

RNCM Professional Engagements: Procedure and Performers' Instructions

Public performances are a key part of a musician's development. The RNCM has long-standing links with numerous music societies, orchestras and corporate promoters both in the North West and further afield. Professional Engagements acts as an agency, liaising with senior academic staff to match the most suitable Classical and Popular Music performers to a wide range of external professional engagements.

How does an engagement happen?

- An initial enquiry is received from a promoter asking for musicians for a performance, such as a recital, choral or orchestral performance, or background music for a function.
- Dates and Times are checked with the Orchestras & Ensembles office to avoid any clashes with College activity, including rehearsals. You will only be offered an engagement if you are not required for an internal project.
- For recitals, the Head of the appropriate School of Study will be approached for a recommended soloist or ensemble, and you will then be contacted to check your availability. For background music, you will be contacted directly if you are on the External List (see further details below).
- An Offer Form will then be created and sent to you via email with this document and a confirmation statement must be emailed back to confirm you will take on the engagement and have read the Terms and Conditions and Professional Engagements Procedure and Performers' Instructions. If you are a soloist, you will need to forward the Offer Form to your tutor and ask them to email Professional Engagements with their confirmation of approval.
- A contract and invoice will then be sent to the promoter with a request to return the booking form with a signature, confirming the booking. At this point, you are contracted and unable to withdraw from the engagement.
- An Absence Request will be sent to the Orchestras & Ensembles office, Academic Services and relevant School Administrator.
- Any additional details will be requested, including a biography, photograph and programme if required, and any specific music requests.
- Contact details will be exchanged so you can get in touch with the promoter directly and you will receive the signed booking form, Health & Safety checklist and this document again.
- You will receive an email around one week before the engagement to check that everything is set.

Liaising with Promoters

Concert and event organisers always want to discuss the details of the performance with you and this is an opportunity for you to raise any queries you may have. You will be provided with the contact details for the promoter with the signed booking form and it is your responsibility to contact the promoter as soon as possible before the performance and discuss the below details with them.

- **Equipment:** Please take music stands with you unless you have been informed that the venue has them. They should always match if you are in a group.
- **Dress Code:** Presentation is extremely important so please wear suitable smart dress for your performance. If you are unsure, please contact the promoter or Professional Engagements. Ensembles should co-ordinate to bring some unity to their dress code.
- **Page Turners:** Music societies must be asked well in advance if you require a page-turner.
- **Introductions:** Printed programmes may not be available so please check in advance whether the promoter would like you to introduce your programme and prepare for this. Speak confidently and loud enough for the whole audience to hear.
- **Dietary Requirements:** If catering facilities are provided, promoters will need to know whether you have any dietary requirements.
- **Accommodation:** Promoters can occasionally provide overnight accommodation if there is no transport available for your return journey or if the venue is a long distance from Manchester.

- **Rehearsals:** For recitals, please check the availability of the venue with the promoter and let them know what time you would like to rehearse. For orchestral and choral engagements, it is worth checking whether you are required for the full rehearsal if you are not involved in the full programme.
- **Health & Safety Checklist:** Please read through this before your engagement. Promoters will also receive a copy and will be asked to go through this with you on your arrival at the venue.

Travel Expenses

- Travel expenses are not always paid, and this will be indicated in the Offer Form. If travel expenses are in addition to the fee, please inform the promoter of your travel expenses before the engagement so that you can be reimbursed on arrival. Occasionally promoters will ask for expenses to be added to the invoice after the engagement.
- Travel expenses are calculated from Manchester unless special arrangements have been agreed.
- **Public Transport:** Inform the promoter of your estimated arrival time and whether you need to be met at the station or if you need directions to the venue. Please book standard tickets and keep hold of any receipts to show the promoter. Please check for train strikes and inform Professional Engagements if there are no trains running on your performance date.
- **Car:** Check the directions to the venue and inform the promoter of your estimated arrival time. Please follow the Musician's Union guidelines for claiming motoring expenses; currently 55p per mile.

Payment of Fees

- An invoice is sent to the promoter before the engagement and promoters are asked for payment within 7 days after the date of the engagement.
- Once payment is received, it is processed by the RNCM and will be transferred to you by BACS. If this is your first engagement or if you have recently changed your bank details, please send Professional Engagements an email with your bank name, sort code, account number and account name.
- In the event that promoters do not pay within the stated time frame, payment will be chased up. Please note that the RNCM is unable to pay you without receiving payment from the promoter first.
- The rate of commission deducted from fees is 15% for current students and those who have graduated within the last two years, and 10% thereafter. The amount received after commission will be specified in the Offer Form.

Engagement Commitment and Cancellation

Once you have emailed your confirmation statement to Professional Engagements, you are committed to fulfilling the engagement.

In the unfortunate situation of a cancellation by the promoter within 1 month of the engagement, 50% of the fee will be due if the promoter has signed the booking form. Within 48 hours, the whole fee will be due.

Deps are not normally acceptable but if you have a valid reason for providing a dep, you must discuss it with Professional Engagements beforehand and any personnel changed must be authorised by the Head of the relevant School.

Publicity and Programmes

For formal concerts and recitals, promoters usually require biographical details and a photograph some time before the concert in order to publicise it. Please provide an up-to-date biography or around 200 words and a suitable publicity photo when confirming your acceptance of an engagement. Biographies may be edited according to the promoter's requirements.

Programmes should be set out clearly and must include full details:

- Full title of piece, including key and opus number
- Composer and any arrangers or transcribers
- Titles of movements

External List

- The External List is a list of soloists, chamber groups and pop / jazz musicians who are considered eligible to undertake external engagements.
- You can apply to be on the External List by completing an application form which can be downloaded from Moodle. The completed form must be approved by your tutor / ensemble coach and Head of School in an email to Professional Engagements.
- Heads of School also recommend soloists and groups to be added to the External List and you will be contacted by Professional Engagements if you have been put forward.

International Student Visas

Students who are on a Student Visa (or Tier 4 General Student Visa) can only legally perform outside of the RNCM if the performance opportunity is processed through the RNCM. If you undertake an external performance opportunity without informing the RNCM you will be breaking the UK immigration law and conditions of your visa which can result in cancellation of your visa. This applies to paid and unpaid performance opportunities and also affects conductors.

It is your responsibility to make sure that you understand exactly which forms of work you are allowed to undertake and how many hours you are allowed to work each week. It is extremely important that you follow the UK Border Agency rules and restrictions for your visa.

If you have been offered a performance of any sort, please email the details to Professional Engagements at the first opportunity, no later than 2 days after the date of engagement.

Terms and Conditions (as stated on each Offer Form)

- *A deduction of 15% will be made from all fees for current students and recent graduates, or 10% if you have been a graduate for two or more years.*
- *The Promoter is asked to make payment to the RNCM within 7 days of the engagement. Payment is usually processed by the RNCM and transferred to you by BACS within 28 days following the performance. Please note that the RNCM is unable to pay you until we have received payment from the Promoter.*
- *Professional Engagements will pass on your email address and phone number to the Promoter. Please make sure you let Amy Whitehead know if you would prefer these details **not** to be passed on.*
- *Your email confirmation statement will act as a signature in accepting the engagement you are offered and understanding the Terms and Conditions and Professional Engagements Procedure and Performers' Instructions.*

Questions?

If you have any questions about the procedure or a specific professional engagement, please contact Professional Engagements Manager, Amy Whitehead, at amy.whitehead@ncm.ac.uk or on 0161 907 5352, available Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm.