



## MUSIC DIRECTOR

One of the UK's foremost amateur choirs and orchestras is seeking a new Music Director. Tonbridge Philharmonic Society (TPS) has a thriving choir and orchestra at its heart, making this an appealing proposition to a candidate looking to make great music, lead vibrant performances, and chart an ambitious repertoire for both choir and orchestra.

Tonbridge is only 45 minutes by train from central London, and 40 miles by car.

Building on a significant history, TPS has been enterprising and resourceful during 2020-21, continuing to gather together and make music as best it can during lockdown, such is the spirit and commitment of its dedicated members. As the current Music Director Benjamin Westerman, is re-locating to Berlin, we are seeking a new Music Director to take over in Autumn 2021, as we expect to resume in person rehearsals in some form by then. We are also planning to revive our 75<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations which were put on hold by the pandemic.

TPS is unique in enjoying a new association with the venerable Royal Philharmonic Society, whose team is helping the TPS team optimise its marketing and promotional capabilities, and inspiring TPS Members by organising encounters virtual and real with noted solo musicians.

*'Tonbridge Philharmonic Society represents the very best of the nation's leisure-time choirs and orchestras. We have loved meeting the team, and a host of Members on Zoom, and together they exude a winning team spirit and appetite for making music. We are sure the role of Music Director will be rich in possibility for the right candidate.'*  
James Murphy, Chief Executive, Royal Philharmonic Society

**[www.tonphil.org.uk](http://www.tonphil.org.uk)**

## Key responsibilities

We recognise that all music directors have different strengths and look forward to talking to candidates about what they would bring to meeting each of these responsibilities. We are also interested in exploring what else they may also be able to offer or wish to develop within the role.

The key responsibilities of the Music Director are:

- Leading the choir and orchestra in their preparation for the schedule of concerts throughout the year (see below for outline of schedule)
- Conducting performances
- Working with the Executive Committee (ExCo) in planning the repertoire and sourcing appropriate soloists. The repertoire is usually scheduled two to three years out from the date of the concert
- Co-operating with the Marketing team in being available for media coverage in local press and on social media
- Developing and enhancing the standards for both choir and orchestra through challenging repertoire that builds on previous works performed

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## Remuneration

This is a remunerated position, and the Music Director is paid for all rehearsals attended, concerts conducted, and time spent on other matters such as press interviews. The Society does not pay travelling expenses, but will provide local hotel accommodation after a concert if required.

## Expressions of interest

The successful candidate will be a proficient, trained conductor with paid experience of conducting amateur and professional choirs and orchestras. They should have a demonstrable passion and track record for encouraging performers to excel, attain new standards, and give accomplished performances of a range of repertoire.

We are open to a wide range of candidates and anticipate that this role will suit an energetic, adventurous and charismatic music leader looking to further their experience, consolidate and expand their practical repertoire, and enhance their CV by demonstrating a wholehearted commitment to music-making.

Initially we hope to connect with interested candidates online for a general conversation, providing an opportunity to exchange information. Following this, we will invite candidates to attend a more formal meeting and audition.

If you would like to express an interest in the role, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact the Society Secretary on [secretary@tonphil.org.uk](mailto:secretary@tonphil.org.uk) or write to 16 Manor Close, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 8YB.

## About the Society

Tonbridge Philharmonic Society was established in 1946, and looks forward to fully celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> birthday in the year ahead, initially planned for the 2020-21 season but limited by the pandemic.

### *Performances*

From the early days the Society has comprised an orchestra and choir, with a pattern of events that has evolved into today's season as follows:

- November: major choral work with orchestra
- December: Family Carols (organ accompaniment/no orchestra)
- February: orchestral concert
- March: major choral work with orchestra
- May: orchestral concert
- June: lighter choral work(s) with orchestra

Our principal venue is the wonderful Chapel of Tonbridge School which accommodates reasonable symphonic forces. The 1995 Marcussen organ is widely regarded as one of the finest instruments in the country.

TPS is much-loved by its community. Audiences regularly exceed 250, with over 400 attending Shostakovich's *Leningrad* Symphony and over 500 attending the Britten *War Requiem* in 2018. The Family Carols, raising money for a local charity, attracts an enthusiastic sell-out audience of over 700. Other venues used are the churches of Ss Peter and Paul, and St Stephen, both in central Tonbridge.

In recent years we have performed a wide range of music from the usual repertoire of Bach and Beethoven to challenging works by Britten and Bernstein. We have been fortunate in finding Music Directors who have encouraged and stretched our capacities, always striving for the highest standards to match those of exceptional soloists. Recent repertoire is listed at the end of this document.

Our local reputation is strong, encouraging a consistent flow of new members. Auditions are not required, but the demanding pace of rehearsals imposes an expectation of capability on members. Discussions on how to meet these expectations are held with any member who is having difficulties with the repertoire.

### ***Rehearsals***

Rehearsals mainly follow the school year pattern but continue through half-term breaks. They are on Monday for the orchestra and Wednesday for the choir, each running 19:45 – 21:45, and are generally held in the Recital Room of Tonbridge School. Before a joint concert there are combined rehearsals, usually on the preceding Wednesday and on the afternoon of the concert. Parking is generally available at Tonbridge School.

### ***Structure of the Orchestra***

The orchestra currently consists of around 50 members including the leader, Susan Skone James.

The orchestra currently comprises:

- strings: 10 x 1st violins, 11 x 2nd violins, 7 x viola, 8 x cellos, (see note below re double basses)
- double wind plus a bass clarinet/3rd bassoon
- 4 horns, 2 trumpets (with a 3rd available), tenor and alto trombones
- Timpanist together with access to able music students at Tonbridge School to fulfil other percussion roles
- Extra wind players are available for no fee, and we have a regular group of horns, brass, double basses, percussion and harps to whom we pay a professional fee.
- Extra string players are occasionally called on.

The Orchestra is managed by an Orchestral Chair and Orchestral Deputy, supported by representatives for wind/brass and string sections and an Orchestral Librarian. All are voluntary posts drawn from players within the orchestra.

### ***Structure of the Choir***

The choir comprises over 100 members who are not auditioned, although in recent years the demands of ambitious repertoire have meant that some members have stepped down, to be balanced by a steady flow of joiners. Some join after attending the annual workshop mentioned below, and there has been a recent influx of younger members. The age range is 15 to 70+.

The choir current comprises:

- Soprano 1: 28
- Soprano 2: 16
- Alto 1: 22
- Alto 2: 16
- Tenor: 16
- Bass: 18

The choir is managed by a Choral Chair and Deputy Chair, both voluntary posts drawn from within the choir, supported by section representatives and a librarian.

The choir benefits from regular piano accompaniment provided by Jong-Gyung Park, a professional concert pianist. Jong-Gyung has much experience in accompanying choirs and is always willing to take sectional rehearsals. She occasionally contributes to our concerts and was scheduled to play Rachmaninov's 2<sup>nd</sup> Piano Concerto during our 75<sup>th</sup> season, to be rescheduled once we are able to perform again. We have had a taste of this work in a Zoom concert that Jong-Gyung recorded for us earlier this year.

In addition to regular rehearsals, an annual workshop has been staged each year to study a forthcoming work, led by the Music Director. This is organised by choir members, and attendance is usually around 80, mixing TPS members with others from choirs in the area.

As with most societies, it is unlikely that all members will be available at all rehearsals, or at all concerts. Other commitments and personal preference mean that some will choose not to take part in particular events. There is no strict rule as to how many or what percentage of rehearsals should be attended before a member is permitted to take part in the concert, although registers are kept so that the section leader knows who has attended regularly and who has not.

Members have benefitted greatly from instruction in vocal technique from former Music Directors, both during rehearsals and more particularly from the group and individual lessons paid for by the members attending. This is not a requirement of the Music Director's contract but has been helpful in developing confidence and raising standards, as well as in establishing an excellent rapport between the Music Director and choir members.

### ***Structure of the Society***

The Society is a registered charity. It has a Committee (ExCo) which oversees planning, operations and finance, whose members are voted in at the AGM and who serve for terms of three years. The Committee consists of:

- Chair
- Deputy Chair
- Treasurer
- Orchestral Chair
- Orchestral Deputy

- Choral Chair
- Choral Deputy
- Marketing Officer
- Secretary

The Music Director is not a member of ExCo but works closely with the Society, Orchestral and Choral Chairs, although s/he may be asked to attend a meeting (either electronically or in person) where there are matters of repertoire etc to be discussed. The Music Director is also expected to attend the Annual General Meeting, held in Spring each year, and also to submit a written report to that meeting.

There is a Marketing team, who plan and execute marketing activities from local poster production and distribution to social media and press contacts.

The Committee meets on average four to five times a year. In recent years it has instituted a new Constitution (2016) and Privacy, Equality and Safeguarding Policies. All of these documents are regularly updated as requirements and regulations change.

The Society's President, Robin Morrish, served for many years as MD, and TPS has a number of vice-presidents and a small group of Patrons and Friends.

The Society is financially stable, with a healthy reserve that will cover at least one season's costs. Income is derived from subscriptions, concert tickets, gifts, donations and sponsorship. The Treasurer reports to the Executive Committee on a regular basis, and submits an annual report both for independent professional scrutiny, and to the Charities Aid Foundation for approval.

### ***TPS during the Covid-19 pandemic***

Since March 2020, the Executive Committee has met each month to ensure that there are appropriate and accessible activities of interest to members. During the summer, when restrictions permitted, there was a distanced rehearsal of the choir, learnings from which we will take forward to our return to more normal activities. A group of string players also rehearsed. We have fully risk-assessed procedures and a suitable location should we be able to resume rehearsals before all restrictions are lifted.

Since the first lockdown the Society has continued to facilitate:

- weekly online choir rehearsals with accompanist and Music Director
- weekly email updates by Choir and Orchestra Chairs
- an online orchestral montage concert
- an online carol concert, made of a montage of readings and carols, which raised over £1000 for charity
- monthly music-based talks by the outgoing Music Director who has also provided playlists for interest

- occasional specially recorded concerts by Jong-Gyung Park, who also talks about what the chosen repertoire means to her
- an AGM held online, which had more than 80 participants
- periodic quizzes and online social gatherings
- a fortnightly digital newsletter 'The Tacet Times', with news, memoirs, poetry and short fiction

We believe that the majority of members will be ready to resume making music as soon as the situation permits, and are confident that the Society will continue to thrive.

Thank you for your interest in Tonbridge Philharmonic Society and we hope to hear from you should you wish to be considered for this rôle.

## Recent repertoire

Date	Composer	Work
February 2020	Mussorgsky/Ravel Shostakovich	Pictures at an Exhibition 5 <sup>th</sup> Symphony
November 2019	Dvořák	Stabat Mater
March 2019	Brahms	Ein Deutsches Requiem
February 2019	Elgar Elgar Rachmaninov	Pomp and Circumstance March No 1 Cello Concerto 2 <sup>nd</sup> Symphony
November 2018	Britten	War Requiem
March 2018	Copland Bernstein Verdi	In the Beginning Chichester Psalms Four Sacred Pieces
February 2018	Copland Barber Shostakovich	Fanfare for the common man Adagio Symphony No 7 <i>Leningrad</i>
November 2017	Elgar	Dream of Gerontius
July 2017	Bizet	Carmen (concert performance)
May 2017	Borodin Smetana Norris	Symphony No 2 in B minor Má Vlast Symphony in (Approximately) 15 minutes
March 2017	Mozart Cherubini Mozart	Piano Concerto No 22 Overture to Anacréon Requiem
February 2017	Chausson Debussy Arutunian	Symphony in B flat Nocturnes I & II Trumpet Concerto
November 2016	Finzi Elgar Holst	For St Cecilia Enigma Variations The Cloud Messenger
May 2016	Strauss Tchaikovsky Schubert	Serenade for Wind Op7 Serenade for Strings Op48 Symphony No4 in C minor <i>Tragic</i>
March 2016	Handel	Messiah
February 2016	Mendelssohn Brahms Tchaikovsky	3 <sup>rd</sup> Symphony 1 <sup>st</sup> Symphony 1 <sup>st</sup> Symphony