

Role Description - Leader, St Albans Symphony Orchestra (SASO)

As SASO Leader you will be professional colleague to the AD, and the main link between the orchestra and the AD or Guest Conductor in rehearsals and performances.

In addition to leading the first violins, you will oversee the musical and, where appropriate, technical development of the string sections and the whole orchestra.

Rehearsals

During the SASO season (early September to mid-July) you will rehearse with the orchestra weekly on a Wednesday evening (7.30pm to 10pm) in St Albans (unless alternative arrangements have been agreed, such as for school holidays or sectional rehearsals).

Concerts and performances

You will lead the orchestra for up to six concerts a year including

- New Year (1st or 2nd January)
- the biennial choral concert organised by the St Albans St Cecilia Festival Society, of which SASO is a member.
- Two short Family concerts currently held on one Sunday afternoon

In addition, you will lead the orchestra for its biennial orchestral workshop (Friday evening and Saturday) and informal end-of-season repertoire or concerto evening.

Should you be unable to attend a rehearsal or concert, you will book a suitable professional dep.

Preparation for and guidance during rehearsals

At the beginning of each concert period, you will prepare a Violins seating plan. You will also take lead responsibility for agreeing with other string section principals a strategy for setting and copying bowings.

You will seek to maintain and develop the musical standards of individual players and the entire orchestra; proactively offering advice to players where appropriate.

During sectional rehearsals you will tutor the first violins (first half) followed by all Strings (second half).

SASO administration and planning

You will attend meetings of the SASO committee (usually online) in a non-voting, advisory capacity.

You will make repertoire recommendations in consultation with the Artistic Director and SASO committee and advise on concert planning and other matters relating to the administration of the orchestra.

You will undertake other duties requested by the committee by mutual agreement.

Role requirements

Essential:

- Evidence of professional and suitable experience of performing symphonic repertoire to a high standard.
- A wide-ranging knowledge of the symphonic repertoire and its technical and musical requirements.
- Appropriate preparation for rehearsal and concerts.
- Ability to motivate non-professional players to achieve a high standard of performance and enjoyment of music-making.
- Punctuality and good time management
- Effective communication with conductor, section and other orchestra members.
- Effective communication with the SASO committee.

Desirable:

- Previous experience working with non-professional orchestras and musicians who aim to achieve high performance standards.
- Previous experience of leading a symphony orchestra

Appointment process

Applicants will be shortlisted for audition and interview in late June/early July. Three applicants will be invited to lead concerts in our 2026/2027 season. The successful applicant will subsequently be selected by SASO, the start date to be negotiated.

Terms and remuneration

SASO currently offers fees of £130 per rehearsal and £475 per concert and £30 for committee meetings. The two family concerts on the same day are considered as one for remuneration purposes. Each concert day fee also accounts for other work pertaining to that concert period, including bowings and other relevant admin.

Workshop fees are additional and in line with the above. Fees are inclusive of travel. They are due for review in September 2027.

You will provide your services to SASO under contract. Notice of at least 12 weeks, from either SASO committee or Leader is required for termination of the contract.

Statement on equal opportunities

St Albans Symphony Orchestra welcomes applications from suitably qualified musicians regardless of age, gender, race, religion/belief, sexual identity or disability.