

Westchester Oratorio Society

Westchester Oratorio Society Seeks a New Conductor

The Westchester Oratorio Society is a mixed-voice choral group of about 35 members from the Northern Westchester area. We were founded twenty-five years ago as a community choir dedicated to performing classical repertoire supported by professional orchestra and soloists. We rehearse weekly on Tuesday evenings, from September through May, and perform publicly twice a year, in the fall and in the spring. Currently we rehearse from 7:00 to 8:30 pm at the Katonah Village Library, located within walking distance of the Metro North Harlem Line train station in Katonah.

Our current Conductor and Artistic Director, Benjamin Niemczyk, who has led us ably for over two decades, has announced that he will retire from his position after our spring performance in May of 2024. We are looking for an energetic new leader with artistic vision who can guide our group going forward.

The primary duties of this competitively compensated position include presiding over weekly rehearsals with the choir and conducting our biannual concert performances. During rehearsals, the Conductor assists choir members in the development of vocal techniques designed to optimize the quality of the choral sound. The Conductor should have the ability to instruct adults with diverse voices and varying levels of experience.

The Conductor also handles numerous other responsibilities under the direction of the Board of Directors, and subject to budgetary limits imposed by the Board. For instance, the Conductor negotiates and secures contracts with our rehearsal venues and performance venues; and selects, hires, and contracts with the professional orchestra, individual instrumentalists, and soloists for our concerts.

With regard to musical programming, the Conductor, subject to Board approval, proposes our repertoire, and researches and selects the vocal score editions. Because we rely on grants to support our organization, the Conductor should also be prepared to assist with grant applications and community outreach efforts.

Our Board of Directors manages most of the logistics of the organization, including scheduling of rehearsals and concerts, ordering and distributing music scores, handling the finances, managing the website, printing programs, submitting grant applications, collecting membership dues, recruiting new members, and fundraising. However, the Conductor must be prepared to work closely and cooperatively with the Board of Directors on all these matters. For this reason, the Conductor is expected to attend Board of Director meetings, either in person or via zoom. While the Board of Directors ultimately controls the purse-strings, the Conductor proposes yearly budgets, submits payroll to the Treasurer, and submits invoices for preapproved expenses.

Interested candidates are encouraged to submit a resume as soon as possible to vickimewsic@icloud.com.