



MUSIC DIRECTOR SEARCH
WINDSOR SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA (WSO)

BRIEFING DOCUMENT
DECEMBER 2025

1. The Opportunity

The Windsor Symphony Orchestra (WSO) is seeking a visionary artistic leader as Music Director (MD). This position is a significant advocate of the arts in Southwestern Ontario, Canada. Working with the Board of Directors, WSO musicians, administrative leadership and community partners, the new MD will be responsible for taking the orchestra to the next level musically and reputationally.

The new MD will provide expert artistic guidance with a collegial leadership style. They will have considerable successful experience in professional orchestra conducting, a dynamic personality and excellent communication skills. They will be a visible and vocal champion of the orchestra, of the arts in the Windsor Essex community, and will play an active role in raising the profile of the WSO and increasing support for the orchestra's continued development.

2. Organization Profile

The WSO exists to "connect people through music" and its vision is "through exceptional performance and education, we are an indispensable cultural asset within the Windsor Essex community."

The WSO is governed by a Board of Directors and the MD reports directly to the President of the Board. The administrative team includes operations, marketing, finance, box office, development and education/outreach. The WSO also includes two youth orchestras, a community orchestra and chorus. There is also a vibrant volunteer group, the WSO Guild, which raises money and the profile of the orchestra.

The WSO's season consists of five Masterworks concerts, five Pops concerts, five Onstage/Café concerts and a Family Series. Additional outreach concerts include Music for Health performances in senior homes, hospitals, long-term care residences. Special concerts such as the annual performance of Handel's Messiah in local churches and WSORocks! concert create a fulsome offering of a wide range of music for the Windsor Essex community. The WSO also prioritizes its education program which includes concerts in area schools, classes coming to the Capitol Theatre for educational concerts, a strong partnership with the

public and Catholic school boards and outreach/work with local secondary school bands.

The orchestra's annual operating budget is approximately \$2.3 million. Revenue to support the budget is generated through ticket sales, fundraising and ongoing public support such as grants from the City of Windsor, Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts.

Through a special agreement with the City of Windsor, the WSO also manages the orchestra's home, the Capitol Theatre, in downtown Windsor.

3. Position Profile

Reporting directly to the Board of Directors and working closely with the Board Chair and Executive Director, the MD will maximize the orchestra's considerable strengths. While bringing strong leadership qualities, the MD will have a collaborative, team approach. They will advocate for the orchestra and continue to grow community partnerships with other organizations and institutions including media, donors, community leaders and volunteers.

The WSO MD will provide visionary artistic leadership; conduct orchestra rehearsals and concerts; oversee orchestra personnel; participate in auditions of new members; develop program repertoire and selection of guest soloists; participate in fundraising, community outreach and public relations activities; participate in strategic planning and implementation; present music/artistic public conversations with concerts and report monthly to the Board of Directors.

Promoting and developing Canadian talent is also an expectation of this role.

4. Candidate Profile

a. Education and Experience

- i. a master's degree in music from a recognized university, or equivalent;
- ii. extensive successful experience conducting professional orchestras;
- iii. experience conducting choral/orchestral music;

b. General

- i. outstanding musicianship, a passion for music-making, and proven commitment to quality;
- ii. dynamic personality and outstanding leadership, interpersonal, and communication skills;
- iii. effectively articulate long-range vision and can lead a transformation of the organization;

- iv. proven ability to motivate the best efforts of the orchestra musicians;
- v. thorough knowledge of past and present performance practice, and of the orchestral repertoire, scores, and styles, including full orchestral works, works for chamber orchestra, operas, oratorios, and contemporary and cross-cultural music;
- vi. instinct for developing imaginative, innovative, flexible, and diverse programming that has significance to the orchestra, the occasion and the Windsor Essex community;
- vii. awareness of current solo artists and composers, particularly Canadian;
- viii. strong commitment to, and successful experience, creating innovative and engaging education concerts for school children and outreach concerts for the community.

c. Technical and Performance

- i. the ability to identify and correct orchestral intonation and balance;
- ii. a working knowledge and understanding of all instruments;
- iii. mastery of various music styles and knowledge of performance practice.

d. Conducting

- i. an effective baton technique that maintains the continuity and quality of the overall performance of a work;
- ii. an effective and efficient rehearsal technique;
- iii. a podium presence that enhances the quality of music-making and the musicians' and audience members' experience;
- iv. ability to inspire and communicate musically and verbally with audiences of all ages, both on and off the stage;
- v. off-the-podium qualities that will inspire board, staff, and community to do their utmost to aid the orchestra's growth and development.

e. Administrative and Personal

- i. awareness of the important role of the orchestra in a changing society and its value in enhancing the quality of life in a community;
- ii. ability to operate within established budgetary limits;
- iii. commitment to fulfilling the orchestra's potential as an artistic and community resource and willingness to become involved in community outreach activities and in the life of the community more broadly;
- iv. eagerness to support and participate in fundraising;

- v. understanding of the orchestra as a non profit organization and of the roles of the board, Executive Director, musicians, administrative staff and volunteers;
- vi. openness and willingness to collaborate with staff and board as a part of the management team;
- vii. understanding of the nature of contract negotiations and an instinct for good personnel relations;
- viii. the confidence and integrity to make difficult decisions, good judgement and a sense of fairness and objectivity in making recommendations to the orchestra's management about personnel decision.

5. Residency

As this role is expected to be community-facing with a strong presence, a plan to reside in Windsor/Essex is strongly preferred.

6. Location

The City of Windsor, one of Ontario's best kept secrets, and the proud International Gateway between Canada and the United States of America is an incredible community that offers world-class entertainment, fascinating historical and cultural landmarks, and unparalleled waterfront parks and gardens. Here, visitors will find a city committed to being a creative and vibrant destination that encourages artistic expression and celebrates our cultural identity and diversity. Whether you are interested in intellectual and artistic experiences, or the very best recreational and heritage exploration opportunities, Windsor has it all.

Further details about Windsor Essex can be found at:

<https://www.visitwindsor-essex.com/windsor/>

<https://www.investwindsor-essex.com/>

<https://www.destinationontario.com/en-ca/cities-towns/windsor>

7. Search Process and Applications

Please email your letter of application, resume, repertoire list, reviews, and contact information for seven references to:

employment@windsorsymphony.com.

Please also include at least two videos of recent conducting both rehearsals and concerts. Send a link to your video via WeTransfer, Dropbox, GoogleDrive, YouTube or similar.

Upon receipt of documents, qualified applicants will receive a confirmation email and potentially a request for additional written materials.

Closing Date:

Applications must be received by February 15, 2026.