

The National Youth Orchestra 2025

Applicant Information

Hello, we're delighted you're looking for more information about applying for The National Youth Orchestra. This information sheet provides you with the detail you need to apply for the Orchestra and to feel confident about your application and audition.

Why join NYO?

Joining The National Youth Orchestra will open up your world.

You open the door to a room full of people who love music as much as you.

You open a chance to learn together with the best musicians in the UK – and play better.

You open up new ideas, new friends, new places to visit and new music to explore.

You open up your passion for music to other young people.

In fact, the Orchestra is only a small part of the adventure – because the biggest thing that you'll open up, is you!

Get involved. Play your part.

You will be welcomed into a nationwide community of musicians, where you will find a culture of mutual understanding, support and respect, in which everyone actively contributes to each other's wellbeing. You will play your part in shaping an inclusive environment for everyone.

You will play orchestral and ensemble music, from masterworks to new music, championing diverse musical ideas, composers and instruments- working together for collective success. Your musicianship will develop through audacious musical challenges, supported by NYO's world class musical and pastoral team.

You'll perform your music with, and for, teenagers everywhere – from concert halls to schools and surprising spaces and places. You'll make the music and performance your own, and work with leading creative innovators to develop your creative music skills, finding new ways to perform and present music.

You'll take action to open up music to other young people – sharing your skills and experience through [The NYO Inspire Programme](#) – making a difference to others.

Who can apply for The Orchestra?

Am I eligible?

- You need to be between 13 and 18 on 1 September 2024.
- You should be a British citizen or resident or studying in the British Isles.
- We accept applications from musicians at secondary school, sixth-form college, university, or who are home-schooled. We do not accept applications from those studying full-time at a music college or conservatoire, or on a joint course with a music college or conservatoire.

What instruments are you looking for?

We are recruiting 157 musicians who play orchestral instruments: violin, viola, cello, double bass, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, french horn, trumpet, trombone, tuba, orchestral percussion, harp and orchestral keyboard.

Do I play well enough?

If you play your instrument at an advanced level of technical proficiency and musicianship, we want to hear you. The benchmark level to apply for the Orchestra is grade 8 and above – there is no need to have taken graded exams. If you're unsure, have a look at the orchestral excerpts, and if you feel confident playing these, we would love to hear you.

What is the commitment in 2025?

NYO is a national team, and each musician plays a big role on and off the performance platform. If you are offered a place, you are expected to play this part fully.

NYO musicians make an eleven-month commitment, starting in October 2024 and culminating in August 2025, with projects mainly structured around school holidays and some weekends.

You will be involved in digital meet ups and workshops, rehearsals on residencies, NYO Inspire projects, local projects and national touring to schools and concert halls. Here are some outline dates for 2025. Please note that not everyone will be required for the dates in italics:

NYO Unite

Winter residency & concert tour

NYO Inspire Activity

October 2024 (one day)

28 December 2024 – 6 January 2025

February 2025 (three days)

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Spring residency & concert tour	April 2025 (exact dates tbc)
<i>NYO Inspire Activity</i>	<i>June/July 2025 (ten days)</i>
Summer residency & concert tour	28 July – 9 August 2025

NYO musicians need to be available for all residencies and concert tours and at least one day at NYO Unite in October.

NYO musicians will need to take part in up to three days of NYO Inspire activity. You'll be asked to be available for as many dates as possible so that we can plan the best experience for you.

What is the cost of auditioning for NYO?

First round video auditions are free – we offer free feedback and suggest further opportunities (why not give it a go!).

Final round assessment days are free and supported by travel and accommodation bursaries for those who need them. Please email orchestra@nyo.org.uk for more information.

What is the cost of a place in the Orchestra?

We invest over £10,000 in each NYO musician every year. In 2025 we expect to ask each musician to contribute £2,451 towards this cost (current figure at March 2024). We work with our supporter community to help raise the rest.

NYO musicians will not be turned away on financial grounds. We understand that for some the level of contribution may be out of reach. Don't give up now, we want to hear about what you need: our bursary scheme is generous, considering both means and expenditure, aiming to help with some, or all, of the contribution. We can also guide you in applying to other organisations for funding help.

Those musicians invited to be part of NYO 2025 join a large community of supporters who champion young musicians and help fund your development in the orchestra. We ask you to make your contribution at the beginning of the year, which enables us to plan and widen the scope to include many more young musicians who need opportunities. We also offer a six-month instalment plan.

As an NYO musician you will have a role in engaging with and thanking our nationwide community of supporters.

How do I apply?

To apply for the Orchestra, please complete an online application (full details below) by the end of **Sunday 2 June 2024**.

All instruments (please note this is different to previous years!) have two rounds of auditions, for which you will need to upload a **video audition** by the end of **Sunday 16 June 2024**. NYO 2024 Musicians, NYO alumni and Associates do not need to upload a video.

Our **final round assessment days** are designed to help showcase who you are as a musician, and as a young person who loves music, in the best possible environment. We aim to give you a fulfilling music-making experience alongside your audition.

Final round assessment days will take place between **2-15 September 2024** in London and Manchester. Percussion auditions will take place in Birmingham and harp auditions will take place in Reading.

You can let us know about any availability issues in your application.

What does the NYO recruitment timeline look like?

NYO applications open	First week of March 2024
Application deadline	the end of 2 June 2024
First Round video audition upload deadline	the end of 16 June 2024
First round results emailed by	19 July 2024
Final Round Assessment Days	2-15 September 2024
Final Round Assessment Day results emailed by	27 September 2024

What music do I need to perform?

For your video audition and for the solo audition part of your final round assessment day, you will need to prepare a solo piece (or pieces), and orchestral excerpts.

Solo Pieces

Strings, wind, harp, and orchestral keyboard players

- Please perform **two solo pieces** of your own choice.
- We ask that you play two contrasting works by different composers, to highlight what you are capable of as a musician: your technique, your musicianship and what you love to play.

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- At both first and final round, the panel will stop you after around **three minutes** of each piece, so if you'd like them to hear a particular section of the piece, please make cuts accordingly.
- You do not need to play with piano accompaniment for your video audition, but if you'd like to, you are welcome to. At final round, your pieces must be performed unaccompanied but don't need to have been written as an unaccompanied work.
- If you're offered a final round audition, you can play the same pieces you performed at first round or something different.

Brass players

- Please perform **one solo piece** of your own choice of around four–six minutes of playing in total.
- Choose something that highlights what you are capable of as a musician: your technique, your musicianship, and what you love to play.
- You do not need to play with piano accompaniment for your video audition, but if you'd like to, you are welcome to. At final round, your piece must be performed unaccompanied but doesn't need to have been written as an unaccompanied work.
- At final & single round you can play the same piece you performed at first round or something different.

Percussion players

- Please perform **one solo piece** of your own choice on xylophone, marimba or vibraphone, of around four–six minutes of playing in total.
- Choose something that highlights what you are capable of as a musician: your technique, your musicianship, and what you love to play.
- At final & single round you can play the same piece you performed at first round or something different.

Excerpts

Orchestral excerpts are an important part of your auditions and are chosen so that you can demonstrate your exploration and understanding of orchestral musicianship. They also enable the panel to establish how players of differing standards address the technical and musical challenges in the same repertoire.

You can find each instrument's orchestral excerpts [here](#). You will need a **password**: this is NYO2025Excerpts.

Our top tips for preparing excerpts? Listen to multiple performances of the excerpts, so that you understand the orchestral context of the excerpts, work on

them with your teacher, or other musicians you know, just as you would your pieces. And listen to other pieces from the same composer to widen your knowledge of their writing for your instrument and their style.

What happens after the auditions?

NYO If you are offered a place in The Orchestra, you will be asked to confirm your commitment to taking part in all three NYO orchestral residencies, tour dates and performances, and between 2–7 days of NYO Inspire activity. If you are not offered a place this time, but will still be eligible next year, we hope you will continue enjoying your music and apply again.

NYO Inspire aims to accelerate learning in and through ensemble music for those musicians traditionally underrepresented in the orchestral sector and who may experience barriers in taking their playing to the next level: musicians who attend a state school, home-schooled musicians, and musicians who are Black, Asian or ethnically diverse.

NYO Inspire musicians are part of the NYO community, and work closely with NYO musicians. They come together for orchestral and ensemble projects throughout the year to develop ensemble and musicianship skills, creative skills and their own personal performance. They work within the spirit and ethos of NYO.

Musicians who put themselves forwards for NYO and are eligible will be automatically considered for NYO Inspire so that we can continue to keep in touch with you and invest in your progression and your future.

If you are unsure whether or not to apply for NYO or NYO Inspire, we would advise you to get in touch with us at orchestra@nyo.org.uk. **You do not need to fill in two application forms:** Inspire-eligible musicians applying for NYO will also be considered for NYO Inspire activity.

What if I want to withdraw?

NYO is a charitable organisation and fundraises in order to provide free auditions for everyone. Please remember this if you consider withdrawing your application, particularly if you have been offered a final round assessment day. To withdraw, please email orchestra@nyo.org.uk to let us know. It's really helpful for us if you can give us a reason, too.

If you withdraw from your audition, we will ask for a donation of £150 to cover the cost of your unused audition so we can ensure teenage musicians can continue

to have free auditions in the future. When you submit your application, you are agreeing to these terms.

The nitty gritty: application & video audition

Create your NYO online account in our Musicians' Portal:

- Visit <https://musicians.nyo.org.uk/>
- Click 'Create Account' or sign straight in if you already have one.
- Choose whether you want to apply for The Orchestra or for NYO Inspire.

Completing the application

- You will need to work through the online form.
- **Make sure you save each section** before you move on. You can come back to it at a later stage before submitting if you would like to.

Parent / Carer

There are some questions that you may need your parents or carers to help you with, including household income. We ask this information so that we are able to statistically report back to the Arts Council and other high-level funders. This is done anonymously. We may also use this data when 'matching' individual musicians with particular strands of funding that we receive.

Video audition: technical guidelines

We love watching your video auditions and seeing your passion for orchestral music radiate the screen! In order for us to assess each video accurately, it's vitally important that we can see you clearly on screen, in a bright-lit space, positioned centrally on camera with yourself and your instrument clearly visible.

Preparing a video audition can feel like a daunting prospect, but remember, we want you to showcase your love for orchestral music and gain a deeper insight into you as a person and as a performer. Our most important tip is to relax and enjoy the process. It can be easy to feel the need to record multiple takes of each piece, but try to treat it like a 'live' performance by practising and working hard and then aiming for your best effort.

Make sure you watch our preparation videos at the bottom of [this link](#) for more hints and tips!

The main technical points:

- You do not have to play your pieces and excerpts in one take. You can edit together each element, or you can upload each section separately.
- You can film your audition using a handheld device such as a phone, tablet or via a laptop or desktop computer.
- When filming and recording, you should use only the internal microphone on your device. **Please do not use any external microphones.**
- Videos should be presented in their original form and not subject to any sound enhancement.
- Videos should be recorded indoors, in landscape view if possible.
- We want to offer support to those who don't have the equipment or technology. If you need help, please email us at orchestra@nyo.org.uk

How to film your video

- **Camera angle** – please be in the middle of the shot and face the camera. You and a large proportion of your instrument(s) should be clearly visible.
 - String players should try to have as much of your fingerboard in view, and then all the way down to your bridge in view so we can see your bow.
 - Wind and brass players should try to have their face and embouchure visible and not hidden by the instrument of bell.
- **Lighting** – try using natural light (face a window if possible) or turn on a lamp and place it behind your camera. This will provide good lighting without casting too much shadow.
- **Background** – film your video in an empty or uncluttered background if possible. Make sure that your bed and personal belongings are not visible on video for safeguarding purposes.
- **Sound** – please ensure you film your video in a quiet setting. Recording indoors in a closed room usually projects better sound quality.
- **Checking before recording** – using the tips above, don't forget to test it out, check if you are happy with everything before doing the full take.
- **Start and end of a recording** – make sure that when you start and end your video, you leave a little pause so that it does not cut out the video.

How to upload your video

Saving your video(s)

Once you have recorded your video(s) please save them in the following format:

- **First name, SURNAME – Instrument – Video** description (i.e. Complete video, Introduction, Solo piece, Excerpt 1, etc.)
- Please include the name of the piece.

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- If you have recorded your videos on a handheld device and are struggling to rename your video, it is often easier to email it to yourself (using [WeTransfer.com](https://www.wetransfer.com) if it is a large file), rename it on a computer and submit it from there.

Uploading your video(s)

- Upload your video(s) via the instrument-specific upload link, which you can find on your excerpts document.
- You will be able to select single or multiple files to upload direct from your computer.
- This may take a while depending on the size of your files. We advise being connected to WiFi.
- You will see that it's uploaded, but you won't receive any confirmation email from Dropbox. Please be reassured that if you have applied and we don't chase you for your video, we have received it!

If you are having difficulties uploading your video(s), please email us on orchestra@nyo.org.uk.

Any further questions?

Please email the team on orchestra@nyo.org.uk.