

London Philharmonic Orchestra

LPO Junior Artists 2026/27

Application Guidance

LPO Junior Artists aims to support young musicians from backgrounds currently under-represented in professional UK orchestras, and we invite applicants to self-identify how they meet this requirement at application. To help teachers, schools and applicants assess whether the programme is right for them, guidance is offered below. **Each application will be considered on an individual basis.**

If you would like to discuss your application further please contact Lowri Thomas, Education & Community Project Manager directly at juniorartists@lpo.org.uk or 07932 636 373.

Playing standard

Applicants need to play an orchestral instrument at **Grade 8 standard or above** (it is not necessary to have taken a certified exam). This is a broad guideline, and essentially, we are looking for young people whose present playing standard, for their age, indicates that they may have the potential to consider studying music beyond school, and ultimately consider entering the profession. We also recommend that to get the most out of the programme, applicants should have experience of playing in orchestras and be particularly interested in developing their skills in this area. Please note that for this programme the piano is not included as an orchestral instrument.

Age range and commitment

Applicants should be aged between **15 and 19 on 1 September 2026**. Junior Artists is a commitment that spans across the academic year, so those taking exams or who take part in other substantial musical activities should bear in mind their overall schedule when considering an application. We aim to schedule activity in holidays and occasional weekend days in term times. We also hope to be able to welcome Junior Artists to LPO concerts or rehearsals that may include evenings. Core Junior Artist activities take place in the London Waterloo area, near the Royal Festival Hall, so successful applicants will need to be able to attend regular London-based activity.

Long-term plans

We ask that applicants are **considering the possibility of studying music** at a higher level and potentially interested in a **career in the orchestral music sector** (either as a performer or non-performer). However we understand that applicants may not have definite plans at this stage. One of the aims of the programme is to give participants as much information as possible to help them decide which pathway is right for them.

Under-representation

Applicants need to be from a background that is **currently under-represented in professional UK orchestras** either due to financial, cultural or practical barriers, or existing unconscious or conscious bias within the sector. We are not presenting a fixed set of criteria, and instead ask applicants to self-identify their eligibility in this area. Eligible criteria may include, but are not limited to, **under-represented racial, ethnic or socio-economic backgrounds, and may also include gender, disability and special educational needs.**

Please note that ethnicity refers to one's cultural background and is distinct from nationality – applying based on a non-British nationality alone would probably not fulfil the criteria of the scheme. A minority ethnic background within the UK may also not necessarily equate to under-representation within professional UK orchestras e.g. musicians from certain East or South East Asian backgrounds are well represented within the sector.

Please note, LPO Junior Artists is not a bursary scheme. A low-income background may overlap with under-represented socio-economic backgrounds but applying on this basis alone may not fulfil a definition of under-representation. Under-represented social groups may have lower cultural capital and reduced access to wider cultural opportunities as a community, low progression rates to higher education, and lack of support networks to support artistic progression.

All applications are considered on a case-by-case basis and we encourage you to get in touch with us directly with any questions about your or a young person's eligibility and suitability for the scheme. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us at juniorartists@lpo.org.uk, 020 7840 4203.

Deadline for applications: Monday 13 April 2026, 5.00pm