



Recruitment of Music Director

(Appointment to start December 2018 or January 2019)

The Society:

Tonbridge Philharmonic Society has been bringing music to this part of Kent for over seventy years. It is unusual in that it has almost 120 Choral members (aged 15 – 80) and 50 Orchestral musicians who, although not auditioned, are able to rise to the challenge of both the standard repertoire of works, as well as interesting and new music, as programmes for the concerts over the last decade will show. The Orchestra has a professional Leader.

Five concerts are held each year, two of which are made up of purely Orchestral music, together with a Family Carols service (always a sell-out with over 700 in the audience, which in 2018 generated a donation to charity of over four thousand pounds). The Chapel at Tonbridge School is the main venue, although from time to time we use one of the two large churches in Tonbridge, and have even performed in the grounds of Tonbridge Castle.

Every other year our orchestral concert includes a piece for the winner of one of the sections of TWYICA – the Tunbridge Wells International Young Concert Artists Competition.

The Music Director:

Our Music Director is an integral part of the musical life of the Society, and we are looking for someone with musical talent and with energy and commitment, who can help us develop our musical skills and understanding.

Since September 2014, the Society has enjoyed the services of Matthew Willis as Music Director. He has offered challenges to all our musicians and has chosen some very interesting works for us to perform. He has also provided group and individual singing lessons to those who wished to participate, as well as an annual 'open' choral workshop focussed on a work to be performed in the next season, and a dedicated 'open' strings' workshop in the lead up to our amazing performance of the Shostakovich *Leningrad Symphony*. In addition, he has undertaken PR activities such as interviews with local press and television, which have helped to broaden the reach of our marketing.

Matthew is now in the process of moving on to a position in Europe which means that, with regret, he has to hand on the 'TPS' baton to a successor. The candidate chosen to carry on his work will be able to engage with and motivate all

elements of the Society, and use her/his understanding of how to bring out the best in all those involved in our performances.

The Candidate:

The successful candidate will be a professional conductor with a proven ability to inspire and develop both orchestra and choir. S/he will have:

- a well-trained, excellent conducting technique
- knowledge of and enthusiasm for a varied repertoire
- the ability to engage and motivate all sections of the choir and orchestra
- an understanding of the techniques required to produce a high standard of performance for both players and singers
- strong interpersonal skills, and the ability to build rapport with amateur performers
- the ability to develop and maintain effective working relationships with the Leader, the Accompanist and the TPS Executive Committee

The Organisation:

The Society is a registered charity, and is represented by an Executive Committee elected by the members. The Committee works with the MD in selecting the programme of works to be performed. Marketing and promoting our performances, arranging the venues and the many supporting activities that are needed are carried out by a large group of dedicated and hardworking volunteers.

Orchestral rehearsals take place on Monday, and the Choir rehearses on Wednesday. Both take place in Tonbridge School from 19.45 to 21.45. Our season runs from early September to end June/early July.

The Music Director may be invited to attend committee meetings where important matters of repertoire are discussed, but his/her presence is not usually required. The MD is expected to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Society, generally held on a Wednesday in March after the spring choral concert.

Recruitment procedure:

Applications should be received no later than midnight, Monday, 9th April, and should include a recent CV, covering letter outlining why you should work with us and your vision for our musical development, and online links to your recent performances/details of forthcoming performances. We would like you to offer two referees, covering both the choral and orchestral disciplines, who should be able to comment on your musical ability and experience together with your general suitability for the post. We will ask for your permission before we contact them.

Applications should be sent to Joanna Mace, the Society's Secretary, on secretary@tonphil.org.uk. Interviews will be held in Tonbridge on the afternoons of Sunday 6th and Sunday, 13th May, and short listed candidates will be invited to take part of the rehearsals on Monday evening, 21st and Wednesday evening, 23rd May, also in Tonbridge. These will focus on sections of works under rehearsal, and will be notified to the candidates when they are invited to audition.

We will offer a competitive level of payment for rehearsals, concerts and workshops, to be discussed with the successful applicant. The contract will be for one year, in the first instance, and reviewed on an on-going annual ('seasonal') basis thereafter. Our aim is to find an outstanding individual who is looking for a commitment of at least five seasons. We would like the contract to start on 1st December, 2018, although there is some small flexibility over this.

Tonbridge Philharmonic Society is committed to diversity, and will make the decision to appoint based only on the applicant's suitability for the post.

Future Programmes:

Our draft programme for the next two seasons includes:

2018/19

24 November 2018	Britten <i>War Requiem</i>
15 December 2018	Family Carols
16 February 2019	Elgar <i>Cello Concerto</i> , Rachmaninov <i>Symphony 2</i>
30 March 2019	Brahms <i>Ein Deutsches Requiem</i>
18 May 2019	Haydn orchestral works
29 June 2019	<i>Puccini and Prosecco (provisional)</i>

2019/20 (to be reviewed by the Committee with the successful applicant)

November 2019	Delius <i>Mass of Life</i>
December 2019	Family Carols
February 2020	Britten <i>Four Sea Interludes</i> , TWYICA concerto Vaughan Williams <i>Symphony 5</i>
March 2020	Bach <i>B Minor Mass</i>
May 2020	Ives <i>Three Places in New England</i> , Copland <i>Rodeo Suite</i> , Dvorak <i>Symphony 9</i>
June 2020	Mozart <i>Così fan Tutte</i> – semi-staged

Reviews

Reviews of all our concerts are posted on our website in the News area, but here are a few comments that our reviewers have made regarding recent performances:

Shostakovich 7th Symphony *The Leningrad*

February 2018

I do not recall ever attending a concert given by amateur performers that received a spontaneous standing ovation at the end. That this concert, given by the Tonbridge Philharmonic Orchestra in the sacred space of Tonbridge School Chapel, was so received is an indication of what a stupendous occasion it was. I was anticipating a great programme, comprising three hugely significant works of the twentieth century, two American and one Russian, written within a six-year period between

1936 and 1942. I did not expect was such a completely immersive experience from first note to last.

Conductor Matthew Willis has a flair for imaginative programming combined with theatrical presentation, so we should not have been surprised that Aaron Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man* began with none of the usual concert preamble of leader, conductor, polite applause. We fair jumped out of our seats as the first thunderous crash of timpani, bass drum and tam-tam rang around the chapel. We were now gripped for two hours of powerful, spell-binding, exciting, moving, sumptuous.... the adjectives just kept flowing through my mind.

Elgar Dream of Gerontius

November 2017

One of the great strengths of the Tonbridge Philharmonic Society is the relationship between the choral and orchestral divisions. Few such societies enjoy the privilege of having two equally-matched teams of amateur musicians which both perform so ably.

.....The orchestral detail and the dark vocal tone with its relentless rhythm, created a truly threatening mood. In contrast, the angels' hymn had powerful brightness and momentum, surging along on its forward-thrusting chains of dominant chords and harmonic sequences. The choir is to be congratulated on its focused tone, balance of parts and the vocal unanimity of its vowel sounds. All this contributed to a really exciting and vibrant choral sound, easily able to match the large orchestral forces.

Joint orchestral/choral concert

November 2016

The reviewer is writing about the performance of Holst's 'The Cloud Messenger'

The choir sang with great expressive power, a large dynamic range and subtlety of phrasing. Holst had scored the work for a large orchestra, but so skilfully, that the choir and orchestra were seen as equal, but complementary, partners in this fascinating sound world. Clarity was paramount.

.....Even though not large in number, the strings played with warmth and breadth of tone, and there was much fine solo playing, ranging from cello to brass, not forgetting the extravagant timpani solo. This was a splendid achievement from our local musical friends.

An evening which presents music, familiar and unfamiliar, at such a high standard is something we should value highly in our town.

Orchestral concert

February 2016

Shivering strings evoked an icy feel, suited to the nickname *Winter Daydreams* given to Tchaikovsky's Symphony in G minor; but after a melody played gloriously by flute and bassoon, we were soon off on a thrilling troika ride over the snow. Rich orchestral textures, confident clarinet and lovely woodwind and brass ensemble ensured a pleasing first movement, although the music is always underpinned by a

slightly malevolent bass figure. The ever-widening intervals played by the cello section were perfectly executed.

The second movement is the 'comfort food' of the symphony: beautifully crafted melodies, sumptuous warm string sound and outstanding playing from the woodwind section suggesting birdsong, perhaps looking ahead poignantly to spring.