



## Notes for Children Attending for Audition and their Parents

You will have information on the place, date and time of the audition offered to your child in the invitation to audition which is despatched in mid September, plus a map to show you the location of the audition centre. We try to take account of any requests you make for dates and times but this is not always possible as some venues fill early. If your circumstances change after you send in the application form and you can no longer attend at the time or date originally requested, please contact us as soon as possible and we will attempt to find another venue or date to suit. **You should note, however, that there is a £5 surcharge for changing arrangements once the invitations have been sent out.**

### Preparation

Your child needs to prepare two pieces which have contrasting styles for the audition. Perhaps choose one which is slow plus a faster one. Select music with which he/she is familiar and confident rather than something new which there has not been much time to practise. Your child's teacher will be able to advise. (Percussionists should prepare pieces for two instruments selected from timpani, snare drum and tuned percussion.)

### Arriving

When you arrive at the audition centre, you will be booked in and shown where you can leave any coats, large instrument cases etc. There will be a waiting area for you to relax in for a while if you are early. You are not allowed to play instruments in this area but if you have one which needs assembling, such as a bassoon, you can get it ready.

### Accompanists

If you wish your child to play with an accompanist, you must arrange this yourself. About half our candidates play unaccompanied and this is perfectly acceptable. If you cannot have an accompanist who is well known to your child, you should consider playing pieces which have no need of one. You are advised that, if you plan to arrange for an accompanist who is new to your child, you also arrange several practice sessions with that person in advance of the audition date. There is neither time nor opportunity to practise with a new accompanist at the audition centres.

### Sight reading

A little while before the audition, the steward will take the applicant to the practice room for the sight-reading practice. There will be a maximum of 5 minutes to look at this piece of music and have a few runs through it. (Brass players will be allowed time to warm up their instruments before the sight reading is given to them as long as they arrive with sufficient time to do this.) Applicants are not permitted to have anyone in the room with them while they practise the sight reading as this has to be their own unaided effort.

The sight reading starts off with some easy bars and gradually gets more complicated. Those who are trying for a place in one of our younger orchestras, should not be worried when they see it. The youngest players only have to try the first part; older candidates are asked to do more. The steward will check each applicant's age and give guidance on how far through the piece they should play. Each child should practise the sight reading a number of times until happy with their

performance. Any time left over before the steward comes to take them for their audition can be spent going over a bit of the music they are planning to play to the adjudicators.

Do not plan for your child to use this time to do a run through of the pieces to be played in the audition; such practices should have been completed beforehand and there will not be sufficient time. Some locations do not have a piano in the practice room, so you should not rely on this for any accompanist.

*Please note that if you arrive late, there may not be an opportunity to have this practice time unless it has been possible to rearrange audition times for other applicants without inconveniencing them. Those arriving late may have to forego the practice or may be delayed waiting for an alternative slot to become available.*

## **Audition**

When it is time for the audition, the steward will collect the applicant and the accompanist, if you have one. Usually there will be two people listening to each audition but occasionally there may be just one. They will introduce themselves and then ask what pieces have been chosen. These two pieces will be played first and then the accompanist, if you have one, will leave. The applicant will then be asked to play the sight reading which was practised before the audition.

After that there will be a second piece of sight reading. For this second piece, the adjudicator will say how much they want to hear and there will be about 30 seconds to think through it before playing. Applicants are not allowed to practise playing this piece. When they start to play, they must continue to the end of the section they have been given without stopping or restarting even if they think they have made a mistake.

The whole audition usually takes about 12 to 15 minutes depending on age. (Older applicants have longer sight reading pieces and tend to choose longer pieces to play.) Everyone is very friendly and they will expect a few nerves, so try not to worry.

## **Photograph and film**

Please note that each child will be photographed at the audition for insertion into the office copy of the adjudicators' notes for ease of recognition in the future. This photograph may also be used for identification if a place is later taken up in the Orchestra. (We send photographs in advance to tutors on courses to assist them in getting to know their sections and also display them for other members to get to know each other.)

We also film the audition. This is to ensure that the marking standard remains the same throughout the audition period and to assist when a decision about offering a place involving several applicants has to be made. These films will only be seen by the Director of Music, the adjudicators and audition staff.

## **Viola players and cellists: treble clef**

Twelve and 13 year old players need to be able to read treble clef fluently. Younger players should preferably have some experience with treble clef.

## **Trumpet and French horn players: transposition**

Trumpeters should be aware that they may come across transposition on their courses. You will not need to transpose during the audition but, if you are successful, you should ask your teacher to help with trumpet in A and trumpet in C. Horn players should get guidance on F and Eb.

## **Trombonists**

Thirteen year old trombonists need to be able to read tenor clef fluently. Younger trombonists should have some experience with tenor clef.

## **Percussionists**

Percussion auditions are limited to certain venues where instruments are available. You will be expected to play timpani, snare and xylophone at the audition. (Whichever type of instrument you do not include in your chosen pieces is likely to be given to you as part of the sight reading exercise.) If you wish to play a 'tuned' percussion instrument other than xylophone, check with the NCO office whether this will be possible. Because you have to play on more than one instrument, we allow a slightly longer period for percussion auditions. You need to provide your own sticks and beaters at the audition.

## **Harpists**

Because setting up your instrument takes longer than for other musicians, we allow a longer period on the timetable for you to prepare before the audition and pack up afterwards. We also try to give you a space where you can both practise beforehand and have the actual audition without having to move between rooms though this may not be possible in some venues.

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16 July 2010