



Frequently Asked Questions 2013-14

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1 Q: What is Notts NYJO?

A: Notts NYJO exists to enable young, talented local musicians, of school or secondary college age, to develop their shared interest, skill & enjoyment in playing & performing jazz. With an emphasis on live performance, NYJO players develop lots of practical life skills too, such as time management and presentation, in addition to honing their craft of jazz musicianship through playing alongside other gifted players.

NYJO players develop their performance abilities, including improvisation, in weekly sessions and through gigs. NYJO is a friendly and well-focused group where the ethos is on supporting each other. The high quality of NYJO's musical entertainment and the band's enthusiasm at gigs has been noted, for instance by judges at national competitions as well as audiences entertained by NYJO.



NYJO's patron is Nottingham-born world-class professional Jazz musician [Tony Kofi](#), seen in this photo with members of the NYJO Combo at a JazzSteps gig in Nottingham.

NYJO Sponsors include [Clement Pianos](#) who provided NYJO's keyboard and contributed to the NYJO shirts that are worn at performances.

2 Q: Where can I keep up-to-date about NYJO?

A: The NYJO website at www.nottsnjjo.co.uk is the 'public' face of NYJO. You will find details about forthcoming NYJO gigs and times for rehearsals in the '[About NYJO>Rehearsals](#)' link on the Home page. [Download some documents](#) such as the NYJO Welcome Pack Docs from the NYJO website. Some recordings of NYJO are on **You Tube** - search for 'NottsNYJO' or similar wording. Notts NYJO is also on **Facebook** and your contributions are welcome.

3 Q: Where & when does NYJO rehearse?

A: All weekly rehearsals are based at the Becket School on Tuesdays. (The Becket Way, Wilford Lane, West Bridgford, NG2 7QY) The NYJO2 Band (the 'intermediate' Big Band) rehearse from 5:00 to 6:30; NYJO Combo from 6:30 to 7:30 pm and the

NYJO Big Band rehearse from 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm.. Rehearsals are in the Music Block.

4 Q: What's the minimum standard for players?

A: NYJO runs 3 bands and each requires different minimum levels of playing ability. The intermediate NYJO2 band has players from around Grade 3/4; NYJO1 (the Big Band) players are at approximately Grade 5/6 or above and should expect to be reasonable readers of music. Players in the 8-piece (or-so) NYJO Combo come from the Big Band with an interest in developing their improvisation skills.

Whatever your skill level, if you are interested in playing jazz (and of school/secondary college age), just make contact with us via the website and we will discuss your interest. We can easily arrange for you to come along to a rehearsal so you can get a feel for a NYJO band before you decide further. To help us 'place' players in bands we have auditions as and when required (see 'Auditions' FAQ below). Don't hesitate to contact us to find out more or to arrange to come along.

5 Q: How Can I start with NYJO & do they hold auditions?

A: Apply to join NYJO using the Contact page on our website. We contact you back and often suggest you bring your instrument along and sit in on a rehearsal. It's an easy way of getting a feel for NYJO and, during this session, you can chat with the tutor. If you decide to join NYJO, there may be an audition that comprises playing a piece of music of your choice, playing a piece that is given to you and having an informal chat about your interests in playing jazz.

This will give you, and us, a good idea of the best starting place in NYJO bands. We do have auditions and they are short and informal sessions with NYJO tutors and happen during the year as required.

We use them partly to help NYJO tutors to assess which would be the most suitable band for each player to join. In practice, many new players start by joining a NYJO rehearsal to

Also, an annual audition session in early summer can include existing players as part of continuing assessments and feedback. Please contact us via

our website and we can arrange for you to come along to sample a rehearsal ahead of any audition.

6 Q: What is the Subscription to NYJO and what are fees used for?

A: The 2013-14 annual standard rate for NYJO membership is £230, payable in advance. There is a pro rata amount if you join part-way through a year based on the fraction of rehearsals remaining in the year. See FAQ item 7 for details of reduced fees. The NYJO membership includes a package of professional input, with opportunities to play jazz styles in a group, to develop skills in improvisation, to play public gigs and, when available, to make recordings in a professional recording studio, to join special workshops, enter competitions and go on tour. NYJO provides a context to develop their skills in giving accomplished public performances which involves stage presence, presentation and time management skills as well as their musical abilities.

Your subscriptions for NYJO contribute towards rehearsal rooms, tutor fees, music scores and a range of NYJO equipment such as drums, microphones and amps used for gigs. Sponsors Clement Pianos - www.clementpianos.com – kindly donated a Casio Previa stage piano as well as purchase of branded polo shirts and hoodies. Other sponsorship has been for transport (Newark Motor Auctions) to Edinburgh and music pads loaned from the Henley Farrell Big Band.



Any funds earned from NYJO engagements (after expenses are deducted) are ploughed back into improving resources for NYJO players. To help subsidise players' costs to go on tour, such as to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in August, players are invited to help with fundraising, such as by busking.

NYJO is an independent not-for-profit organisation (we are a registered charity as part of NYO, see below), and income is necessary to cover such costs. NYO and NYJO want to support young people in their musical development.

7 Q: Can we get a reduction on the standard rate?

A: A reduction of 20% on standard fees for NYJO is available if a player is already a member of the NYO or if a family has more than one player in NYJO/NYO. Please provide the relevant details about this when you complete the subscription form. Also, bursaries may be available to families on relatively low incomes. For details on these matters, or any questions relating to NYJO subscriptions, please contact pauladjwatt@gmail.com or email via 'Contact Us' on the NYJO webpage.

8 Q: Do NYJO bands perform Concerts and Gigs?

A: Yes - public performance is very important to NYJO. These engagements are varied and include corporate and social entertaining (conferences, weddings, birthdays, carnivals etc), gigs (e.g. with the NYO at the Royal Concert Hall), busking and tours to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. These live performing opportunities in front of public audiences are a vital part of NYJO players' musical advancement and help build the reputation of NYJO as a leading national youth jazz band.

Plans are that NYJO bands perform twice a year for family and friends. The prestigious Lakeside Towers venue near Arnold has been used on many occasions - usually for an indoors Winter Concert (early in the New Year) and an Open Air Summer Jazz Evening.



Photo: NYJO2 band perform at the Royal Concert Hall Foyer

NYJO bands have numerous other opportunities to entertain audiences throughout the year. For instance, in 2013-14 NYJO 1 and NYJO2 will perform at the Royal Concert Hall 1 March 1014), NYJO1 and Combo will play at three libraries and NYJO Combo

will entertain at the Nottingham International Jazz Piano Competition in early October 2014. Check out the NYJO gigs on the website. NYJO has toured for 4 successive at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival (approx one week early August) and enjoy both playing gigs and visiting other Fringe performances in this vibrant International Festival. NYJO bands take bookings and get invitations to perform gigs for private functions and charity events. For example, when Royalty visited Nottingham as part of the Queen's Jubilee Celebrations, NYJO played on stage at Vernon Park.

At a National Competition in 2010, judges said ***"This is a very fine band indeed, displaying not only excellent ensemble playing but fine solos too"***.

NYJO has received widespread praise for its enthusiasm and professional approach when performing in public. Following a gig, the organiser emailed to say *"I can't emphasise enough how delighted we were with NYJO's performance [at our Summer Ball]... We were so impressed by the quality and professionalism of your young musicians and it was fantastic to see how much they enjoyed what they were doing."*

NYJO is happy to discuss requests to hire a smaller Combo or Big Band for functions – with rates for private and charity performances. NYJO can provide entertainment for Weddings, Conferences, business and social functions, festivals, charity events and more. Informal live recordings by NYJO are to be found on the YouTube website - type in **Notts NYJO** to see a selection - or look a list on our website <http://www.nottsnyjo.co.uk/videos-on-you-tube/>

9 Q: How are NYJO players selected to play at gigs?

A: Players are selected from a pool of musicians who have successfully auditioned and are committed members of NYJO. All NYJO bands – currently NYJO2, NYJO and Combo - get chance to perform in public several times per year.

10 Q: What kind of music does NYJO play?

A: NYJO plays a varied repertoire of music from jazz

standards to arrangements of pop tunes and original compositions in both the Jazz Orchestra (a 'Big Band' of approximately 18 players), the NYJO Combo (around 8 players) and NYJO2 ('intermediate' big band of variable size). Many arrangements are unique to NYJO which makes performances rather special. NYJO occasionally plays 'crossover' music – such as 'Mass in Blue', a modern jazzy choral piece composed by Will Todd and performed with the East of England Singers; another example is 'Prelude, Fugue and Riffs' by Leonard Bernstein played as part of an NYO concert. NYJO does busking and marching jazz music at carnivals – it's really varied. See also the FAQ: *"Do NYJO bands perform Concerts and Gigs?"*

11 Q: Do I have to come every NYJO session? A: **'Yes'** for the most part – commitment is important to your musical development and mutual support of your fellow musicians in NYJO. Significant commitment to NYJO is expected, including playing at gigs. If you know in advance that you can't make the date of a gig, please say so at the time you are asked. We will aim to deputise a fellow NYJO musician.

Occasionally it's 'No' as circumstances for players and/or their family support network mean being at a NYJO session is impossible. If there are genuine extenuating circumstances that a NYJO player cannot attend a session, tutors need to be informed ***in advance with reasonable notice*** via text or phone. Visit the website for tutor contact details: <http://www.nottsnyjo.co.uk/nyjo-rehearsals/>

During the GCSE examinations, NYJO rehearsals continue. If you have an exam the following day, tutors understand if you request to miss that rehearsal, but this should be no more than two consecutive weeks otherwise the continuity is lost and it's not fair on others in the band. Whatever the circumstances, please discuss *in advance* with tutors if you anticipate not being able to be at a rehearsal.

12 Q: Is NottsNYJO connected with the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Music Hub?

A: Yes, along with the NYO, NYJO is involved with the local Music Hubs for County and City.

13 Q: How do I get a NYJO sticker? What about the NYJO polo shirts and hoodies?

A: When you join NYJO we provide you with a free NYJO sticker that looks good on music cases etc. We have smart NYJO branded polo shirts for use at gigs that are supplied to NYJO players and included in subscription fees. For outdoor performances and Tours, we loan the use of distinctive hoodies. Both are black and carry the NYJO logo. NYJO sponsors Clement Pianos have contributed to provision of these garments that enable the band to have a smart, coordinated presentation for performances.

14 Q: What happens to players once they leave NYJO - are they in contact?

A: We like to think that NYJO players never *fully* leave but, as NYJO alumni, always remain in contact. With the internet and social media such as NYJO Blogs and Facebook pages this is easy and we hope that alumni will follow what's happening and keep us updated too.

Several NYJO alumni remain in contact musically: for instance Jacques Moran is a professional musician now and works as an assistant tutor for NYJO and often accompanies NYJO on Edinburgh tours. Ex-NYJO players are invited to perform at special NYJO gigs or have independently returned to play professionally in Nottingham - e.g. bands led by NYJO alumnus Mark Lewandowski (bass), featuring fellow ex-NYJO drummer Will Glaser, have played at Jazzsteps. Other alumni have set in with NYJO at gigs. We delight in keeping contact with NYJO alumni.

15 Q: What instruments are in NYJO and do you have vocalists and clarinet players?

A: The line-up of a Jazz Orchestra typically has keyboard, bass, drums, trumpets, trombones and saxes (alto, tenor, baritone). Occasionally percussion or flute are included.

NB: new starters to NYJO2 can apply to play clarinet, on the understanding that they will switch to another instrument such as saxophone in due course.

NYJO has a number of arrangements that feature vocals, whether from band members or guests.



Photo: Patron Tony Kofi playing with NYJO Combo

16 Q: What is the repertoire played by NYJO bands?

A: It's varied, interesting and of differing levels of challenges. There are jazz standards (e.g. *Miles Davis' Kind of Blue*, *Weather Report's Birdland*), arrangements of classic songs in the Big Band idiom (e.g. *Mr Bojangles*, *Mad About the Boy and Misty*), and jazz genres that cover Funk, Swing, Latin and Pop, from Ballads to high tempo numbers.

Some of the music charts are commissioned exclusively for NYJO which means that there is a distinctively different 'NYJO sound' in its repertoire. Other charts are purchased - recently we used money raised by NYJO busking to buy 3 charts of arrangements by Callum Au. Some music is on loan - the local Henry Farrell Big Band has generously loaned charts. A selection of NYJO's charts include vocal scores and we try to include vocals in our programmes.

Some music is bought on a short-loan basis - typically for a specific concert such as Will Todd's *Mass In Blue*, performed with the East of England Singers. Then there are the arrangements created by members of NYJO themselves for the band to try out.

With around 90 music charts, NYJO players enjoy a great variety of music and can put together programmes that audiences really appreciate. For instance, after a recent NYJO Big Band concert, a jazz enthusiast in the audience complemented the band for its "refreshingly varied" repertoire that included some great jazz interpretations on recent pop tunes.

Finally, NYJO has a great asset in tutor, professional musician and versatile music arranger Ben Lee. Ben is able to arrange pieces that work well whatever the combination of instruments he's presented with.

17 Q: Are there any workshops?

A: Yes - NYJO organises specific workshops and during 2013-14 has support from the regional jazz organisation EMJAZZ on a jazz improvisation and life skills programme called [Miles Ahead](#). There will be several weekend workshops with top jazz professionals Zoe Rahman, Julian Joseph and Tony Kofi. There are also jam sessions available during this year ahead. See the website for [more details](#):

18 Q: Are there any discounts available in local music stores to NYJO members?

A: Yes – in previous years there has been a NYO membership card provided that gives entitlement to specified discounts at music stores on presentation of the card.

19 Q: Is there more than one NYJO?

A: Yes - we can't help but share the shortened name 'NYJO' with the National Youth Jazz Orchestra. They are really top class so get to hear them if you can – <http://www.nyjo.org.uk>

20 Q: How can parents, carers and friends of NYJO players support NYJO?

A: Support is really welcome. Many parents, carers and friends of NYJO players help out as volunteers, with shared transport to NYJO gigs, with NYJO raffle prize contributions etc. There are also opportunities to join the Friends of NYJO committee that meet roughly every 6 weeks to coordinate and organise the programme of NYJO activities.

For those that would like to sponsor NYJO, we welcome hearing from you. We recognise and promote NYJO sponsors in programmes and gigs. NYJO activities happen through a team effort and the experience is greatly enriched by your active support. If you have any suggestions please contact one of the Friends of NYJO Committee or email via the [website Contact form](#).

21 Q: What association does NYJO have with the Nottingham Youth Orchestra (NYO)?

A: NYJO is part of NYO which is a registered charity - No. 519861. NYJO has its own volunteer support and employs jazz tutors. NYJO enjoys a close working association with NYO.

Some musicians are in both NYO and NYJO, enjoying the contrast in music styles, gigs and personnel. For instance, NYJO bands usually perform as part of a NYO concert (e.g. at the Royal Concert Hall) both on stage and playing jazz during the concert intervals in the foyer.



Photo: NYJO playing with the NYO at the Royal Concert Hall

22 Q: Is NYJO on YouTube?

A: Yes – there are many videos with cumulatively thousand of views: try entering '**Notts NYJO**' in YouTube. Players learn from studying themselves play, and it's fun and entertaining for all. NYJO alumni also feature on YouTube – e.g. '**Mark Lewandowski at Bonington**'.

Q: Are there any 'rules' to being part of NYJO?

A: There aren't rules as such but there are expectations around your membership of NYJO:

Share your enjoyment of playing

**Notts
NYJO**

Be on time and be prepared

Meet your commitments

Know that 'There's a job to be done'

Contact tutors if you cannot be there

26 Q: I've got a question and/or comment that's not in the FAQs - who can I contact?

A: We'd love to hear from you. Please contact us by email via the 'Contact Us' section of our website.



24 Q: What about NYJO rehearsals during GCSE & A Level Exam Periods?

A: This topic is discussed in the FAQ on 'Do I have to come to every session?'

25 Q: I do not seem to be getting emails from NYJO – what might be the problem?

NYJO relies on using email as the primary method of communicating with players and parents/carers. Please keep us updated with any changes to your email address. If do not seem to be receiving emails from NYJO, please first check your Junk Email box; otherwise contact us via the [Contact Form](#) on the website and we can check our records.



NYJO at Confetti Recording Studios, Nottingham

