



# FOREST SCHOOL

## 11+ Music Scholarships at Forest School

### Frequently asked questions

#### **How do I register?**

When you register your interest in Forest there is a box to tick on the form to indicate that you would like your child to be considered for a Music scholarship. You will then be contacted by the Admissions office who will ask you to complete a form giving information about the musical details of your son/daughter.

#### **What can be awarded? What is the difference between an Exhibition and a Scholarship?**

There are two types of awards: Exhibitions and Scholarship. An Exhibition is a monetary award that pays for the cost of instrumental or vocal tuition. It is equal to the cost of thirty lessons each of forty-minutes duration at the school rate i.e. one year of tuition. Exhibitions can be used for tuition with Forest music teachers and with external music teachers. However, if an external teacher costs more, the School will not pay any more than the Exhibition value. Pupils may hold more than one Exhibition. When an Exhibition is awarded it is given for the entire school career of the pupil, subject to successful progress each year.

Scholarship is remission from fees. We can award up to a maximum of 20% remission. Some candidates will be offered both Scholarship and Exhibition(s), some just Scholarship, and some only Exhibitions.

#### **How many places are available?**

There is not a fixed number of places for Music Scholarships. The Director of Music makes recommendations after the audition process. If no candidates meet the standard, no offers will be made; if there are many strong candidates, then a panel of senior staff will decide how to divide up the offers.

#### **Can I combine Scholarships, and can that extend beyond the 20% limit?**

Scholarship awards can be combined. Many pupils have, for example, both Academic and Music Scholarship awards. However, the total combined award cannot extend above 20% remission.

#### **How do you assess the First Round?**

The Director of Music, Deputy Director of Music and the Heads of Section will

carefully listen to the recorded submissions. They will also look at the most recent exam certificates and mark forms. There is a limited number of slots available for the Second Round of face-to-face auditions, and the panel will be looking to invite as many as possible to these two days. They will not only be looking for a developing technique but also musicality, control, expression, and a sense of involvement when delivering their performance.

### **What happens at the audition?**

The audition will last approximately 20 minutes. Before the audition the candidate will be able to warm-up and briefly rehearse with an accompanist (if required). In the audition, the candidate will perform all pieces first, then will be given some aural tests and sight-reading. The level of these tests will be of a similar standard to the pieces offered at the audition. Finally, there will be a short interview with the Director of Music and the panel of specialist music teachers, who will be keen to know more about the candidate's musical interests, passion, work ethic and ambitions.

### **What grade does my child have to be?**

Although we are looking for future potential and ongoing commitment, most pupils who receive 11+ Music Scholarships are already playing at Grade 4-5 ABRSM standard and beyond in their main instrument or voice, show competence at technical skills including sight-reading and aural tests, and a secure knowledge of music theory. As well as displaying a strong command and connection to their musical instrument, we are looking for communicative and expressive performances that are clearly the outcome of high-quality, focused practice.

### **What if my child doesn't do graded exams?**

We will accept applications from pupils who have not done graded exams, but we will need a reference from their main instrumental teacher to confirm the equivalent level at which they are currently playing. The chosen repertoire for the audition should reflect their current standard of playing.

For candidates who do not take graded exams, we would want to ensure that, going forward, they receive the correct technical guidance as part of a carefully planned programme of study, which would include an appropriate musical examination board.

### **What is a principal study? Is singing an instrument?**

The application form asks for first (or principal) instrument, then also second and third. The first study will usually be their most advanced instrument, which also tends to be the one that the candidate has been learning for the longest time. The principal study instrument should also be their favourite!

There is no need to offer more than one instrument, although most candidates offer two. Singing is considered an instrument and can be the principal study.

### **How many pieces to play?**

At audition the candidate should play two pieces on the principal study and one on any other instruments. If they feel they have a joint principal study, they could prepare two pieces on each.

However, at the audition we may indicate to the candidate that we will stop them during the performance if the pieces are long – this never means we do not like what we are hearing! It just means we need to keep the auditions moving forward so we stay on schedule.

### **Do I need to use accompaniment? Can I use backing tracks?**

If a piece requires accompaniment, it should be performed with that accompaniment. Backing tracks can be used for drum-kit, electric & bass guitar, jazz saxophone and others. Any backing tracks should be brought on a portable device (such as a mobile phone) and this will be connected to a bluetooth speaker in the audition room. Backing tracks can also be sent in advance by email.

### **Are there any instruments you don't consider?**

Not really! We are open-minded. It is fair to say that our offering of tuition at Forest is mainly based around orchestral and band instruments; this includes electric guitar and bass, drum-kit and vocal studies in both classical and musical theatre/rock and pop styles. We have made awards to Hindustani and Carnatic instrumentalists and vocalists, folk musicians, and given awards for composition and song writing.

### **What is required of a Music Scholar?**

We ask our Music Scholars and Exhibition holders to participate in at least two musical ensembles (although most of them are in more!) Music Scholars are all expected to sing in a choir.

The successful candidates will be the ones who love music and show focus and ambition in their instrument(s). By doing so and participating in the musical life of the School, they will be our leading lights, setting an example of enthusiasm, curiosity and dedication to the many other Forest pupils who are musicians but not award holders.

Although not an official requirement, Music Scholars who join Forest via the 11+ selection continue with music in the classroom to at least GCSE level.

### **What is your best advice for preparation for the audition?**

Listen to the advice of your instrumental/vocal teacher(s)! Play pieces that you know very well and enjoy playing. Do not try to play anything that is not ready, unprepared, half-done, or too difficult. By playing or singing pieces that you know and enjoy you will be able to show musicality. That means, the music will come to life, will be nuanced and expressive. Practice everyday and with focus; use a metronome and set it to a slow tempo to ensure you learn the notes correctly; do not only play from beginning to end but practise the bits that need work.

Be honest when we ask you questions about music and what you are listening to – there are no trick questions in the audition, we just want to find out more about what makes you tick as a musician!

**I don't want to put my son/daughter under too much pressure – what should I do?**

We want to make the audition process as positive and welcoming as possible. We appreciate that the pupils will be nervous, but we will do what we can to put them at ease and give them encouragement. Ultimately, the decision to go for an award must be taken between you and your son/daughter. However, it is important to note that the Music Department at Forest is open to all pupils, regardless of any Scholarship status, and all pupils are encouraged and welcome to join our numerous ensembles and choirs.

To gain advice about whether your child should apply you can arrange a pre-audition with the Director of Music.

**What is a pre-audition? How can I arrange one?**

During the Trinity and Michaelmas term the Director of Music can meet with prospective candidates and their parents, subject to times being available. Candidates can visit Forest for a short pre-audition where the Director of Music will hear the candidate play in the presence of their parents and give them advice about whether they should be applying.

**To arrange a pre-audition please contact**

**Jana Valentová**

Music School Manager

[music@forest.org.uk](mailto:music@forest.org.uk)

Tel: 020 8509 4988

**When will we find out if we have been successful?**

All the correspondence dealing with offers is sent out in February. Should you have any other questions or need more information please contact the Music Department using [music@forest.org.uk](mailto:music@forest.org.uk)



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