

# NATIONAL YOUTH CHOIR OF SCOTLAND

## AUDITION GUIDELINES



Thank you for your application to the National Youth Choir of Scotland. We are delighted that you are wanting to audition and join our family of National Choirs.

This document provides further information on the National Choirs and audition process; we hope it will be a helpful resource as you prepare for your upcoming audition.

Please get in touch if you have any questions or concerns at any stage of the process. We are always happy to help however we can and aim to make the audition process a positive and welcoming experience for all, regardless of the outcome.

**Isabelle Orford – National Choirs Producer**

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# NATIONAL CHOIRS

The NYCOS National Choirs provide singing opportunities at the highest level for young people across Scotland. The basis of the choirs' activities stem from residential courses where time is split between individual vocal coaching, musicianship sessions and sectional and full rehearsals. National Choir membership is offered on the condition that members must commit to ALL engagements – courses & concerts.

Christopher Bell, Artistic Director, has overall responsibility for the national courses and is supported by Margaret Izatt (Head of Singing) and Isabelle Orford (National Choirs Producer).

## National Youth Choir of Scotland

**Ages:** 16-25

**Residential Course:** 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> July 2026 with additional performances TBD

## National Girls Choir

**Ages:** 12-17

**Residential Course:** 13<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> April 2026 with additional performances TBD

## National Boys Choir

**Ages:** 10-17

**Residential Course:** 6<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> April 2026 with additional performances TBD

# APPLICATION & AUDITION PROCESS

## TIMELINE

31 <sup>st</sup> October	application deadline
Early November	audition invitations sent
14 <sup>th</sup> -23 <sup>rd</sup> November	audition period
Late December	results sent

## AUDITION LOCATIONS

Friday 14 <sup>th</sup> November.....Edinburgh	Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup> November.....Aberdeen
Saturday 15 <sup>th</sup> November.....Glasgow	Thursday 20 <sup>th</sup> November.....Online
Sunday 16 <sup>th</sup> November.....Edinburgh	Friday 21 <sup>st</sup> November.....Glasgow
Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> November.....Perth & Dundee	Saturday 22 <sup>nd</sup> November.....Glasgow
Tuesday 18 <sup>th</sup> November.....Online	Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> November.....Edinburgh

We will endeavour to schedule your audition at your first-choice location. Additional locations across Scotland may also be added if there is sufficient demand.

Subject to your location, in-person auditions are always preferable - especially if it is your first time auditioning - so please make every effort to attend one of the locations above before requesting an online audition.

We are happy to write to schools should absence be required in order to attend your audition.

**Please let us know as soon as possible if you wish to withdraw your application or cancel your audition.**

## PREPARING FOR YOUR AUDITION

Remember, we will be listening out for what you do well! For the best possible audition experience, start preparing **now**.

### Song Choice

Take time to choose a song wisely. It is better to sing a simple song well than a difficult piece not so well. Avoid anything too long or over-complicated. The song should be in a classical style which lies comfortably within your range. Avoid songs from musicals or in a pop-style as these do not necessarily show-off the best aspects of the voice. There are many possibilities but you may wish to use the following as a guide:

#### NYCOS

- Folk songs – in a classical style
- English songs (Ireland, Britten, Head etc)
- Simple Italian arias
- Simple lieder (German song) or French song
- An aria from an oratorio

#### NGC & NBC

Any of the above or:

- Songs from the ABRSM, Guildhall or Trinity exam syllabuses
- Songs from the NYCOS *Go for Bronze/Silver/Gold* books

If you are singing in a language not your own, ask your singing teacher or class music teacher for help; it is important to know what you are singing about so that you can express the song well. Your singing or class music teacher will be able to advise on a suitable song to sing but please get in touch if you need guidance.

## ON THE DAY

- Please arrive 10-minutes before your scheduled audition time
- On arrival, a member of the NYCOS team will greet you & take a photograph of you to aid the post-audition process
- A warm-up room will be provided at most venues
- An accompanist will be provided. It will not be possible for anyone other than the NYCOS accompanist to play for your audition
- Parents/carers are permitted in the warm-up room but not the audition room

## THE AUDITION

Your audition will be conducted by Christopher Bell, NYCOS Artistic Director and last approximately 7-8 minutes. The audition will follow the format below:

### SONG

A prepared song of your own choice that showcases your voice to the best of your ability. Christopher may ask you to sing parts of the song again or work on certain bits with you; please be reassured this is not a reflection of a poor performance but to hear more from you. Conversely, it is not a negative if you are not asked to sing anything again.

## SIGHT-SINGING

You may be asked to sing a few bars of music to assess your sight-singing skills.

### *Sight-singing tips:*

- *Don't panic*
- *Look at the key signature*
- *Look at the time signature and keep a steady pulse*
- *Look for repeated notes and phrases*
- *Practise as regularly as possible & ask your teacher for help*

## RANGE TEST

You will be asked to sing some simple exercises to assess your vocal range. The range of a young person's voice is not yet settled and can change from day to day. Very high and very low notes should never be forced.



Please let us know if you  
have any access requirements or if there's anything we can do to make the audition process more accessible for  
you.

## OTHER AUDITION INFORMATION

- Auditions are free to attend
- Bring **three copies** of your chosen song: one for you, one for Christopher Bell and one for the accompanist. It will not be possible for staff to make copies or print anything at the venue
- Accompanists will not transpose music on the day
- Please be punctual and inform staff if you are running late or no longer attending (a contact number will be provided nearer the time)
- Present yourself well and remember to smile!

**GOOD LUCK!**