

Job Vacancy

Chorus Master

Department:	Music
Salary:	Negotiable
Deadline for Applications:	Friday 6 December 2019 (12 pm)
Interviews:	Mid December 2019
Permanent	

Welsh National Opera is an Equal Opportunities Employer and a Registered Charity. We encourage people from any background to apply for vacancies. We are committed to creating a workforce which is representative of society and brings together people with a variety of skills and experiences to help shape what we do and how we work. We are particularly keen to hear from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and disabled candidates.

All candidates must complete an application form. Forms can be downloaded at <https://wno.org.uk/about/work-for-us> and submitted electronically to recruitment@wno.org.uk or in hard copy to the HR Department, WNO, Wales Millennium Centre, Bute Place Cardiff CF10 5AL.

Our Mission

Our mission is to bring the power, drama and raw emotion of opera to as wide an audience as possible in performances, marked by an uncompromising quest for artistic quality.

As a national company with international status, we sit at the heart of music-making in Wales and play a valuable role in the communities we serve in England. We work with our partners to discover and nurture young operatic talent, and provide the springboard for international careers.

Touring is our lifeblood and we strive to present the highest quality work across our artistic programme, entertaining and inspiring audiences at our operas and concerts and providing transformative experiences through our youth and community work.

Building on our 70-year history and our roots in the communities of South Wales, we aim to demonstrate to future generations that opera is a rewarding, relevant and universal art form.

More than any other company, WNO opens up the world of opera to everyone.

Our Vision

We believe in the power of opera to transform lives.

Our Values are:

Expert our people have the talent, knowledge and skills to deliver at every level with the highest quality standards

Collaborative our work is created by people coming together and working in partnership to successfully achieve common goals

Smart we are agile and open-minded, identifying new opportunities and using our resources wisely to maximise our potential

Innovative we are unafraid to challenge ourselves creatively and professionally and actively encourage new ideas

Inclusive we embrace a diverse workplace culture where people are valued. We respect and recognise each other's differences in an environment where all can thrive

Our Goals

Goal 1: Artistic

Open up opera through presentation, content, innovation and accessibility

Goal 2: Income

Unlock our creative and artistic capital to grow our income streams

Goal 3: Audience

Grow and diversify our audiences by creating a buzz, increasing engagement and becoming unmissable

Goal 4: Relevance

Increase our relevance and inspire ownership throughout Wales, England and internationally

The energy which drives the Company today is rooted in its formation in the 1940s. In 1943, WNO was founded by a group of people from across South Wales including miners, teachers and doctors. They wanted to forge an opera Company befitting Wales's rich reputation as the 'land of song'. The first rehearsals took place above a garage in Cardiff and their first performance was in April 1946 with the double

bill of *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci*. From those early days through to today, WNO has attracted some of the world's best opera singers, and indeed offers many young singers their first steps to international renown.

Following his position as General Director of Seattle Opera since 2014, Aidan Lang joined WNO to lead the Company as General Manager in July 2019.

Welsh National Opera has been led from the pit by a series of great Music Directors and has worked with many of the art form's most influential directors; traditions which continue to this day. Our current Music Director Tomáš Hanus joined WNO in August 2016. At its heart sit the Company's two full-time ensembles, the 36 strong Chorus and 55 strong Orchestra. The Company's funding structure is unique amongst large-scale arts organisations in the UK as it receives its core funding from both the Arts Council of Wales and Arts Council England.

The Company performs at its home base – the state-of-the-art Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff and tours in Wales and England performing to over 100,000 people each year. Today WNO is an ensemble of passionate and committed musicians, artists, craftspeople, technicians and administrators. It employs over 230 people and has a turnover of £18m.

About Cardiff – The Home of Welsh National Opera

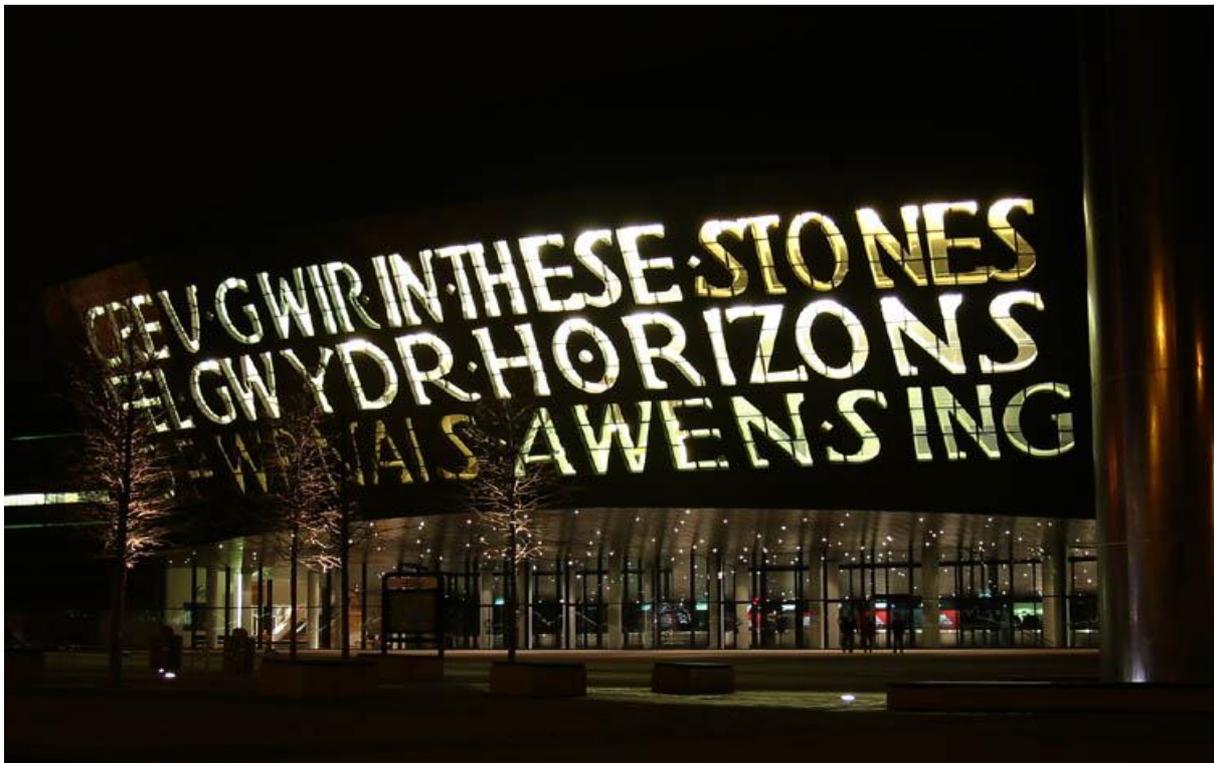
Cardiff is a city proud of its culture, history and language. The capital of Wales since 1955, Cardiff has embraced the role with vigour, emerging in the new millennium as one of Britain's leading urban centres.

Cardiff is a compact city; an ancient castle to the north of its centre; a thriving waterfront at Cardiff Bay to its south; Cardiff combines ancient history, sporting excitement, ultra-modern development, eclectic culture and activities. Cardiff is a friendly, diverse and exciting capital city, just 2 hours by train from London.

Cardiff offers a startling range of unique attractions, top class entertainment and quality shopping with a difference and is easy to explore on foot with attractions such as the National Museum Cardiff, spectacular Cardiff Castle and the impressive Principality Stadium, all within the City Centre, while Cardiff Bay is a short hop away.

Cardiff is also a thriving hub for the arts and media in Wales and internationally and a flourishing film and TV industry. Many mainstream television programmes such as Torchwood, Merlin, Gavin and Stacey, Casualty, Sherlock, Upstairs Downstairs, The Hollow Crown Shakespeare series of plays and Pobl y Cwm are all being produced by BBC Wales and S4C, with Doctor Who attracting fans from across the globe. Cardiff also hosts many musical events including the prestigious *Cardiff Singer of the World* annual competition which draws a huge international audience of fans to the city as well as many arts and media students who chose to study at the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies is based at Cardiff University, a member of the prestigious Russell Group of leading universities and the Cardiff School of Creative and Cultural Industries at the University of South Wales.

Along with the innovative architecture of Cardiff City Centre with its historic buildings, Cardiff Bay offers a great mix of dining, shopping, activities, waterside views, arts and entertainment for everyone. At its heart is Wales Millennium Centre, the home of Welsh National Opera.



The Chorus of Welsh National Opera

The WNO Chorus began as a professional body in 1968 working with the Company's famed Voluntary Chorus until 1973, when the latter was disbanded. The Voluntary Chorus was made up of amateur singers who gathered together in 1943 to form the nucleus of what became Welsh National Opera. Many members of the Voluntary Chorus auditioned for the newly-formed Chorus and became full-time professional singers, often after lengthy careers in other fields. Thus the Chorus of Welsh National Opera was firmly based in the Welsh tradition of choral societies, as well as drawing on the strong vocal culture both inside and outside Wales. It was the success of the Chorus in such early productions as *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci*, *Faust*, *The Tales of Hoffmann*, and especially *Nabucco* that put WNO firmly on the operatic map. In the early days of WNO, many roles were cast from within the Chorus, and this tradition remains to this day. Consequently, many members of the ensemble are heavily involved in this part of the Company's work. The Chorus' operatic and concert work has won wide praise, not only in the traditional repertory such as Verdi, but also in 20th century works such as Tippett's *A Midsummer Marriage* and Janáček's *From the House of the Dead*. The Chorus has recorded many operas including *Andrea Chenier* with Riccardo Chailly, *Tristan und Isolde* and *Parsifal* with Sir Reginald Goodall, *I masnadieri*, *Norma*, *Hamlet*, *Ernani*, *Anna Bolena* and *Adriana Lecouvreur* with Richard Bonyngne, and *Rigoletto*, *Faust* and *Un ballo in maschera* with Carlo Rizzi. It has recorded *Tosca* with Sir Georg Solti as well as *The Mikado*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Yeomen of the Guard*, Britten's *Gloriana* and Janáček's *Osud* with Sir Charles Mackerras. Among concert pieces it has recorded are *Sea Drift* by Delius, *The Vigil of Venus* by George Lloyd and *Hiawatha* by Coleridge-Taylor. Most members of the Chorus have active concert and operatic careers as soloists.

The Chorus have travelled with the Company to many venues abroad including, in 2017, Dubai Opera with performances of *Madama Butterfly* and *La bohème*; in 2014, The Savonlinna Opera Festival in Finland, as well as being the first UK opera company to perform in the Royal Opera House Muscat in Oman in 2013. Recently there have been landmark performances under previous Music Director Lothar Koenigs of Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and *Lohengrin*, and, in 2014, Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron*, for which the Chorus received critical acclaim and a host of award nominations, winning a Wales Theatre Award in 2015.

The Chorus is no stranger to the concert platform where they have performed with great distinction in recent years, including at the Royal Albert Hall for the BBC Proms in a concert performance of *Die Meistersinger*; at St David's Hall Cardiff with performances of Handel's *Messiah*, the Mozart *Requiem*, the Brahms *Requiem* and the Poulenc *Gloria*; and at the Edinburgh Festival with Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. The Chorus recently appeared alongside the Orchestra and WNO Community Chorus for a tremendously impressive performance of Mahler Symphony No. 2 with new Music Director Tomáš Hanus, his first symphonic concert with the Company.

The Chorus undertook a tour of Wales in 2011 with a specially devised and presented programme by the Chorus Master Stephen Harris, repeated in the summer of 2015 with their then Chorus Master Alexander Martin. The 2014/2015 Season also saw a revival of the hugely popular production of *Chorus!*, featuring some of opera's greatest choruses; placing the WNO Chorus firmly in the spotlight once more. In April 2015 they won Chorus of the Year at the prestigious International Opera Awards.

2018 saw the Chorus Ladies feature heavily in a series of performances throughout Wales and England of a new staged commission titled *Rhondda Rips It Up!* by Elena Langer, whilst the Gentlemen toured Wales with WNO Orchestra as part of a series of concert residencies.

Job title: Chorus Master

Responsible for: Choristers (permanent and extra chorus, in association with the Chorus Manager and the Chorus & Orchestra Director)

Responsible to: **Artistic :** Music Director
Operational : Chorus and Orchestra Director

Main purpose of job

To be responsible for and ensure the highest quality of musical preparation and delivery of the Chorus for opera performances, concerts, recordings and WNO Youth and Community activities.

To be responsible for the artistic development of the Chorus.

Organisation chart: See attached

Key accountabilities

Artistic Management

- Oversee artistically and direct the Chorus musically in order to achieve consistently the highest level of artistic standards for the Company.
- Supervising all of the work of the Chorus in order to achieve the maximum effectiveness as part of the wider artistic ensemble.

People Management

- Working with the Chorus Manager to achieve a productive environment both through and around the Company's rehearsal and performance processes.
- Providing regular feedback to Choristers including bi-annual appraisal reviews. Identifying development needs of Chorus members.
- Encouraging upward communication of ideas and issues from Chorus members.

Financial

- To provide all relevant information to enable the Chorus Manager and Chorus and Orchestra Director to produce budget projections for all WNO work that involves the Chorus.
- Help to create rehearsal and performance processes that are conducive to responsible financial management of the Chorus.

Key accountabilities as Chorus Master

- To rehearse the Chorus in preparation for opera performances, concerts, recordings and to support WNO Youth and Community initiatives and activity.
- To conduct or oversee the Chorus at rehearsals and to play the piano for chorus rehearsals as required.
- To liaise with the Chorus Manager and the Chorus and Orchestra Director on matters relating to the administration of the Chorus.
- To attend all relevant artistic planning meetings and budget meetings requiring artistic decision-making. To contribute to all scheduling decisions in relation to Chorus rehearsals and performances flowing from such meets and all other such discussions.
- To conduct backstage choral elements of main stage productions and undertake non-choral backstage musical elements as required, including playing as required by the Head of Music.
- To be fully involved (including as a choral conductor) in Chorus Concerts as required by the Chorus and Orchestra Director – including programming such events in association with relevant colleagues. To be fully involved in the planning of Chorus Concerts and the involvement of the Chorus in Orchestra-based Concerts, travelling and venue/promoter relationship-forming as relevant.

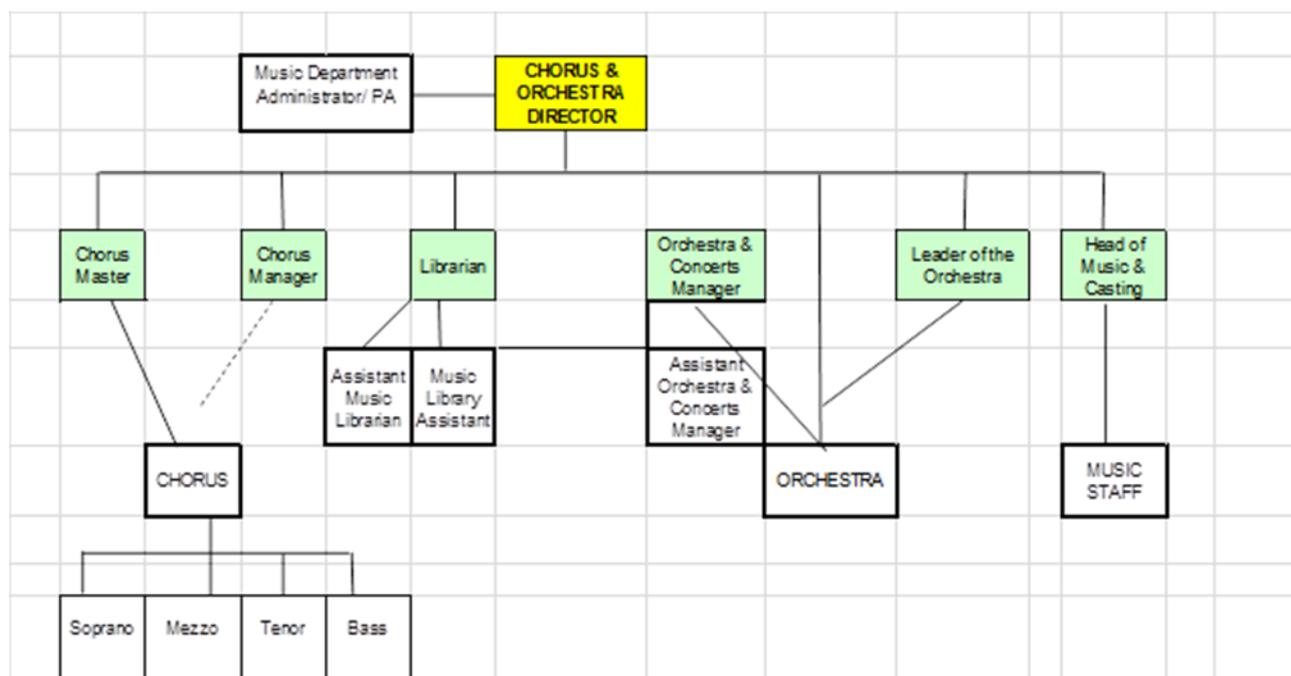
- To ensure that Choristers are working in a productive and well-disciplined environment at all times. To deal with, or contribute the resolution of, any disciplinary issues at the appropriate time in conjunction with the Chorus Manager and the Chorus and Orchestra Director.
- To participate administratively as a panel member in auditions for permanent choristers, extra choristers alongside the Head of Music and other key artistic staff.
- To participate administratively as a panel member in auditions to allocate roles and covers to Chorus members alongside the Head of Music and other key artistic staff.
- To oversee the allocation of Choristers in all operas and concerts.
- To assist and support the development of the WNO Community Choir and any other choral ensembles associated with the company.
- To work with language coaches in order to enhance the Chorus's rehearsal processes.

Any conducting aspirations will be considered favourably by the Company. This would include working as assistant conductor for opera productions and taking over some performances, as well as opportunities to conduct as part of the wider programme of the Company.

Health & Safety

- The post carries responsibility for Health & Safety issues at level 6 (see attached).

Organisation Chart



Person Specification

Essential skills, knowledge and experience:

- Able to communicate effectively at all levels.
- Highly organised and motivated with the ability to motivate others.
- Very strong knowledge of operatic repertoire.
- Excellent Choral Conductor.
- Accomplished pianistic skills.
- Languages – solid working knowledge and experience of working in Italian, German and French repertoire.
- Some experience of coaching singers and an understanding of vocal technique.
- Administrative and organisational skills.
- Computer literacy – Word and Email.

Desirable skills and experience:

- Concert Programming experience for Choral work.
- Working with singers in other operatic languages – eg. Russian and Czech.
- Experience of working as a member of music staff in an Opera Company.

Employee Benefits

Pension

All employees are automatically enrolled into WNO's Stakeholder Pension Scheme (the "Plan") or such other registered pension scheme as may be set up by the Company as a Qualifying Workplace Pension Scheme three months after joining the Company, subject to satisfying certain eligibility criteria.

Maternity/ Paternity/ Adoption

We offer a generous scheme which provides payments in addition to statutory provisions.

Corporate Leisure – Gym Membership

All employees are eligible to obtain the Active Corporate Card operated by Cardiff City Council which is available at a 25% reduced rate and covers various leisure facilities throughout Cardiff.

Discounts

The Wales Millennium Centre offers discounts to residents at selected outlets within the building and selected restaurants around Cardiff Bay on presentation of ID cards.

Discounted Cinema Tickets from Cineworld

Please contact HR for an access code.

Staff Parking Discount with Q Park

We have a corporate rate with Q Park, Pierhead Street (opposite WMC).

Main Terms and Conditions

- Salary by negotiation, payable monthly by credit transfer to bank.
- The offer of an appointment is subject to receipt of two references and a health report that are satisfactory to the company.
- The appointment is subject to a 6-month trial period
- Termination of engagement during the trial period is by one month's notice on either side. Termination thereafter is by three months' notice on either side.
- Working hours are as required to fulfil the duties of the post.
- The post is Cardiff-based but involves travelling throughout the UK and occasionally abroad.
- Holiday entitlement is 5 weeks per annum (pro rata for shorter engagements).
- Sickness benefit during the first six months of employment is at the statutory minimum. Entitlement thereafter is a maximum of 13 weeks at full salary and 13 weeks at half salary, inclusive of statutory sick pay in both cases.
- The Company offers a contributory pension scheme

Health and Safety

Individual Responsibilities

All Employees

(Level 6)

Every employed person, including Managers.

Responsibilities

All employees are responsible for:-

The observance and implementation of rules and systems which are derived from the Health and Safety Policy and the arrangements for its implementation.

Taking reasonable care for their personal health and safety and that of fellow employees and others who may be affected either directly or indirectly by their acts or omissions at work.

Reporting promptly to the appropriate Manager potential or actual hazards and defects.

Taking part in any health and safety training considered by the Company to be necessary in order to comply with the Company Health and Safety Policy and current legislation.

Knowing the correct action to be taken in the event of an accident, fire or other emergency.

Co-operating with Management and other employees in meeting statutory requirements.

Not interfering with or misusing anything provided to protect their health, safety or welfare which is required by legislation and using any machinery, equipment, substance or safety device in accordance with any training and instruction.