidate will be someone who has experience in a range of the following areas, and/or is willing to gain further knowledge:

- Working in a management capacity in an arts organisation, those in the music sector offering further advantage
- Arts background, with a knowledge of music across genres
- Budgeting, forecasting, and financial management
- Working with ACE or a similar public body, or a grant-giving organisation
- Planning and achieving objectives within agreed budgets and adapting to variances
- Achieving goals and continuing to meet deadlines while under pressure
- Working with Boards in a not-for-profit context and gaining an understanding of charity governance
- Fundraising, setting fundraising targets and accurate estimates for major campaigns, developing new strategic approaches to fundraising from private and public sources
- Marketing in the Arts or creative industries marketing
- Key HR, and Health and Safety requirements for small organisations [desirable]

Orchestra of the Swan welcomes applications from candidates from all backgrounds. A large print version of this recruitment pack is available; if you require another accessible format, please contact us at debbie@orchestraoftheswan.org

Application process

The deadline for applications is 31st October 2025.

Applications should be sent by email to debbie@orchestraoftheswan.org

Please provide a CV, plus a written application of no more than four additional pages expressing your interest in the role and what you feel you can bring to Orchestra of the Swan.

These should be provided in a single PDF file.

Please provide names and contact details for two referees, one of whom should be contactable prior to interview.

We anticipate that first interviews will be held by zoom in mid-November 2025, with a second round to follow in December.

If you have any questions about the role or would like an informal discussion, please contact the present CEO Debbie Jagla by email on debbie@orchestraoftheswan.org





"Dad loved the Wednesday Cafe Muse sessions. Music was such a big part of his life. He really came to life...singing, playing his 'moothie', tapping his feet and clapping to the music. It is a very special session & a lifeline for those whose health is failing, and for their relatives."

Bereaved family member of a Café Muse Hereford participant







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Orchestra of the Swan

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Supported using public funding by

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Charity number 1068570

Orchestra of the Swan is a member of the ABO