



**Windsor & Maidenhead Symphony Orchestra
New Conductor Application Pack**

Contents

	page
• Advertisement	2
• WMSO – an overview	3
General	
Repertoire	
WMSO Young Musician Concerto Competition	
Management and Finance	
Programme Planning	
Extra activities	
WMSO Conductor Laureate	
• New conductor requirement	4
Professional experience & skills	
Personal qualities	
Responsibilities	
• Application process	5
• Schedule for selection	5
• Arrangements for appointment	5
• Temporary Contract for Services	6



Advertisement

Windsor & Maidenhead Symphony Orchestra seeks a new conductor for September 2025

The Windsor & Maidenhead Symphony Orchestra, one of the UK's foremost amateur orchestras, is looking to appoint a new conductor from September 2025 following the announcement by Leon Gee to step down after 18 years as conductor of the orchestra.

The Windsor & Maidenhead Symphony Orchestra comprises talented players from across the Thames Valley. Normal membership is around 65 players, with a full complement of wind, brass and timpanist, and willing extra players as required for concerts. We rehearse on Tuesday evenings in Hurst, central Berkshire, during term time.

We perform three main concerts a year within the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead and district: around mid-November, mid-March (both Saturday evenings) and late June (Sunday afternoon, family-orientated), plus a short Christmas concert for the children at the school where we rehearse. In addition, we give occasional chamber concerts or performances for local music festivals, and run an annual Young Musician Concerto Competition.

Since our founding just over 50 years ago, the WMSO has performed most of the giants of the orchestral repertoire, as well as the major symphonies and concertos and a number of modern works too. We combine with local choral societies every two years for a large-scale choral concert.

We are looking for a skilled, ambitious and motivating conductor to continue our exciting journey.

Conductor's fees are currently £150 per rehearsal and £585 for the concert day: approximately £6,255 per year including travel. Fees are reviewed annually.

The closing date for applications is **Friday 28th February 2025**.

Further information and application details are available on www.wmso.org.uk or contact the WMSO secretary Katharine Henson on secretary@wmso.org.uk

For an informal discussion about the position please contact Chairman Frances Jones on 0118 926 8598 or chairman@wmso.org.uk

We look forward to hearing from you.

Frances Jones. Chairman, Windsor & Maidenhead Symphony Orchestra



Windsor & Maidenhead Symphony Orchestra - an overview

Registered Charity no. 296537. President: Baroness Theresa May.

General

Since it was founded in 1972, the Windsor & Maidenhead Symphony Orchestra has attracted high-level players from across the region: semi-professional players, instrumental teachers, former music students whose career is now outside music, and keen amateur players who love playing stimulating repertoire. Rehearsals are held during term time at The Dolphin School, Hurst, RG10 0FR on Tuesday evenings from 19:30 to 21:45 with a fifteen minute refreshment break at 20:30. We do not rehearse in half-term. The conductor issues a detailed rehearsal schedule (including a sectionals evening) at the start of rehearsals for each new programme.

Repertoire

The orchestra has enjoyed performing most of the great orchestral repertoire, including Holst's Suite The Planets, Strauss's An Alpine Symphony, Janacek's Sinfonietta and Stravinsky's Rite of Spring. Every two years we accompany massed local choirs in such works as Belshazzar's Feast, Carmina Burana and Verdi's Requiem. A full list of our past programmes is on www.wmsso.org.uk.

WMSO Young Musician Concerto Competition

The WMSO organises a Young Musician Concerto Competition each October which attracts talent from all over the UK: former winners include a number of players who subsequently became BBC Young Musician winners and finalists, including Martin James Bartlett, Ryan Wang, Jamaal Kashim and Ewan Millar. The winner of the WMSO YMCC receives a cash prize and an offer to perform a concerto with the WMSO in the following season. Often the standard of young musicians is so remarkable that the player given second place is offered a concerto too. The adjudication panel has to date comprised our current conductor Leon Gee as string specialist, Robert Roscoe our former conductor as wind specialist and renowned local pianist Nigel Wilkinson as keyboard specialist. For the competition in October 2025, we have invited Susie Henwood, our Leader, to take the position of string specialist. We invite our new conductor to attend.

Management and Finance

The orchestra is managed by an efficient committee. It is in a healthy financial state and uses subscriptions, grant funding and government tax schemes to cover all its outgoings.

Programme Planning

Each spring, members suggest works that they would like to perform. A sub-committee including the conductor uses this as the basis for putting together the forthcoming season's programmes, with additional suggestions from the conductor as appropriate.

Extra activities

In the past the WMSO has made many exchanges with musicians in the twin towns of the Royal Borough, in France, Germany and Belgium, although the freedom of players to travel means that these have not taken place in recent years. The WMSO has been invited to play twice for royal celebrations at Windsor Castle. Each Christmas we play a Christmas concert for the children at the school where we rehearse; we give occasional chamber concerts and performances for local festivals. We like to incorporate string / wind or full orchestra 'workshop' evenings, often on spare Tuesday evenings after a concert but before the end of term.

WMSO Conductor Laureate: Robert Roscoe

We maintain close contact with our former conductor, Robert Roscoe, who on retirement from conducting the WMSO for 30 years was awarded the position of Conductor Laureate. Robert takes rehearsals when our conductor is not available, he is the wind specialist adjudicator at our YMCC, he sometimes takes wind sectionals and wind workshops. We would like to maintain this relationship in the future.

New WMSO Conductor requirement

We are looking for a dynamic conductor with experience, commitment and enthusiasm.

The principal responsibilities of the new conductor are to direct, train and stimulate the members in rehearsals and performances, to prepare the players to perform concerts of the highest possible quality and to create weekly rehearsals that are an exciting and fulfilling experience for all players.

Professional experience & skills

- Professional training in orchestral conducting.
- Experience in training and conducting a large high-standard amateur orchestra for enjoyable rehearsals and excellent public performance.
- Experience in conducting a varied repertoire of orchestral music.
- Deliver clear and reliable direction in concerts.
- Ability and knowledge to recommend suitable and balanced musical programmes, incorporating players' suggestions and a variety of soloists.

Personal qualities

- Committed, energetic, enthusiastic and adaptable.
- Punctual, reliable and well-organised.
- To demonstrate strong, clear communication skills and create a positive ambiance.
- To respectfully advise players on technical matters.
- To plan rehearsals to ensure both efficient progress and weekly enjoyment for all sections of the orchestra.
- To plan rehearsals to ensure the orchestra's readiness for all events.

Responsibilities

- Take as many WMSO rehearsals as possible (minimum 90%), and conduct all public performances unless agreed otherwise.
- Liaise with the committee to ensure that all the musical requirements of rehearsals and performances are covered.
- Liaise with the orchestra's Leader and Chairman on all appropriate matters.
- Work with a sub-committee to select and plan the repertoire for future seasons.
- The conductor is an ex-officio member of the committee. Attend committee meetings if desired, or submit input on agenda items. There are usually five meetings a year.
- Be willing to make a strong commitment to the WMSO and participate in occasional social events.
- Attend and possibly be part of the adjudication panel for the WMSO Young Musician Concerto Competition each October.

Application process

Applications to be received by end 28th February 2025.

Please send your application by email to Katharine Henson on secretary@wmso.org.uk

Application documents should be sent in Word or PDF format as email attachments. Your application will be acknowledged by return.

Your letter of application should include the following:

- A statement of why you are applying for the role and what you feel you can bring to the Windsor & Maidenhead Symphony Orchestra.
- Personal details, contact information, education and background.
- CV of general musical experience and orchestral conducting experience.
- References and testimonials: references from two professionals and testimonials from at least two orchestras with which you have worked, including a contact email and phone number for each.

If you have any queries about the application, please address these to Katharine Henson, WMSO secretary, on secretary@wmso.org.uk or Frances Jones, WMSO Chairman on chair@wmso.org.uk as appropriate.

Schedule for selection

- Vacancy advertised until 28th February 2025.
- Applications to be received by end 28th February 2025.
- Week commencing 18th March 2025 an initial selection of up to ten candidates will be chosen. These will receive an invitation to participate in an informal 20-minute conversation on Zoom with a sub-committee from the WMSO comprising Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Leader, to take place before 31st March 2025.
- Week commencing 31st March 2025 a shortlist of three applicants selected for formal interview and audition. Shortlisted applicants will be informed of their selection by 6th April. Those who do not hear back by 6th April will not have been selected.
- Shortlisted candidates to have a formal 30-minute interview, and conduct the first hour of a rehearsal with the orchestra in April / May 2025, works by arrangement with current conductor Leon Gee, on conductor@wmso.org.uk. The interview will take place at 18:45 at the rehearsal venue on the evening that the candidate conducts the orchestra. Reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.
- Successful candidate offered conductor position no later than end May 2025. In the event that the WMSO's first choice of conductor is not able to take up the appointment, the position may be offered to a reserve candidate.
- New conductor appointment commences 1st September 2025.

Arrangements for appointment

A temporary appointment will commence on 1st September 2025 and run for 7 weeks. A permanent appointment would commence with a vote by the WMSO membership at the AGM on 21st October 2025.

This appointment would be for one year in the first instance, thereafter renewable after three years or by mutual agreement. The full contract is given overleaf.

Frances Jones. Chairman, Windsor & Maidenhead Symphony Orchestra. January 2025.



WMSO Conductor Temporary Contract for Services

This Contract Agreement is made on (date)

between (conductor's name)

and the Windsor & Maidenhead Symphony Orchestra (WMSO)

Signed (conductor appointed for trial period)

Signed on behalf of the WMSO (Chairman, WMSO)

1. Appointment

1.1. The WMSO hereby appoints (name) as conductor of the WMSO with effect from 1st September 2025 to 21st October 2025 (AGM).

1.2. In consideration of the fees specified in clause 3 the conductor shall perform the duties specified in clause 2.

1.3. The performance of the conductor and the success of the role will be reviewed after one year and subsequently every three years or by mutual agreement.

2. Duties

The principal duties of the conductor shall be:

- a) to conduct and direct the WMSO and other performers at concerts or other events as shall be fixed;
- b) to work with the committee in selecting music for the WMSO;
- c) to create an enjoyable and positive ambiance at rehearsals for all members of the orchestra and through weekly training prepare the WMSO to perform concerts of the highest possible quality.
- d) to make recommendations to the committee for the engagement of soloists and other performers needed for concerts;
- e) to provide to the committee on request all details reasonably required for producing printed programmes and publicity material.

3. Fees

3.1. The conductor will be paid in arrears on receipt of an invoice. Monies will be paid by the WMSO within 14 days. The fees will be set annually by mutual agreement.

3.2. Cancellation arrangements.

- a) If a rehearsal is cancelled by the WMSO with notice of one week or less the conductor shall be paid the full rehearsal fee; with more than one weeks' notice, the conductor shall be paid half their rehearsal fee.
- b) If a concert is cancelled by the WMSO with notice of four weeks or less, the conductor shall be paid their full concert day fee; with more than four weeks' notice, the conductor shall be paid half their concert day fee.

4. Contractual relationship

- 4.1. The conductor is engaged by the WMSO on a self-employed basis.
- 4.2. The conductor shall conduct all rehearsals possible (minimum 90%) and all concerts given by the WMSO except by prior arrangement with the committee. In the event of non-availability the conductor shall give maximum possible notice to the committee and be prepared to arrange for a suitable deputy in partnership with the committee.
- 4.3. If the conductor is unable to fulfill an obligation to the orchestra owing to circumstances beyond their reasonable control, such non-performance will not be considered a breach of this contract.

5. Relationship with the committee

- 5.1. Management of all aspects of WMSO business including all arrangements for rehearsals and concerts and the control of finance is vested in the committee of the WMSO. The conductor is not empowered to enter into any commitment or incur any expenditure on behalf of the WMSO except as expressly authorised by the committee.
- 5.2. The conductor is invited ex-officio to participate in committee meetings and to advise on musical matters but is not entitled to vote on any issues affecting the WMSO.

6. Conductor's rights

- 6.1. The conductor's name shall be afforded due prominence on all advertising and publicity material.
- 6.2. The conductor shall agree to the recording of their performance for non-commercial purposes and may use any such recordings for their own non-commercial purposes.

7. The WMSO's obligations

To ensure that all administrative aspects of rehearsal and performance with the WMSO are carried out.

8. Termination

- 8.1. This Agreement may be terminated with one year's notice in writing on either side or by mutual agreement with the WMSO's committee.
- 8.2. Each party may at any time terminate this Agreement with immediate effect if the other party is in material breach of any of their obligations under this Agreement.
- 8.3. The WMSO may at any time terminate this Agreement with immediate effect if:
 - a) the conductor is in the reasonable opinion of the committee negligent or incompetent in the performance of their duties or
 - b) the conductor commits any fraud or acts dishonestly or in any manner which in the opinion of the committee brings or is likely to bring the conductor or the WMSO into disrepute or is materially adverse to the interests of the WMSO.

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