



IRISH
CHAMBER
ORCHESTRA

ICO Leader Recruitment Pack





Table of Contents

3. Introduction

4. What We Do

6. Our Vision and Mission

7. Our Values

8. The Role of ICO Leader

10. Ideal Candidate

11. Other information

Introduction

Dear Candidate

Thank you for your interest in the role of Orchestra leader with Irish Chamber Orchestra (ICO).

This is an exciting and pivotal role at the heart of one of Ireland's most dynamic ensembles. The Orchestra Leader will play a key part in realising our vision of what a world-class chamber orchestra can be in the 21st century—artistically excellent, relevant, and forward-thinking.

Leading a dynamic and energetic ensemble, and working in partnership with our Artistic Partner, Artistic Advisor, and CEO, the successful candidate will directly influence the orchestra's artistic direction and uphold our high musical standards. The Orchestra Leader also sits on the Artistic Committee, which shapes our programming and artistic direction. With the recent appointment of Henning Kraggerud as Artistic Partner, we are entering an ambitious new chapter, rich in artistic opportunity and collaboration.

ICO is Ireland's busiest chamber ensemble, comprising 22 exceptional musicians known for their passion, dedication, and collaborative spirit. ICO offers a unique and welcoming atmosphere, with many musicians staying at the same hotel during rehearsals, fostering a sense of camaraderie and connection that extends beyond the rehearsal room - an open, supportive environment that is both rare and special. This rapport helps to create ICO's unique sound which has captivated audiences all over the world.

Each year, we present our concert seasons in Limerick and

Dublin, embark on regular national tours, with prestigious international appearances supported by Culture Ireland. Our Artistic Committee works closely with our Artistic Partner to devise exciting, diverse, and innovative programmes, mixing standard repertoire with new work – often specially commissioned – from the best Irish and international composers. This versatile approach enables us to appeal to music lovers of every stripe while upholding the highest artistic standards.

Throughout the past decade, we have performed at leading concert halls and festivals across Europe, the U.S.A., and South America. We have released a series of acclaimed recordings on the prestigious Orfeo and Alpha Classics labels. The successful candidate will work alongside an outstanding roster of guest artists, which have included in recent seasons the likes of Jörg Widmann, Thomas Zehetmair, Kristian Bezuidenhout, Igor Levit, Brett Dean, Tabea Zimmermann, Elisabeth Leonskaja and Istvan Vardai.

Our acclaimed ICO Schools initiative is the only music education programme in Ireland linked to a professional orchestra. It offers free access to music education to children and young people, where they gain an abundance of opportunities and life-enhancing skills. Over the years, we have achieved incredible results and witnessed first-hand the life-changing power of music.

We are orchestra-in-residence at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick and we are funded by The Arts Council of Ireland/An Chomhairle Ealaíon.

What we do

ICO currently undertakes approximately 37 performances each year, from performances of our core programme in venues across the country, to high-profile international engagements and select recording projects.

The orchestra routinely collaborates on diverse projects—from opera and cross-genre concerts to creative partnerships with other Irish arts organisations—demonstrating our commitment to innovation and artistic relevance.



Visit www.irishchamberorchestra.com/music
to watch us perform



We also maintain a strong and meaningful presence in music education and community engagement. These activities are woven into the fabric of our organisation, with many musicians contributing directly to programmes such as:

- **ICO Schools**, hailed as a model of social inclusion, which offers free weekly music tuition and performance opportunities to over 450 primary school children in Limerick.
- **ICO Youth**, our youth orchestra for musicians aged 11 to 24, providing community-based ensemble experience and mentorship.
- **MA in Classical String Performance** run in partnership with the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick, provides holistic postgraduate string training led by ICO Principals, as well as close contact with visiting ICO directors and soloists. ICO is orchestra-in-residence at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick.
- **Community Visits** take place throughout the year. ICO musicians give time to visit local voluntary organisations and charities to perform for audiences who are unable to attend concerts, in hospitals, special needs centres and other venues.
- **ConCorda** an international chamber music course for string players held annually in the beautiful surrounds of Newtown School, Waterford. The course is designed to provide students with the opportunity to study chamber music intensively at a very high level with a staff of Irish and International experts including members of Irish Chamber Orchestra.



Our Vision

To be one of the world's most inspiring and innovative chamber orchestras, performing to the highest artistic standards for the widest possible audience.

At the heart of ICO's vision is the belief that music is for everyone.

Our Mission

To enrich the lives of everyone we engage with through world class performances, collaborations and music education and engagement programmes.



Our Values



Excellence

We strive for excellence in all that we do, through our artistic programming and performance, our education and engagement programmes, and our management and governance.

Inclusivity

We promote inclusivity, equality and diversity across our organisation, encouraging inclusive practice in the way we work and across the design, development and delivery of our performances, programmes and collaborations.

Engagement

We work with the finest and most talented musicians and artists across the creative disciplines to engage with audiences of all ages, and with the broader music community, nationally and internationally.

Collaboration

We collaborate with partners and key local, national, and international stakeholders enabling us, through a shared vision to deliver world-class experiences to diverse audiences.

Innovation

We seek to grow and innovate, developing cutting-edge programmes, projects and commissions, with and by Irish and international composers and artists; presenting our performances in unexpected places and spaces where our audiences can meet to enjoy our music.

The Role of the ICO Leader

This is a freelance position suited to a highly distinguished violinist with a strong background in orchestral and chamber music, leadership experience, and a passion for collaboration and artistic excellence.

The Orchestra Leader will play an integral role in shaping ICO's musical identity and driving our artistic vision. This role offers a unique opportunity for an outstanding musician to contribute to the orchestra's vibrant programming, spanning baroque to contemporary and Irish music.

The Orchestra Leader will collaborate closely with the Artistic Partner, Artistic Advisor, and CEO to ensure the highest artistic standards, providing guidance to our musicians and fostering cohesion within the ensemble.



Key responsibilities include the following:

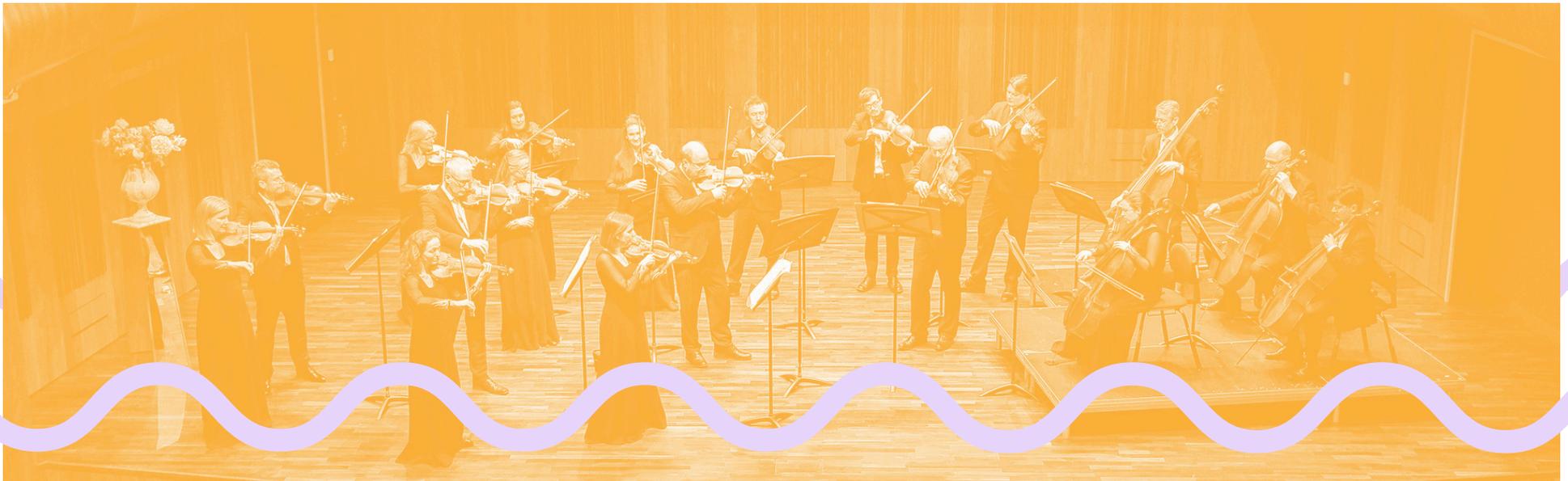
- Lead the orchestra when there is a Conductor.
- Sit sub-principal to Guest Directors.
- Direct the orchestra for agreed programmes and for individual programme elements as required.
- Perform as a soloist when required.
- Work in close collaboration with the Artistic Partner, Artistic Advisor and CEO to shape the musical vision of the orchestra.
- Actively participate as a member of the Artistic Subcommittee, contributing to the delivery of the orchestra's artistic mission and programme.
- Act as a liaison between the conductor and the orchestra, communicating musical ideas effectively.
- Provide guidance to section leaders and ensure the cohesion of the orchestra's sound.
- Contribute to educational and community engagement initiatives.
- Maintain a professional and positive relationship with orchestra members, management, and stakeholders.



As ICO embarks on an exciting new chapter with our new Artistic Partner, the Orchestra Leader will play a key role in realising ICO's vision. If you have the experience, passion, leadership and interpersonal skills, and are excited by the prospect of working for an ambitious and excellent chamber orchestra, this could be the role for you.

Ideal Candidate

- Exceptional Violinist: Strong classical background with versatility in various musical genres.
- Proven Leadership: Experience leading an ensemble or orchestra, with a collaborative, motivational style.
- Orchestral Expertise: In-depth knowledge of orchestral repertoire and performance practices.
- Effective Communicator: Ability to bridge the gap between conductor and orchestra, ensuring cohesive musical interpretation.
- Collaborative Team Player: Strong interpersonal skills to work closely with orchestra members, conductors, and management.
- Passionate & Committed: Deep dedication to ICO's mission and contributing to its artistic growth and success.
- Flexible & Adaptable: Open to diverse musical styles and art forms, contributing to community engagement and educational initiatives.



Other Information

Audition and Interview requirements:

- A five minute mvt from one of the Bach Partitas
- 1st and 2nd mvt of a Mozart concerto with cadenza
- A contrasting piece of own choice with cadenza as appropriate
- Orchestral excerpts tbc
- Chamber music - Mozart String Quartet played with ICO Principals
- Interview



Position Brief:

Orchestra Leader - Irish Chamber Orchestra

- **Contract type:** This is a freelance contract for services as Orchestra Leader.
- **Location:** ICO is based at the University of Limerick where it maintains a rehearsal studio, office space and other facilities in our own purpose-built building. The University of Limerick campus, on the fringe of Limerick city in the mid-west of Ireland, is an attractive and dynamic home for the ICO Studio. Orchestra members and guest artists stay at an excellent nearby hotel with a restaurant, gym, swimming pool and other facilities. In common with several other members of the ICO, it will be possible to live overseas while undertaking non-playing duties.
- **Fees:** Retainer €22,000 (paid over 10 months); 30 concert fees @ €450 = €13,500; Directing one tour = €3,600. Plus, expenses where applicable (e.g., per diems). Total circa €40,000 per annum.
- **Scope of activity:** ICO guarantees a minimum of ten monthly freelance projects per year – each generally comprising five to eight days, depending on the number of concerts. Concerts take place in Limerick and Dublin, with national touring central to our mission. Project dates are notified at least a year in advance, while the detailed orchestral diary is finalised three months in advance. The expected annual commitment is 70 days. January and July are non-retainer months, with no concert commitments during these periods.

To apply

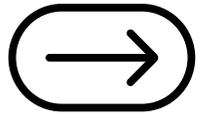
Please apply via musicalchairs <https://www.musicalchairs.info/jobs/50622> and upload your CV and a cover letter outlining your suitability and experience by 23.59 pm Tuesday 1 July 2025.

Initial Auditions and Interviews will take place mid October.

For any queries please contact CEO Gerard Keenan on Gerard.keenan@ul.ie

If you are a passionate, collaborative musician eager to shape the future of a world-class chamber orchestra, we would love to hear from you.

More information on Irish Chamber Orchestra:



www.irishchamberorchestra.com

Read the ICO Strategy: [ICO Strategy 2024 – 2028 – Beyond the Notes:](#)

Pin to ICO studio: https://maps.app.goo.gl/Dj2Tt68EaA52UzNfA?g_st=iw

Thank you for your interest in this role. ICO is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to selection on merit welcoming applicants from all sections of the community.

Feel every
note

