

# JOB DESCRIPTION

**Job Title:** Principal BASSOON  
**Department:** BBC Symphony Orchestra  
**Division:** Content  
**Current Base:** Maida Vale  
**Reporting To:** Orchestra Manager

## Context

The **BBC Symphony Orchestra** is one of the UK's leading orchestras. It has played a central role at the heart of British musical life for more than 90 years and has a high profile both in the UK and on the international stage. The BBC SO has an outstanding reputation for its performances of a wide range of music with particular emphasis on 20<sup>th</sup> century and contemporary music; each year giving the world premieres of a number of works commissioned by BBC Radio 3.

As the flagship orchestra of the BBC, the BBC SO makes at least a dozen appearances each year at the BBC Proms, including the First and Last Nights. All BBC SO concerts are broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and a number are televised, giving it the highest broadcast profile of any UK orchestra.

The BBC SO gives frequent performances under its present Chief Conductor Sakari Oramo, performing regularly with a wide range of other international conductors and soloists. The BBC SO is Associate Orchestra of the Barbican in London and performs an annual concert season there of up to 25 concerts, including a number of concerts and events focusing on a single composer. Recent seasons have also seen the BBC SO embark upon a series of critically acclaimed performances of opera in concert. The BBC SO performs at a number of music festivals both in the UK and abroad, and undertakes regular major overseas tours.

Studio recordings play an important role in the Orchestra's life, both for BBC Radio 3 and for commercial recording companies, whilst a strong commitment to community and outreach work involves the Orchestra in a number of adventurous learning projects working with schools and members of the local community

The Orchestra is looking forward to moving to a new purpose built studio facility at the site of the former Olympic Park in East London within the next few years.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/symphonyorchestra>

## **Overall purpose of the job:**

The Principal's allocation of work is calculated as:  
60% of a possible 10 sessions per week each quarter, less public holidays and fixed annual leave (Four Weeks).

The work of the Principal and Co-Principals will be scheduled in consultation with the Orchestra Personnel Manager and, if appropriate, the Orchestra Manager. This allocation will take into account the different types of work being undertaken by the Orchestra, and reasonable requests for specific periods of time off. Either the Principal or Co-Principal must cover the Principal seat for all periods of work. There might also be occasions when the Management requires both the Principal and Co-Principal to be present, but such periods are usually indicated on the Advanced Schedule for the Orchestra.

Whilst this position does not require the Principal to work exclusively with the BBCSO, it is expected that the Orchestra will have first call on the Principal's availability & that the work of the BBC SO will be prioritised. In accordance with BBC policy regarding leave, any time off must be agreed in advance by the Management and is subject to the scheduling requirements of the BBC.

All members must work in accordance with the BBC/MU Agreement, the Information for Orchestral Players Handbook and with all other BBC policies both current and future.

## Job Purpose

To sit as Principal Bassoon, doubling as required.

To have excellent solo and orchestral playing abilities, maintaining the highest musical standards of the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

To be an effective and committed team player and to play a full role in the life of the Orchestra.

To be an effective and committed team leader when leading the Section.

This job requires travelling throughout the UK and touring as well as evening and weekend work patterns.

### **Key Responsibilities**

To sit as Principal Bassoon and to lead the section as required.

To maintain the high standard of professional playing and musical and artistic excellence required by the BBC SO.

To familiarise oneself with the relevant parts, including solos, in advance of the first rehearsal and performances.

To support professionally any Leaders and Conductors & artists engaged by the Orchestra.

To take responsibility for the style, intonation, balance, ensemble, rhythm and preparation of the section in conjunction with Leaders and the Chief Conductor.

To lead and manage the section effectively, and to share responsibility with the management for the performance of players within the Section.

To foster an environment in which artistic excellence flourishes.

To develop and support positive working relationships with all other members of the Orchestra, the section and any freelance players engaged by the Orchestra.

To participate in audition panels (to include writing audition reports), trial assessment meetings, orchestral and artistic meetings as required with due regard for confidentiality.

To engage in the general activities of the Orchestra, such as attendance at meetings, promotional activity, outreach and learning work\*, and to act as an ambassador for the BBC/Orchestra during these activities.

To be a role model for BBC Values\*\* and to work in accordance with the BBC/MU Agreement, the Information for Orchestral Players Handbook and all other BBC policies and guidelines.

To support all the BBC's policies on managing people and diversity, including participation in Personal Development Reviews and training.

To work in accordance with the BBC's Health and Safety guidelines and policy.

### **PERSON SPECIFICATION**

#### **Required Knowledge and Experience**

Excellent professional orchestral and solo playing abilities.

Knowledge of the range of repertoire of the **BBC Symphony Orchestra**.

Ability to both lead and work collaboratively to inspire and contribute to performances that meet the highest musical standards by providing artistic direction and by motivating members of the section.

Effective people and performance management skills, including the ability to give constructive feedback, deal with sensitive issues and to make difficult decisions.

Good interpersonal skills and the ability to establish and develop harmonious working relationships with a diverse range of people

Demonstrates commitment to maintain the reputation of the Orchestra.

Participates actively as part of a diverse team and supportive of colleagues.

Demonstrates respect for others by being fully prepared and ready to play at the start of every session.

Ability to plan ahead in order to prepare parts, organise allocations and to make the best use of the resources available.

Awareness of health and safety issues.

### **Competencies**

*The following competencies (behaviours and characteristics) have been identified as key to success in the job. Successful candidates are expected to demonstrate these competencies.*

**Leadership & Managing Performance** – ability to create a vision and inspire others to realise it irrespective of circumstance. Sets challenging team and individual objectives, sharing clear expectations about required performance levels. Acknowledges success and monitors the performance of their section. Treats team members with honesty, respect and compassion.

**Influencing & Persuading** – ability to present sound and well reasoned arguments to convince others. Can draw from a range of strategies to persuade people in a way that results in agreement or behaviour change.

**Planning & Organising** – is able to think ahead in order to establish an effective and appropriate course of action for self and others. Prioritises and plans activities taking into account all the relevant issues and factors such as deadlines, staffing and resources requirements.

**Resilience** – can maintain personal effectiveness by managing emotions in the face of pressure, set backs or when dealing with provocative situations. Demonstrates an approach to work that is characterised by commitment, motivation and energy.

**Change Management** – can understand and anticipate the need for change. Builds frameworks to plan and manage the continuous process of change.

**Managing relationships** - able to build and maintain effective working relationships with a range of people. Works co-operatively with others to be part of a team, as opposed to working separately or competitively.

**Self Development** – is able to identify and apply opportunities for learning and development.

*\* The BBC is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and young people and you may come into contact with children and young people as part of your job. Your offer of an engagement with the BBC is therefore subject to you confirming that you are not restricted from working with children and young people and you will be asked to sign a Personal Declaration Form to that effect. If you work more closely with children the BBC reserves the right to ask you to be checked by the Criminal Records Bureau.*

**\*\* BBC Values – please see the attached BBC Values Guide.**

*A job description is a written statement of the essential characteristics of the job, with its principal accountabilities, incorporating a note of the skills, knowledge and experience required for a satisfactory level of performance. This is not intended to be a complete, detailed account of all aspects of the duties involved.*

*Prepared by BBC Recruitment for BBC Resources Ltd*