

Young Artist Programme



Key Facts

Founded by and working in partnership with the **UK's 6 leading opera companies**

One of the most respected opera training opportunities for singers and répétiteurs in the UK, the Studio has been training Young Artists for almost 50 years

Bridges the gap between higher education and a professional opera career

The most coaching-intensive Young Artist Programme out there

9-month programme, based in Wandsworth, London

12 singers and 4 répétiteurs

Fully-funded training with monthly stipends and bursaries

Focus on musical, artistic, physical, psychological, and professional skills

Year-round audition opportunities and industry exposure

Health and wellbeing integral to all training

May finish gives Young Artists a head start on summer contract availability, plus extra individual coaching time before leaving the Studio

2025 / 26 Young Artists perform with Orchestra of English National Opera in the Studio's opera scenes production *Act Three* in collaboration with Scottish Opera.

Image by Richard Hubert Smith



The National Opera Studio (NOS) was founded by the UK's leading opera companies to create a smaller, elite training environment for singers and répétiteurs. Its purpose is to bridge the gap between formal education and the professional stage, offering free, bespoke training that equips artists with the skills, experience, and industry connections needed for the real world of opera.

The Studio is a place to take risks and ask questions, a place where exploration is part of the process. It's a chance to test yourself in a professional setting while still having the support to try things out, challenge assumptions, and grow into a more complete and self-aware artist.

artists for their talent and potential, focusing on long-term growth and tailoring opportunities to individual development. Unlike company programmes, we're not limited by opera house production needs, allowing us to tailor every project and opportunity to each artist.

Our Young Artist Programme stands apart by selecting



Soprano Georgia Melville (2025/26 alum) performs in the Studio's opera scenes production *Act One* in collaboration with Opera North.

Image by Tom Arber

Our offer to singers

Our Young Artist Programme offers singers a focused, intensive pathway from study to career.

Coaching

At the start of the year, you'll work closely with our core coaching team to reflect on your strengths and set clear goals for your development. Your training is then tailored to support your vocal and artistic growth, including curated programmes to showcase you fully, carefully selected coaches, and thoughtfully scheduled one-to-one sessions.

Outside production periods, you'll have weekly one-to-one coaching in vocal health, music, languages, stagecraft, and performance resilience, complemented by recitals, filming days, and special events.

During production periods, support continues alongside music calls and rehearsals. While on residency, you'll work closely with the music and creative teams, orchestras, and wider staff at our world-class partner companies, building valuable industry connections.

By the time you leave NOS, you will have already worked with the companies, met the decision-makers and shown them what you can do.

Audition Preparation & Industry Exposure

Audition workshops and regular feedback prepare you to present your best self. Throughout the year, you'll have regular auditions and exposure to casting directors, with partner company casting teams tracking your progress, alongside an Agents Day where industry professionals hear you perform.

Masterclasses & Recitals

You'll take part in masterclasses with leading artists and present at least one lunchtime recital including contemporary repertoire, livestreamed to a wider audience.

Digital Skills & Career Development

Regular filming days help you create high-quality video content. You'll also receive training in digital presence, social media, personal branding, and PR – essential for a modern opera career.

Jonathan Evers (2023/24 alum) performs in the Studio's opera scenes production *Et Voila!!* in collaboration with Welsh National Opera.

Image by Kirsten McTernan

'The National Opera Studio has been the perfect stepping stone between being a student and going fully fledged into the profession. The opportunity to work at such an intensely focused level to develop my individuality as an artist by working with world-class coaches, conductors, and directors has been invaluable.'

Jonathan Evers, baritone
2023/24 alum

Performance Experience

You'll participate in multiple performances, including residencies with Welsh National Opera, Opera North, and Scottish Opera. These programmes are carefully curated by the Studio's Artistic Team to showcase your strengths, with Young Artists working alongside partner company orchestras and our Young Artist répétiteurs.

Each opera scenes performance is directed by a leading guest director, giving you the chance to work with a variety of creative voices and approaches. Past directors include Adele Thomas, Keith Warner, Lucy Bradley, Louisa Muller, and Olivia Fuchs. Orchestral performances are led by guest conductors such as Richard Farnes CBE, Karen Kamensek, Garry Walker, and Stuart Stratford.

The repertoire spans from baroque to contemporary opera, providing a breadth of experience that sets our programme apart.



Repetiteur Su Choung (2025/26 alum) in the Studio's opera scenes production *Deception and Desire* in collaboration with Welsh National Opera.

Image by Kirsten McTernan

Our Young Artist Programme prepares repetiteurs for the full spectrum of a modern repetiteur's career, whether on stage, in the pit, or in the rehearsal room.

Our offer to repetiteurs

Practical Musicianship

You'll work on vocal scores and orchestral reductions, focusing on style, colour, and clarity. Training includes continuo, recitative playing, and adapting to different conductors and rehearsal styles. Singing and playing simultaneously is developed throughout the year.

Coaching

You'll gain core coaching skills, structuring sessions, offering feedback, and working supportively with singers. Daily studio life offers constant opportunities to build collaborative, musical, and interpersonal confidence in a professional rehearsal environment.

Conducting & Leadership

Your time here will include sessions on conducting focusing on gesture, clarity, and building a confident presence in rehearsals and performances.

Residency & Industry Insight

Each repetiteur undertakes an individual residency with one of our partner companies, shadowing the music staff and observing the full creative process. You'll also prepare core excerpts and arias needed for repetiteur auditions, and develop the skills required for freelance success.



Repetiteur Alfonso Sánchez Pérez plays at a masterclass at the Royal Ballet and Opera.
Image by Richard Hubert Smith

Scenes Projects & Rehearsal Experience

Repetiteurs play a key role in all opera scenes projects. You'll be assigned multiple scenes and cover others, attending music calls and rehearsals from start to performance, gaining hands-on experience with varied repertoire and creative teams.

'My time at the National Opera Studio has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. Through the dedication and insight of the coaches and artists I've worked with, I've grown enormously, both musically and professionally. I've gained a deeper understanding of operatic repertoire and developed a working approach that I know will support me in my future career.'

Alfonso Sánchez Pérez,
repetiteur 2025/26 alum

Breakdown of the year

Stagecraft & Language Foundations

Six weeks of intensive coaching to build core skills and identify areas for development.

Residencies with Partner Companies

Three residencies with performances and orchestral work at:

- Opera North
- Scottish Opera
- Welsh National Opera

Opera Scenes Performances

At least four opera scenes performances in London, including one accompanied by the ENO Orchestra, with industry professionals invited to all performances.

Digital Skills & Career Development

Talks and one-to-one sessions covering:

- Branding and social media
- Recording techniques
- Website and CV building
- PR, tax, and freelance career management

Recitals

- At least one livestreamed lunchtime recital per artist
- Recital at Wigmore Hall
- Private recitals for supporters and donors

Fundraising Events

Participation in multiple fundraising events throughout the year.

Masterclasses

At least one masterclass per artist
Includes masterclass at the Royal Ballet and Opera

A breakdown of the key events taking place throughout the year in the Young Artist Programme at the National Opera Studio, based on our 2026/27 offer and subject to change. These run alongside regular coaching, masterclasses, and performances.

Agents Day

Audition day with invited agents and casting professionals.

Recording Days

At least 5 recording sessions per Young Artist (one-hour sessions) held at the Studio, led by our in-house AV technician using our state-of-the-art multi-camera setup.

May Finish & Summer Availability

- Programme finishes in May, ahead of most conservatoire courses
- Increased availability for summer contracts, subject to audition success
- Extra individual coaching time with the NOS Artistic Team before leaving

Ongoing Support After NOS

- Access to coaching (subject to availability)
- Remaining audition travel fund
- Free practice, recording and performance space
- References and alum promotion via NOS newsletters and social media

'As I approached the end of my Master's, I applied to NOS during a transitional moment, stepping from education into the professional world. I felt almost ready to work in opera houses but wanted guidance before fully jumping in. NOS felt like the perfect bridge. I went into the audition hoping to enjoy the experience and, I must say, it was one of the most fun auditions I have done! I was overjoyed to be accepted, giving me the chance to grow and build connections in the UK.'

Ana-Carmen Balestra, soprano

'In my final year of my Master's, as opposed to an opera school setting, I decided I needed more specialised, performance-based training before starting my career, which was exactly what NOS offered. The coaching, residencies, and learning environment sounded fantastic. I didn't think I would get an audition, let alone a place, but, as improbable as it seemed at the time, I ended up exactly where I wanted to be.'

Ceferina Penny, soprano

'After completing my undergraduate degree and singing in some wonderful choruses throughout my 20s, I knew I needed further training to refine my skills and become a soloist. NOS has been the perfect place to do this, and at the perfect time in my career.'

Jack Sandison, bass-baritone

'At the end of my Master's, having been relatively new to opera before my studies, I wanted to build on the experience I'd gained and prepare for a freelance career in the UK. NOS's close connections with major opera houses and the chance to work with their music staff were a big draw, as well as the opportunity to expand my skills and network.'

Alistair Burton, repetiteur

Biqing Zhang and Peter Lidbetter
(2025/26 alums) in the Studio's opera
scenes production in collaboration
with Scottish Opera and English
National Opera.

Image by Richard Hubert Smith

Funding*

Thanks to support from Arts Council England, our six partner companies, various trusts and foundations, and private philanthropy:

- All training is completely free to Young Artists
- Young Artists will receive a monthly performance stipend (currently £1400/month)
- Additional bursary support is available (currently up to a further £250/month)
- We have additional funds available for singing or piano lessons up to £600 per year
- An Auditions Travel Fund is available, offering a one-time payment of up to £260 during the Studio year or one year post-programme

*Based on our 2026/27 offer. Financial support levels are subject to increase.

Applications†

For **singers**, we hold three rounds of auditions. The first is by video, including two recordings with piano accompaniment. The second round takes place across six days of live auditions in three UK cities - London, Leeds, and Cardiff - hearing around 200 singers. We will then invite 30+ finalists to a third and final round to sing for the wider National Opera Studio panel, alongside the casting teams of our partner opera companies. Some singers may be invited to working sessions after this.

For **repetiteurs**, there are two rounds of auditions and both are at the Studio in front of a panel made up of at least two members of the Studio's Artistic Team, and at least one of our coaches.

† Reflects our 2027/28 application process.



Scan the QR code for full details on applications, including requirements and key dates.

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'My time at the National Opera Studio proved to be an invaluable springboard into the profession. Working directly with pillars of the opera business helped equip me for what was to come.'

Nicky Spence OBE, tenor
2009/10 alum



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