

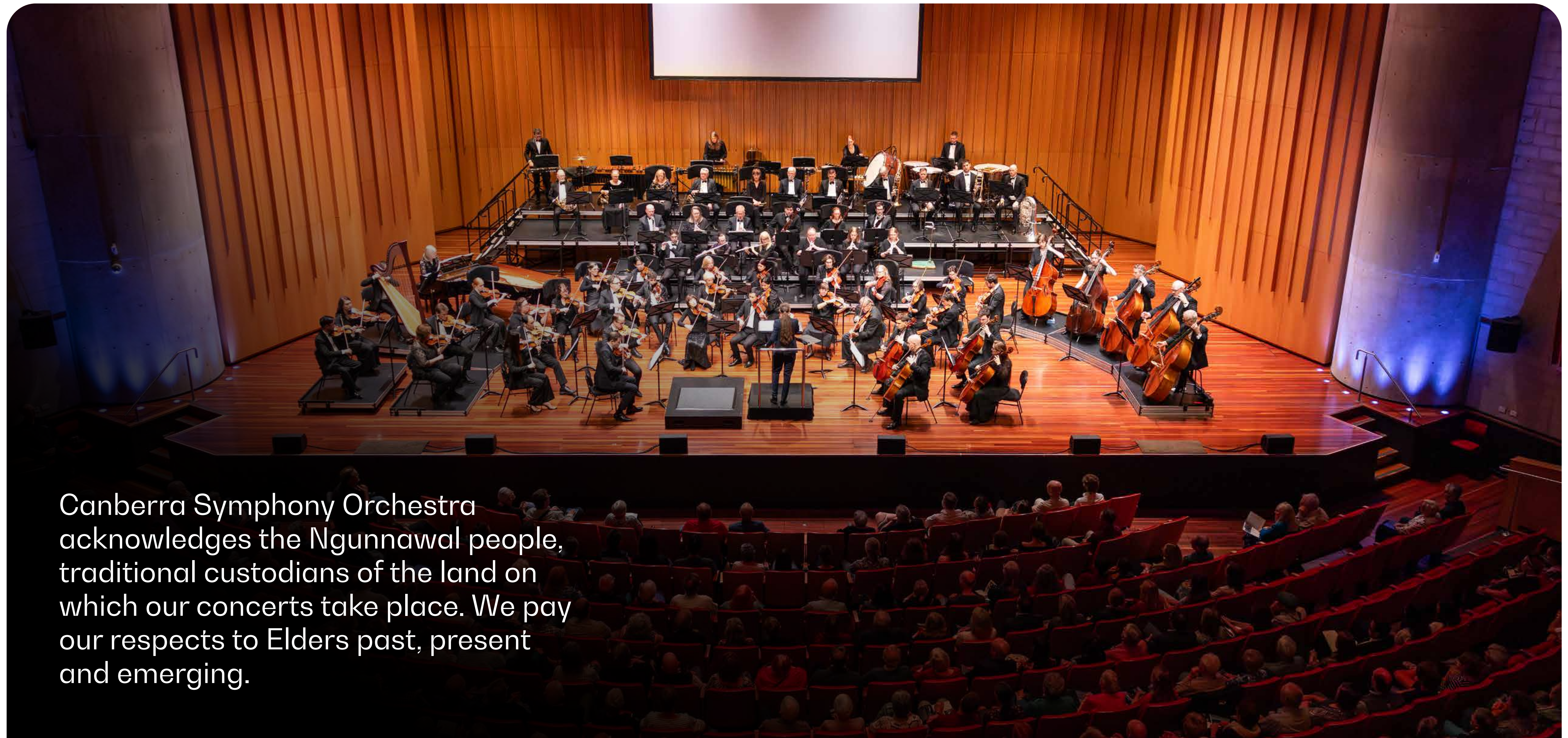


Concertmaster

Candidate information pack

Applications close at 5pm AEDT
Monday 18 January 2027





Canberra Symphony Orchestra acknowledges the Ngunnawal people, traditional custodians of the land on which our concerts take place. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Invitation from the Chief Executive Officer

Canberra Symphony Orchestra (CSO) is seeking an exceptional musician and artistic leader to become our next Concertmaster. As the orchestra of the nation's capital, we have recently experienced a period of significant growth and renewal and this role offers a violinist a special opportunity to help shape what comes next.

CSO holds an important place in the cultural life of the nation's capital. We have a strong reputation for our music-making, our enduring commitment to Australian music and to maintaining deep connections with the community in which we thrive.

As we look towards 2030, our ambition is to further strengthen our distinctive place among Australia's orchestras. At the heart of this vision is an organisation where musicians feel supported, challenged and inspired to do their best work, while finding new ways to connect people through music.

I hope to welcome a Concertmaster who brings the musical authority to lead, the generosity to listen and the curiosity to

explore what is possible. The ideal candidate will be someone who takes genuine pleasure in making music with others and who is excited by the opportunity to work with our Chief Conductor and Artistic Director Jessica Cottis and our talented musicians in shaping the orchestra's future.

This is an opportunity to make an enduring contribution to CSO's artistic life and play a defining role in our next chapter. I warmly encourage you to consider being part of it.

Rachel Thomas

Chief Executive Officer
Canberra Symphony Orchestra



About Canberra Symphony Orchestra

Founded in 1950, CSO has been central to Canberra's musical and cultural life for more than 75 years.

Canberra offers a distinctive setting for an artistic career. Alongside its established musical community, the city is home to national cultural institutions, The Australian National University and a network of vibrant arts organisations and performance venues. As Australia's capital, Canberra offers distinctive opportunities for artistic collaboration that connect with the nation's cultural and civic life.

Since 2021, CSO has been led by internationally renowned Australian conductor Jessica Cottis. Based overseas but a regular visitor to the nation's capital, Jessica has a strong personal connection to Canberra, where she undertook her formative musical studies at ANU. She is recognised for her imaginative, thought-provoking programming, musical curiosity and collaborative leadership.

CSO's professional part-time model brings together accomplished musicians, many of whom pursue dual careers. This breadth of experience and expertise is a distinctive strength of the orchestra, enriching its music-making and connection with the wider community.

As the largest professional performing arts employer in the ACT, CSO has enjoyed considerable success in recent years, with growing audiences and an increasingly ambitious and varied range of performances. Building on this momentum, the orchestra is looking confidently towards its future.



The orchestra in numbers

60%

Ticket revenue so far in 2026, up on the whole of 2025

8.6%

Growth in subscriptions on 2025

15.5%

Of subscribers are first-timers

46.7%

Growth in CSO’s audience database since January 2025, to 10,260 people

MUSICIANS AND CONCERTS

Musicians	117
Concerts Season 2026	14
Concerts Season 2027	16

VENUES

Llewellyn Hall, ANU
National Gallery of Australia Gandel Hall
National Museum of Australia Gandel Atrium

CONCERT SERIES

Llewellyn Series	Traditional, core repertoire
Chamber Series	Intimate performances showcasing CSO musicians
Australian Series	Dedicated to Australian classical and art music
Special Events	Blockbuster programs for the whole community to enjoy

Our music and our community

Artistic program and audiences

CSO's artistic program spans major symphonic works, Australian music, chamber performances and a growing range of commercial and collaborative productions. Season 2027, Other Worlds, delivers 16 programs that travel to the South Pole, *fin de siècle* Paris and the deep sea.

The Llewellyn Series brings the full orchestra to the stage of the storied Llewellyn Hall for the great symphonic repertoire, alongside distinguished soloists and conductors. The Australian Series, presented in partnership with the National Museum of Australia, champions Australian composers and new compositions. In the Chamber Series, the orchestra's musicians play one-hour concerts in the National Gallery of Australia's Gandel Hall.

CSO's audience growth has continued apace in 2026. Ticket revenue is already 60% higher than the whole of 2025, while subscriptions have increased 8.6%, with first-time subscribers accounting for 15.5% of that total. Since January 2025, CSO's audience database has grown 46.7% to 10,260 people.

Performances with national cultural institutions, major arts organisations and regional partners such as the National Museum of Australia, the National Gallery of Australia and the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia further expand CSO's artistic reach and community connection.

Season 2027

Other Worlds

**16 programs
that travel to the
South Pole, *fin de
siècle* Paris and
the deep sea.**

Our music and our community

Community and education programs

CSO's Future Pathways program has grown rapidly and is now an integral part of Canberra's musical life. Through its youth ensembles and the Kingsland Fellows, the program connects talented youngsters aged eight to 21 with professional musicians, providing opportunities to develop their skills and experience. Future Pathways alumni have gone on to further music study, with a number successfully auditioning to perform with Canberra Symphony Orchestra.

Building on its award-winning community engagement work, CSO aims to create stronger connections between musical participation, education and professional pathways, while continuing to develop opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy orchestral music.



Our vision

By 2030, Canberra Symphony Orchestra is known across Australia and beloved by its community for the quality of its music making, the richness of its cultural contribution, and its power to connect people through creativity and shared human experience.

What defines us

Creativity

Distinctive and committed to quality



Relevance

Forward-thinking and responsive

Reach

Inclusive, accessible and connected to community



Sustainability

Resilient, adaptive and future-focused

Our strategic priorities

Artistic excellence and orchestral leadership	Strengthen artistic cohesion, musical excellence and opportunities for orchestra and audience.
Australian music	Create, perform, preserve and champion Australian orchestral and chamber music.
Orchestral learning	Build connected pathways from early musical experiences to professional practice and lifelong engagement, while expanding access and participation.
The orchestra of the nation’s capital	Create distinctive artistic experiences and collaborations that draw on Canberra’s unique cultural and national institutions.
A sustainable future	Build the people, resources and relationships needed to sustain our artistic ambitions.

The opportunity

As Concertmaster, an exceptional violinist will take a leading role in an orchestra with an established reputation, a varied artistic program and ambitious plans for the future.

Working in close partnership with Chief Conductor and Artistic Director Jessica Cottis, the Concertmaster will influence the orchestra's musical character, contributing their artistry, experience and judgement to the collective achievement of its musicians.

CSO's breadth of programming, from major symphonic works and Australian music to chamber performances and artistic collaborations, creates a rich musical

environment. The successful candidate will join accomplished colleagues and contribute to the orchestra's artistic life at an important stage in its development.

We seek a musician who finds as much fulfilment in making music with colleagues as they do in their own playing.



A note from Jessica Cottis

“One of the great pleasures of working with CSO is the breadth of music we explore together, from the great symphonic repertoire to new Australian works and collaborations that take us in unexpected directions. Each brings different musical challenges and opportunities, and I value the artistry and commitment our musicians bring to this work.

I’m looking forward to developing a close musical partnership with our next Concertmaster: someone with a strong musical voice, collaborative spirit, a genuine desire to help further develop the orchestra’s sound, and an openness to new ideas and artistic exploration.”

Jessica Cottis
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director



Key responsibilities

Artistic leadership and performance

- Lead the orchestra musically in rehearsals and performances, setting a high standard through exceptional musicianship, preparation and artistic judgement.
- Work in close artistic partnership with the Chief Conductor and Artistic Director as well as guest conductors to realise each program's musical vision, interpretation and style.
- On occasion, lead rehearsals and performances without a conductor.

String leadership and orchestral coordination

- Work closely with the Chief Conductor and Artistic Director and string Section Leaders/Principals to support artistic cohesion, ensemble playing and the development of CSO's string sound.
- Lead the First Violin section and oversee bowings, tuning, string preparation and violin desking, in consultation with the Principal Second Violin and relevant Section Leaders/Principals.
- Take responsibility for First Violin player rankings and oversee ranked lists across the orchestra, in consultation with Section Leaders/Principals and the Chief Conductor and Artistic Director.

Key responsibilities

Musician development and orchestral culture

- Lead by example, with an approach to artistic leadership that is at the service of the music and the musicians around them.
- Be a trusted musical resource to colleagues, sharing expertise, offering constructive feedback and mentoring, and supporting their continued artistic development.
- Foster a respectful, supportive and collaborative orchestral environment, working constructively with Section Leaders/Principals and fellow musicians to address artistic and professional matters.

Artistic collaboration and orchestral contribution

- Contribute to auditions, trials and other artistic assessment processes, including panel deliberations.
- Provide informed artistic input to the Chief Conductor and Artistic Director and management on musician capability and performance requirements.
- Participate in the Artistic Advisory Committee (AAC) and other relevant artistic discussions, supporting constructive communication.

What we're looking for

We seek a musician and artistic leader whose experience, approach and ambitions align with CSO's future direction. Our selection process will focus on five qualities we believe are central to succeeding in the role:

Artistic excellence and musicianship	Exceptional violin performance skills, with the technical mastery, interpretive depth and musical authority to perform at the highest professional standard across orchestral, solo and chamber repertoire.
Musical leadership and orchestral expertise	Experience as a Concertmaster or in a comparable senior orchestral position. The ability to inspire musical excellence, shape ensemble playing and lead with confidence. A thorough understanding of orchestral practice and the artistic judgement to guide musicians effectively in rehearsal and performance.
People leadership and orchestral culture	Experience leading and developing musicians, with the sound judgement and maturity to handle sensitive artistic and professional matters fairly and respectfully. A commitment to building a cohesive, supportive orchestral culture and to mentoring emerging musicians and the next generation of orchestral talent.
Collaboration and interpersonal skills	A collaborative approach and clear communication, with the ability to build trust with the Chief Conductor and Artistic Director, guest conductors, Section Leaders/Principals, musicians and management. An appreciation of CSO's professional part-time model and the varied experience, careers and commitments of its musicians, with the ability to bring colleagues together around shared artistic goals.
Alignment with CSO's vision and strategic direction	A strong connection with CSO's vision, values and strategic direction, including its commitment to artistic excellence, Australian music, orchestral learning and community engagement. Musical curiosity, openness to new ideas and a genuine interest in championing Australian music as a defining part of CSO's artistic identity. An enthusiasm for contributing to the breadth of CSO's artistic and community programs and its future development.

How to apply

Your application

Please provide the following:

1.

A letter of interest (approximately two pages)

We would like to understand what you would bring to CSO, both as a musician and as a colleague and artistic leader. In particular, we invite you to share:

- What draws you to the Concertmaster role and the contribution you hope to make to CSO's musical life.
- How your professional experience has shaped your approach to leadership.
- How your artistic interests, experience and aspirations align with CSO's vision and direction.

Your letter should help us understand your suitability for the role.

2.

A current CV outlining your professional orchestral, solo and chamber music experience, including relevant musical leadership appointments.

3.

A video recording submission as outlined below, recorded within the past 12 months and presented without editing, in any order.

Recording submission requirements

Concerto (unaccompanied)

Mozart: Violin concerto 3 or 4 or 5, exposition with cadenza

Orchestral solos:

Bach: St. Matthew Passion, *Erbarne dich*, solo

Brahms: Symphony No. 1, 2nd mvt, solo

Rimsky-Korsakov: Scheherazade, solos

Swan Lake Suite, Op. 20a – No. 4, Scène, violin solo

Orchestral excerpts:

Shostakovich: Symphony no. 5, 1st mvt, Fig 9-12

Strauss: Don Juan opening (start to 14 bars after Fig D)

Mahler: Symphony no. 5, 1st mvt, Fig 4-5

4.

Two professional referees who can comment on your musicianship, leadership and professional conduct. Please include their names, positions and contact details. Referees will not be contacted without your permission.

Lodging your application

Applications close at 5pm AEDT on Monday 18 January 2027.

Please email your application, with written materials consolidated into a single PDF and links to your recordings, to recruitment@csso.org.au.

For a confidential conversation about the role before you apply, contact CEO Rachel Thomas at recruitment@csso.org.au with your availability for a phone call.

Recruitment process and timeline

2027

JANUARY

Initial assessment and shortlisting

Applications and recordings will be reviewed.

2027

Performance trial

Selected candidates will be invited to rehearse and perform with CSO in both orchestral and chamber settings, perform a short recital and to participate in an interview. The timing and details of these activities will be confirmed with shortlisted candidates.

2028

Extended trial

The preferred candidate may be invited to undertake a further extended trial, potentially encompassing a full concert season. The timing of this final stage will depend on the progress of the earlier trials, artistic programming and candidate availability.

Location and appointment arrangements

CSO anticipates offering a substantial part-time appointment, with flexibility to accommodate the orchestra's artistic requirements and the successful candidate's existing professional commitments.

Applications are welcomed from musicians in Australia and New Zealand, and from Australians currently living internationally. The successful candidate will be expected to be based in Australia, with regular attendance in Canberra. Candidates must have the right to work in Australia.

The precise scope of the appointment and its remuneration will be discussed confidentially with shortlisted candidates.

Participation in an earlier stage does not guarantee an invitation to subsequent trials.

Equity and inclusion

CSO values diversity and welcomes applications from people of all backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We are committed to a respectful and equitable recruitment process and will make reasonable adjustments to support candidates throughout the process.

recruitment@csso.org.au

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