

National Orchestra for All 2017-2018 Season

What is the National Orchestra for All?

NOFA is a unique, mixed ability orchestra made up of 100 musicians aged 11-18 from across all four countries of the UK. NOFA is the only non-auditioned, free of charge, nationally run youth orchestra in the world.

Our young musicians are nominated through schools, Music Hubs and a range of musical and non-musical organisations to take part because of their dedication and commitment to music in the face of challenging circumstances. These might be personal challenges (physical or mental health issues, economic circumstances, caring responsibilities) or community challenges (rural isolation, limited local accessible music-making). Our young musicians do not audition and can be of any musical standard. NOFA is entirely free of charge for families. This creates a highly inclusive, mixed ability group of young musicians. The 12-month membership programme consists of orchestral residential courses, workshops and spectacular public performances.

Why does NOFA exist?

NOFA provides a platform to young people who would not normally get the opportunity to participate in music-making together and helps to ensure young people are better equipped with the skills they need to achieve their aspirations.

The importance of access to musical experiences and a high quality musical education is widely accepted. Research indicates the importance of music-making as it:

- Transcends educational ability, socio-economic status and disability
- Gives young people a unique way to express themselves
- Can provide a safe space for young people to escape from challenging home or school lives
- Brings multiple benefits: confidence and self-esteem, self-efficacy and cultural awareness

Playing in an ensemble provides additional proven benefits, including providing access to a broad and diverse social network and improving teamwork and communication skills. More information on the research into the power of music can be found on our website.

Yet music education and high quality musical experiences are inconsistently resourced across the UK, and young musicians with complex lives are often the first to miss out. Opportunities for orchestral music-making too often go towards those who are already privileged in some way. A 2014 Youth Ensembles report conducted by the Association of British Orchestras highlighted that 92% of British Youth Orchestras set a minimum entry standard and 80% charge an annual membership fee.

This is deeply unfair. It means disadvantaged young people repeatedly miss out on the unique opportunity of ensemble music-making and cannot realise all the non-musical benefits that playing in an ensemble can develop.

“One word: confidence. I’m just much more confident as a person directly because of NOFA.”
Find out more about percussionist Charley – as well as stories from some of our other inspiring young musicians – by visiting our website at www.orchestrasforall.org/meet-our-musicians

What does membership involve?

The NOFA season begins each July and lasts for nine months. The 2017-2018 season will see the young musicians explore the relationship between music and dance, with activities delivered in partnership with the UK's national dance organisation, One Dance UK.

Across the 2017-2018 season, members must participate in three residential courses:

Summer Course 2017 – four-day residential course held at the University of Leeds from Saturday 29 July – Tuesday 1 August 2017, culminating in a spectacular concert to an audience of over 3000 at the First Direct Arena in Leeds on Tuesday 1 August 2017

Winter Sessions 2017 – three regional weekends held in Edinburgh, York and London on the weekends of 18-19 November, 25-26 November and 2-3 December (locations TBC)

Spring Course 2018 – two-day residential course held in Manchester on the weekend of 24-25 March 2018, with a performance on Sunday 25 March (location TBC)

All travel, accommodation and subsistence is covered, and young people are supported at all events by our experienced team of professional musicians and pastoral staff.

There will also be the opportunity to take part in other workshops, side-by-side events with professional orchestras and opportunities to attend concert performances throughout the year.

For those members in **Year 11 and 12** we offer further opportunities through our **Young Leaders Programme**, which include the possibility of gaining an Arts Award qualification during the programme.

Who is eligible for membership?

NOFA is both an arts organisation and a social change organisation. Our aim is to support dedicated young musicians who face some kind of barrier to participating in music. Nominated students **must fulfil Criteria 1 and Criteria 2 and at least one statement from Criteria 3** for NOFA membership as detailed below. It is very important to NOFA that we are able to reach pupils who will benefit most from the opportunities that membership in the orchestra offers. **Please bear this in mind when nominating young musicians.**

Criteria 1:	Commitment to music and music-making in and/or out of school
Criteria 2:	Sufficient emotional maturity to benefit from and contribute to a residential course, and will act as an ambassador for their school
Criteria 3:	Recipient of Free School Meals (FSM) Emotional, Social or Behavioural Difficulty (ESBD) Mild Learning Difficulty (MLD) Physical Disability Physical Health Condition Mental Health Condition Young Carer In Care / Looked After Refugee / Asylum Seeker No Fixed Abode English as an Additional Language (EAL) Resident of Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) area Resident of a Low Participation Neighbourhood Student at Teach First Partner School Late Start on an Instrument (post year 7) Limited Accessible Local Music-Making

We accept nominations for players of any orchestral instrument (including saxophonists). All of our music is specially arranged for players from Grade 1 to 8 standard, and students do not need to be strong readers of music to join. In general we only take a maximum of five players from each school or organisation to ensure we have a broad intake from across the UK. If you have more than five players, contact us about how you might set up an accessible ensemble in your school or community through our **Modulo Programme**.

Returning members: We believe that we will have the greatest impact on a member's life if we work with that member over a number of years. Any member that has been nominated for the orchestra once will **only need to meet Criteria 1 and 2**, along with a teacher's statement explaining why that member should return as a member. Due to demand for places, renomination forms for returning members must be returned to NOFA **by Friday 18 December 2016** in order to guarantee the place.

All the data we collect will be handled confidentially in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and will be used to make sure that NOFA is reaching the most suitable students, as well as ensuring future funding for the organisation.

What is the impact of NOFA?

Over the first five years of our work with young musicians, we have found there to be a direct connection between musical development and the development of key skills, including:



Improved confidence and self-esteem: Involvement in our programmes improves our participants' confidence and self-esteem both as musicians and across other aspects of their life.



Improved ability to self-reflect: The ability of our young musicians to make connections between their development as musicians and as people improves the longer they spend participating in the programmes, suggesting our approach enables them to become more self-reflective and self-aware.



Improved communication skills: Our young musicians are able to make friends and communicate more easily with people from different cultures and backgrounds following engagement with our programmes.



Greater inspiration and motivation: Young people are more likely to seek out additional music making opportunities following engagement with our programmes.

For more details on our impact on the lives of young musicians, read our 2011-2016 Impact Report via our website at www.orchestrasforall.org/impact

How much does NOFA membership cost?

Membership in NOFA is free of charge for the young person. However, annual NOFA membership costs approximately £1500 per member, which is raised by our small staff team from a range of trusts, foundations, donors and fundraising events.

We ask each school to contribute just £250 per place, a sixth of the overall cost of membership. In previous years, schools have raised the money through raffles, coffee mornings and cake sales - and we're happy to help with creative suggestions to cover the cost. Membership will be invoiced in either May or September 2017.

However, we do not want money to act as a barrier for dedicated young musicians to join the orchestra, and appreciate that some school leaders may be unwilling to cover this cost. Please contact us to discuss in more detail if you have concerns about the financial contribution.

How do I nominate a young musician?

1. Discuss the financial contribution with your headteacher or head of department. **If your school is unable to make the £250 contribution, contact the NOFA team and we can discuss alternative arrangements.**
2. **Meet with the nominee and explain what NOFA membership involves.** It is important that the young person understands that nomination does not guarantee membership. All nominations will be considered together to ensure we are working with young people from across the UK who will benefit from the opportunity the most.
3. **Confirm with the nominee and the parents / carer the commitment required.** NOFA members must attend all three events in the season.
4. **Complete the nomination / renomination form online within the deadline.** The nomination forms can be found at www.orchestrasforall.org/national-orchestra-for-all

When does the nomination process take place?

Monday 5 December 2016	Renominations of returning members open
Friday 6 January 2017	Renominations of returning members close
Monday 9 January 2017	Nominations of new members open
Friday 3 March 2017	Nominations of new members close
Early March 2017	Places allocated
Mid March 2017	Offer letters sent out to nominating teachers



How do I get in touch with the NOFA team to discuss this?

Any questions, don't hesitate to get in touch with Head of Programmes Stuart Burns:

By email stuart.burns@orchestrasforall.org

By phone 0207 267 4141