

BRISTOL CONCERT ORCHESTRA

Conductor opportunity

Bristol Concert Orchestra (BCO) is seeking a new Conductor from January 2025 to succeed Stefan Hofkes who is moving to Spain.

BCO is Bristol's longest established symphony orchestra. We play three main concerts a year, featuring challenging large scale symphonic repertoire, plus spin-off events.

We are a friendly, encouraging, and supportive orchestra which looks to give its members the best possible experience, while achieving musical excellence.

Our website <https://bristolconcertorchestra.org.uk> gives detailed background.

Conductor's main duties

- 1) Conduct the Bristol Concert Orchestra (BCO) at rehearsals and performances.
- 2) Assume full responsibility for the musical direction of the orchestra's performances.
- 3) Work with the Leader and Section Leaders at full and sectional rehearsals on musical and technical aspects of orchestral playing.
- 4) Advise the BCO Committee on the choice of music for concerts, taking into account the abilities of the orchestra, and the programme suggestions submitted by orchestra members.
- 5) Advise the BCO Committee on the choice of suitable soloists.
- 6) Offer general advice and assistance to the BCO Chairman and Committee on all matters pertaining to the musical conduct of the BCO.
- 7) Work with the Leader and BCO Committee to enhance the long-term technical and artistic development of the orchestra while maintaining its financial security.
- 8) Advise the Leader and BCO Committee on the selection of the Leaders of the Second Violin, Viola, and Cello sections. Advise the BCO Committee and Woodwind, Brass and Percussion Section Organisers on the selection of suitable players.
- 9) Advise the BCO Committee and appropriate Section Leader / Organiser about any member of the orchestra who is unable to perform to a satisfactory level within rehearsals and concerts, and together decide any action that may need to be taken.

Rehearsals are at Ashton Park School from 19:30 to 21:30 on Monday evenings in school term, with an additional Friday evening just before each concert. Concerts are at weekends, mostly in St Georges Bristol. We use other venues in and around Bristol when appropriate to repertoire, target audience and cost.

Person specification

Essential:

- A) Professional musician with proven experience of orchestral conducting
- B) Wide-ranging knowledge of orchestral repertoire and its technical and musical requirements
- C) Ability to conduct exciting high quality concerts and to engage with audiences
- D) Ability to lead rehearsals to maintain and develop the orchestra's quality and be rewarding, challenging and enjoyable for all sections of the orchestra
- E) Willingness to explore exciting and varied pieces which are both challenging and enjoyable for the orchestra
- F) Sufficient knowledge of all instrumental families to understand technical challenges and help players resolve them
- G) Excellent communication skills and a positive, encouraging attitude towards amateur players, giving them the support and confidence to perform at their best
- H) Diplomacy skills and the ability to deal with members of different ages and experiences
- I) Willingness to take an active interest in the management of the orchestra, working closely with the committee, Chair and Leader
- J) Willingness to engage socially with members of the orchestra outside of rehearsals and during rehearsal break

Desirable:

- K) Conducting qualification
- L) Contacts in the musical profession to secure soloists and to recommend deputy conductors where necessary
- M) Experience as an orchestral instrumentalist
- N) Familiarity with and contacts in the Bristol and regional musical scene

How to apply

We aim to attract applicants from a diverse range of backgrounds, and we encourage applications from groups who are under-represented in professional classical music. We will prefer applicants with short, reliable and sustainable access to Bristol.

The appointment will be on a self-employed basis, meaning that the postholder will be responsible for their own tax, National Insurance and other financial arrangements. The postholder must have the necessary permission to work in the UK. Rehearsal and concert fees will be negotiable depending on skills and experience.

To apply, please email the orchestra chair at chair@bristolconcertorchestra.org.uk . Please send a CV including names and contact details of two relevant referees, a brief covering letter explaining why you are interested in BCO and what you would bring to us, and link(s) to video showing you conducting a rehearsal and/or concert. Applications will be treated in confidence.

The closing date is 21 July 2024. Shortlisted candidates will be interviewed online in August. A small number will be invited to conduct a rehearsal of the orchestra in September or October. The committee will decide the appointment in the light of the orchestra's views on candidates after the auditions. The appointed candidate should take up the role from January 2025. The appointment will be initially for two terms, reviewed after the summer 2025 concert.

For any further information please e-mail chair@bristolconcertorchestra.org.uk .