# Nationwide search for members of new National Youth Folk Ensemble

**Tuesday 16 February, 2016**

The English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS) has launched a nationwide search for talented young musicians to become the first members of the new National Youth Folk Ensemble.

A series of Sampler Days will be held throughout England during May and June to audition musicians aged 14 to 18 for up to 25 places in the Ensemble, which is supported by Arts Council England.

Led by the Ensemble's Artistic Director, BBC Radio 2's Folk Musician of the Year 2015 Sam Sweeney, each Sampler Day will include creative workshops with a team of professional folk artists, individual auditions, and a question and answer session with Ensemble staff.

Selected musicians will be invited to a final audition in London in July. To register for a Sampler Day, musicians have to be aged between 14 and 18 on 1 September 2016, live in England, be able to play confidently on any instrument and have an interest in folk music.

Places on the Sampler Days are free but limited and booking is essential at www.efdss.org/nationalyouthfolkensemble.

**Katy Spicer, EFDSS Chief Executive and Artistic Director, said**: “We are looking for excellent instrumentalists who are dedicated to developing as folk musicians and excited about collaborating with others who share their passion.

“This is a unique opportunity for young musicians and the first time a group of this kind has been established on a national basis. It offers a chance to develop in a nurturing environment with experienced and skilled musicians.

“We are hoping the Ensemble will discover, encourage and inspire the folk performers, educators and leaders of the future, and we would encourage as many young musicians as possible to sign up to the Sampler Days.”

**National Youth Folk Ensemble Sampler Days 2016:**

Sunday 8 May – Birmingham Conservatoire, **BIRMINGHAM**

Saturday 28 May – Sage Gateshead, **GATESHEAD**

Sunday 29 May – Leeds College of Music, **LEEDS**

Monday 30 May – Royal Northern College of Music, **MANCHESTER**

Tuesday 31 May – Derby LIVE, Guildhall Theatre, **DERBY**

Thursday 2 June – Exeter Phoenix, **EXETER**

Friday 3 June – Cecil Sharp House, **LONDON**

Saturday 11 June – West Road Concert Hall, **CAMBRIDGE**

Sunday 12 June – Cornerstone, **DIDCOT**

The National Youth Folk Ensemble will formally launch in October. Members will take part in four weeks of intensive residential courses around the country, receiving high quality tuition and guidance from leading professional folk artists.

They will also develop skills in performance, arrangement, leadership and facilitation and give public performances.

Keep up to date with news about the ensemble at www.efdss.org/nationalyouthfolkensemble and tweet @theEFDSS #youthfolk

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