

South East London Orchestra

Music Director

About South East London Orchestra (SELO)

Formed in 2012, South East London Orchestra (SELO) is an ambitious, friendly and values-led amateur orchestra based in Beckenham. We bring together skilled non-professional and ex-professional musicians who share a love of orchestral music, curiosity about repertoire, and a strong sense of community.

SELO is guided by six core values: **Excellence, Adventurousness, Friendliness, Respect, Passion and Enjoyment**. These values shape not only our musical standards, but also how we rehearse, perform and work together. Our audiences and players enjoy exploring a wide and diverse range of repertoire, and we are proud of the partnerships we have developed locally through our community development activities.

About the Music Director role

SELO is seeking a new **Music Director** to lead the orchestra from **Autumn 2026**. This is an exciting opportunity to shape the artistic direction of a thriving orchestra, working with committed players, a professional Leader and a proactive volunteer committee.

The Music Director will play a central role in SELO's continued musical development, inspiring artistic ambition within the sustainable operation of a volunteer-run organisation. We are looking for someone who combines strong musical leadership with warmth, clarity and an inclusive approach to music-making.

Duties of the role

Musical leadership

- Conduct all SELO rehearsals, typically comprising five weekly Thursday evening rehearsals and one Sunday afternoon rehearsal per concert cycle, including one sectional rehearsal.
- Conduct all SELO concerts each season, typically five, which are held on Saturday or Sunday afternoons. Our season runs from September through to early July.
- From time to time, lead additional one-off repertoire sessions aimed at welcoming and attracting new members.

Supporting and inspiring musicians

- Motivate and inspire SELO members through clear, well-structured rehearsals, balancing high expectations with respectful encouragement and good humour.
- Liaise with the professional Leader and Principal players on musical and personnel matters, as appropriate.

Programming and artistic development

- Work with the committee to develop engaging, well-balanced programmes each season, featuring a mix of core orchestral repertoire alongside more rarely performed works. Programming decisions will take account of the orchestra's ambitions and ability, member interests, audience experience and financial considerations.
- Work with the committee to engage suitable soloists and additional performers as required within agreed budgets.

Collaboration and organisational support

- Maintain open and timely communication with the committee and volunteers to support planning for each concert, contributing to the partnerships with mutual respect and welcoming constructive two-way feedback.
- Attend regular online committee meetings in an advisory capacity.
- Attend and contribute to the Annual General Meeting, usually incorporated into a rehearsal.

Audience and community engagement

- Welcome, engage and communicate with audiences at concerts, including introducing repertoire from the stage.
- Play an active role in supporting the orchestra's interest in widening access to music and contributing to SELO's role as both a musical and social community. In the past, this has included relaxed concerts, partnerships with local charities and community groups, and performances in non-traditional settings.

What we are looking for

Experience and skills

- Demonstrable experience conducting orchestral repertoire to a high musical and technical standard.
- An ability to inspire players and bring out their best technical and musical performance within a high-standard ensemble.
- Excellent verbal communication skills
- A broad and curious knowledge of the symphonic repertoire, with the capacity to support the orchestra in exploring both well-loved works and lesser-known pieces.

Behaviours and approach

- We welcome a range of leadership styles compatible with our values. We are seeking styles that balance trust, confidence and enjoyment.

Contract and remuneration

- Applicants must have the right to work in the UK.
- SELO is not an employer; the successful candidate will be engaged on a freelance/self-employed basis and will be responsible for their own tax and National Insurance arrangements.

- The Music Director role is offered at a fee of up to £1,200 per concert commensurate with experience, which includes all advance and on-the-day rehearsals. Attendance at all rehearsals and concerts is expected, although we understand that some absences may be unavoidable. In such cases, the Music Director is responsible for arranging a suitable deputy. Fees for any additional performances or rehearsals outside the main concert season will be agreed separately.

Timeline and process

- **Application deadline:** 5pm, Friday 27 February 2026
- **Online interviews (long-list):** Mid-to-End March 2026
- **Auditions (short-list):** Sunday 3 May 2026 (afternoon), Beckenham
Repertoire: Beethoven Symphony No. 5

Following the May audition, we anticipate inviting two candidates to rehearse and conduct a full programme each with SELO in Autumn 2026. The final appointment is expected to be made in December 2026, with the role starting in January 2027. The position will be reviewed annually.

SELO reserves the right to explore an earlier start date if a final decision can be made following the May audition.

- **Final candidate concert 1:** Sunday 11 October 2026
- **Final candidate concert 2:** Sunday 6 December 2026
Venue for both concerts: St Michael and All Angels Church, Beckenham BR3 4TN
(Rehearsal start dates to be confirmed)

Application

Applications should include:

- A CV (maximum two pages) outlining relevant skills and experience
- A supporting statement responding to the following questions:
 - Why are you interested in the role of SELO Music Director?
 - What skills are most important for this role, and how has your experience prepared you for them?
 - What new opportunities or experiences would you like to help SELO explore in the future?

The supporting statement may be submitted either:

- In writing (maximum two pages), or
- By video (maximum length 5 minutes)

Applications should be emailed to seorchestra@gmail.com by **5pm on 27 February 2026**.

If you have any questions about the role or process, or would like to discuss access or support needs at any stage, please contact us via this email address.

SELO is committed to being an inclusive and welcoming organisation. We encourage applications from people of all backgrounds and identities, including those who are underrepresented in orchestral leadership roles. All applications will be considered on the basis of skills, experience and suitability for the role.