

Director of Music Call for Applications



Musarc performing Jennifer Walshe's *The White Noisery* at London Contemporary Music Festival, 2019, with Cathy Heller Jones, Musarc's Director of Music from 2009–2021. Photo by Dawid Laskowski

About Musarc

Musarc is one of the UK's foremost experimental choirs. Founded by Joseph Kohlmaier at the School of Art, Architecture and Design, London Metropolitan University in 2008, the ensemble has developed a distinct reputation for its interdisciplinary and research-led approach to music and performance, and the space it affords artists and singers to experiment with new ideas.

Since its inception, the choir has collaborated with more than one hundred artists and composers, including Jennifer Walshe, Lin Chiwei, Laure Provost, Ed Atkins, Jenny Moore, Lina Lapelytė, Sam Belinfante, Fritz Hauser, Neil Luck and many others; and numerous festivals and arts organisations in the UK and abroad – including the BBC Proms, London Contemporary Music Festival, Post Disaster Rooftops EP03 (Taranto, Italy), Palais de Tokyo (Paris), the Royal Academy, CCA Goldsmiths, Museum of London, Extra City (Antwerp), Serpentine Gallery, MK Gallery, Wysing Polyphonic, STUK (Leuven) Cafe OTO, Bold Tendencies and Whitechapel Gallery.

Context

Following our ten-year anniversary and renewal post-Covid, we are looking for a dynamic new Director of Music to take us into the next ambitious phase of our development as an ensemble.

Musarc is inclusive of everyone regardless of identity, experience, or ability. The choir does not require singers to audition and specifically welcomes people who may not otherwise join a choir. Singers range from amateurs with limited singing experience to professional musicians and composers. Many bring important skills to the ensemble beyond music and singing.

The repertoire we perform occupies an equally broad and unconventional terrain. It combines works from the traditional choral canon with more experimental, boundary-crossing projects conceived in collaboration with contemporary artists and the choir's lively creative base. Often these works evolve through a series of workshops and require extended vocal techniques, movement, or unconventional staging. Many are specific to the site and context in which they are performed which can vary in scale considerably, from concert halls to an urban dimension. For representative examples, see [The Orrery](#) (2019) and [Hysterical and Happy](#) (2022), both at LCMF; [The End of the World Service](#), Taranto, Italy, 2022; and Northampton Complaints Choir, 2023 (read [about the project](#), and [Guardian review](#)).

We are based at Aldgate, East London, with approx. 50 active members currently, but a wider community of more than 100 singers and artists who contribute regularly to special events and performances. The choir rehearses from 7pm until 9pm on Tuesdays, except for scheduled breaks, normally aligning with the academic calendar.

What we are looking for

Our aim is to create a safe space where members can develop their singing skills and take advantage of the wide array of creative, social and professional opportunities offered by the group.

We are looking for someone who can work well with the choir, and bring continuity to the development of core vocal and music skills in an eclectic and often shifting ensemble of singers.

Applicants should have extensive vocal training and experience leading vocal ensembles – ideally amateur ensembles and singers with a broad range of abilities and skills. A holistic approach to voice production rooted in movement and the body is essential to working with us, as well as an openness to improvisation, extended singing techniques, and experimental ways of staging choral music.

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Applicants should have a broad knowledge of music, an active interest in contemporary music practice, and an ability to work with a range of different scores – from classical to experimental and text scores – and an ability to adopt different conducting and music development techniques.

We are looking for a highly collaborative individual able to work flexibly with a diverse mix of composers and artists, and in different contexts and formats: from a traditional concert environment to workshops, participatory projects or in the role of facilitator supporting guest conductors.

The successful applicant will support Musarc's founder and Artistic Director, Joseph Kohlmaier, in the realisation of the overall artistic and curatorial vision for the ensemble and the development of a varied and exciting set of commissions and music for performances throughout the year – including self-organised concerts (usually July and December) and leading collaborations with local and national festivals and cultural institutions.

Musarc is dedicated to equal opportunities.

We are hoping to hear from a broad range of applicants.

We are committed to providing equal opportunities for everyone regardless of their background. We acknowledge that people from certain backgrounds are under-represented in the sector and within the ensemble, and we're actively doing what we can to correct this. We are particularly keen to receive applications from those who identify as global ethnic majority.

Please get in touch directly or indicate in your application if you need any adjustments to be able to participate in the recruitment process.

Selection Process

To apply for the position, we are asking prospective applicants to send a CV and covering letter (500–700 words) that details relevant experience and responds to the information and criteria set out above. A panel formed by members of the ensemble, regular collaborators and friends of the choir will make an initial shortlist. As part of the recruitment process, the shortlisted conductors will be invited to conduct a short rehearsal (60 minutes). The rehearsal should include a warm-up; teaching the choir a short piece by rote; work on something the choir already knows (music and notes will be shared with the applicant); and a work or section from a work of the conductor's choosing. A short and informal conversation with the selection panel will precede the rehearsal.

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Remuneration

The position is paid on an hourly basis, with additional remuneration for concerts and project development. Hourly fees will be agreed with the successful applicant based on industry/profession standards.

Frequently Asked Questions

If you have any questions, please email us. We will make questions and answers available in a shared location accessible to applicants.

Key Dates

Applications need to reach us by **Monday 18 September**. Applicants should try to keep the evening of **Tuesday 3 or 7 October 2023** free to attend the rehearsal. We are hoping to start working with the new Director of Music as soon as possible after the interview and selection process has been completed, but no later than **January 2024**.

Please send your CV and covering letter to:

info@musarc.org