



Choir Director - Watford

- Hours:** 6ish per week, including rehearsal and preparation time + extra for gigs/workshops
- Contract:** Freelance
- Fee:** £150 per rehearsal, plus sessional fees for gigs and workshops

Background

The Choir with No Name (CWNN) runs quirky pop music choirs for people affected by homelessness in London, Birmingham, Brighton and Liverpool. Our mission is to empower as many homeless and marginalised people as possible to showcase their talents, build personal resilience and positive, joyful singing communities. We are very excited to launch our first CWNN Community Choir in Watford - This choir will also welcome members from the wider community in addition to those who have experience of homelessness. We are now seeking a warm and enthusiastic Choir Director to bring our new Watford Choir to life.

You don't necessarily need to be a hugely experienced choral conductor (although it wouldn't hurt!), but will need experience of leading and facilitating community music. You'll also need an excellent ear, keen musicianship, great taste in music, the ability to work with and lead other professional musicians, and of course the ability to engage and inspire and have fun with 30 or so people who may not be used to the discipline of a choir setting. You'll work alongside the Watford Choir Committee (whose role will be to recruit and support choir members, plus provide logistics for gigs, workshops and rehearsals). You'll receive support and supervision from our central team and other choir directors.

The choir will run Wednesday evenings in a venue in central Watford and we are aiming to start on the 20th of October so ideally you will be available then, although we could be flexible around times and dates for the right candidate.

The job itself

1. Rehearsals

- a) Plan each season's repertoire and set rehearsal schedules, in consultation with choir members
- b) Provide the direction and attention to detail necessary to support choir members in achieving the best sound possible, paying attention to tone, pitch, rhythm, tempo, and harmony
- c) Lead weekly warm ups with attention to healthy vocal technique, fun and variety
- d) Give leadership and direction to accompanists and musical volunteers
- e) Arrange repertoire, taking an inclusive and accessible approach
- f) Allocate and coach soloists, again paying attention to inclusion and diversity
- g) Encourage and support choir members in their endeavours outside of choir, musical and otherwise

2. Performances

- a) With choir committee, consult on appropriate performance opportunities
- b) Manage the musical side of gigs; book the band, ensure they will be rehearsed to a professional standard, ensure equipment is adequate etc.
- c) At gigs, be the front person for the group, chatting to the audience and leading them in any participative sections



- d) Lead the choir in establishing a suitable formation for the space
- e) Conduct choir and give direction to musicians

3. Other

- a) Any administrative tasks or reasonable requests associated with the role
- b) Meet regularly with choir committee, CWNN's Artistic Director and other CWNN choir directors for planning and training purposes

Person Specification

Essential

- Passion for the organisation and its members' potential, and commitment to its vision, mission and values
- Excellent musical skills, including arranging for a four-part choir, with facilities to share arrangements with other directors
- Ability to lead a choir of differing abilities in a way in which its members feel both comfortable and challenged
- Ability to inspire and make people feel good about themselves
- Ability to improvise and think on the spot
- Ability to lead and direct other musicians, including accompanists and dep choir directors, and a network of them to call on
- Experience of leading choirs, or community music group workshops

Desirable

- Experience of working with vulnerable adults
- Accompanying skills (e.g. piano, guitar)
- Reading and writing music using music notation software

How to apply

In the interest of a non-biased process in appointing our choir director, we're not asking for specific details of your education, training, or work history. Instead, we are seeking the answers to questions that demonstrate the above skills necessary for the role. To help us with this, please follow these steps:

- Copy and paste the questions below onto a separate Word document.
- Answer the questions, trying not to use more than 300 words per question.
- Don't put your name or any identifying information on the document.
- Email the document as an attachment to info@choirwithno.name, by 9am on Monday 27th September. Please include your telephone number in the email.

If you have access needs that make any aspect of the application process difficult, please contact us at info@choirwithno.name and we will make reasonable adjustments. You can also use this email address if you have any questions about the process.

If your answers are among the ones that show the best demonstrations of the skills we're looking for, we will be in touch to ask you along to audition for us. If you haven't heard from us by 4th **October**, we're afraid that you can assume that you haven't been successful.

Thank you so much for your interest in coming to join us at the Choir with No Name, and good luck!



APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Try not to use more than 300 words per question - thank you. Don't feel you need to use the full word limit if you can answer more succinctly.

1. Why is the Choir with No Name where you want to be, and why now? If relevant, feel free to tell us how your experience makes you the perfect person to lead our Watford choir.
2. We want to build communities who work together to lead their own choir projects, harnessing members' strengths and creating opportunities to develop new skills. Can you tell us how you would go about that in our Watford choir? (If relevant, tell us about any past experience which you would draw upon).
3. Tell us about two contrasting songs you would want to arrange for the Watford choir, describing your approach to the arrangement. You don't have to write the full arrangement down but if you have a previous written example of an arrangement you've written that you think would suit our Watford choir, then feel free to include it.
4. Imagine you are bringing one of these excellent arrangements to rehearsal and trying it out for the first time. One of the choir members tells you they hate that song and it reminds them of a very difficult time in their life. In addition, one of the parts you have written just isn't working and the altos can't pitch their harmony. What would you say and do?
5. Sell us your vision for the Watford choir's first performance. Think big, but achievable 😊 Where would it be? What would you sing? What musicians would be backing the choir up and how would you have recruited them? Who would be in the audience? What other artists might you want to include on the bill? Feel free to answer these questions or to diversify into others according to your vision.