



Northamptonshire Music and Performing Arts Trust

Inspire • Nurture • Excel

Welcome to County Chamber Strings 2025 – 2026

Congratulations on being awarded a place in this year's County Chamber Strings! Whether you are a brand new member, or returning for another year, we are excited for you to be a part of the NMPAT community, and look forward to an exciting year of sharing music and performing arts with you.

This letter, along with any other communication from us throughout the year, will be available on the NMPAT website, as well as being emailed directly to families: www.nmpat.co.uk/letters

Rehearsals

Rehearsals will take place every Tuesday, from 6.00-8.00pm, in the Richard Coles Hall, also known as the Upper Hall. The easiest route to the hall is via Door 1, following the corridor past the common room. Our first rehearsal will be on **Tuesday 9th September**.

Access to the NMPAT building is controlled by a keypad. The code was included in the email to which this letter was attached. Please do not share this code with anyone, and, although it's tempting to be polite, try to avoid holding the door open for anyone that isn't in your group.

Please try to tell me in advance if you know you are not able to attend a rehearsal for any reason. The easiest way to do this is online, via iPresto. You can also email me using the details below, or contact the main office on 01604 637117. The office closes at 5.30pm Monday to Friday, so any emails or phone messages sent after this time won't be received until the following day.

We take online registers for all County Ensembles, using iPresto. This means that an automatically generated email will be sent home if you are not at a rehearsal, and we don't already know that you are going to be absent.

Open evening

Before our first rehearsal, you are invited to come to the NMPAT open evening. Particularly if you are in a moving to a new group this year, you may like to familiarise yourself with a different part of the building before your first rehearsal. Anyone is welcome – families included – anytime from 4.00-6.00pm, on **Monday 1st September**.

The Friends of NMPAT

The Friends of Northamptonshire Music and Performing Arts Trust (FNMPAT) are an invaluable support to the work the County Ensembles, providing refreshments at rehearsals and concerts and arranging the sale of the ever-popular NMPAT Hoodies!

Funds raised go towards subsidising the cost of travel to out-of-county events and purchasing specialist instruments for use in County Ensembles. Students look forward to going to the common room for sugar laden goodies in their breaks each week, but this isn't possible without your help.

The Friends need the involvement of parents and supporters to continue to provide all that they do, and any help is welcome. You will find members of the Friends in the Common Room / kitchen at NMPAT - please have a conversation if you think you might be able to help in any way. Thank you.

Events and performances

Please make a note of all our planned performances, and let me know as soon as possible if you can foresee any availability clashes. These dates are correct at the time of writing:

- **Saturday 22nd November** – Autumn Festival of Music, at Spinney Theatre, Northampton (7.00pm start)
- **Saturday 7th February** – String Spectacular, Venue TBC. (6.00pm start)
- **Saturday 15th, 22nd, or Sunday 23rd March** – TBC. Music for Youth Regional Festival
- **Sunday 5th July** – Second Generations, at Derngate, Northampton (6.00pm start)

The most up to date information on all NMPAT concerts and events can be found on our online events calendar – which you can also link to your own personal calendar, if you would like to:

www.nmpat.co.uk/events

Concert dress: we will perform wearing all black with at least quarter-length sleeves, including clean black shoes. Any skirts/dresses should be at or below knee length, and worn with black tights.

Additional opportunities

In addition to County Ensembles, we offer a wide range of additional opportunities to support your musical journey. Some details are included below and you can find more information on our website.

Theory classes - students taking ABRSM exams on their instrument / voice will need to have Grade 5 Theory in order to take the Grade 6 instrument / voice exam. For those students not taking ABRSM exams, it's a useful qualification to help develop your musical knowledge and understanding. For more information and to register for classes, please go to www.nmpat.co.uk/theory

Aural classes - to assist with ABRSM and Trinity College London exams, we offer additional Aural Classes. These are fully funded for NMPAT County Ensemble members. For more information and to register for classes, please go to www.nmpat.co.uk/aural

Music Production – classes take place online, via Zoom, on Tuesday evenings and are open to anyone, with no prior experience required. For more information and to register, please go to www.nmpat.co.uk/production

Centres: as an existing County Ensemble member, you are entitled to join a Centre for just £30 per term! Please notify the NMPAT Office (office@nmpat.co.uk) if you would like to utilise this offer. Some Centres also offer leadership and work experience opportunities for older students. More information can be found at www.nmpat.co.uk/centres

I am really looking forward to working with you this year, and look forward to seeing you at our first rehearsal on **Tuesday 9th September**.

Kate Bickerdike
Director: County Chamber Strings
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