

Chief Artistic Officer
Expressions of Interest

September 2026

MJ Capps & Associates
maryjo@mjcapps.com.au
mjcapps.com.au



The TSO acknowledges the traditional owners and continuing custodians of Lutruwita / Tasmania, and pays respect to the Aboriginal community today, and to its Elders past and present.

The TSO recognises a history of truth, which acknowledges the impacts of colonisation upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and stand for a future that profoundly respects their stories, culture, language and history.



This is not a standard recruitment process.

The TSO is inviting Expressions of Interest for a newly created role: Chief Artistic Officer.

For nearly 80 years we've been building our artistry, our reputation and our connection with Lutruwita / Tasmania. Today, under the artistic leadership of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director Eivind Aadland, we create unique worlds of sound across a wonderfully broad repertoire in the concert hall, through chamber music in pubs, barns and community halls, in festivals and special projects, and through digital and live-streamed experiences. There is a lot to be proud of – and a lot of exciting territory still to explore.

Being Tasmanian is fundamental to who we are – it is a place of great beauty and creativity. It gives us a distinctive perspective, and the freedom to be agile, entrepreneurial and a little bit different. The TSO takes pride in staying deeply connected to our island while sharing the creativity and character of Tasmania with the world. We're looking for someone with artistry and imagination and the skills to involve others in realising a vision. Someone who looks at an orchestra with extraordinary musicians, a distinctive home, and a unique place in Tasmania's cultural life, and sees an expansive future.

This is a chance for an exceptional artistic leader – programmer, curator, practising artist, artistic director, or something that fits none of those boxes – to help shape TSO's next chapter, while understanding that won't be built by one person alone. It will take artistic leadership, collaboration, courage, experimentation – and occasionally, changing our minds or expanding our artistic frames of reference.

We're looking for someone who wants to help lead that work. Someone who respects what an orchestra is. [But is also curious enough to ask what else it could be.](#)

That is why we're not starting with a conventional Position Description. We're open to co-creating the role itself – its title, its structure, even whether it's shared across more than one person. The details can come later. Right now, we want to know:

[With all of these magical ingredients, what might we create?](#)

Be ambitious, strategic, and creative – we can't wait to hear from you.

Caroline Sharpen OAM

CEO, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra

About TSO

The Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra is one of Australia's leading performing arts companies and part of the DNA of Tasmanian cultural life – we have been inspiring, invigorating, and delighting audiences through music since 1948.

Based in Hobart's Federation Concert Hall, the 47-piece double-wind orchestra performs an extensive and varied concert season in Hobart, travels regularly to Launceston, as well as delivering chamber music across the island – eager to connect with as many Tasmanians as possible, the TSO offers a wide-ranging education and community program. We enjoy a profile well beyond the shores of our island state, having taken out major national awards in recent years for performances and recordings – we are the most recorded, broadcast, and streamed orchestra in Australia.

The TSO is at the forefront of nurturing the next generation of composers and conductors, convening intensive pre-professional training programs including the Australian Composers' School and Australian Conducting Academy. For works which require choral forces, the TSO is joined by the TSO Chorus, an auditioned group of approximately 80 voices.

The TSO community (musicians, staff, board, chorus, and supporters alike) are enterprising, curious, collaborative, and committed. Inclusive and closely knit, the organisation is united by a love of music and with a strong esprit de corps, employees are empowered to bring new and bold ideas to the table.

Over the last five years, TSO has undertaken a bold employee-led project to identify and finalise the new organisational values that will guide our strategy, decisions, and behaviour over the next ten years. From consultation with nearly 100 members of the TSO cohort, three clear and agreed values emerged: connection, artistry, and integrity. We uphold these values in everything we do – how we make decisions, how we connect with our stakeholders, and how we work with each other.

You might like to watch some current TSO employees talk about their experience living and working in Tasmania [here](#), or get a sense of what a typical week at TSO is like [here](#).



Life in Nipaluna / Hobart

The TSO is inherently influenced and inspired by its home in Lutruwita / Tasmania. The vast and varied natural landscape and thriving cultural life of our island make it an inspiring and sought-after location to live and work.

Our main performance venue, rehearsal studio, and office are co-located on the Hobart waterfront, and musicians and staff alike value the community spirit and work-life integration that a small but vibrant capital city like Hobart provides.

Food, culture and the arts are big attractions in Hobart (ranked the safest city in Australia) and further afield, Tasmania has over 2000km of walking tracks as well as 18 national parks. Through our First Nations artistic projects and reconciliation initiatives, there are plentiful opportunities to understand and experience palawa (Tasmanian Aboriginal) Country, culture, language and stories.

We regularly tour to the many unique and vibrant towns across the island – we've made music and connected with music-lovers in pubs, community halls, schools, parks, churches, and even airport hangars.

Brand Tasmania research identified that the Tasmanian spirit and guiding philosophy can be encapsulated as 'the quiet pursuit of the extraordinary' – as an island and a community we are humble and quietly confident, isolated so therefore inventive, and we privilege the unusual and delight in the remarkable.



The invitation

At TSO, you'll have some extraordinary ingredients to play with: world-class musicians; a chorus of 75+ voices; recording, broadcasting, streaming and film capabilities; elite pre-professional conductor and composer development programs; loyal audiences and supporters; strong partners and networks; and an invigorating and inspiring island home.

What might you make with them?

We invite you to tell us what you imagine, what excites you, what you think TSO could become.

Tell us what you would protect fiercely, challenge, stop doing and start doing.

Tell us how you would use the extraordinary range of creative assets at TSO's disposal – our musicians, artists, audiences, communities, location, platforms, reputation and networks – to create something distinctive.

We're interested in your artistic vision. We're equally interested in your strategy for making that vision matter.

- Who is it for?
- Who else could it be for?
- Where's the opportunity?
- How do you create artistic work that is ambitious and rigorous, while also understanding audiences and the changing ways people choose to spend their time and money?
- How do you ignite the fire in others to achieve it?

Because great ideas and great music matter. So does understanding the people you hope will connect with them.



What exists

You won't be starting with a blank page. TSO is already an extraordinary collection of artistic, organisational and creative assets. Your challenge will be to see the possibilities between them.

An exceptional orchestra

A 47-piece professional orchestra and 70-strong auditioned chorus. Highly skilled musicians with deep knowledge of the art form and an increasingly active role in shaping and curating TSO's artistic activity.

An established model where artistic ideas can emerge from across the orchestra – not simply from the top of the organisational chart.

A creative ecosystem, not just a concert season

A diverse range of TSO artistic platforms, formats and collaborators: some are established. Some may evolve. And some, no doubt, you'll bring to us. More broadly, the proximity and collaborative spirit of the wider Tasmanian ecosystem makes it easy to get ideas off the ground.

A clear understanding of who we are talking to

An established audience segmentation framework which provides the opportunity – and expectation – to think deeply about different audiences, what motivates them, what gets in their way, and how they might connect with TSO.

A remarkable home and a nimble creative infrastructure

A co-located concert hall, rehearsal studio, recording capability and organisational offices. The ability to move quickly from artistic idea to rehearsal, performance, recording and digital distribution.

Digital capability with global reach

In-built livestreaming and digital capabilities, allowing us to think beyond the number of seats in a concert hall. A growing digital footprint and the opportunity to be a global export and reach audiences across Tasmania, Australia and the world.

An exceptional reputation

TSO has an excellent reputation amongst conductors, artists and collaborators. Not just for the quality of our artistry. But for something equally valuable: being deeply decent humans to work with.

Loyal supporters and partners

A committed and growing community of donors, partners, investors and supporters who believe in the value of TSO – and help enable artistic ambition.

An island that wants its orchestra

An appetite across Tasmania for TSO to visit and engage with communities, and a long history of taking music beyond the concert hall. The opportunity to think creatively about what it means to be Tasmania's orchestra – not simply an orchestra based in Tasmania.

What might be

The Chief Artistic Officer will be TSO's senior in-house artistic strategist and creative leader, working closely with our Chief Conductor / Artistic Director, Eivind Aadland.

They will have significant influence over TSO's artistic direction, programming and creative identity. But this is not a role that sits in an artistic silo.

The Chief Artistic Officer must be deeply audience and market-minded. They will understand that artistic strategy, audience strategy and organisational strategy are interconnected. They will be curious about audiences, understand markets, and pay attention to demand.

1. Create a distinctive artistic point of view

Shape an artistic identity that is unmistakably TSO. Develop the overarching artistic architecture for TSO's seasons and creative activity. Bring together repertoire, artists, ideas, place, experimentation and storytelling into something that feels coherent, ambitious and alive.

2. Know the audience. Know the market. Take them somewhere.

Develop a deep understanding of the people TSO currently reaches – and those it does not. Use audience insight and market understanding as creative intelligence. This does not mean programming only what is familiar, it also knowing how to create a pathway between 'I like this' and 'I didn't know I would like that'.

3. Curate an orchestra for the world we are living in

Lead and enable programming across TSO's concert activity and creative platforms. Identify the artists, conductors, composers, collaborators and ideas that TSO should be in conversation with – including future Chief Conductor and artistic collaborator appointments.

4. Turn the whole organisation into a creative asset

The artistic identity of TSO does not live in one person's taste or spreadsheet. It is shaped by musicians, artists and collaborators, audiences, education and community work, digital presence, partnerships and the experiences we create.

5. Extend the creative ecosystem

TSO does not need to have all of its creative intelligence sitting inside one role. Draw on specialist expertise, artistic partnerships, niche curators, community voices and creative collaborators where they can add depth, knowledge and perspective – and create an ever-expanding artistic frame of reference.

6. Make the big artistic ideas deliverable

Ambition without delivery is just an expensive daydream. Balance artistic aspiration with budgets, scheduling, logistics, contracts, technical realities and organisational capacity. Be creatively ambitious because you understand constraints – not despite them.

7. Leave the orchestra and the art form stronger

Think beyond the next season. Build relationships that matter, develop artists and creative voices, strengthen TSO's place within Tasmania, Australia and the international cultural landscape, and help ensure the orchestra has something meaningful to say about the future.

Tell us what you would need from us

This is important. We do not expect an incoming Chief Artistic Officer to arrive with a fully formed vision and then simply be told to “make it happen”.

If you have an ambitious vision for TSO, we want to know what you think the organisation needs to put around you to give that vision the best possible chance of succeeding.

The team

What kind of artistic and creative team would you want around you? What capabilities would sit inside TSO? What would you build, evolve, or strengthen?

The musicians

TSO musicians are one of TSO's greatest sources of knowledge, creativity and artistic intelligence. How would you harness the established musician curator model – or other models – and create the right balance between clear artistic leadership and genuine creative contribution?

The artists

What relationships would you want to build? What kinds of conductors, artists and collaborators would be important to your vision? Where would you bring in new voices? And how would you ensure that TSO remains a place exceptional artists want to return to?

The wider creative network

Where would you deliberately bring in external artistic expertise? What kinds of curators, creative partners or specialist voices would strengthen TSO's work? Where should we resist the temptation to assume that all creative expertise needs to sit within the organisation?

The board

What would you need from the Board to enable ambitious artistic risk-taking while maintaining appropriate governance and stewardship?

The organisation

What ways of working would enable your best work? Where might typical paradigms or assumptions need to evolve? How would you want artistic, audience, operational and commercial thinking to come together?

The resources

What do you believe is important in creating the conditions for artistic ambition? How would you think about making choices, building partnerships and using the resources available to greatest effect?

We are not asking you to design the organisation for us before you have even joined it. We are interested in how you personally view the relationship between vision, people, audiences, structure, resources, governance and execution.

Your expression of interest

You can dispense with the conventional cover letter. Instead, we would like to understand your story and your thinking. Based on what you've read so far in the EOI pack, consider covering the following areas – in whatever order you choose.

1. Your point of view

What has shaped the way you think? What do you believe an orchestra can and should be in 2026 and beyond?

2. Your vision for TSO

Where would you begin? What possibilities do you see? Please don't provide a fully programmed season – we are more interested in your thinking than a list of repertoire.

3. Audience and market

How do audiences and markets influence the way you think about artistic strategy? Where do you see opportunities for TSO to deepen relationships, reach new people and create demand?

4. Your response to big questions

Choose a few of the artistic challenges or opportunities you believe matter most and tell us how you would approach them at TSO. Feel free to challenge our assumptions.

5. How you would make it happen

How do you bring people with you, balance ambition with practical realities, and work with differing perspectives?

6. What you would need from us

Tell us what TSO would need to provide around you for your vision to have the best possible chance of success.

7. Why you and why now?

What experience, relationships, achievements, artistic practice or perspective would you bring? And why does this opportunity make you want to have this conversation?

What to submit

A written expression of interest

Maximum 5 pages if it's solely words; maximum 10 pages if it includes images or design elements.

Your CV or biography

Tell us where you have been and what you have done. Maximum 3 pages.

Something that helps us understand your work

This might include links, programs, recordings, writing, creative projects, reviews or other material that gives us a better sense of your artistic practice or leadership. Feel free to incorporate these into your other submitted documents too.

We are interested in substance, not presentation polish. A beautifully designed document will not compensate for an uninteresting idea.

What else?

- More specific information about TSOs current programming, artistic leadership model, organisational chart, audience and financial environments can be provided during the consultation process.
- It is anticipated that the Chief Artistic Officer joins the TSO Executive Team.
- Competitive salary, relocation, and other benefits can be discussed during consultation.
- We are open to unique models and structures (joint leadership models; being based between Nipaluna / Hobart and somewhere else, etc). During the consultation process you will be supported to really refine your proposed model and pitch.
- We welcome EOI submissions from people with diverse backgrounds, experience and artistic practices.
- You do not need to tick every conventional box to start this conversation. What matters is that you have something to say – and the capability, curiosity and creativity to help make it happen.



What happens next?

1. **Consultation with recruiter** – We will only accept EOIs from candidates who connect with our recruiter, Mary Jo Capps maryjo@mjcapps.com.au
2. **Expressions of interest** – We invite interested people to send us their thinking. Submissions must be received by 5pm AEDT Sunday 25 October 2026.
3. **Conversations and shortlisting** – We will identify a small number of people whose ideas, experience and perspective we would like to explore further.
4. **Come to Hobart** – Selected candidates will be invited to Nipaluna / Hobart 8-11 November 2026.
5. **Pitch, discussion, questions** – There will be an opportunity to expand on your vision, pitch your ideas, explore your thinking with the panel (representing a cross-section of TSO) and also participate in more traditional interview-style questions.
6. **Referee checks** – Please include four people who you think can best speak to why you're the right person for this job. Think laterally!
7. **Co-design conversation** – We will invite our preferred candidate to work with us to convert this EOI process and visioning into 'nuts and bolts' (working arrangements, salary model, position description, a contract).



The Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra is
not a blank canvas.

Nor should it be.

There is a lot already here – and there
is more to imagine. If that feels like an
opportunity worth exploring, let's talk.

MJ Capps & Associates
maryjo@mjcapps.com.au
mjcapps.com.au

tso.com.au/careers

