



**SINFONIA
SMITH SQ.**

**FELLOWSHIP
APPLICATION PACK**
2026/27

sinfoniasmithsq.org.uk

ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

We are looking for talented emerging musicians to join our 2026/27 orchestra and embark on a life-changing experience that promises to transform your prospects.

Every year, we invite 34 players from all over the world to be part of Sinfonia Smith Square's renowned ten-month Fellowship programme, designed to prepare you for all aspects of professional musical life. We are looking for musicians who not only have talent but dedication, team spirit, imagination and willingness to take risks and embrace new ideas.

To be eligible, you should play one of the following orchestral instruments to a high standard and have completed an undergraduate or postgraduate music degree either at music college or university, or achieved an equivalent musical qualification or playing standard:

- Violin
- Viola
- Cello
- Double Bass
- Flute
- Oboe
- Clarinet
- Bassoon
- Horn
- Trumpet
- Percussion

To find out more about [the Fellowship experience](#), please visit our website. We strongly recommend reading through our [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) before applying too.

We are often asked if it is possible to be in Sinfonia Smith Square while still studying at music college or university. Owing to the intensity of the programme, this is not normally practical so we strongly recommend you wait until your final year to apply so that your time with us follows your graduation. Please see Frequently Asked Questions on our website (sinfoniasmithsq.org.uk) for more information about this.

Sinfonia Smith Square is committed to improving diversity, equity and inclusion across the organisation. We therefore actively seek applications from individuals with backgrounds currently underrepresented in the arts. We welcome applications from all sections of the community, regardless of age, disability, gender identity or gender expression, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or any other equality characteristic.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

This pack is your simple step-by-step guide to completing your initial application and the rest of the process. Please take the time to read it fully. The application process consists of 3 stages:

Stage One: Application Form and Video Footage

Stage Two: In-person audition

Stage Three: Interview

If you have any queries about the programme or the audition process, please do not hesitate to contact us via auditions@sinfoniasmithsquare.org.uk, or you are welcome to call one of our team on +44 20 7222 1061 who will be very happy to give advice.

We are committed to making reasonable adjustments in the application and recruitment process for the Fellowship. If we can support you with the application process in any way, or you require assistance at any stage, please do contact us.

STAGE ONE: APPLICATION FORM & VIDEO FOOTAGE

To apply, visit [Apply](#) under 'Our Orchestra' on our website (sinfoniasmithsq.org.uk) and follow the link to the online application portal. If you applied last year, you can log back in to the system using the same email address and password - or follow the link to reset your password if required.

Completed applications must be submitted to us by the closing date:

12:00 noon (Greenwich Mean Time) on Friday 30 January 2026

Your stage one application consists of two parts:

- Video footage
- A written application form

We regret that we cannot accept late applications.

VIDEO FOOTAGE

As part of the stage one application, applicants are required to submit one piece of recently filmed footage. Please note:

- Your footage should be recorded within the last 6 months
- You can play either a piece of solo or accompanied classical repertoire. If you have chosen accompanied repertoire then this should ideally be recorded with an accompanist if possible.
- Percussionists should submit footage of you playing timpani. You may send either recent footage of you performing with an orchestra or ensemble, so long as you are clearly visible and audible for the majority of the performance, or you can send solo/unaccompanied footage of you performing the timpani part of an orchestral work.
- Your chosen repertoire can be anything from baroque through to contemporary music. We welcome and encourage you to consider repertoire from a diverse range of composers.
- You can either specially film it or it can be from a solo performance you have recently filmed, but the audio should all be from the same performance, not digitally edited, and one continuous take. Please only submit one video.
- The footage should be no longer than five minutes. If you submit a longer video, the shortlisting panel will only view the first five minutes. Please avoid lengthy introductions before you play where possible.
- In order to standardise applications, we ask that you please do not use studio recording equipment but do ensure the footage is of good quality and represents your ability as a musician.

Please note we cannot accept purely audio recordings; it must be filmed footage in which you are clearly visible.

UPLOADING YOUR VIDEO

You should upload the footage to the internet using YouTube, Vimeo or an equivalent which makes it instantly accessible (rather than something that requires a download or password), then include the link to it in your application form. Wherever possible, please ensure the composer and title of the piece you are playing are included in the video's title or description.

The footage should remain fully accessible online until the end of our recruitment process in May. Before sending us the link, please check that your footage is definitely visible, ensuring that you have deactivated privacy settings so that we can view it easily.

If there is any reason why your circumstances may not enable you to submit filmed footage as described above, please contact us at auditions@sinfoniasmithsquare.org.uk.

TIPS FOR VIDEO FOOTAGE

Please do not submit a professional, studio produced video. The most important thing is that your playing is well represented. If you are specially filming for your application, there are a few easy tips to consider when creating your footage which will help you to present yourself in the best possible way.

- Use a room with a good acoustic
- We recommend using a digital camera or phone camera
- Listen back with a good pair of headphones to check you are happy with the sound quality. It doesn't have to be of professional quality, but should allow the listener to easily and clearly hear your playing
- Use a tripod, or place your camera/phone on a flat surface, so your footage is stable
- Ensure that you can be seen in the frame, not so close that any of you is cropped out but not too far back either. We need to be able to clearly see that it is you playing

APPLICATION FORM

As demand for places is high, we regret that we cannot audition everyone who applies. We therefore strongly recommend that you take time to complete the application form in detail, giving the best possible representation of yourself. Your application form must be written in English. Everything we need is in the online application form, so please do not submit a CV in addition to this.

We encourage you to take your time thinking about and answering the first three written questions, as these will form an important part of your application along with your video footage. Required questions within the application form are marked with an *. Without information in these fields, you will not be able to submit your application. Beyond this, we recommend you complete as many questions as are relevant to you to give yourself the best possible chance.

You do not have to complete the application form in one session. Once you have created your account, you can save progress on your application and return to it later, up until the closing date. If you do plan to return to complete your form at a later date, make sure to save any progress before logging out.

In the 'Referees' section, please provide the details for two people who we may contact for their view of your accomplishments and potential as a musician. Please notify them that you are providing their details. The first should be your most recent teacher; the second may be someone who has employed you as a musician, such as an orchestra manager, fixer or promoter, or another teacher. For 'Role', please state what they do for a living.

RE-APPLYING

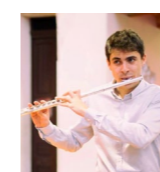
If you have applied in previous years, you are warmly welcome to apply again – many of our players achieve places after applying more than once – but please ensure you tell us in your form what new things you have done musically and how you have progressed since your last application.

If you applied last year, you can log back in to the system using the same email address and password - or follow the link to reset your password if required.

NOTIFICATION

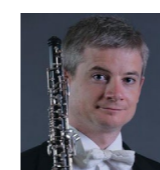
Once we have received your complete application, you should receive a confirmation by email within a few hours. You will then hear within a month of the closing date if we are able to invite you for an audition in April.

As all correspondence about applying to Sinfonia Smith Square is by email, it is worth you taking the time now to ensure emails from Sinfonia Smith Square – especially from the addresses auditions@sinfoniasmithsquare.org.uk and joshua@sinfoniasmithsquare.org.uk – are approved in your spam filter settings. We also recommend you regularly check your junk mail folder to ensure no emails from us accidentally end up there.



"Hard work and perseverance pay off! I didn't get a place in Sinfonia Smith Square first time, but when I reapplied it was absolutely worth the effort: Amazing orchestral projects from Baroque music to contemporary and jazz, collaborations with leading orchestras, tours, audition masterclasses, and performing in great concert halls in London and beyond."

PEDRO LOPEZ CAMPOS 2015
FREELANCE FLAUTIST



"I am deeply grateful to have been part of Sinfonia Smith Square. Not only did it bring about opportunities to play at wonderful venues and interact with leading professional players, it gave an insight into the very real life of becoming an orchestral musician."

MICHAEL WILSON 2004
PRINCIPAL OBOE, HONG KONG PHILHARMONIC



"During my time as a Fellow, I learned invaluable orchestral skills that I don't think I would've been able to pick up elsewhere. I was able to make mistakes and improve upon them in a setting that fostered growth and helped me to improve my musicianship. When my time with the Sinfonia finished, I felt newly courageous, and went straight into my first orchestral trial. Since then, I have continued to freelance in London and throughout the UK. I love my varied orchestral career, which I am able truly to enjoy through the confidence that I learned as a member of Sinfonia Smith Square."

CORINNA BOYLAN 2018
FREELANCE CELLIST

STAGE TWO: AUDITIONS

Once stage one applications have been shortlisted, selected applicants will be invited to attend a 15–20 minute audition in London. It is also sometimes possible to attend an audition in Australia or New Zealand pending availability. You will be able to let us know in your application form if you would be interested in attending your audition in a different location, and we will let you know if this is possible when we contact you with your audition notification.

If it is absolutely not possible for you to audition in person but you would still like to be considered, please contact auditions@sinfoniasmithsquare.org.uk giving details of your situation and where you are located, and we will let you know what alternative options might be available to you.

Auditions will take place in April 2026. If selected for audition, you will be notified individually of the date you are required to attend. We aim to make auditions a friendly and welcoming experience for all candidates. Each panel comprises several colleagues from Sinfonia Smith Square, plus a specialist player from the forefront of the music profession.

The audition will involve three parts:

- Set pieces as listed on the next page
- A selection of excerpts which you will be sent in advance
- A short piece of sight reading

On the day, you will have the chance to run through key passages of your repertoire very briefly with one of our accompanists before the audition, or you may bring your own accompanist.

You should know the whole 1st movement of your concerto and contrasting piece as the panel may ask you to play several passages. Please note you do not have to prepare the cadenza of your concerto movement unless you personally want to. We welcome and encourage you to consider a contrasting piece from a diverse range of composers.

Candidates will be notified of the outcome of auditions by the end of April, and select candidates will then be asked back to participate in a short interview (stage three).



INSTRUMENT	PIECES
Violin	1 st movement of a Mozart Concerto A contrasting accompanied piece
Viola	1 st movement of the Hoffmeister or Stamitz Concerto A contrasting accompanied piece
Cello	1 st movement of a Haydn Concerto A contrasting accompanied piece
Bass	1 st movement of a Classical Concerto A contrasting accompanied piece
Flute	1 st movement of a Mozart Concerto A contrasting accompanied piece
Oboe	1 st movement of the Mozart Concerto A contrasting accompanied piece
Clarinet	1 st movement of a Mozart Concerto A contrasting accompanied piece
Bassoon	1 st movement of a Mozart Concerto A contrasting accompanied piece
Horn	1 st movement of a Mozart Concerto A contrasting accompanied piece
Trumpet	1 st movement of the Haydn or Hummel Concerto A contrasting accompanied piece
Percussion	A piece of your choice for solo marimba

STAGE THREE: INTERVIEWS

Interviews take place in London in April/May 2026, though it is possible for the interview to be conducted via Zoom if you are not resident in the UK. The interview will be with several members of Sinfonia Smith Square's team.

At interview, we will want to hear more about your musical interests and aspirations, and what you would like to achieve in the year ahead. We would also like to hear your thoughts on classical music concerts and music education. It is also your opportunity to ask us questions and find out more about the Sinfonia Smith Square experience. Each interview lasts approximately 20 minutes.

Following interviews, candidates will be notified by the end of May whether they have been successful in attaining a place in Sinfonia Smith Square.



“Over the course of the year, I have seen a huge improvement in both my personal and professional development. I have learned so much from my experiences of playing in the orchestra, from my fantastic colleagues, the wonderful professional musicians we have worked side-by-side with, and also the staff through their guidance and mentorship.”

RACHAEL WATSON
FLUTE, 2024/25

TIPS FOR INTERVIEWS

- We aim to make interviews a friendly, positive experience so rest assured we won't be testing you on anything
- You don't require your instrument at this stage, but please bring your diary with you to interview as the panel will ask you about potential engagements for the following year
- Take the time to familiarise yourself with how Sinfonia Smith Square runs in advance of the interview; you can find lots of information on our website, including a Frequently Asked Questions page, follow us on social media, or talk to anyone you may know who has been in the orchestra previously.
- This is the ideal opportunity for you to ask the panel anything that is specific to your circumstances or not already answered by the website

FEEDBACK

Although we can only grant 34 places in the orchestra each year, we are keen to help others who have applied. As noted above, many of our players achieve places after applying more than once, so we want to give you the best possible chance to succeed in future years. Anyone attending auditions or interviews is welcome to request feedback on their progress so far and we will aim to give you some insightful and constructive thoughts that we hope will be of use.

If you would like feedback, please email auditions@sinfoniasmithsquare.org.uk with the following subject heading:

Feedback – Instrument – Forename Surname

Owing to the orchestra's commitments and because we want to take the time to send you helpful and focused thoughts, it can sometimes be a number of weeks before we can send you feedback, so thank you for your patience.

If you have any further queries about the programme or the audition process, please do not hesitate to contact us on auditions@sinfoniasmithsquare.org.uk. You are also welcome to call one of our team on +44 20 7222 1061 who will be very happy to provide advice.

APPLICATION TIMELINE

Friday 14 November 2025: Stage One: Applications open

Friday 30 January 2026, 12.00 GMT: Stage One: Applications close

Mid February – early March 2026: Notifications sent to inform applicants whether they have been invited to audition

Early - mid April 2026: Stage Two: Auditions followed by notifications to inform applicants whether they have been invited to an interview

Late April – early May 2026: Stage Three: Interviews

Mid-late May 2026: Notifications sent to inform applicants whether they have been successful in gaining a place

Early October 2026: 2026/27 Fellowship Programme begins



“As a member of Sinfonia Smith Square, you live the life of a working orchestral musician for a year. I found this invaluable, as when the call comes in to play with a professional orchestra, you don't feel thrown in at the deep end. You are already doing the job, and you know exactly what to expect.”

JAMES BURKE 2010

CO-PRINCIPAL CLARINET, BBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
PRINCIPAL, ACADEMY OF ST MARTIN IN THE FIELDS