

Fairfax Choral Society – Artistic Director Search

Artistic Director Position Overview

The **Fairfax Choral Society (FCS)** seeks a new Artistic Director to lead the organization and conduct the Symphonic Chorus beginning with the 2018-2019 Concert Season. The Artistic Director plays the major role in ensuring that FCS meets its commitment to its core values of musical excellence, artistic integrity, passion, commitment, respect, and artistic opportunity, while providing the highest level of musical experience, learning, and enjoyment to FCS singers and listeners. The Artistic Director and Conductor of the Symphonic Chorus (SC) serves under contract with the FCS Board of Directors (the Board). In collaboration with the Board, Director of Youth Programs, and FCS staff, the Artistic Director provides the musical and artistic leadership of FCS by establishing standards of performance; choosing and balancing repertoire; reviewing and recommending venues, soloists, instructors, instrumentalists, accompanists, and choral ensembles; and selecting singers for the SC. This is a part-time position.

About the Organization

Northern Virginia's largest auditioned choral organization, FCS uniquely provides choral opportunities for all ages, pre-kindergarten through senior adult. With the mission to enrich lives through the performance, education, and appreciation of choral art, FCS has grown from a 24-voice ensemble in 1962 to a comprehensive choral performance and music education program involving nearly 400 singers, with 11 choruses and 15 musicianship classes for preschool through high school, as well as an adult Symphonic Chorus.

FCS performs concerts that include new compositions, major choral works with full orchestra, and often pops concerts. The 2017-2018 season encompasses 10 concerts: *“Bravi, Tutti,” “This Christmastide,” “Mozart’s Requiem,” “A Night at the Opera,”* two Christmas Youth Concerts, *“Harmonious Art,” “Poetry of Music,” “Spring Follies!”*, and a Youth Spring Concert. Our Youth Choirs also participate in several free community outreach concerts throughout Fairfax County each year. FCS ensembles have hosted visiting conductors and major vocal artists, and performed exchange concerts with other choral organizations.

FCS’s extensive musical program allows singers to experience choral music of all genres, even working with world-renowned artists such as Dr. Craig Jessop, Sir David Willcocks and Z. Randall Stroepe. A Choral Festival and Workshop with National Medal of Arts recipient Morten Lauridsen involved area choral groups, including the US Air Force Singing Sergeants. Singers perform throughout the National Capital Area, with frequent appearances with the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra and the Washington Symphonic Brass, as well as collaborations with the National Symphony, including Kennedy Center performances with the late Marvin Hamlisch and the presentation of *Carmina Burana* at Wolf Trap. FCS choruses have premiered new choral works, produced several commercial recordings, performed by invitation at Carnegie Hall, and

toured internationally. In 2015, the youth Concert Choir was selected to record the new State Song of Virginia, now heard across the nation.

The elite youth FCS Master Singers and Concert Choir perform challenging repertoire and participate in competitions and tours, with many graduates continuing their music studies at the university level. FCS's history of outstanding education programming is illustrated by the annual Poetry of Music program, uniting the creative media of the written word, art, and music in a partnership between Fairfax County Public Schools, FCS Youth Choruses, and a renowned composer that results in the premiere of choral works based on student poetry. The entirety of FCS programming exposes singers and audiences to a variety of choral music. FCS was recognized for its "contributions in music education, performance, and appreciation of choral art for people of all ages" with the 2016 Arts Education Award from the Fairfax County Arts Council.

The Ideal Candidate

FCS seeks a creative professional who understands and relates to the organization's roots and unique history, is comfortable serving on a collaborative staff team, and builds upon strengths to lead the organization into its next phase of growth. The Artistic Director must communicate effectively, articulate a compelling vision for the organization, and translate that vision into original and innovative programs and larger organizational goals. The Artistic Director will drive musical and artistic decisions and performances, and collaborate with FCS staff to plan, market and promote performances among our growing audience and wider arts community in the Northern Virginia and Washington, D.C. metropolitan areas and nationally.

The Artistic Director must share the core values of FCS and bring a natural ability to explore and share the meaning of song texts and other compositional elements in ways that resonate with singers and audiences. The Artistic Director will recognize our singers' desire to continue learning about the art and science of singing, vocal technique, intonation, tone production, and diction. The Artistic Director will prepare for weekly Symphonic Chorus rehearsals and bring a positive, energetic, consistent, and collaborative spirit to rehearsals and concerts.

Specific responsibilities

- Creates innovative choral programs in collaboration with the FCS staff and, as needed, the Director of Youth Programs and/or other musical groups. Proposes and submits a 3-year programming plan for the Symphonic Chorus to the Board of Directors, and reviews and submits a similar plan for the Youth Programs, developed by the Director of Youth Programs.
- Supervises, programs, rehearses, and conducts the concerts of the Symphonic Chorus, including youth choruses when they perform with the SC.
- Works closely with the staff on artistic and administrative matters related to concert production, including identifying instrumentalists or soloists as needed.
- Actively develops new performance, collaborative and recording opportunities.
- Recruits and auditions singers for the Symphonic Chorus.

- Contributes to building concert attendance and revenue, and assists staff in developing relationships with donors to increase charitable gift revenue.
- Serves as a non-voting ex-officio member of the Board of Directors and advises on issues related to choral performance, preparation, and repertoire.
- Promotes FCS in the Northern Virginia and Washington, D.C. metropolitan areas and nationally through relationships with choral and music organizations, ensembles, musicians, conductors, composers, choral associations, and colleges.

Expertise and Qualifications

- Excellent musicianship, aural acuity, thorough score preparation, and effective choral and orchestral conducting skills.
- A solid understanding of vocal production, vocal pedagogy and rehearsal techniques.
- Wide knowledge of sacred and secular choral repertoire suitable for accomplished adult singers.
- Experience in developing full concert seasons of appealing programs around various themes within budgetary guidelines.
- Excellent relationship and communication skills to draw the best out of volunteer singers, from novice to classically trained.
- Ability to engage with audiences.
- Bachelor's degree in musical performance or conducting; advanced study in choral conducting preferred.
- 5+ years' experience directing a college, community, or church choral ensemble.

Application process

Applicants must submit a **cover letter and resume or curriculum vitae** by **Friday, March 9, 2018** to board@fairfaxchoralsociety.org. Questions may be directed to the same address.

Upon invitation by the FCS Board, candidates may be asked to submit the following:

- Three references with full title, email address and phone number
- Sample video or digital sound recording from a recent rehearsal
- Sample video or digital sound recording from a recent performance
- Three or four recent concert programs
- Proposed programs for a concert season for the FCS Symphonic Chorus

Selected candidates will be invited to interview with the search committee in March-April. Final candidates will be invited to audition with the Symphonic Chorus. Final selection is expected to be made in May.

The selectee must provide proof of legal eligibility to work in the United States. The Fairfax Choral Society is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

For more information about FCS, visit www.fairfaxchoralsociety.org.