

NYO String Ensemble Residency – An Unforgettable Experience

During the spring mid-term break, I took part in a three-day String Ensemble Residency with the National Youth Orchestra (NYO) from February 15 to 17. It was my first time away from home on my own, and while I was initially nervous about sharing a room with unknown musicians, I ended up with a single room—an unexpected bonus!

The journey began with a three-hour coach ride from Nottingham to Blackpool, where I quickly bonded with other musicians. The atmosphere was electric, and everyone shared a similar passion for music. It was amazing how we all connected so easily—just name a piece, and suddenly, everyone was humming along!

Each day was packed with over nine hours of music. After breakfast, we would head to the school for physical and musical warm-ups with the brass section, followed by sectional rehearsals. After lunch, we would rehearse tutti and return for more sectional work in the evening, wrapping up with a warm-down with the brass before heading back to the hotel. It was intense but incredibly rewarding.

On the final day, we performed a selection of pieces: *Sinfonia No. 10 in B minor* by Mendelssohn, *Libertango* by Piazzolla, and *Cringlemire Garden* by Ruth Gipps. The performance was the culmination of all our hard work, and standing on stage surrounded by such talented musicians was a powerful moment of pride.

Looking back, this residency was a transformative experience. I was inspired not only by the talent and determination of the musicians around me but also by the camaraderie and support we all shared. It reminded me of the power of music to bring people together. I left the residency feeling more motivated than ever to continue my musical journey.

If you ever get the chance to be part of a program like this, I wholeheartedly recommend it. It's an experience that will push you to grow, connect with others, and discover new depths to your love for music.

Sophie, Year 9