

English Folk Dance and Song Society Artistic Director (National Youth Folk Ensemble)



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National Youth Folk Ensemble performance at Purbeck Valley Folk Festival 2022, by Neil King – Fatea

Recruitment Information October 2022

English Folk Dance and Song Society **Artistic Director (National Youth Folk Ensemble) – freelance**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the English Folk Dance and Song Society

At the English Folk Dance and Song Society, we champion the folk arts at the heart of England's rich and diverse cultural landscape.

We deliver programmes of learning and participation and artist development:

- through our arts venue, Cecil Sharp House
- through our library and archive, the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library
- online and at a range of venues across England, and sometimes beyond.

We frequently work in partnership with arts, education and heritage organisations.

EFDSS became a Regularly Funded Organisation (now National Portfolio Organisation) of Arts Council England (ACE) in 2009, increasing its funding in 2015 specifically to develop a National Youth Folk Ensemble and associated programme.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

EFDSS is fully committed to leading by example and to calling out all forms of discrimination – wherever, whenever and however they take place. Striving for equity and diversity in the folk arts is central to our vision and mission. We are continuously developing, challenging and expanding thinking and practice in this area. Find out more about current and recent developments: www.efdss.org/about-us/what-we-do/diversity

As the National Youth Folk Ensemble is funded through EFDSS' National Portfolio Organisation agreement, the programme must contribute to Arts Council England's Creative Case for Diversity. (The Creative Case for Diversity is part of Inclusivity and Relevance - one of Arts Council England's Investment Principles under their Let's Create strategy.)

www.artscouncil.org.uk/news/essential-read-inclusivity-relevance

Creative Case for Diversity short film: www.youtube.com/watch?v=LTK0msopLK8

About EFDSS Education

The EFDSS Education department runs classes, courses, projects, and events at Cecil Sharp House for young people, families, and adults, and delivers creative learning projects with schools, community groups and cultural organisations across London and other parts of England. It runs the National Youth Folk Ensemble, London Youth Folk Ensemble, its Inclusive Folk programme for disabled young people, and a range of other youth activities. EFDSS also delivers professional development opportunities and courses for educators from folk, education, and the wider cultural sector, and runs the national Folk Education Network. Its award-winning Resource Bank provides many free teaching and learning resources for using folk music, dance and other artforms in education.

The overall aims for the EFDSS Education programme are:

- To raise the profile of folk arts in education and learning
- To improve the practice of folk arts education
- To increase participation and diversity within folk arts

www.efdss.org/efdss-education

About the National Youth Folk Ensemble

With support from Arts Council England (as part of our NPO funding), EFDSS launched the National Youth Folk Ensemble for England in 2016.

Our vision is young people throughout England discovering, playing and loving folk music.

We wish to encourage progression from earliest grassroots activity in schools and community settings on to lifelong engagement with folk music – as participants and professionals.

The National Youth Folk Ensemble celebrates excellence in youth folk music, bringing together talented young folk musicians from across England to create and perform inspiring new arrangements of folk music.

With young musicians at the heart of the programme, the National Youth Folk Ensemble aims to nurture their talents, aspirations and creativity, enabling them to develop into the folk performers, educators and leaders of the future. The musicians participate in four intensive residential courses per year in the school holidays; receive high quality tuition and guidance from leading folk artist-educators; develop skills in performance, arrangement and leadership; and perform at events, venues and festivals.

The wider National Youth Folk Ensemble Engagement Programme aims to increase opportunities for young people and audiences to discover folk music and develop practice in folk education in England through high quality learning and performance experiences.

The National Youth Folk Ensemble:

- takes talented young folk musicians from across England;
- has up to 25 players;
- is open to young people aged 14-18 years;
- is open to any instrument;
- focuses mainly on instrumental music, with song and dance included as elements of the programme;
- has a significant focus on traditional folk music from England, reflecting its regional variety, complemented by folk music from the rest of the UK and beyond;
- includes newly devised and composed music drawing from traditional music;
- offers membership on an annual basis via audition;
- meets for residential courses, rehearsals and performances across England;
- aims to complement, build on and help link existing youth folk music provision;
- seeks positive relationships with similar youth folk ensembles across the UK and beyond.
- provides extension opportunities for 19–25 year olds who are alumni of the programme
- runs an Engagement Programme that helps foster the growth of local and regional youth folk music provision, particularly where there is currently little provision

Audition process:

- Open Days take place across England in May, providing the chance for young musicians to meet alumni and current members of the Ensemble, learn from the tutor team, and find out more about the Ensemble.
- The first stage of the application process is via video audition.
- Musicians selected from the video auditions are invited to attend a Creative Audition Day at Cecil Sharp House in July.
- The new cohort of musicians join the National Youth Folk Ensemble in October.
- Joining the Ensemble is a one-year commitment with a new cohort recruited for each academic year. Some young musicians may apply to be a member of the Ensemble for additional years.

Since launching in 2016, the National Youth Folk Ensemble has:

- Performed at festivals including Cambridge Folk Festival (Stage 1), FolkEast, Purbeck Valley Folk Festival, Sidmouth Folk Week (Ham Marquee), Shrewsbury Folk Festival (Pengwern Stage), Whitby Folk Week
- Performed at venues including Cecil Sharp House (London), Guildhall (Derby), Liverpool Philharmonic, National Centre for Early Music (York), Sage Gateshead and The Met (Bury)
- Participated in residential courses in Derbyshire, Dorset, Hertfordshire, Kent, Lancashire, Norfolk, Northumberland, Somerset, Surrey and Yorkshire
- Delivered youth-led workshops/sessions at The Sidmouth Folk Festival, Cambridge Folk Festival and FolkEast
- Recorded three EPs and a live session on BBC Radio 3

The National Youth Folk Ensemble Engagement Programme has included:

- 50 free Youth Folk Sampler/Open Days
- Projects and events in partnership with Baby People, Centre for Young Musicians, People Express, Music Mark, Music for Youth, National Youth Jazz Collective, NYMAZ, Orchestras for All, Wiltshire Music Centre and Music Hubs including Camden Music, Bury Music Service, Derbyshire Music Hub, East Sussex Music, Kent Music, Lincolnshire Music Service, Music8, Musica Holme Valley, Soundstorm, and Wolverhampton Music Service.

For more information visit: www.efdss.org/youthfolk



Youth Folk Open Day, Cecil Sharp House 2022, by Brian Slater

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title:	Artistic Director (National Youth Folk Ensemble)
Term & duration:	Freelance, fixed term to August 2025 (subject to annual review)
Responsible to:	Education Director
Working with:	Programme Manager (National Youth Folk Ensemble)
Responsible for:	Freelance music leaders

Summary of Job Purpose: This is a freelance role for an exceptional folk music performer and educator to lead on the artistic vision of the National Youth Folk Ensemble. With a strong knowledge of folk and traditional music from England and beyond, and excellent facilitation and leadership skills, the Artistic Director will inspire and nurture the young musicians, helping them to explore their creativity and develop their performance, arrangement and leadership skills.

The Artistic Director will be responsible for planning and delivering high quality learning experiences for National Youth Folk Ensemble participants; devising content for Open Days and residential courses across England; collaborating with the young musicians and music leaders to create and arrange repertoire; and preparing and supporting the young musicians to give inspiring performances.

Working closely with the Education Director and Programme Manager, the post-holder will select young musicians for the Ensemble and invite a team of music leaders to deliver the programme. The Artistic Director will collaborate with the Education Director and Programme Manager to agree repertoire, plan new initiatives and contribute to EFDSS' Equity, Diversity and Inclusion plan.

Key Responsibilities

1. Deliver high-quality music education experiences that support the development of young musicians as instrumentalists and ensemble players.
2. Lead on the planning and delivery of the artistic content of four weeks of residential courses.
3. Lead on sourcing musical repertoire for the National Youth Folk Ensemble, drawing on folk and traditional music from England and beyond.
4. Co-create original arrangements of folk and traditional music with the Ensemble members, facilitating them to compose music and give creative input.
5. Prepare and support the Ensemble to give high quality and appropriate performances.
6. Support and nurture the talents, musical interests and leadership skills of Ensemble members, including tracking their progress throughout the year.
7. Invite, brief, lead and collaborate with a team of music leaders to deliver the programme, in consultation with EFDSS.
8. Collaborate with EFDSS staff to plan and develop the programme: including Education Director, Programme Manager and Pastoral Lead.
9. Deliver Open Days for young musicians across England.
10. Lead a positive, supportive audition process and choose the line-up for the Ensemble in consultation with EFDSS.
11. Build relationships with guest artists and partner organisations.
12. Perform with and deliver workshops alongside the Ensemble and Alumni when appropriate.
13. Prepare some written material, including feedback for auditionees and workshop plans.
14. Represent the National Youth Folk Ensemble through media appearances; at relevant external meetings, performances and events; and be an ambassador for the Ensemble, EFDSS and folk music education.
15. Reflect on and contribute to evaluation of the programme.
16. Be a positive role model for young people both within and outside of the Ensemble.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential:

1. An excellent instrumentalist and performer whose core repertoire is folk music from England and who has an active interest in a wide range of traditional musics.
2. An engaging and skilled folk music educator.
3. Able to teach music and arrangements by ear.
4. Confident communication, leadership and facilitation skills.
5. Passionate about nurturing and facilitating the musical development and creativity of young folk musicians.
6. Experience of collaborating with young musicians to create and arrange musical repertoire.
7. Experience of planning and developing high quality creative workshop content.
8. Excellent ability to arrange folk music for mixed instrument ensembles.
9. Dedicated to acknowledging, within the Ensemble's repertoire, the regional variety and diversity of England's folk music.
10. Committed to excellent quality musical experiences for young people and audiences.
11. Committed to working in a way that is inclusive and delivers EFDSS' values and ethos.
12. Committed to developing a good working relationship with EFDSS staff, pastoral staff and other music leaders, including the existing tutor team.
13. Willing to learn from and build on the existing National Youth Folk Ensemble methods and practice.
14. Willing to reflect on and evaluate the work and accept feedback.
15. Ability and willingness to travel and work across England and beyond, including overnight stays.
16. Ability and willingness to work flexible hours including evenings and weekends.
17. Strongly committed to safeguarding; equity, diversity and inclusion; health and safety; and safe arts practice.
18. Committed to Continuing Professional Development, skill-sharing and disseminating effective practice, via EFDSS' Folk Education Network and other relevant networks

Desirable:

1. Good awareness of current issues in music learning and participation.
2. Experience of talking to the media.

Qualities:

1. Warm, friendly and approachable personality.
2. Flexibility and a positive attitude.
3. Ability to work as part of a team.
4. Resilience – ability to cope well with change and challenge.
5. Ability to relate to, and communicate well with, young people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Fee: up to £10,800 per year

Expenses: Travel, accommodation and meal expenses will be provided as necessary.

Commitment: This is likely to involve 50 days' work per Ensemble cohort (including planning, de-brief and evaluation; delivery of Open Days, auditions, residential courses and performances).

Flexibility is required as weekend and evening working will be necessary

Dates: Indicative delivery dates for 2023-24, subject to further discussion, are:

Planning and development: from January 2023

Open Days: 31 May 2023 (plus two other dates in May tbc)

Creative Audition Days: 8-9 July 2023

Residential Course 1: 22-27 October 2023

Residential Course 2: February half term 2024 (x 5 days)

Residential Course 3: April 2024 (x 5 days)

Residential Course 4 and festival tour: Summer (July/August) 2024 (x 7 days)

Folk Experience Days: January-April 2024 (x 5 days)

Term: Fixed term until August 2025 (subject to annual review).

Additional work: There is potential for extra work by negotiation for additional fee, such as:

- Delivering workshops as part of the National Youth Folk Ensemble Engagement programme with music hubs, schools, youth music groups and arts organisations.
- Producing music education resources
- Delivering Continuing Professional Development / training workshops for music leaders working on the National Youth Folk Ensemble programme and externally

This job description is a guide to the nature of the work required. It is not wholly comprehensive or restrictive and may be reviewed as required.

Please note: this role will involve regular contact with young people under the age of 18. In line with EFDSS' Safeguarding Policy, appointments will be made subject to satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and references; the signing of a declaration stating that there is no reason why you would be considered unsuitable to work with children; and declaring all relevant previous criminal convictions (as per *The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974*). Read the EFDSS Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (which includes our Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders) on our website www.efdss.org/policies.

Positive Action for a Diverse Workforce

At the English Folk Dance and Song Society we strive to be an Equal Opportunities employer and to ensure that no person is unfairly discriminated against in our recruitment and selection policies and procedures. We are committed to diversifying our workforce to better represent society and we follow guidance on positive action in recruitment from the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Equality Act 2010.

- We particularly welcome applicants from ethnic minority backgrounds, and those who are disabled, as these are under-represented in our organisation and the wider folk music leader workforce.
- All disabled applicants who fulfil the Essential Person Specification and Qualities criteria for this role will be called for an interview. Please make clear in the cover letter if you consider yourself disabled. (You may find it helpful to refer to this definition www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010.)

HOW TO APPLY

Applicants should visit the EFDSS Vacancies page for up to date information about this position and to access the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form: www.efdss.org/about-us/work-for-us/vacancies

- Write a **cover letter** explaining why you are interested in this role and why you feel you have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to do it, referring to the Job Description and Person Specification.
- Please confirm your **right to work in the UK** in your cover letter
- Attach an **up-to-date CV** containing your full contact details and outlining your relevant work experience – in either a paid or voluntary capacity. See our CV-guidance on our Vacancies webpage.
- Complete the **Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form** via the link on our Vacancies webpage. (This form will not be seen by the selection panel).

Completed applications with the subject line 'Artistic Director NYFE' should be emailed to Lucy Grant, Business Development & Operations Director, at recruitment@efdss.org

Closing date for completed applications is Friday 2 December at 9am

Applicants will hear from EFDSS by Friday 16 December.

Interviews and music leading auditions for shortlisted candidates will be held on Sunday 15 January at Cecil Sharp House in London.

Interview: candidates will be asked a series of questions by the panel and invited to deliver a verbal presentation about their vision for the 2023-24 National Youth Folk Ensemble.

Music leading audition: candidates will deliver a 30-minute folk music workshop for a group of young musicians, who will provide feedback to the interview panel. The young people will be an invited group of experienced young folk musicians aged 14+, including alumni from the National Youth Folk Ensemble.

Anyone invited to interview will be contacted with the outcome and all interviewees will be offered feedback on request.

Travel expenses will be offered to interviewees.

If you wish to have an informal and confidential discussion about the role, please contact: Sarah Jones, Programme Manager (National Youth Folk Ensemble), 020 7485 2206 ext. 235, sarah.jones@efdss.org or Rachel Elliott, Education Director, 020 7485 2206 ext. 236, rachel@efdss.org