



NATIONAL YOUTH CHOIR OF SCOTLAND

APPLICATION & AUDITION GUIDELINES



This document has been created for prospective National Youth Choir of Scotland applicants. We are delighted you are wanting to audition and join our family of choirs, and we hope this will be a helpful resource across the application and audition process.

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.

Isabelle Orford – National Choirs Producer

national-choirs@nycos.co.uk

ABOUT THE NATIONAL CHOIRS

The NYCOS National Choirs offer unparalleled opportunities for Scotland's most promising young singers. From age 10 to 25, our choirs provide a clear progression pathway, world-class training, and the chance to perform at the highest level. 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 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

SATB voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass)

Comprised of the most promising young singers from across Scotland, our flagship youth choir has a well-deserved international reputation for vocal excellence. The choir is made up of two sections:

Residential Course: 5th-11th July 2027

with additional engagements 24th-30th July

& August TBC

- National Youth Choir of Scotland
- NYCOS Training Choir

National Girls Choir Ages 12-17

SA voices (Soprano & Alto)

A distinguished choir comprised of talented young female voices from across Scotland, celebrated for their exceptional musicality and expressive performances. The choir is made up of two sections:

Residential Course: 12th-17th April 2027

with additional engagements TBC

- National Girls Training Choir
- National Girls Choir

National Boys Choir Ages 10-17

TAB voices (Treble, Alto, Baritone)

An acclaimed choir bringing together and supporting boys at all stages of vocal development from across Scotland, celebrated for their rich sound and exceptional performances. The choir is made up of three sections:

Residential Course: 5th-10th April 2027

- National Boys Training Choir
- National Boys Choir
- National Boys Changing Voices Choir

Why do I have to audition every year

The National Choirs comprise the best young singers in Scotland and beyond and in order to maintain the highest possible standard year on year, it needs to recruit the very best singers available. Sometimes this can lead to difficult decisions but feedback is always provided along with encouragement to singers to continue re-applying, even if initially unsuccessful.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Who can apply

We welcome applications from young singers aged 10-25 at the time of the residential course, either born, residing or studying in Scotland.

How to apply

To apply for the National Choirs, visit www.nycos.co.uk/apply and submit your application before **Friday 30th October 2026**. All applicants will be offered a free audition providing they meet the eligibility criteria above.

Which choirs to apply for

Where age ranges overlap, you are welcome to apply for both the National Boys Choir/National Girls Choir and the National Youth Choir of Scotland if you would like to be considered for more than one choir (you only need to complete one application form). There is no automatic progression between the National Choirs based on age or length of time spent in a particular choir. If successful at audition, you will be placed in the choir or choir(s) best suited to your voice and musicianship level.

Audition Dates & Venues

Thursday 19 th November.....Dumfries	Wednesday 25 th November.....Dundee
Friday 20 th November.....Glasgow	Thursday 26 th November.....Online
Saturday 21 st November.....Glasgow	Friday 27 th November.....Edinburgh
Sunday 22 nd November.....Edinburgh	Saturday 28 th November.....Glasgow
Monday 23 rd November.....Perth & Inverness	Sunday 29 th November.....Edinburgh
Tuesday 24 th November.....Aberdeen	Monday 30 th November.....Isle of Lewis

We will endeavour to schedule your audition at your first-choice location.

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 in-person before requesting an online audition. We are happy to write to schools should absence be required in order to attend.

Audition Invitations will be sent, via email, w/c 2nd November. We anticipate there being a lot of applications to process so do not worry if you do not hear from us in between your application and early November.

Please let us know ASAP if you wish to withdraw your application or cancel your audition.

PREPARING FOR YOUR AUDITION

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

Choosing a song

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.

You want to choose a song that showcases your voice to the best of your ability. 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 song from the:

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

THE AUDITION DAY

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

- Please arrive 10-minutes before your scheduled audition time
- On arrival, a member of NYCOS staff will greet you & take a photo of you for your application form
- A warm-up room will be provided at most venues
- A NYCOS accompanist will be provided – please do not bring your own
- Parents/carers are permitted in the warm-up room but not the audition room

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

1. SONG

You may be asked 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.

2. 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 & keep a steady pulse.
Look for repeated notes & phrases. Practice as regularly as possible & ask your teacher for help.*

3. 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.

There is no target or perfect range we are looking for – your voice is your voice and we want to hear where it is at the moment of audition.

Voice Part allocations: The music we sing is made up of a variety of voice parts, traditionally Soprano (Treble), Alto, Tenor and Bass, with specific ranges associated with them. The voice part offered is determined at audition by the range test & the tonal quality of your voice. In some instances, we will consult with your singing teacher as they know your voice very well and can advise us.

OTHER INFORMATION

- Audition results will be emailed during the w/c 14th December and no later than 18th December. Please be patient with us during this time whilst we process all the results.
- 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 on 0141 471 1463 if you are running late or no longer attending

GOOD LUCK!