

Candidate Information Booklet

National Symphony Orchestra Ireland
Principal 1 Clarinet

Application Deadline: Sunday, 12 July 2026
Auditions: 6 & 7 September 2026



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A Message from our CEO

Welcome to everyone who has an interest in joining us at the National Concert Hall. As Ireland's National Cultural Institution for music, our journey began in 1981 when the National Concert Hall was opened. Throughout those years we have undergone a number of transformations, continuing to build, diversify and broaden our offering and remit, and most recently becoming the permanent and proud home of our National Symphony Orchestra. If you are successful through this process, you will be joining us in continuing on this journey, driving the story of music in Ireland forward, and engaging with new and ever more diverse audiences.

We are an organisation full of passionate, ambitious and exceptional people who love all things music and what we collectively strive to be: *an inspiring, world-class music organisation, accessible to all, enriching people's lives and the cultural landscape of Ireland.*

That is a bold and ambitious aim, one that is guided by and dependent upon the excellence of the people who work here. The culture of our organisation is founded on four important values - **Respect, Integrity, Collaboration** and **Excellence**. These values, chosen collectively by everyone who works here, fuel our commitment to deliver for our audiences and achieve our customer promise. They give us the confidence to meet the high expectations that our audience has whenever and however they interact with us. Equally, as a publicly funded arts institution, excellence in public service is always front and foremost in our ambition.

Music captivates us all - it creates emotion and magic all at once. We know how special that can be and we welcome interest from anyone who believes they can contribute to creating that magic as part of the National Symphony Orchestra and our wider team at the National Concert Hall.

Good luck!

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Flegg', written in a cursive style.

Nigel Flegg, CEO

National Symphony Orchestra Ireland

National Symphony Orchestra Ireland (NSOI) is a keystone of Ireland's cultural and musical heritage. We are a leading force in Irish musical life through year-long programmes of live music which range from symphonic, choral and operatic to music from stage and screen, popular and traditional music as well as new commissions. The Orchestra can consistently be experienced through our broadcasts on RTÉ and internationally through the European Broadcasting Union.

NSOI is in an exciting phase of growth, development, and change. In 2022, the Orchestra transferred from RTÉ and is now under the remit of the National Concert Hall. We are proud to commission new works and promote and support Irish music as a cornerstone of our repertoire. Our innovative educational projects and development schemes for young musicians have expanded since the transfer to the NCH. The move has enabled the Orchestra to work with the NCH Learning and Participation team in delivering education projects, family concerts and community work. Founded in 1948 as the Raidió Éireann Symphony Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra was formerly known as the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra.

Alexander Shelley was appointed Principal Conductor for the orchestra commencing in September 2026. He has assumed the role of Principal Conductor Designate already and has delivered outstanding, dynamic performances across our main 2025/26 season and 2026 Spring/Summer season. As Principal Conductor, Alexander will feature prominently in NSOI's performance schedule and in contributing to its artistic planning. In his inaugural season, he will lead seven projects as part of the orchestra's main season taking place between September 2026 and May 2027.

NSOI works closely with National Symphony Chorus Ireland. Founded as the RTÉ Philharmonic Choir in 1985, the Chorus has gone from strength to strength, firmly establishing itself as Ireland's leading symphonic choral ensemble with a highly impressive repertoire. Following the transfer from RTÉ in January 2022, the Chorus, directed by David Young, is part of the National Concert Hall's family of choirs, with Cór Linn youth choir and Cór na nÓg children's choir. The Chorus prepares, performs and broadcasts at least six large-scale Orchestral choral works each season alongside NSOI, with internationally acclaimed conductors and soloists, in recordings and stand-alone concerts.

About the National Concert Hall

NSOI's home is at the National Concert Hall. The NCH is a focal point for music in Ireland. This is a place where music is experienced, celebrated and explored whether performing from our own traditions, new and old, or hosting the rhythms of the world.

The NCH, as we know it today, opened in September 1981 but the site has an association with music going back much further and has worn many different hats. It was built as a concert venue for the International Exhibition in Dublin in 1865 and continued to operate after the Guinness family bought the buildings in 1871.

It then became a university, firstly the Royal University of Ireland in 1883 and then University College Dublin (UCD) in 1909. Notable alumni of these universities include James Joyce, Éamon de Valera and Pádraig Pearse. The buildings also played an important part in Irish politics, with many students and faculty members participating in the Easter Rising, the War of Independence, and the Irish Civil War. Furthermore, the Great Hall was used as the temporary home of Dáil Éireann, where The Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1922 was ratified.

Our Future

In 2018, the Irish Government approved a significant investment which will see the National Concert Hall take its place among the world's greatest concert halls, providing a home to creators, educators and practitioners of every style and aspect of music, domestic or international, contemporary or traditional.

The NCH is currently planning for a major redevelopment of all facilities as part of the National Development Plan and Project Ireland 2040. The restoration and redevelopment of the Earlsfort Terrace site will be the largest redevelopment project ever undertaken in a National Cultural Institution in Ireland. Within the plans is the creation of a dedicated, state of the art space for the National Symphony Orchestra, including a rehearsal space, practice rooms, changing facilities, physio and well-being spaces, catering and green rooms. Work is likely to start onsite in 2026 and last three years. During this time, the Orchestra and Chorus will operate from an alternative Dublin base and focus on presenting concerts in various venues across the country.

Living & Working In Dublin

You and NSOI

Today, NSOI's home is the National Concert Hall in the heart of Dublin city centre. A planned redevelopment of the NCH complex will provide state of the art amenities and facilities. It will be a creative hub, with the energy, resources and supports needed to attract new talent from home and abroad, while giving Dublin its rightful place among the musical capitals of the world.

Life in Dublin

Perhaps you've been to Dublin or thought of visiting. Maybe you already live here? Dublin is a unique city with an atmosphere of its own. Big enough to be a world capital, yet small enough for you to bump into the same person twice in the same week. The National Concert Hall's location is second to none with St Stephen's Green less than a hundred meters away in one direction and the tree-lined banks of the Grand Canal just up the road

in the opposite direction. Transport to-and-from anywhere is plentiful, with the Luas light rail close by and a choice of buses in all directions.

Dublin offers a dynamic blend of culture and innovation. Nestled between scenic landscapes and a bustling urban environment, Dublin is a truly global city with a unique and rich culture. As a modern and forward-thinking city, Dublin is home to numerous prominent multinational corporations, including eight of the top ten financial services companies and the top five global software companies in the world. Ireland has had the fastest growth in GDP in Europe since 2017 and is the fourth most competitive economy in the EU.

Work-life Balance

As a member of NSOI, you aren't just a resident of the city, you're part of its heartbeat. The National Concert Hall stands alongside Dublin's other great cultural institutions: The National Gallery, The National Library, The National Museum, and The Natural History Museum, as well as Trinity College, and many more artistic, cultural and historic sites around the city. Dublin is a city that's confident enough to speak its mind, passionate enough to value its artists and open-minded enough to value all music – from Haydn to Hip Hop.

It's a great place to be.

Our Employee Benefits

We are pleased to be able to offer a number of benefits to our employees, some of which are outlined below.

Government Funded Organisation

In recognition of the importance of music in Ireland; the NCH is a publicly funded organisation, meaning that NSOI musicians are public sector employees. Public sector employment offers a host of benefits including job security, salary increments¹, membership of the public sector pension scheme, generous policies related to work-life balance and wellbeing and the opportunity to contribute to Irish culture.

Pensions

The successful candidate will be offered the appropriate superannuation terms and conditions as prevailing in the National Concert Hall at the time of being offered an appointment. In general, and except for candidates who have worked in a pensionable (non-single scheme terms) public service job in the 26 weeks prior to appointment, this means being offered appointment based on membership of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme ("Single Scheme").

¹ *In accordance with Government pay policy.

Long Service Awards

We take pride in maintaining a low rate of employee turnover, with many of our musicians joining at the early stages of their career and staying until retirement. In recognition of our employee's loyalty, we express our gratitude by presenting long-service awards at a number of career milestones.

Wellbeing

We value our employees' wellbeing and want to make sure it is cared for. From workplace considerations as standard as regular audiology appointments to a monthly book club meeting, or weekly yoga classes in the Concert Hall, we aim to ensure there is a good mix of resources and outlets for teams to build strong working relationships in a safe and caring environment. The SCENE team has a focus on wellbeing for all staff, and organises fun treats for employees, an annual exercise challenge to keep you moving and raise money for charity, as well as plenty of other activities throughout the year.

Family Friendly Policies

Recognising the importance of maintaining a healthy balance between professional and personal commitments, we have implemented various systems and policies to ensure that employees feel adequately supported.

With a typical start time of 10am, rehearsals allow for a more flexible morning routine, allowing you to fit in the school run or complete your daily exercise before the workday has begun.

We understand that life isn't all about work and that you'll have various responsibilities to juggle as you go through life. Our Maternity, Paternity, Adoption Leave, Parental Leave, and Flexible Working policies, help to facilitate a healthy balance between work and life commitments while enhancing wellbeing and ultimately reducing absences and stress.

Holidays

A general annual leave entitlement of 24 days. This is planned in conjunction with Orchestra Management Team.

Induction

All employees will receive a comprehensive induction upon joining which will ensure a smooth integration into the work environment, promoting a positive start to their employment. This will include information and guidance on living and working in Dublin.

The Position

Title of position:	Principal 1 Clarinet, Sitting No 2 with E flat liability.
Tenure:	Permanent, full-time
Reporting to:	Orchestra Manager
Location:	National Concert Hall, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin, D02 N527, Ireland

Job Description

NSOI is seeking to appoint a Principal 1 Clarinet. The successful candidate will sit **No. 2 Clarinet with NSOI, doubling E flat, and will have a liability to step up to lead the section on a first call basis.** The successful candidate will provide the highest standard of orchestral playing and work in accordance with NSOI policy. Candidates should have significant orchestral experience and show evidence of excellence in performance to a high professional standard. The ideal candidate will be an exceptional player and demonstrate commitment to delivering a very high standard of work. NSOI will also consider candidates who are in the early stages of their career and can demonstrate potential to fulfil the role as required.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

The successful candidate will:

ESSENTIAL

- Demonstrate exceptional orchestral and solo playing abilities.
- Contribute to performances that will meet the highest artistic standards.
- Demonstrate respect for others by being fully prepared and ready to play at the start of every session.
- Demonstrate the ability to maintain composure when working under pressure.
- Have a high level of musical training, including relevant third level qualifications.

DESIRABLE

- Have expertise in a broad range of musical & performance activities including chamber music, education and studio work.
- Have experience of performing in equivalent roles in professional orchestras.

PERSONAL SKILLS

The successful candidate will be:

- An effective communicator with excellent organisational skills.
- Self-motivated, working under pressure with integrity.
- Able to work collaboratively and respectfully as part of a team.
- Willing to develop positive working relationships with other members of the orchestra and the management team.

Conditions of Service

General

This role is offered as a **full-time, permanent position**.

The appointment is subject to the Civil Service Regulation Acts, 1956 to 1996, the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act 2004 and any other Act for the time being in force relating to the civil service. The appointee will be subject to the National Concert Hall's policies in respect of Code of Standards and Behaviour.

Salary and Pay Arrangements

The Principal 1 salary scale applies (rates effective from 1 June 2026) as follows:

€54,727 - €55,950 - €57,180 - €58,418 - €59,619 - €60,443 - €61,682 - €62,928 - €64,480 - €66,082

Subject to satisfactory performance, increments may be payable in line with current Government Policy.

Please note: As part of this Policy, Public Service Agreements have been agreed that cover pay increases up to 2026. Further details on how this will be rolled out can be found [here](#).

Starting Salary for full time role: The appointment will be at the 1st point on the NSOI Principal 1 scale (as at **1 June 2026**) - **€54,727** per annum before deductions. The rate of remuneration may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government pay policy.

Probation

The appointment will be a **permanent, full-time position** and shall be subject to a probationary period of 9 months at which time an assessment of performance would be carried out by Human Resources. The appointment may be terminated at any time by either side in accordance with the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Acts, 1973 and 1991.

Location

The place of work will be at the National Concert Hall, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin. The National Concert Hall reserves the right, at its discretion, to change this location to any other place within Ireland.

Hours of Attendance

The hours of attendance will be such as may be fixed from time to time by Orchestra Management in accordance with applicable legislation. You will be liable to rehearse or perform for any aggregate number of hours not exceeding net hours 120 per 4 weekly period and subject to a maximum of 33 in any one week. The weekly attendance may be spread over the 7 days of the week. No additional payment will be made for any attendance given on Sundays, public holidays or Christmas Day within the maximum specified. The term "attendance" shall be held to include all performances and rehearsals which the Orchestra Management may deem necessary.

In cases of performances away from base (within Ireland), there will be flexibility with regard to hours in respect of any week involving regional performance or performances i.e. not more than total of 40 hours per week, with pro rata deduction from the 4 week total of 120 hours or time off in lieu (TOIL).

The successful candidate will agree to co-operate in assisting the National Concert Hall to maintain accurate records of your working hours for the purpose of Section 25 of the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997.

Annual Leave

You shall be given annual leave with full pay for a period equivalent to twenty four days per annum. Leave is customarily arranged in one single block, during the summer months.

The Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997

The terms of the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 will apply, where appropriate, to this appointment. Further information on the conditions of employment will be outlined in the contract of employment for the successful candidate.

Other Conditions of Employment

The above represents the principal conditions of service and is not intended to be the comprehensive list of all terms and conditions of employment which will be set out in the employment contract to be agreed with the appointee.

Application Process and How to Apply

Stage 1: Application

Complete the online application on Musical Chairs by **12th July 2026**.

No applications will be accepted after the above stated closing date.

If you have any issues applying on Musical Chairs, please contact our HR team on hr@nch.ie

Stage 2: Shortlisting

We will screen applications against the competencies for the position and invite all shortlisted candidates to attend an in-person audition at Stage 3.

Stage 3: Audition (Live, in-person)

If you are shortlisted at Stage 2, you will receive an invitation via Musical Chairs to attend an audition in person. You will be sent a list of repertoire requirements (excerpt pack and set works) to prepare in advance of audition. Candidates will be given no less than 6 weeks to prepare accordingly. Sight reading may also be required as part of your audition.

Stage 4: Trial

Successful candidates at audition will be invited to trial with the NSO.

The initial trial duration will be two weeks, candidates may be offered further trial periods as appropriate.

At each stage of the trial process, the duration and nature of the work will be, as much as can reasonably be arranged, consistent & equitable to all candidates.

The trial may include any of the following key aspects subject to the schedule, including rehearsals and performances for:

- Subscription Season concerts
- Summer season lunchtime or evening concerts
- Learning & Participation Orchestral Concerts

We know this can sometimes be a daunting experience, so you will be provided with support by a member of our Orchestra Management Team as required during your trial. This point of contact will be independent of the trial process.

Stage 5: Permanent Contract

If you are successful following completion of the trial, you will be offered a permanent position with the NSO with a probation period of at least 9 months.

Eligibility to Compete

The National Concert Hall welcomes applications for Orchestral vacancies from all candidates.

Please note: The National Concert Hall will provide support to applicants from outside the EEA who are successful in recruitment competitions for positions with National Symphony Orchestra Ireland. Candidates are required to arrange their own travel visa to attend audition. If successful at audition, the NCH will then support the application of an Irish employment permit. If you have any questions regarding your eligibility to work in Ireland, please contact a member of our HR team at hr@nch.ie

General Information

Pre-employment Checks

Please note that any offer of employment made to a successful candidate will be subject to the following:

- Satisfactory reference verification
- Pre-employment medical and audio test

Confidentiality

Subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2014, applications will be treated in strictest confidence. Candidate confidentiality will be respected at all stages of the recruitment process. Applicants should however note that all application material will be made available to those with direct responsibility for the recruitment process within the National Concert Hall.

Please note information provided by you as part of your application may be used as part of our diversity, equality and inclusion metrics in relation to this campaign.

Legal Compliance

The National Concert Hall are committed to complying with all relevant legislation over the course of this recruitment campaign, including the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015, the Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018, the Data Protection Acts 1988 - 2018, and the Freedom of Information Acts, 1997, 2003 and 2014.

GDPR Compliance

The National Concert Hall collects, processes and stores personal data, as provided by applicants when applying for the role available. The data provided by applicants is collected, recorded, stored, retained and destroyed in compliance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 - 2018.

Expenses

The National Concert Hall will not be responsible for any expense, including travelling expenses, candidates may incur in connection with any aspect of their application, audition or probation. However, candidates who are placed on trial will receive the appropriate expenses for the duration of their trial period.