

Upper or Lower String Teacher

The ARCO Project



Location: Prince Albert, Western Cape, South Africa

Position Type: Full-time beginning January 2026. Fixed term contract 12 months.

Reports to: ARCO Project Director Dr Louise Lansdown and ARCO Board

Application deadline: Friday 24 October 2025 (send to Louise.lansdown15@gmail.com)

Interview Week: starting 3 November 2025

Application Content: Include full CV, two referee contact details, letter of motivation

About the ARCO Project

The ARCO Project is a dynamic string teaching initiative dedicated to expanding access to high-quality music education, fostering creativity, and nurturing the next generation of musicians through innovation, equity, and collaboration based in Prince Albert, Western Cape.

Our mission is to create a community of curious, inspired, committed, innovative, passionate young musicians empowered by learning an instrument and the life-changing activities associated with this journey. For learners based in a remote Karoo-town mobility is vital. Music offers an opportunity to explore the world outside of their environment, opening their minds and imagination to a bigger and better world through performances, attendance at festivals and concerts both regionally and nationally. In addition to delivering two instrumental lessons a week in groups of two or three children, ARCO runs weekly orchestral rehearsals for its four string orchestras. ARCO soon plans to begin a weekly chamber music programme as it increases its footprint expanding instrumental expertise. Although ARCO does use a Finnish string teaching methodology called *Colourstrings* to teach the mechanics and theoretical elements of playing violin, viola, cello and double bass, South African music is at the heart of the musical content of our work. Even after just seven months there is already a strong sense of belonging and pride amongst the learners. They have just had their very first public performance as part of the Kaleidoscope Festival, one that was immensely exciting and inspiring for them all. The ARCO Project is not bringing European Western Art Music into Prince Albert, but through the skill of learning a traditional Western instrument it is using the heritage and sounds of the Karoo to offer an alternative educational experience and opportunity for many culturally deprived and neglected young learners.

Role Overview

We are seeking a passionate, skilled, and inspiring **Upper or Lower Strings Teacher** to join the ARCO Project teaching faculty from January 2026. The ideal candidate is not only an accomplished performer and pedagogue but also committed to social impact, inclusivity, and student-centered learning. Ideally, but not essential the candidate would be able to speak Afrikaans fluently and be willing to undertake training in the Colourstrings teaching method. This role involves teaching violin, viola, cello, or double bass (depending on expertise), developing students' technical and musical abilities, and fostering a supportive, engaging, and creative learning environment in a challenging but supportive community.

Key Responsibilities

- Teach group lessons in string instruments (beginner to intermediate levels). At the moment we deliver two instrumental lessons for each learner each week and most groups are with two or three learners.
- Teach select individual lessons for those students progressing rapidly
- Teach basic music skills to ECD groups at crèches (more detail on this in interview)
- Conduct four orchestral sessions each week. This number may increase as our student numbers rise
- Develop engaging lesson plans tailored to different learning styles and abilities. Use initiative to tweak learner groupings for instrumental lessons based on aptitude and progress.
- Continually study and watch Colourstrings videos preparing material for lessons
- Maintenance, repair, care and security of the ARCO instrument collection, accessories, music stands and music resources is of vital importance. We will offer training on instrument maintenance and repair.
- Collaborate and work sensitively with head teachers and parent liaisons at the Prince Albert Community Trust and schools. This includes Blink Begin, Prince Albert Primary School, Kweekvallei and Albert College. Other schools in Prince Albert will also come on board over the next 12 months.
- Mentor and inspire students, encouraging personal growth, discipline, and creativity.
- Incorporate innovative tools, technology, and methods in teaching, where appropriate.
- Participate and initiate community events, concerts, and outreach initiatives that promote the ARCO Project mission.
- Maintain accurate records of student progress and attendance.
- Update and share timetable changes, communicate effectively and in a timely fashion with all schools and parents.
- Show willingness to incorporate South African music, in particular Afrikaans and indigenous Karoo music in the teaching curriculum. This could involve writing out music by ear and arranging music.
- Show willingness to assist collaborating with the research project with Nelson Mandela University (see section on background at the end)

Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree or higher in Music Performance, Music Education, or related field (or equivalent professional experience).
- Demonstrated excellence on a string instrument (violin, viola, cello, or double bass).
- Proven experience teaching individual and group lessons across varied age groups.
- Strong knowledge of pedagogy, technique, and repertoire. Willingness to undertake training in Colourstrings methodology.
- Ability to connect with students from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.

- Excellent communication, organizational, and interpersonal skills.
- Commitment to equity, inclusion, and the ARCO Project mission.

Preferred Skills

- Experience with orchestral or chamber music coaching.
- Familiarity with digital tools for music learning (recording, practice apps, AI-assisted tools, etc.).
- Bilingual or multilingual communication skills.
- Experience with community engagement and outreach programs.

What We Offer

- Opportunity to make a meaningful social impact through music education.
- Collaborative, creative, and mission-driven team environment.
- Professional development opportunities and support for innovative teaching approaches.
- Competitive compensation. The ARCO Project is offering a 12-month contract @ R20,000 a month. Travel, accommodation and other expenses are not included in this figure. The successful candidate would be expected to rent accommodation at their own expense (further information @ interview will be provided).

Background information ARCO Prince Albert

ARCO Prince Albert in partnership with the Prince Albert Community Trust (PACT) officially launched its instrumental teaching lessons in February 2025. Around 80 young learners between the ages of 4-13 across five different schools have started to learn the violin, viola, cello and double bass. Royal Birmingham Conservatoire graduate and cellist **Elliot Tingley** has headed up pedagogical and day-to-day lessons assisted by PACT's Creative Arts Team Leader and musician **Waldon Everts**. Upper String specialists Elsabe Raath De Jäger (South Africa), Klara Rüttimann (Switzerland) and ARCO Director Louise Lansdown have spent shorter periods of time in Prince Albert assisting Elliot. UK based ARCO Director double bassist Anthony Alcock has also spent several weeks at a time teaching alongside Elliot.

It took around eighteen months to set ARCO up in Prince Albert. The project is incredibly grateful to PACT for the daily use of their beautiful music room at the PACT Youth Centre and The Showroom in Church Street. In addition, ARCO now has a music instrument storeroom in the PACT Youth Centre. Thanks to PACT Founder and Executive Team Leader **Ingrid Wolfaardt**, **Azuke Ntapane**, **Waldon Paul**, **Selwyn Maans**, **Renichia Mooneys** and **Anolisha Paulsen**.

Before leaving the UK in January 2025 for South Africa Elliot undertook a course in string instrument repair and restoration as well as a training course in the highly successful Finnish string pedagogy method “**Colourstrings**”. Along with other recognised schools of string pedagogy including Paul Rolland and Suzuki, ARCO is in the process of creating a string teaching curriculum relevant to young Afrikaans learners with specific musical, pedagogical and linguistic content. To this end ARCO is also drawing on historically recognised Afrikaans songs from the FAK (Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge) Sangbundel (Volumes 1 and 2). The first volume, first released in 1937 containing lyrics and sheet music is considered a significant reference for Afrikaans music culture. In addition, ARCO is also using the New Apostolic Church Organ Hymnals and notating music used for the Riel Dancing and Karoo Blues.

ARCO has invested substantially in over sixty-five instruments, almost all having made their way to South Africa from the UK on two separate journeys made by private jets (long story). These consignments include 30 violins, 11 violas, 16 cellos and 7 double basses, most of them mini instruments constructed specially for small children to play! This investment has been made possible by a generous donation from **The Tertis Foundation**, a Registered Charity in the UK, 1099084. ARCO sourced most of its instruments from **Stringers of London** with many thanks to violist and General Manager **Ian Byrne-Brito** and his staff. **Heuer Pianos** in Stellenbosch have provided most of the violins and the music-stands. Many thanks to **Derek Sale** and **Hans Heuer**. In addition ARCO has invested in 15 hardy orchestral music stands, Colourstrings teaching books, spare strings, accessories and simple percussion instruments and teaching aids.

Alongside the day-to-day teaching ARCO is embarking on a major Research Project in partnership with **Nelson Mandela University** (NMU), Gqeberha. **David Bester**, violinist, Senior Lecturer and Programme Leader for the BMus in the Music Department, NMU is our principal contact and researcher **Penny Alder** our principal researcher and data collector based in Prince Albert. From March 2025 ARCO has embarked on informal data collection. This has involved identifying interested parents, students and teachers to constitute the focus groups and planning to begin the research informally.