

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY GROUPS

2025-26 Season



BMT 
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BUCKINGHAMSHIRE MUSIC TRUST

WELCOME TO THE NEW SEASON



The Buckinghamshire County Groups exist to provide access to high level repertoire working with the best young musicians in the county, our programmes will also include some partnership and masterclass opportunities with established professional musicians.

We recognise that at this level, many young people are pursuing music seriously and so the schedules for these groups are designed such that you can participate in more than one group should you wish.

All groups are open to any young person up to the age of 22 of the required standard. Applications are considered for anyone currently or previously resident or at school in Buckinghamshire and from any adjacent area where similar provision is not available. We are also happy to welcome university students who wish to return to Bucks to take part.

The 2025-26 programme will include a 5 day overseas tour from Saturday 18th to Wednesday 22nd July with an end of season concert on 23rd July 2026.

The Buckinghamshire County Groups perform at major venues and festivals in the UK and Europe, including Sinfonia Smith Square in 2025. They have previously toured in Spain, Belgium, Jersey, Prague, Budapest and Iceland.

Buckinghamshire County Youth Orchestra (BCYO)

Musical Director: Tom Horn | Manager: Carolyn Sewell

Comprising the county's finest young orchestral musicians, BCYO has earned a reputation for exciting, high quality performances. Each season, the ensemble tackle challenging orchestral repertoire with performance opportunities not only in Bucks, but also at prestigious venues in the UK and abroad. Under the expert guidance of conductor Tom Horn, members are also supported by professional tutors who will challenge them to achieve their highest standards in playing. In the coming season, the orchestra will undertake a tour to Northern Spain.



Tom Horn developed his passion while studying Music with Acoustics at Southampton University. He trained with notable conductors like Peter Stark, Peter Ash, Toby Purser, and Robin Browning. Tom has worked with various Youth and Amateur Orchestras in the South of England, collaborating with renowned musicians including Nicola Benedetti, David Owen Norris, and Sir Mark Elder. Currently, he serves as the Musical Director for multiple ensembles, including the Buckinghamshire County Youth Orchestra, Pelly Concert Orchestra, Marlow Orchestra, Aylesbury and Slough Youth Orchestras. Additionally, he is involved with the Haslemere Music Society and founded the Charity Symphony Orchestra.

Buckinghamshire Youth Wind Ensemble (BYWE)

Musical Director: Ed Hodgson | Manager: Fay Hayhurst

The high levels of musicianship in this ensemble means that it produces performances of exceptional quality, playing repertoire designed to challenge each player and provide them with a unique chamber ensemble experience.



Ed Hodgson studied the french horn and conducting at the Guildhall School of Music and then followed it with a postgraduate course at the Royal Academy of Music. Since then he has enjoyed a varied musical career performing with orchestras including the BBC Concert Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Istanbul Philharmonic, Cyprus Symphony Orchestra and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. His West End experience includes playing in shows such as Oliver!, Wicked, Les Miserables, Gypsy, Miss Saigon, Kiss Me Kate and Warhorse and has been a conductor on Mack and Mabel with Michael Ball, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, Sinatra, Mary Poppins UK tours and has conducted the BBC National Orchestra of Wales brass ensemble for their series of recordings during lockdown. He can be heard playing on the soundtrack to Doctor Who, Hidden Kingdom, Atlantis and Crimewatch!

Bucks County Youth Choir (BCYC)

Musical Director: Edwin Pitt Mansfield | Manager: Karen Wallace

BCYC is an auditioned choir for experienced young singers and musicians who enjoy learning and performing a variety of music to a high standard. It is a county-wide ensemble performing mixed, choral repertoire in a friendly and supportive environment whilst building key choral singing skills. The 2024/25 season will feature an eclectic range of music, ranging from Baroque to Contemporary in genre and spanning different languages.



Edwin Pitt Mansfield Edwin is an educator, performer and musical director based in London. As a baritone, he has sung for opera companies, choirs and choruses throughout the UK and France. Edwin has established a reputation as a leading teacher of young voices and gifted teenagers. He is a member of the vocal faculty at Tring Park School for the Performing Arts and deputy vocal teacher at the Royal College of Music's Junior Department having previously taught at The Royal Ballet School and Stowe School. He is an examiner for Trinity College London and Chair of the Association of Teachers of Singing (2022 - 2024). As an educator he leads workshops, teacher training days, presents at conferences throughout the UK on the topic of male voice change and is a regular contributor to the UK magazine Music Teacher. Edwin is Musical Director of the Buckinghamshire County Youth Choir and Aylesbury Consort of Voices.

Bucks Youth Jazz Collective (BYJC)

Musical Director: Ralph Wyld | Manager: Fay Hayhurst

The central ethos of this new and exciting group is improvisation, with the majority of time spent working in small groups on interaction, listening and leadership and will include opportunities to work with established players. In addition to preparing for performances, there is a strong emphasis on process, ensuring our young jazz musicians have the skills to play in and lead jazz ensembles, and preparing them for further studies.



Award-winning vibraphonist and composer **Ralph Wyld** is making his name playing original, contemporary music with artists such as Yazz Ahmed and Stan Sulzmann. He has performed at venues and festivals across five continents, and released an album on Edition Records described as an "outstanding debut" by MOJO magazine. As well as directing BYJC, Ralph is a tutor for the National Youth Jazz Orchestra, and is a Licentiate of the Royal Academy of Music in jazz education.

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 2025-26

BCYO	BYJC	BCYC	BYWE
6 Sep			
25 Oct	26 Oct	12 Oct	
			2 Nov
20-21 Dec	22-23 Dec		
		4 Jan	2-3 Jan
14 Feb	21-22 Feb	8 Feb	
		29-30 March	31 March
10 April Evening Rehearsal	12 April	6-7 April	1 April
11 April Rehearsal & Concert			2 April Rehearsal & Concert
		21 June	

Overseas tour 18th - 22nd July with end of season concert on 23rd July 2026.

The dates above are firm and must be fully committed to. As most members are in their upper school years, the summer term schedules ensure that they do not interfere with exam preparation.

Locations and timings, including specific details for all full-day rehearsals, will be provided to all members at the start of the season.

Members should be aware that other performance and masterclass opportunities may arise during the year and we will give as much notice as possible for these.

HOW TO APPLY

All prospective and existing applicants must complete an application form.

Applications for all groups close on Monday 7th July 2025.

BCYO & BYWE

Open to players at Grade 6 level or above on their instrument. We will always consider applications from students working towards Grade 6 with the support and recommendation of their teacher and then assess their suitability at audition.

BCYC

Open to any singer who is Grade 6 and above. We will always consider applications from students working towards Grade 6 with the support and recommendation of their teacher. We welcome and encourage applications from instrumentalists who have an interest in singing and wish to sing in a high level choir.

BYJC

Open to players of any instrument with some experience and a passion for jazz and improvisation. They should be of a standard to play in a senior band or orchestra and most importantly be passionate about improving their skills and challenging themselves to improve.

Apply online www.bucksmusic.org/county



AUDITIONS

All new applicants will be required to audition. These will be held in person in July – see dates below. You will be required to play a short piece (accompaniment not required) and do some sight reading. If you are applying for two groups as an instrumentalist we will try to facilitate one audition for all of your applications (excluding BYJC). If we are oversubscribed in a particular section we reserve the right to re-audition existing members (after auditioning new applicants) to ensure a balanced section. This audition would ideally be in person but could be via Zoom or video entry. If, by the start of the season, there are still spaces in a section we will consider late applications.

Applications close on Monday 7th July 2025.

All applicants must be under 22 years old on 1st September 2025.

Audition Dates:

BCYC 12th July

BYJC 13th July

BYWE 13th and 15th July

BCYO 12th July 1pm Strings

BCYO 13th July Brass & Wind

BCYO 15th July Strings, Wind & Brass

Membership Fees:

1 group £790

2 or more groups £850

Fees include all elements of the programme, including the full cost of the tour.

Subsidies are available for students eligible for FSM or on low incomes (50%) and siblings (20%).

Payment plans can be arranged to spread the cost across the year.

Access to all senior county groups is driven by ability and opportunity. We want all eligible and committed young musicians to be able to take part. If the cost presents a challenge, please contact the Director of Music at BMT for a confidential discussion via director@bucksmusic.org



For more information:

Fay Hayhurst

fhayhurst@bucksmusic.org

www.bucksmusic.org/county

