

Chorus Director

Norwich Philharmonic Society

Norwich Philharmonic Society is looking to appoint a new Chorus Director for September 2024. “The Phil” is a well-respected amateur chorus and orchestra, established in 1841, performing a number of highly regarded and well supported concerts throughout our six-month season. David Dunnett, our chorus director for over 25 years is stepping down in March 2024, and we are looking for an enthusiastic and dedicated Chorus Director to provide musical inspiration, leadership, and training to our chorus.

We are a mixed voice, auditioned chorus of over 100 members, performing a wide range of works from the choral repertoire: recent performances have included Mahler’s 8th Symphony, Duke Ellington’s Sacred Works, the Verdi Requiem, Rossini’s Petite Messe Solonnelle and Orff’s Carmina Burana; for some of the larger choral pieces, we have combined with other choirs and choruses in Norfolk and East Anglia. Following the Norfolk and Norwich Festival historical tradition of commissioning works (Elgar’s Sea Pictures, Vaughan Williams’ Five Tudor Portraits) we are currently seeking funding for a newly commissioned substantial work by Dani Howard, with librettist Phil Porter, to be performed at the Norfolk and Norwich Festival in May 2025.

The pattern of concerts for the Chorus is a half-choral, half-orchestral concert in early November, a Christmas ‘Family’ concert on the Tuesday before Christmas, and a full choral concert in mid to late March. Occasionally, there are additional commitments, such as in the Norfolk and Norwich Festival (late May) sometimes with a professional orchestra and conductor, as well as Choral Workshops and ‘Come and Sing’ events.

The Chorus has a long-standing relationship with the Musik Institut in Koblenz, and alternating exchange visits are organised every two years, where members of the two choirs combine to sing, normally at the March concert. We have also collaborated with other local choirs and Cambridge Philharmonic Society to sing at Ely Cathedral.

The Chorus Director's responsibilities will include:

- liaising with the professional orchestral conductor and Committee to select a stimulating and varied programme for three choral concerts, performed with the orchestra, during the season.
- leading weekly rehearsals (held on Tuesday evenings) with a professional accompanist from September to March.
- developing good vocal and choral techniques to enable the chorus to appreciate the composers' intentions and produce a high standard of performance for the selected works.
- selection and engagement of suitable vocal soloists when needed for performances.
- conducting concert performances with additional 'dress' rehearsals on the Friday evening and Saturday afternoon beforehand, as necessary.
- conducting auditions for any prospective member of the chorus, and carrying out re-auditions of the chorus as necessary.
- attending committee meetings (currently held on Zoom) and the Society's AGM.

Job Description

The Chorus Director is responsible for the overall musical standard of the chorus and preparing the chorus for concerts, usually three a year, plus the potential involvement of the Chorus in the annual Norwich and Norfolk Festival. They are expected to promote the quality and attractiveness of the chorus to potential new singers as well as an audience, thus maintaining the high profile and standing of the Philharmonic chorus in Norwich and Norfolk. In conjunction with the Committee and the professional orchestral conductor, they will be expected to select the programme for the three choral concerts, performed with the Society's orchestra, during the season. The current salary is £4,800 for the season.

We are seeking someone with the following qualities:

Essential:

- To have suitable experience of choral training and performance.
- To be an excellent communicator, with an engaging and enthusiastic manner - we hope they will ensure that the chorus enjoy their rehearsals and be inspired to perform under their new leader.
- To challenge and further develop the choir and its repertoire.
- To have experience of working with orchestras and professional soloists
- To embrace an inclusive ethos and commitment to supporting equal opportunities

Desirable:

- To have a degree in music, music teaching or related field.
- To be prepared to lead occasional workshops, and fund-raising 'Come and Sing' days.
- To have some experience of working within a Committee management structure.
- To be confident in teaching members of the chorus to sing in different languages.

If you believe you have the vision and ability to lead this flourishing choir, you are invited to submit your CV and a covering letter, with the names and contact details of two referees to our Chorus Secretary: sallyfish@msn.com The deadline for applications is March 3rd. Please state where you saw the post advertised.

We plan to draw up a long-list of candidates for online interviews on March 27th and 28th. Candidates selected for a short-list will be invited to an interview in person on the same night as they are expected to conduct a chorus rehearsal held in April-May 2023. There will be one item of music chosen by the Committee (common to all candidates) and another chosen by each candidate. The successful candidate will be expected to start in September 2024.