

WORK WITH THE CBSO

LEADER



LEADER

The CBSO is seeking an exceptional violinist to lead and inspire this world-renowned orchestra. The ideal candidate will have extensive professional orchestral experience and outstanding leadership abilities, combined with the highest level of technical and musical excellence and a collaborative spirit.

The CBSO works approximately 190 days a year and seeks to employ one of two leaders. The two leaders will undertake the responsibility of leading the orchestra for approximately 75 days each per year, with the Associate Leader (No.2) usually leading several concerts during the year, and the Assistant Leader (No.3) leading on occasion. The allocation of work for both leaders each season is organised by the Orchestra Manager/Director of Artistic Planning and the Director of Orchestra operations. This job requires travelling throughout the UK and touring overseas as well as evening and weekend work. Whilst this position does not require that you work exclusively for the CBSO, it is expected that the Orchestra will have first call on your availability.

The role of the leader is to lead, motivate and inspire the Orchestra and First Violin Section. They must have excellent solo and orchestral playing abilities and are responsible for maintaining the highest musical standards required by the CBSO. They will share responsibility with section leaders and the management team to support effective people management, development, diversity, inclusion and belonging.

CONTRACT: Day count by negotiation – approximately 75 days per annum

LOCATION: Birmingham based but with a regular requirement to travel in the UK and internationally

REPORTING TO: Director of Orchestra Operations

SALARY: This is a freelance position with a negotiated daily rate

ABOUT THE CBSO

[The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra](#) (CBSO) is an internationally celebrated symphony orchestra, at home in Birmingham. A family of 90 incredible musicians, led by Chief Conductor and Artistic Advisor Kazuki Yamada, proud to make exciting musical experiences that matter.

Resident at Symphony Hall, the orchestra performs over 150 concerts each year in Birmingham, the UK and around the world, with music that ranges from classics to contemporary, soundtracks to symphonies, and everything in between. For more than 100 years, it has been involved in every aspect of music-making in the Midlands, and through its wide-reaching community and education projects, and family of choruses and youth ensembles, this continues to grow. Helping to build a life-long love of music for audiences, communities and musicians across Birmingham, the West Midlands and beyond.

OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY:

The CBSO is an equal opportunity organisation: we value diversity in our organisation and welcome applications from everyone. We consistently monitor our recruitment process to ensure that individuals are selected based on their relevant merits and abilities and receive equal treatment.

You will be welcomed at the CBSO and will find an inclusive environment where different views and experiences are valued, and everyone is able to be themselves. We recognise and understand the importance of diversity and inclusion and want our organisation to be representative of the audiences, people, and communities we serve.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- To lead and inspire the Orchestra whilst maintaining the highest standard of performance and artistic excellence required by the orchestra.
- To take responsibility for the style, intonation, balance, ensemble and rhythm in conjunction with the Conductor.
- To direct the orchestra or sections in rehearsal and in performance as required.
- To maintain an exemplary level of preparation with regards to orchestral repertoire and solos, including providing bowings to the library in advance of each project.

- To be an effective Section Leader for the First Violins, taking a proactive role in maintaining section quality, cohesion and wellbeing.
- To build and maintain effective working relationships with all members of the orchestra, management team, freelance musicians, artists and conductors engaged by the orchestra.
- To set examples and be responsible for the maintenance of good orchestral etiquette and discipline.
- To foster an environment in which artistic excellence flourishes.

- To participate and take leading roles in orchestra recruitment, including being part of shortlisting and audition panels and attending trial assessment meetings, with due regard for confidentiality, diversity and inclusion.
- 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 orchestra.
- To participate in performance/capability reviews in accordance with the CBSO MU Agreement.
- To be a role model for CBSO's values and work in accordance with the CBSO/MU Agreement, and all other CBSO policies and guidelines.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE WILL HAVE:

- Outstanding professional orchestral and solo violin playing abilities.
- Detailed knowledge of a wide range of orchestral repertoire.
- The ability to inspire and lead performances that meet the highest musical standards, by providing artistic direction and by motivating members of the orchestra.
- Effective people and performance management skills, including the ability to give constructive feedback, deal with sensitive issues and to make important decisions.
- Excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to establish and develop harmonious working relationships with a diverse range of people.
- The ability to maintain personal and professional effectiveness by managing emotions in the face of pressure, setbacks or when dealing with challenging or provocative situations.
- Commitment to maintain and grow the reputation of the orchestra.
- Embody and exemplify respect for others by being fully prepared and ready to play at the start of every session.

RECRUITMENT OVERVIEW

SHORTLISTING

Following the deadline, anonymised application forms will be reviewed and scored by the recruitment panel. Candidates will then be offered a First Round (screened) audition or an Automatic Second Round (unscreened) audition based on their score. Automatic Trials will not be offered.

AUDITION

First and Second audition rounds will take place on the same day using a call back system.

First Round auditions are screened (anonymous) and will include performing one piece and a small number of orchestral excerpts – full details and notated music for both rounds is included in the Audition Booklet.

Second Round auditions (for candidates progressing from the First Round) are unscreened and will include another concerto, further orchestral excerpts and a piece of chamber music with CBSO musicians. Candidates may be asked to present material from the First Round again and may be asked to respond to feedback from the panel.

Candidates shortlisted for an Automatic Second Round will be asked to present all material from both audition rounds in a single, unscreened audition.

All audition rounds will be heard unaccompanied.

TRIAL

Candidates who have demonstrated a suitable playing ability through audition will be invited to trial for the position. This involves being invited for assessed freelance work with the orchestra on a project-by-project basis. The recruitment panel and section will meet regularly to discuss each candidate's progress and provide feedback or updates where necessary.

As part of the later stages of a trial, the candidate may be invited to perform orchestral extracts/solos with the orchestra and Music Director or Principal Guest Conductor.

INTERVIEW

Candidates who have demonstrated that they meet the requirements of the role during the trial period will be invited to a formal interview with members of the panel and CBSO Senior Management Team.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply for this position, please complete the online application form below. Any questions should be directed to applications@cbso.co.uk.

Please note that our shortlisting process is anonymous, so please ensure your application form does not reference your name or personal details.

We ask that you complete the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Monitoring section of the online form when you submit your application. The information collected will be treated as confidential, used for statistical purposes only, and will not be treated as part of your application.

LINK TO APPLICATION FORM: <https://forms.office.com/e/wchyCmLrHr>

RECRUITMENT TIMETABLE:

Application deadline: Tuesday 30 June 2026

Auditions: Tuesday 8 September, Monday 12 October, Friday 6 November 2026