

Associate Artist

Department:	Artistic Administration
Salary:	£20,000 - £22,000 per annum, pro rata (depending on experience)
Deadline for Applications:	1 October 2024
Auditions & Informal interviews:	First-round auditions: Cardiff (21, 29, 30, October; 1, 4 November) London (6, 7 November) Glasgow (8 November) Manchester (15 November) Birmingham (19 November) Second-round auditions: Cardiff (8, 9 & 10 January 2025)
Start Date:	1 August 2025
End date:	31 July 2026

The WNO Associate Artist programme aims to encourage singers from all backgrounds to take part. WNO is grateful for the generous support of the Shirley & Rolf Olsen Bursary, Sheila and Richards Brooks Bursary, Anthony Evans Scholarship, The Eira Francis Davies Bursary, The WNO E L Schäfer Bursary, Bateman Family Charitable Trust, Joseph Strong Frazer Trust, Stanley Picker Trust, Chris Ball Bursary, and The Parry Family Bursary towards our WNO Associate Artist Scheme.

Job Description

Job title: Associate Artist

Responsible to: Director of Artistic Administration

Main purpose of job:

Welsh National Opera is offering the opportunity for singers to join its ranks as 'WNO Associate Artist'. This is a full-time, year-long traineeship between August 2025 and July 2026.

This would be an ideal opportunity for current students, recent graduates and/or emerging artists who have specialised in any strand of performance or vocal studies and are looking to develop their performance skills and career within an opera company.

Key responsibilities:

We aim to offer auditions to anyone who meets the following criteria:

- An emerging artist in the early stages of their professional career
- Minimum of 1 year's vocal training at HE, College, Conservatoire level or equivalent level
- Relevant opera performance experience as a Chorister or Principal at College and/or professional level
- UK resident and/or with right to work within the UK

The programme will provide a structured learning and professional development programme alongside the opportunity to perform small roles and covers within WNO. Regular vocal and language coaching, singing lessons and other opportunities with industry professionals will be scheduled to ensure that trainees are given access to the highest level of industry performance, and professional development, opportunities.

The main aims of the programme are as follows:

- To give young Artists the opportunity to perform on a national platform (within WNO's mainstage and touring productions)
- The opportunity to learn and study larger roles, supported by coaching from WNO's music staff, as part of a cover cast
- To provide young Artists with a wealth of additional performance opportunities, to expand their experience on all performance platforms, including:
- Involvement in WNO's Programmes & Engagement projects to hone performance craft in different contexts; as part of workshops / as amateurs, school visits, digital projects etc.
- Involvement in large-scale concerts.

- Involvement in Development Concerts, Marketing and Press events
- To provide a structured training and professional development programme to run alongside the role and cover opportunities which may include, but not limited to:
 - Regular language coaching – sessions in Italian, French and German
 - Regular coaching sessions with a member of WNO's Music Staff
 - Singing lessons, with a teacher mutually agreed between the Artist and WNO staff, on a regular basis
 - Coaching from visiting Artists and industry professionals on specific roles
 - Stagecraft workshops from visiting Directors and Choreographers
 - Audition preparation coaching from WNO's Casting committee
 - Professional development training (how to 'market' yourself and interact with stakeholders etc. as an Artist)
- Recital
- Professional showreel filming

World-renowned Welsh soprano Rebecca Evans CBE will mentor the singers throughout the year. The programme will be monitored and supported by WNO Director of Artistic Administration and WNO Head of Music & Casting Advisor. At the beginning of the programme, each young singer will devise a development plan in consultation with these staff members. These development plans will be monitored throughout the year, updated and amended as necessary. At the end of the year, a thorough evaluation and debrief of the goals achieved and training / learning objectives met will be carried out.

General

- To cooperate with us in complying with relevant health and safety legislation, policies and procedure in the performance of the post. The post carries responsibility for Health & Safety issues at level 6 (see attached).
- To behave in accordance with our values
- To maintain confidentiality and observe data protection and associated guidelines where appropriate.
- To ensure compliance with our policies and procedures at all times

The duties in this job description are not exhaustive and may be altered at any time to reflect the changing needs of the organisation.

First-round Auditions

Successful candidates will be invited to a first-round audition in a choice of five cities around the UK. We will do our best to accommodate your first choice but reserve the right to assign a different city if necessary. The audition will last 5 minutes, followed by a 5-minute informal chat with the panel.

- The panel is likely to consist of WNO Head of Casting & Chorus and/or WNO Head of Music & Casting Advisor and/or Deputy Head of Music and/or Rebecca Evans CBE.
- An accompanist will be provided.

Auditions will take place in:

- Cardiff (21, 29, 30, October; 1, 4 November)
- London (5, 7 November)
- Glasgow (8 November)
- Manchester (15 November)
- Birmingham (19 November)

When attending a first-round audition you will need to bring two contrasting arias/songs with you. You will be asked to sing one of these, which you can choose. The panel may ask to hear the second piece, but this is not guaranteed. As the auditions will only last 10 minutes, including a brief chat, please choose arias/songs of an appropriate length.

- We anticipate that the application results will be released by 11 October 2024, and that the results of the first-round auditions will be released by 6 December 2024.

Second-round Auditions

Artists who are selected from the first-round of auditions will be invited to return for a second-round audition:

Second-round auditions will take place in WNO's home, Wales Millennium Centre, in Cardiff on 8, 9 & 10 January 2025.

- The second-round audition panel will be joined by the WNO Director of Artistic Administration.
- An accompanist will be provided.
- WNO can contribute towards the cost of travel to all applicants selected for second-round auditions.

When attending a second-round audition, you will need to bring at least three contrasting arias/songs with you. You will be asked to sing two of these, one of your own choice and one the choice of the panel. The audition will last 10 minutes, followed by a 5-minute informal chat with the panel. Please choose arias/songs of an appropriate length.

- We anticipate that the second-round results will be released by 28 February 2025.

We cannot guarantee an alternative audition date or time if candidates are not available for each audition round.

Person Specification

Associate Artist

Skills, knowledge and experience:

- Minimum of 1 year's vocal training at HE, College, Conservatoire level or equivalent
- Relevant opera performance experience as a Chorister or Principal at College and/or professional level
- UK resident and/or with right to work within the UK
- Welsh language speaker/writer *
- Understanding of GDPR legislation *

Points marked with an asterisk (*) are desirable rather than essential.

Health and Safety Individual Responsibilities

All Employees

(Level 6)

Every employed person, including Managers.

Responsibilities

All employees are responsible for:

The observance and implementation of rules and systems which are derived from the Health and Safety Policy and the arrangements for its implementation.

Taking reasonable care for their personal health and safety and that of fellow employees and others who may be affected either directly or indirectly by their acts or omissions at work.

Reporting promptly to the appropriate Manager potential or actual hazards and defects.

Taking part in any health and safety training considered by the Company to be necessary in order to comply with the Company Health and Safety Policy and current legislation.

Knowing the correct action to be taken in the event of an accident, fire or other emergency.

Co-operating with Management and other employees in meeting statutory requirements.

Not interfering with or misusing anything provided to protect their health, safety or welfare which is required by legislation and using any machinery, equipment, substance or safety device in accordance with any training and instruction.