



JOB DESCRIPTION: MUSIC DIRECTOR

Chicago Master Singers (CMS) is seeking an inspirational, exacting, and highly-qualified Music Director to build on an outstanding 41-year performance history. The chorus will select guest conductors for its 2020-2021 season from among the top candidates for the position, with a view to hiring a permanent music director starting with the 2021-2022 season.

About CMS

Chicago Master Singers is a highly-skilled volunteer chorus that works and performs to professional standards for the cultural enrichment of its members and the communities it serves. Its repertoire focuses on large-scale choral works from the standard literature, as well as lesser-known masterpieces and contemporary works by living composers, traditionally including an *a cappella* concert every other year. The ensemble consists of about 100 auditioned singers from throughout the Chicago area; for some, music is their vocation as professional singers, teachers and choir directors; and for others it is their avocation, a way to enrich their lives by coming together with others who love to sing and perform great works of music.

Celebrating its 41st season in 2019-2020, CMS presents six concerts each season (Fall, Christmas and Spring sequences), regularly performs at Divine Word Chapel at Techny Towers in Northbrook, IL, and frequently collaborates with professional soloists and orchestras, including the Ars Viva Orchestra. The chorus has earned critical acclaim and a reputation for excellence because of its dedication to the highest standards of musical performance and the detail-oriented, passionate, and inspired leadership of its music directors. CMS has released five CDs and has embarked upon European performance tours every two years as ambassadors of goodwill; its 14th tour will be to France and Switzerland in June 2020.

Principal Duties and Responsibilities

Artistic Management:

- Develop, implement, and monitor the artistic objectives for CMS to ensure the highest performance standards and the musical growth of its members and audiences
- Establish audition criteria, and conduct all auditions for new and returning chorus members
- Determine, with the input of the Board of Directors, repertoire to be performed by the chorus
- Recruit professional orchestra members and soloists for concerts, when appropriate and budgeted
- Conduct rehearsals and performances for Fall, Christmas, and Spring concert sequences
- Work collaboratively with the CMS rehearsal accompanist
- Consult with the Board of Directors to evaluate other performance or outreach opportunities, beyond the traditional concert sequences
- Consult with the Board of Directors to provide biennial workshops to enrich the musical education and skills of existing and potential chorus members, as well as providing educational outreach to the communities that CMS serves
- Potentially design biennial summer tours (plan their execution, select the repertoire to be performed, and conduct preparatory rehearsals, tour sound checks, and tour performances)

Board Relations:

- Serve as a non-voting, *ex-officio* member of the Board and report to Board at meetings (typically held monthly during the season)
- Collaborate and communicate effectively and proactively with the Board, staff, and volunteers

- Present annual and multi-year artistic plans for approval by the Board
- Collaborate with the Board on fundraising activities, as needed

Public Relations:

- Serve as a spokesperson for the organization
- Collaborate with the Board, as needed, in marketing and public relations functions to maximize the recognition and reputation of CMS
- Establish and maintain strong ties to the Chicago area musical and artistic community
- Develop and maintain good relationships with donors, funders, and supporters

Financial Management:

- Consult with the Board during development of the annual budget
- Ensure that the costs of performing selected repertoire are within budget
- Assist in the identification of grant opportunities and collaborate in the preparation of grant applications

Compensation and Benefits

The Music Director is hired on a contract basis, to be renewed annually after performance review and feedback. Salary is negotiable depending upon qualifications and experience. We regret that we cannot offer reimbursement for transportation costs during the selection process, nor relocation costs after hiring.

Candidate Experience and Qualifications

Ideal candidates will have:

- BA or Advanced Degree in Music with an emphasis in conducting, or equivalent choral and orchestral conducting experience (minimum 5 years)
- Experience working with a volunteer chorus and professional orchestra
- Ability to inspire vocal and instrumental musicians to a consistently excellent level of performance
- Extensive knowledge of choral literature, and experience in conducting both traditional and lesser-known masterpieces and new choral repertoire

Application Process

Applications should include:

- Cover letter – including a statement of interest summarizing the candidate’s interest in applying for this position, the candidate’s major strengths as a conductor and artistic leader, and what the candidate hopes to gain professionally from this experience
- Curriculum Vitae
- List containing a minimum of 3 years’ worth of repertoire programmed and conducted by the candidate
- Three sample programs from recent concerts conducted by the candidate
- List of 3 references with full title, email address, phone number, and their relationship to the candidate
- Candidates are encouraged to provide links to 10- to 20-minute videos showing the candidate’s conducting style (one video during a rehearsal and one video during a performance)

Applications should be submitted electronically by November 15, 2019 to: info@chicagomastersingers.org.

Selected candidates will be invited to interview with the search committee in January 2020. Finalists will be engaged as guest conductors for the 2020-2021 season and will be asked to provide a program proposal for their concert sequence (in addition to one major work, which will be pre-selected by the Board). The final appointment will be announced in May/June 2021.