Auditions 2019

**Who can apply?**

As a strictly teenage orchestra, we have the following requirements:

You need to be between 13 and 18 on 1 September 2018 in order to apply for NYO 2019.

Unless you're applying as a composer, you should be at Grade 8 distinction level or equivalent. You will either need a copy of your certificate or mark sheet, or a letter from your instrument or music teacher to provide written confirmation that you are of the required standard.

You are a British citizen, or resident or studying in the British Isles.

You are not studying full-time at a college of music, or on a joint course with a music college.

You are available for all of the rehearsal residencies, tour dates and performances and between 5-10 days of NYO Inspire activity. In addition, we may ask if you would like to attend other activities that come up throughout the year. These will be voluntary. For musicians in the orchestral keyboard section, we will rotate all of these dates as the repertoire dictates. We ask that all applicants are available for the complete NYO calendar at audition stage.

When you complete your application, there is space to let us know about any availability issues you may have. Once you have been scheduled an audition slot, please let us know within four weeks if you cannot make this date, venue or time. We will do our best to reschedule any auditions, but have extremely limited flexibility. Auditions cancelled after this time may incur a penalty charge of £150.

Auditions are FREE, and take place around the country. We have travel bursaries available to help with costs to and from the audition venue. For further information, please email info@nyo.org.uk.

The audition experience aims to be positive and constructive and all auditionees will receive a workshop and written feedback. Bursaries are also available to cover the full cost of a place in NYO.

**Financial information: costs and assistance**

We can help you be part of NYO.

NYO subsidises every seat in the orchestra to a manageable level. We raise over £1.5m so that we can do this. We also ensure that free places are available to musicians who need them.

For NYO 2019, we ask for a contribution of £2100 from each musician. The actual cost of being part of NYO is £8000, so your contribution represents around a quarter, and equates to the cost of accommodation and travel on tour.

If you are offered a place in NYO and require financial assistance to cover the contribution our bursary scheme will help you. Depending on your financial circumstances we will fund all of the contribution or some of it. We can also guide you in applying for support from other organisations.

If you would like to help fund NYO bursaries, please contact our development team.

**How to apply**

*Add click here to apply etc. from 1 April.*

Step 1. The first thing you need to do to apply is to create your own account. You do this by clicking on the ‘Musicians Area’ and then ‘Sign up’.

Step 2: Once you’ve done this, you can click on ‘My Applications’ and get going! If you already have an account then you can carry on using this and create a new application. If you are already a musician in NYO then most of the information will already be completed for you based on information you have already given us: you just need to answer the more in-depth questions.

There are some questions that you may need your parents or guardians to help you with. We ask this information so that we are able to statistically report back to the Arts Council and other high level funders. The Arts Council and other funders will not be given any personal information. This information will not be used for any other purpose in NYO and will not be passed on to any other third party. Our website will guide you through each step. It saves as you go along so you can come back to it at any time, and won’t let you submit until you’ve done everything you need to. Any applications you’re in the middle of will be saved in ‘My NYO Applications’ so you only need to create one.

During the application, you will need to include a copy of your Grade 8 certificate or mark sheet, or a letter from your instrument or music teacher. You’ll also need to provide a photo of you and tell us which pieces you want to play (you can look at this page for more information).

**Musicians Area**

We will always communicate via the Musicians Area. Here you can update your application, receive messages and will find your audition information when it’s finalised. You will receive an email notification each time you receive a message with reminders and updates.

These will be sent to the email address that you set up your NYO account with. You will have the option to add your primary parent or guardian’s email address to the email notifications when you complete your account. Please check your junk mail folder if you haven’t received anything before contacting us with any issues.

**The Audition**

Most instruments have two rounds of auditions. The first round takes place all over the country and the majority of final round auditions are held in London, with some in Manchester. Harp, Double Bass, Tuba and Percussion have a single audition. Returning NYO Musicians audition at final round only.

**Audition Overview**

In your audition you will be asked to play your chosen piece(s) together with a selection of the orchestral excerpts. This will be followed by a short interview. After your audition, you will take part in a short workshop with other candidates. The audition panel will consist of a specialist NYO Tutor for your instrument family at first round, and a specialist NYO Tutor for your instrument and a member of the NYO management team at final round. Sometimes additional members of NYO staff will join the panel. You will be introduced to everyone on the panel when you go in to your audition. They are friendly, welcoming and approachable and want you to have a positive experience with us.

You’ll be met on your arrival by a member of our Support Team. They are our pastoral support for all NYO activity we do. Their priority is to make sure you’re happy and well looked after. They will show you to the waiting room and sit with your parents while you have your audition. They can also answer any questions you may have about NYO.

Please arrive at least 20 minutes before your audition in order to warm up. Our auditions are designed to give you a constructive musical experience and something to take away with you, regardless of whether you are offered a place in NYO.

**Withdrawals**

NYO is a charitable organisation and fundraises in order to provide free auditions for everyone. Few, if any, comparable organisations in the classical music world do this. Please remember this if you consider withdrawing your application. If you do need to withdraw, we ask you to give at least 30 days notice. You can do this via the website. In exceptional circumstances, such as illness, you will need to send in a doctor’s note, or an email detailing the reason. If you are unable to do this within four weeks after the audition date, we will ask you to make a donation of £150 to cover the cost of your unused audition so we can ensure that teenage musicians can continue to have free auditions in the future. In applying for an audition, you are agreeing to these terms.

**Results**

We have to wait until all first round auditions are complete before we can shortlist for final auditions. We will contact you via email with your result. Please do not worry if your first audition is in early September but you do not hear anything until the end of the month. It may mean that there is as little as a week between your first audition and final audition.

For final and single round auditions, once all auditions have taken place, we will contact you via email with your result. We regret that we cannot let you know results by telephone.

If you are offered a seat, you will be asked to confirm your commitment to the NYO orchestral rehearsal residencies, tour dates and performances and between 5-10 days of NYO Inspire Activity. You can find the full dates for NYO 2019 here.

If you are not chosen this time, but will still be eligible next year, we hope you will continue practising and enjoying your music and apply again. A lot of musicians don’t get a place the first year they audition, and it’s worth applying for the opportunity to learn about the process and absorb tips to improve your playing from the audition panel and other candidates.

NYO Inspire also offers wider opportunities to young musicians. We may be in contact after the audition process has finished about further opportunities with the NYO and NYO Inspire.

**Pieces**

In the first part of your NYO audition you will play pieces for the panel. You will find outlined below what is expected for each section of the orchestra - Strings and Wind, Brass and Percussion - alongside tips for choosing your pieces.

**Strings and Wind**

Prepare two excerpts from pieces of your own choice. We suggest you play two different works by contrasting composers. You will be asked to play for around six minutes so please bear this in mind when choosing your pieces. Both pieces should be accompanied. All musicians must use the professional accompanist provided by NYO so that everyone is auditioned in the same circumstances. Harps do not need to play accompanied. Provide a copy of your pieces for the panel, as well as a copy of the piano accompaniment for your accompanist.

**Brass**

You will need to prepare one excerpt from a piece of your choice. You will be asked to play for around six minutes in total so please bear the time limit in mind when choosing your piece. The piece should be accompanied. All musicians must use the professional accompanist provided by NYO so that everyone is auditioned in the same circumstances. Please bring a copy of your piece for the panel, as well as a copy of the piano accompaniment for your accompanist

**Percussion**

We rotate percussion instruments for your pieces and excerpts every year. For NYO 2019 auditions, please prepare the following:

1. Grade 8 timpani piece of your choice from the ABRSM/Trinity Guildhall syllabuses

2. A snare drum piece of your choice from the ABRSM/Trinity Guildhall syllabuses

Percussionists may prepare short pieces in their entirety or sections from longer works. Snare drum and four timpani will be provided at the audition.

**Orchestral keyboard**

In the first part of your NYO audition you will play a piece of your own choice for the panel. You will be asked to play for around three minutes. You can choose an excerpt from a longer piece, but please bear in mind the time limit; otherwise you may be asked to stop before the end of your performance. Always choose a work you know well and enjoy playing, as this will help you to perform at your best. Please bring a copy of your piece for the panel.

**Tips for choosing pieces:**

The audition panel first and foremost want to hear you playing at your best, so always choose works you know well and enjoy playing.

The audition panel will only have time to hear around three minutes of each piece (or six minutes if you are a brass player and just playing one piece), so do think about what you want them to hear in advance of the audition.

You will only have 5-10 minutes to rehearse your pieces with the accompanist. This can go very quickly, so it is a good idea to make sure you have thought about any cuts you might need to make to your pieces in advance.

You can change the pieces you’d like to play with your Musicians Area by clicking onto your application, then through to Stage 16 and updating them there. We ask that you do this by 25 August as otherwise we cannot guarantee that we are able to inform the accompanist and panel.

You must play the same pieces in final round as in first round (if you have two rounds).

**Excerpts**

**Prepare, practise – and enjoy yourself**

The excerpts are a central and vital part of your audition. We recommend you prepare very well indeed and look at them well in advance of your audition. We include them on the website from when applications open that you have plenty of time to look at them. Excerpts are chosen so that you can demonstrate your understanding of orchestral musicianship in demanding repertoire and in a musical context. They enable the audition panel to establish how players of differing standards and address the technical and musical challenges in the same repertoire. Please pay very careful and thorough attention to all of the musical details of the excerpts (including tempo and markings).

All excerpts will be available to download from this page in early April. All excerpts need a password before you can access them, so that we keep within publishing guidelines. The password is included in the application form at Step 16 so that you can see the excerpts while you are completing your application. You can also email auditions@nyo.org.uk to receive this password at any time.

**Tips for preparing excerpts**

We suggest that you listen to multiple performances of the excerpts and take them to your teachers, just as you would your pieces.

There are lots of different recordings and they are really easy to find on Youtube, Spotify etc.

You should research and understand the orchestral context of the excerpts - you could even listen to other pieces from the same composer to widen your knowledge of their work and their style.

We have helpful videos from our tutors on how best to prepare your excerpts below...

**Interview & Workshop**

**Interview**

Holding auditions is also the perfect moment for us to get to know you better in person so we ask you for a quick chat after hearing you play. We want to find out a bit about what you think you’ll bring to NYO and what you hope to gain from being in the orchestra. You might also want to think about what we may expect of you as musicians and role models. It is a good opportunity for you to ask us any questions you have about NYO, too. We may also take this moment to talk about progress in your playing and give you any advice after hearing you play.

**Workshop**

Led by an NYO Tutor, this workshop is a chance to work with other musicians, which is what NYO is all about. We may look at general ensemble skills, technique, or focus on the orchestral excerpts. It allows us to see how you work in an ensemble context and enables you to draw insight from our experts that you can apply immediately to your own music-making.

After your individual audition you’ll need to wait until your workshop time. This might be up to an hour and a half depending on how big your group is as we need to wait for the other musicians in your group to finish their audition.

**Composers**

NYO composers are integral to the musical life of NYO and runs alongside the rehearsal residency.

Every year is different but the main activities in an NYO composers’ year might include:

• Short workshops with the full NYO symphony orchestra

• Writing music for large and/or small groups of NYO instrumentalists

• Writing music for the composers to play themselves

• Learning about instrumental writing from excellent young musicians

• Writing electronic music (even if you’re a beginner!)

• Listening to and discussing a broad range of exciting new and recent music

• Watching and listening to the orchestra rehearse (you can learn a lot from watching this amazing orchestra preparing their repertoire)

**Portfolio**

The first stage of the NYO composer application is to send us a portfolio of some of your recent work. You will need to send it to our office (see this page for our address) by 4 June 2018.

Have a look below for some tips on how to prepare your portfolio and an idea of what we’re looking for. Please include a stamped, address envelope with your portfolio if you would like us to return it to you. We read your portfolios and on this basis invite you to an interview. This is what we are looking for at this stage:

• That you have imagination (the most important feature for a potential NYO composer)

• That your music shows potential

• That you can skilfully write notated music for instruments

We are mainly looking for imagination and potential! The NYO course is hard work and of course we are looking for instrumental writing skills. However, we are most excited to have imaginative composers who are keen to learn. We invite young composers to interview who may not show such strength yet in technical writing skills, but we believe have the flare and passion to join the section. Sometimes we feel that the young composers who apply have an expectation of what we want to see and hear. You might be surprised. We are certainly interested in composers who have engaged with new and recent classical music (and a passion for classical music, given it’s the NYO, makes sense). If you love the piece by the big names in ‘contemporary classical’ music and are inspired by them (for example György Ligeti, Kaija Saariaho, Harrison Birtwistle, Steve Reich and/or Unsuk Chin) then great. If you’ve never heard of these composers or anyone like them that doesn’t matter at all. In your portfolio we want to see what you’re passionate about. You could submit imaginative pop songs, a new piece for jazz ensemble, string quartets or music for other classical ensembles, pieces for a strange mixture of instruments, solo pieces or anything else for that matter. It’s impossible to give a comprehensive list of what to put in your portfolio; everyone is different.

However, here are a few dos and don’ts:

Do:

Submit three or four of your best pieces

Include a work in progress as one of your pieces if you think it shows your best writing

Think about the detail in your writing. Make sure you’ve included tempos, dynamics, and articulation to give your music character

Present your pieces carefully – ideally these would be bound, have any information for performers in the front and indicate if the score is in C or transposed if relevant

Try and show a diverse range of your work

Include live recordings if you can

Don’t:

Submit too much (we have a lot of applicants - if you send us five orchestral pieces and your two most recent operas(!!) then we wont have time to read/listen to them all)

Submit too little – one piece is unlikely to be enough to get a sense of your music

Only submit orchestral pieces. Usually any orchestral pieces are the weakest part of an applicant’s portfolio. It’s difficult for anyone, especially a less experienced composer, to write well for such large forces. You’re almost always better off focussing on smaller scale works at this stage.

Worry about the genre or style – we’re interested in imaginative exploratory music of any kind

Try to second-guess what we want. Be yourselves!

**NYO Composers' Interview & Workshop**

If we’ve invited you to an interview and the workshop then we like your music and we want to know more. We will talk about your music but this is not the most important feature of this stage. We’re building a section – the composers spend a lot of time together – so we’re looking for personalities that can work together and represent composition in the NYO. The main things we’re looking for are:

Evidence of musical curiosity

We don't have any particular expectations here. We want to know what you're passionate about, whatever it may be. Think about the music you listen to most and how this affects what you write.

Interested in learning & taking part

Composing can be pretty lonely...but not at NYO. We work together, sometimes even on pieces, and the feedback from the teaching staff and your fellow section musicians is very important in this environment. Not everyone wants this. There is no right or wrong way to compose but we are looking for people who we believe will thrive in the NYO environment.

Able to work under pressure

We're likely to ask you this outright and there will also be a short workshop. We're not going to tell you what that workshop is. We write pieces quickly on short courses. Do you think you can do this?

Proactivity

We provide plenty of opportunities for NYO composers to write and be heard. We also ask you to take the initiative for these projects. We want to see how the music you’ve heard and the skills you’ve learnt about on the NYO residencies has affected your music elsewhere.

Instrumental skills...a bonus!

If you don’t have any then this wont mean you can’t join the section and we don’t audition composers on their playing. However, we would like to know what instruments you have and how well you can play them. Be honest! We might be able to make some great music with some rudimentary skills or record sounds from your instruments for electronic music. As well as traditional orchestral instruments it could also be synths, guitars, toy instruments, electronic gadgets, mouth organs, hand held percussion… anything you can think of.

In terms of preparing for the audition, listen to some new music and be prepared to talk about some new musical discoveries. What other new music does this connect to? What was the last score you looked at? We would like as many people to apply and if you’re not sure about anything above, don’t let it put you off; just go for it!

**Pianists**

NYO also recruit young musicians to join us on our residencies playing orchestral keyboard parts. This is repertoire dependant, and varies from year to year.

This is an exciting opportunity for young pianists (between the ages of 13-19) to develop your piano playing in an orchestral direction. We provide world class tutoring and playing in large scale orchestral repertoire in major concert halls across the UK. Pianists work alongside other talented and like-minded young musicians and with first-rate artists at a national level. We are look for a small pool of 2-4 musicians who will join as the NYO Orchestral Keyboard section. We allocate residencies and projects between the section as the repertoire dictates. Keyboard parts cover orchestral piano, celeste and occasionally organ parts. We sometimes audition separately for organ parts dependant on repertoire. If you are only interested in opportunities for organ, please enquire separately by emailing auditions@nyo.org.uk. Most residencies require two musicians for the section, but sometimes we may ask more to attend (or occasionally we just have one). Detailed information about applying for NYO and the audition process can be found in the 'Join NYO 2019' area of our website.

*Get rid of the rest of this section.*

**The Audition**

The audition panel consists of an NYO Keyboard Tutor and a member of the NYO management team. Sometimes additional members of NYO staff will join the panel. You will be introduced to everyone on the panel when you go in to your audition. They are friendly, welcoming and approachable and want you to have a positive experience with us.

Your audition will consist of four elements:

Performance of your chosen piece

In the first part of your NYO audition you will play a piece of your own choice for the panel. You will be asked to play for around three minutes in total. You can choose an excerpt from a longer piece, but please bear the time limit in mind, otherwise you may be asked to stop before the end of your performance. Always choose a work you know well and enjoy playing, as this will help you perform at your best. Please bring a copy of your piece for the panel.

Have a look at our website here for tips on how to choose and prepare your pieces.

Musical excerpts

The excerpts are a central and vital part of your audition. We recommend you prepare very well indeed and look at them well in advance of your audition. Excerpts are chosen so that you can demonstrate your understanding of orchestral musicianship in demanding repertoire and in a musical context. They enable the audition panel to establish how players of differing standards address the technical and musical challenges in the same repertoire. Please pay very careful and thorough attention to all of the musical details of the excerpts (including tempo and markings). Excerpts are available here. Please prepare all excerpts.

Sight reading

This is to assess how you respond to music that doesn’t have the advantage of being fully prepared. It gives the panel a clear indication of your musical strengths and areas of improvement and also how you might approach a rehearsal when we are working on a new commission. We might also ask you to play some simple sight reading in a duet with our NYO Tutor to get an idea of how you might approach an ensemble context.

Short interview

NYO auditions is the perfect moment for us to get to know you better in person, so we ask you for a quick chat after hearing you play. We want to find out a bit about what you think you’ll bring to NYO and what you hope to gain from being in the orchestra. We might ask you about some things which you have written about in your application form. You might want to think about what we may expect of you as musicians and role models at NYO. It is a good opportunity for you to ask us any questions you have about us, too. We may also take this moment to talk about progress in your playing and give you any advice after hearing you play.

**FAQs**

**Can I bring my own accompanist?**

No, we ask everyone to play with an NYO accompanist. All NYO accompanists are hugely experienced accompanists and are used to playing with young musicians too.

**Where can I find the audition excerpts?**

Excerpts are available from 1 April 2018 on the excerpts page of our website.

All excerpts need a password before you can access them, so that we keep within publishing guidelines. The password is included as part of the application text so you can see the excerpts while you are completing your application. You can also email auditions@nyo.org.uk to receive this password at any time.

Make sure you prepare your instrumental excerpts thoroughly. It is an important part of your audition in demonstrating your orchestral skills. Have a listen to the repertoire and take note of the tempos and musical style. It's a good idea to take these excerpts to your teacher, just as you would your chosen pieces.