RPS JULIUS ISSERLIS SCHOLARSHIP
APPLICATION GUIDELINES 2025

Musicians often benefit from the experience of studying in a different country, drawing from a change of settings and fresh expertise. The Royal Philharmonic Society is pleased to offer young musicians resident in the UK a life-changing opportunity to study abroad, be it to take lessons from a specialist based overseas or to fulfil a course at an international music school or university. This is possible thanks to the RPS Julius Isserlis Scholarship which was generously bequeathed by Cecilia Helen Northcote to us some decades ago, and at her wish is dedicated to the inspirational Russian pianist, composer and teacher Julius Isserlis.

The Scholarship has helped countless musicians in many different ways over the years. Percussionist Rebecca Burch travelled to Ghana to collaborate with local musicians and learn indigenous repertoire, and trumpeter Imogen Whitehead flew to Oslo for an intensive spell of lessons and masterclasses with Norway's top players. Clarinettist Mebrakh Haughton-Johnson has undertaken postgraduate study at The Juilliard School in New York City, USA, and violist Hiroki Kasai is has taken lessons with the renowned musician Noboku Imai at the Escuela Superior de Musica Reina Sofia in Madrid.

We hope the prospect of such funding encourages you to think imaginatively about what musical development you could pursue overseas. Funds granted can only be given for plans agreed with the RPS, but we appreciate that in these circumstances some modification to these may prove necessary as things progress. We don't want current circumstances to deter you from applying and encourage you to contact us should you have any queries or issues regarding this.

The following Application Guidelines are a step-by-step guide to submitting an application and all that follows. Please read them carefully before applying, and continue to consult them throughout the process.

If do you have any queries, you can contact our Administrator Emily Porter at emily@philharmonicsociety.uk or call us 020 7287 0019.

KEY QUESTIONS

What does the RPS offer? This year, we expect to offer a total of £30,000 from the RPS Julius Isserlis Scholarship to young instrumentalists and vocalists to study abroad for up to two years. This will be split between a number of musicians, as decided by the selection panel. Typical grants can range from as little as £500 up to £10,000. In the budget part of your application, you will be asked to tell us how much you may ideally like from the RPS. Given our panel aims to support several applicants each year, some they are able to offer the full amount requested, and some a contribution towards this.

Who is it open to? All classical instrumentalists and vocalists of any nationality between the ages of 15 and 25, who are permanently resident in the UK. In the application form, you will be asked to confirm your age as it will be on the closing date (see below). This fund is for musicians resident in the UK wishing to study overseas. We are unable to accept applications to fund study within the UK.

What does it cost? There is no entry fee so it is free for eligible candidates to apply. If you are shortlisted for audition in London, you would need to cover your own travel expenses and the cost of an accompanist should you need one.

When is the closing date? The closing date is **11am on Tuesday 11 March 2025**. We regret we cannot consider any applications received after that time.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications should be submitted via the form on the RPS website.

In the application form you will be asked to submit some basic information about you. Here, you will also be asked to provide your fixed residential address in the UK. If you are currently a student living away from home in higher education, this should be the address of your family home.

You will next be asked to tell us a little about your musical background then provide an outline of your proposed intentions for travel and study abroad, illustrating why you believe it will be of vital worth to you at this stage. We ask you to provide as much clear detail as you can about your plans at this stage, including place of study and likely teachers, as well as likely dates. On this front, we anticipate your intended planned activity to have begun no later than two years after the closing date for applications. Where your planned activity includes multiple trips abroad (such as a series of lessons with a particular teacher) we encourage you to consider the sustainability of your travel plans in your application to reduce impact on the environment. Please note that we are not able to fund overseas study that has already begun at the time of application.

Across a range of our activities at the Royal Philharmonic Society, we invite participants and applicants aged 18 and over to complete some standard inclusivity monitoring questions, from a link that will be visible onscreen once you submit your

application. The answers you give are confidential and will be reviewed separately from your application. Thank you for taking a moment to do this, which is so helpful to us all collectively in classical music.

We also ask you to complete our simple budget template (which you can **download here**) outlining likely **costs** of study, accommodation, travel, subsistence and other such things, and any **funds** such as savings, grants, income or other financial means you may have or hope to draw upon to help fulfil your plans. Here you will also be asked to tell us how much you would ideally like from the RPS. Once complete, you should upload your budget to our online application form. Then there is also space in the form to share anything further about your financial situation not included in your budget. Here you should also account, if the costs in your budget are considerably more than the funds listed, how you hope to address the difference.

You will be asked to provide the name and email address of a referee (such as your teacher) who can write a short reference, stating how they know you and why they believe you deserve this support for your plans. You will need ask them to send this by email to admin@philharmonicsociety.uk to arrive no later than the closing date. In the subject heading of the email, they should simply write 'Isserlis reference for' followed by your name. It is your responsibility to ensure this reference is sent to us by the closing date. We can only consider applications for which we have a submitted reference by the closing date.

Lastly, you will need to supply some recent footage of yourself which demonstrates a versatile, varied and strong musical character, complying with the requirements below:

1. We would like to see you play two pieces by contrasting composers: these can be complete works or complete movements of works.
2. These should be solo pieces and – with the exception of harp, percussion or piano applicants – at least one of these pieces should feature piano/keyboard accompaniment. Please only submit unaccompanied footage if the piece was written to be performed as such.
3. These should be filmed 'live', with or without an audience, using either one or more cameras, but not edited together from multiple performances.
4. The two pieces can be submitted within the same film or as separate films. If you do not commence playing at the very start of either film, you must provide the time in minutes and seconds at which you do start playing each piece.
5. Filming must have occurred since September 2023 (you are asked to supply the date of filming in the application form).
6. Films should be submitted as links (public or unlisted) to YouTube, Vimeo or equivalent platforms. We regret we cannot accept footage in any other format. You may send links to films that are privately listed online if you prefer, but please ensure to include any passwords with your links in the application form.

The closing date for submission is **11am on Tuesday 11 March 2025.**

We are committed to working with colleagues sector-wide to ensure we are representing excellence, creativity and innovation in music-making within a diverse, multicultural society. We are continually striving to address how we can minimise barriers to the widest possible range of applicants and are proud to have adopted Sound and Music's Fair Access Principles. We particularly welcome applications from under-represented demographics, such as those who are Black, Asian and ethnically diverse, those who are working class, and those who are disabled. If you sense that anything in these guidelines could deter you or another eligible candidate from applying, or if there's anything you'd like to talk to us about, please do get in touch using the contact details below. We would be happy to hear from you.

NEXT STEPS

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend a live audition in London which will take place on **Thursday 24 April 2025**. If you are applying, we recommend you pencil the audition date in your diary now, as we will not have scope to offer alternative dates. We aim to notify you during the week commencing **Monday 17 March 2025** if you have been selected for audition.

Here you will meet a small, friendly panel comprising distinguished figures from the music profession.

Your audition will last approximately 20 minutes. In this, the panel will look forward to hearing you perform and will also take the time to have a short chat with you about your plans.

Though naturally we will not have time to hear it all, we ask you to prepare three pieces which clearly reflect your musical strengths, personality and interests, and cover a range of genres and styles. On the day, the panel will likely ask to hear an extract from each and possibly - if you are presenting a work with multiple movements - contrasting passages from the same piece.

Repertoire submitted in your application can be included in your final audition, but we also relish the chance to hear you perform other pieces too.

Soloists will need to bring their own accompanist to the audition.

We aim to let auditionees know the outcome within a few days following the audition.

FEEDBACK

As noted, we can only shortlist a number of applications for audition, and then only offer scholarships to a couple of successful candidates. There is considerable competition for this, so please do not be too disappointed if your application is unsuccessful. We endeavour to provide brief feedback to applicants but owing to

various commitments for our small team, it can sometimes be several weeks before we can send this. Thank you for your patience.

SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

Payment of the grant will be made into your UK bank account, in two or more instalments. The RPS asks for a short written update on your progress before approving each instalment.

As a beneficiary of the Royal Philharmonic Society, we ask that you reference the Scholarship in your biography and represent the Society whilst undertaking your funded activities. At some stage, we may ask you to help us tell our RPS Members about how we are supporting you, most likely in the form of a written or filmed blog accounting your progress that we can share online. We may also ask you to play and speak at an RPS event for our Members and supporters in return for the grant we have given you.

If you have any further queries not addressed in these guidelines, you can contact our Administrator Emily Porter at emily@philharmonicsociety.uk or call us on 020 7287 0019.