

CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK

Music Director – New Zealand Youth Choir

Closing Date: 21 May 2025



CHOIRS

AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

Photo: Lucas Packett Photography

1. Welcome Message

"Tēnā koe, and thank you for your interest in becoming the next Music Director of the New Zealand Youth 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 Youth Choir (NZYC) has a distinguished international reputation, having won multiple awards and performed at some of the world's most prestigious venues since its inception in 1979. 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, youth development, and the rich musical traditions of Aotearoa."

Ngā mihi nui,
Arne Herrmann
Chief Executive

2. About Choirs Aotearoa New Zealand & the NZ Youth Choir

Who We Are

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

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

The New Zealand Youth Choir

- Established in **1979 as the first national youth choir in the world**, NZYC has achieved **international acclaim**, winning awards at major competitions and festivals worldwide.
- 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 professional development.

Learn more at: nzyouthchoir.com

3. Why we audition

The recruitment for this important role follows our new 'Music Director Appointment Policy' that has these objectives:

1. Promote professional pathways for choral conductors in Aotearoa New Zealand
2. Create viable succession planning for top choral conductors
3. Create new viewpoints and a sense of rejuvenation of the artistic leadership of our choirs and the organization
4. Create a competitive environment for its singers and artistic staff members to achieve the level of excellence associated with our national choirs.

To deliver to this policy all CANZ Music Director roles will become publicly contested once an MD has served two choir cycles with their choirs and then again after each subsequent cycle. This process of opening an MD role for public auditions is not a reflection on the status of the incumbent in any form, in fact the incumbents are encouraged to apply for another cycle if they so desire.

4. The Role: Music Director, New Zealand Youth Choir

- **Reports to:** Chief Executive, Choirs Aotearoa New Zealand
- **Location:** New Zealand (some travel required for rehearsals and tours)
- **Contract:** Fixed Term – Project based 2026 - 2028
- **Remuneration:** Daily rates for project work plus retainer, commensurate with experience

Key Responsibilities

Artistic Leadership

- Develop and implement an inspiring artistic vision for NZYC.
- Select repertoire that showcases musical excellence and reflects the cultural identity of Aotearoa.
- Collaborate with composers, musicians, and artistic partners.
- Contributing member of CANZ Artistic Advisory Group.

Rehearsal & Performance Direction

- Lead high-quality rehearsals and performances.
- Provide vocal training and musicianship development for choir members.
- Conduct national and international tours, recordings, and special projects.

Singer Development & Engagement

- Mentor and develop young singers, fostering individual and collective growth.
- Provide artistic leadership that supports diversity and inclusion.
- Work with vocal coaches and music educators to ensure a high standard of training.

Collaboration & Partnerships

- Work with Choirs Aotearoa New Zealand leadership to plan programming and tours.
 - Engage with the wider choral, classical music, and arts communities in New Zealand and internationally.
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5. Person Specification

Essential Criteria:

- Proven experience in choral conducting at a high national level.
- Deep knowledge of choral repertoire, vocal technique, and ensemble training.
- A strong commitment to fostering young musical talent.
- Understanding of Te Ao Māori and Pasifika musical traditions, or a willingness to engage in these areas.
- Experience in planning and delivering performances at an international standard.

Desirable Criteria:

- Experience leading a youth or professional ensemble.
 - Familiarity with the New Zealand and 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 choirs.
 - The chance to work with **exceptional young singers** and support their artistic growth.
 - The opportunity to **lead national and international tours**, performing on world-class stages.
 - A supportive professional environment within Choirs Aotearoa New Zealand, with access to an extensive network of choral professionals.
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7. The Recruitment Process & Timeline

Date	Stage
28 April	Applications open
21 May	Closing date for applications
26-30 May	Interviews for shortlisted candidates (via Zoom)
14 June	Practical assessment with top 2-3 candidates (Auckland)
19 June	Announcement of appointment

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to **interview via Zoom**, and final candidates will conduct a **practical audition with a special audition choir in Auckland**. There will be up to 4 people on the interview committee, a mix of CANZ and external experts.

8. How to Apply

Interested candidates should submit the following materials:

1. Core Application Materials

- **Cover letter** outlining your interest in the role and relevant experience.
- **Curriculum Vitae (CV)** detailing your conducting and teaching experience.

2. Video Submissions

- **A video of you rehearsing a choir**, demonstrating your rehearsal techniques and engagement.
- **A video of you conducting a choir in performance**, showcasing your artistic and interpretive skills.

3. Repertoire & Artistic Vision

- **Your ideal repertoire list for a three-year cycle**, including a written explanation of why you chose these pieces.

4. Written Reflection

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

1. **Do you think there should be a national youth choir for this age group?** What should it be doing/achieving?
2. **What is unique about NZYC in a global context?**
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 Arne Herrmann at **ceo@choirsnz.co.nz** for more information.
- **Closing date for applications:** 21 May 2024

"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 nzyouthchoir.com
- **Follow us:** <https://www.facebook.com/nzyouthchoir/>
- **Upcoming performances & tours:** 27 June, Holy Trinity Cathedral, Auckland
- **Acknowledgement;** we are grateful for the funding from Creative New Zealand and NZYC's principal sponsor Infratil.