



Abingdon & District
Musical Society

Choral Director

APPLICATION PACK 2024

Summary

Abingdon and District Music Society is a vibrant and thriving organisation which has been making music for over 60 years. The society consists of two sections – a Choir and an Orchestra – which, separately and together, perform five concerts per year. Alexander Walker has been our Musical Director since 2006, conducting both Choir and Orchestra. He is staying on as Orchestra Director but will be leaving his post conducting the Choir. A new model is being created in which two directors will operate alongside each other on an equal basis.

ADMS wants to take the opportunity of the two-conductor model to appoint an exceptional, highly-qualified Choral Director to work with the Choir, training and preparing them for performances.

The successful candidate will have professional experience, passion and commitment to inspire the choir to new levels of achievement and will also have competence and experience in conducting orchestras.

About ADMS

Abingdon and District Musical Society is an amateur non-auditioned mixed voice choir and full symphony orchestra, and has been making music in Abingdon, Oxfordshire since 1946. The choir has about 80 members, and the orchestra has 40 regular members (55 at concerts) with strong string and wind sections. The society is a registered charity.

Our concerts

ADMS gives five concerts each year. In November and June we combine the choir and orchestra in joint concerts. There is an orchestra-only concert in early March, a choir concert in late March (either with small orchestra or more usually with organ accompaniment). The light-hearted family-friendly charity Christmas concert is usually on a Sunday afternoon in mid-December, with all other concerts being on Saturday evenings with an afternoon final rehearsal on the day. With joint concerts we rehearse together at the beginning of the week before the concert.

Conducting arrangements

Since the society's inception, ADMS has appointed a single Musical Director, conducting both choir and orchestra. Our Musical Director since 2006 is internationally-

renowned conductor Alexander Walker, but with Alex resigning from conducting the choir to take up an appointment as Chief Conductor of Henley Symphony Orchestra, the committee has unanimously agreed to move to a two-conductor model, as practised by other societies with two or more sections. This means each section is directed by an experienced professional in their own area of expertise. The Musical Director post will be renamed Orchestral Director and the new choir post will be named Choral Director, The two directors will be at an equal level, and expected to operate and form consensus together about conducting arrangements, including which director conducts each joint concert, subject to committee approval if needed. Firm and provisional concert dates several years ahead are already on the home page of the website.

Fees

A fee of £110 will be paid for each rehearsal. When the Choral Director is conducting a concert, a combined fee of £515 will be paid for the concert and an afternoon rehearsal on the same day.

Rehearsals

The choir rehearses on Thursday evenings between early September and June, usually around 36 times per year. We rehearse at the Manor Preparatory School in Abingdon. The successful applicant will be expected to conduct all of these but may appoint a substitute conductor if he or she is not available.

If the Choral Director is conducting a choral piece in a joint concert, they may also be required to conduct the orchestra. The Choral Director may be called upon to conduct at least the Monday joint rehearsal which happens before each concert, and possibly earlier Monday orchestra rehearsals by agreement with the Orchestral Director, in order to ensure adequate preparation of the orchestra and giving orchestral members the opportunity to become accustomed with the Choral Director's performance well before a concert. The reverse of this scenario will also apply.

Repertoire

Repertoire suggestions are sought every year or two from members. A programme selection subcommittee meets every year, which will involve both conductors. The next programme committee is on Sunday 19 January 2025 at 19.30 via Zoom. Conductors are invited to contribute actively to repertoire selection, including advice to the programme subcommittee on such matters as balancing technical difficulty with aspirations, audience expectations, budget and current resources. The conductors will also recruit soloists. The orchestra is usually happy to play whatever the choir wants to sing, but care is taken with instrumentation to ensure that orchestral members are fully involved and there is no unnecessary expense of guest players. A searchable list of repertoire performed since 1946 appears on the History page of the website <https://www.adms.org.uk/>.

Committee participation

Both conductors would be expected to be present at committee meetings, which are held via Zoom on Sunday evenings in October, February, April and June – a couple of weeks after each main concert.

Replying to this invitation

If you would like to apply to become ADMS's new Choral Director, please send your application by the closing date of 27th of September. Short listed candidates will be invited for two auditions in the first two weeks of October with both a Choir (Thursday) and Orchestral (Monday) audition. The post will be taken up for Thursday 21 November which follows the November concert on the 16th.

To accompany the application please include:

- musical biography and/or website link,
- details of choral conducting experience,
- details of orchestral conducting experience,
- any published reviews

Applications should be sent by email by the 27th of September to

Pen Gresford

Vice-chair – Choir

pengresford@gmail.com

If you have any questions please contact Pen who will be very happy to talk through any details.