

CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK

Music Director New Zealand Secondary Students Choir

Closing Date: 29 October 2026



1. Welcome Message

"Tēnā koe, and thank you for your interest in becoming the next Music Director of the New Zealand Secondary Students Choir. This is an extraordinary opportunity to lead one of Aotearoa New Zealand's most celebrated choral ensembles, guiding and inspiring the next generation of talented young singers.

The New Zealand Secondary Students Choir (NZSSC) has a distinguished international reputation, having won multiple awards and performed at some of the world's most prestigious venues since its inception in 1986. As Music Director, you will help shape the artistic direction of the choir, develop innovative and inspiring programmes, and uphold our commitment to musical excellence and cultural authenticity.

We welcome applications from visionary choral leaders who share our passion for artistic excellence, audience engagement, youth development and the rich musical traditions of Aotearoa."

Ngā mihi nui,
Arne Herrmann
Chief Executive

2. About Choirs Aotearoa New Zealand & NZSSC

Who We Are

Choirs Aotearoa New Zealand (CANZ) is the home of three national choirs and a national choral academy:

- **New Zealand Secondary Students' Choir (NZSSC)** – A national choir for high school students.
- **New Zealand Youth Choir (NZYC)** – A premier national choir for singers aged 18–25.
- **Voices New Zealand** – A professionally run national chamber choir.
- **Aotearoa Choral Academy (ACA)** – A national choral academy for singers aged 13–25.

CANZ also delivers a national outreach programme that includes young conductor training, community and school outreach, an annual composition competition and mentoring.

New Zealand Secondary Students' Choir (*Learn more at: nzsschoir.com*)

- **Established in 1986** by Guy Jansen, who had earlier founded NZYC
- **International acclaim**, winning awards at major competitions and festivals worldwide including Children's Choir of the World in 2022.
- Committed to presenting **diverse and innovative choral repertoire**, including works from Aotearoa and the Pacific.
- **A training ground for emerging choral talent**, providing high-level artistic and youth development.

3. Why we audition

The recruitment for this role follows the retirement of the previous Music Director after 8 years in this role at NZSSC.

4. The Role: Music Director, New Zealand Secondary Students Choir

- **Reports to:** Chief Executive and/or artistic representative, Choirs Aotearoa New Zealand
- **Location:** New Zealand (travel required for rehearsals and tours)
- **Contract:** Fixed Term – Project based 2027 & 2028 with opportunities for extension
- **Remuneration:** Daily rates for project work plus retainer, commensurate with experience

Key Responsibilities

Artistic Leadership

- Develop and implement an inspiring artistic vision for vision for NZSSC.
- Select repertoire that showcases musical excellence and reflects the cultural identity of Aotearoa.
- Devise a two-year programme pathway for NZSSC within agreed budget parameters.
- Collaborate with composers, musicians, and other artistic partners.
- Contribute as member of CANZ Artistic Advisory Group to the overall artistic direction of the organisation.

Rehearsal & Performance Direction

- Lead all high-quality rehearsals and performances.
- Facilitate professional level vocal training and musicianship development for choir members.
- Conduct national and international tours, recordings, and special projects.
- Work with the production and management teams to optimise rehearsal efficiency and scheduling.

Singer Development & Engagement

- Mentor and develop young singers, fostering individual and collective growth.
- Provide artistic leadership that supports diversity and inclusion.
- Foster a collaborative culture working with vocal coaches and music educators to achieve artistic excellence, vocal health, and continuous development.

Collaboration & Partnerships

- Work with Choirs Aotearoa New Zealand leadership to plan programming and tours.
- Commission new works that advance the ensemble's repertoire and identity.
- Engage with the wider choral, classical music, and arts communities in Aotearoa and internationally.

Engagement & Representation

- Serve as an ambassador for NZSSC at public, media, and donor events.
 - Work with the CANZ team to contribute to audience development strategies and fundraising efforts.
 - Support outreach initiatives and recordings that extend the impact of the choir's work.
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5. Person Specification

Essential Criteria:

- Proven experience in choral conducting at a high national level.
- Deep understanding of choral repertoire, vocal technique, and ensemble training.
- Experience leading a school, youth or professional choral ensemble.
- Strong commitment to fostering young musical talent.
- Excellent interpersonal, communication, and collaborative skills.
- Understanding of Te Ao Māori and Pasifika musical traditions, or a willingness to deeply engage in these areas.
- Experience in planning & delivering performances at a level to take to the international stage.

Desirable Criteria:

- Familiarity with the New Zealand and to some extent international choral scenes.
 - A track record of commissioning and performing new choral works.
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6. Why Work With Us?

What We Offer

- The opportunity to shape the artistic future of one of New Zealand's most prestigious national choirs.
- The chance to work with exceptional young singers and support their artistic and personal growth.

- A supportive professional environment within Choirs Aotearoa New Zealand, with access to an extensive network of choral professionals.
- The opportunity to **lead regular national and occasional international tours.**

7. The Recruitment Process & Timeline

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to **interview via Zoom or in person**, and final candidates will be invited to Stage 2 practical auditions. There will be a minimum of 3 people on the interview & audition panel, a mix of CANZ and external experts.

Date	Stage
1 Oct	Applications open
29 Oct	Closing date for applications
1 - 28 Nov	Stage 1 Interviews for long-listed candidates (via Zoom or in person) Final shortlist of 2 to 3 candidates confirmed
14 – 18 Apr 27	Practical auditions in Wellington
19 – 23 Apr 27	Appointment recommendation presented to Choirs Aotearoa Board
By 4 May	Announcement of recruitment outcome

8. How to Apply

Interested candidates should submit the following materials:

- a. Cover letter** outlining your interest in the role and why you think you are suited to it
- b. Curriculum Vitae (CV)** detailing your conducting and performance background and any other relevant experience.
- c. Video Submissions**
 - **Links to videos of you rehearsing a choir**, demonstrating your rehearsal techniques and engagement.
 - **Links to videos of you conducting a choir in performance**, showcasing your artistic and interpretive skills.
- d. Repertoire & Artistic Vision**
 - **Your ideal repertoire for a two-year cycle**, including a short written explanation of why you chose these pieces.

e. Written Reflection

Provide a **written response (max 1,500 words)** addressing the following questions:

1. **What do you think are the three greatest challenges and opportunities for NZSSC in the next 4-6 years?**
2. **What is your philosophy of choral music education, and what is your approach to pedagogy versus artistry?**
3. **How does technology influence your perspective on choral singing at this level?**

Submission Details

- Send all application materials to: joinus@choirsnz.co.nz
- Contact **Jessica Kinney (Manager of Artistic Planning & Outreach)** at jessica@choirsnz.co.nz for more information
- **Closing date for applications:** 29 October 2026

Choirs Aotearoa New Zealand is committed to diversity and inclusion. We welcome applications from candidates of all backgrounds, particularly those from underrepresented communities in the arts.

9. Further Information

- **Website:** choirs.nz nzsschoir.com
- **Follow us:** <https://www.facebook.com/NZSSChoir/>
- **Acknowledgement;** we are grateful for the funding from Creative New Zealand.

Please note: CANZ reserves the right to change timelines and processes if required without prior notice, but commits to updating all candidates in a timely manner.