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The Pro Corda Music Festival for Schools Information for Host schools.

Thank you for your interest in becoming a host school for the Pro Corda Chamber Music Festival. Pro Corda took over the former National Chamber Music Competition in 2006 and rebranded it to become The Pro Corda Chamber Music Festival for Schools (Pro Corda CMF). The Pro Corda CMF is the only Festival of its kind exclusively promoting and celebrating chamber music and small ensemble performance in schools across the UK. In 2020 we had 33 schools enter the Festival, with 173 groups between them. There was an incredibly high standard of chamber music performed throughout all the venues which took part. The Festival has become a very prestigious event with many schools eager to be involved.

The Pro Corda Chamber Music Festival for Schools provides a unique opportunity for chamber groups of all instruments, shapes and sizes throughout the country to engage in a vibrant annual celebratory festival of talent. The Pro Corda CMF is held in January, February and March each year and tours schools around the country through qualifying and regional semifinal rounds, culminating in a final's day at a prodigious performance venue. Each group receives individual coaching with a skilled adjudicator during every round, so the further they progress through the competition the more coaching and experience they receive. The Final usually has a special guest adjudicator and is a celebratory day of chamber music which allows the students the opportunity to play for, and meet, their peers in other schools from around the country.

The festival is organised into four different age categories;

Under 12's, under 14's, under 16's and under 19's.

Below is some information about hosting the festival at your school, based on questions we are most asked.

- We will give you a choice of dates in late January, February and March for your school to host. You just need to let us know when is most convenient for you. We aim to get these dates in the schedule before the end of summer term in the year before the festival.
- Your school can choose to host just a qualifying round or a semi-final round, or both.
- We organise the schedule for the days that the other schools come to you and take care of all the administration, including answering visiting schools' questions, so you don't have to.
- For the rounds, one of our very experienced adjudicators will attend, who will score the groups and offer coaching to help improve their performance.
- When we send out the entry forms we also publish the list of the host schools on our website. The other schools then choose where they would like to attend, depending on location and convenience. We would know the exact schools and student numbers attending once the entry forms are back and will provide you with full information.
- A typical day lasts from around 10am to around 4pm, depending on number of entrants. We will provide you with a full timetable and a list of students and staff attending prior to their arrival. You would not be expected to liaise with the visiting schools.
- Regarding staffing, we usually send one experienced adjudicator. The other schools that attend send their own staff to accompany their children. Again, we will tell you nearer the time exactly who is coming.
- We would need one large performance space with a tuned concert piano and one warm up room.

- The number of children on your school site would depend on the amount and size of the groups. Probably up to around 30 visiting children in a day. They wouldn't all necessarily stay all day.
- Your school would not be expected to provide lunch for the visiting schools.
- Parking for visiting schools would be an advantage but isn't essential. We can tell you in advance which vehicles would be attending and provide number plate information, if needed.
- The ensembles which go through both the qualifying and semi-final rounds then attend the Finals day concert at a venue, which is announced nearer the time.
- The festival produces four "Chamber Champions", where possible from each age group. The Chamber Champions are then given the opportunity to perform at a public concert in the future.
- A Founders Award Trophy is also given as a Special School award for outstanding contribution to chamber music education. The winning school can keep and display the trophy for one year

If you require any further information about The Pro Corda Chamber Music Festival for Schools, please do not hesitate to contact the Pro Corda CMF administrator Katy Osborne-Palmer. Email katy@procorda.com.