

Ludlow Song Young Composers – Call Out

Ludlow Song are looking for young composers, aged 16 to 25, who are facing financial barriers to their musical practice, to take part in a free, expenses-paid workshop with leading composer and teacher [Professor Julian Philips](#) in November this year. The workshop is an opportunity to explore English song: music for voice with text in the English language.

The workshop is generously supported by the Gerald Finzi Trust, and the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire.

What we are offering

- 4 or 5 composers will be selected to take part in a **1 day workshop in Birmingham on Sunday 8th November 2026**. Please see 'How to Apply' below for details.
- In advance of the workshop, the successful applicants will be asked to share a new work in progress – a song or groups of songs for voice and piano with a text in the English language. There will be 6 weeks, from being selected, for successful applicants to work on their song(s).
- At the workshop in November, they will work on their compositions with Professor Philips, along with an experienced singer and pianist, and will also learn from each others' ideas and processes.
- The day will end with a free public performance, including a chance to share the new works in progress with a supportive audience.
- We will cover travel (and where necessary accommodation) costs, and will also pay a per diem to cover other expenses on the day (such as food).
- We are committed to making the workshop as accessible as possible. This includes using accessible spaces. We have also put aside an access budget to make sure we can meet disabled and neurodivergent composers' needs. If selected you will be invited to share your access requirements with us, but if you have questions feel free to contact Steve Catanach on ludlowsong@gmail.com.
- The workshop is an opportunity for young composers to meet each other and the Ludlow Song team, including Artistic Director Iain Burnside. We hope that at least one participant will be offered a paid commission for Ludlow English Song Weekend 2027, with support to attend the festival in Shropshire next April.

“The opportunity to choose any text I liked and have it brought to life by the most amazing artists was such a fabulous opportunity... it really set off my love of writing songs, so you should definitely apply.”

Derri Joseph Lewis

About Ludlow Song

Ludlow Song is led by Artistic Director [Iain Burnside](#), and is the organisation behind the Ludlow English Song Weekend, an annual three day festival in South Shropshire. The festival celebrates songs in the English language, both familiar and unfamiliar, including new compositions and young composers, through a carefully curated mix of concerts, panel discussions, masterclasses, and films. You can read more on our website: www.ludlowenglishsongweekend.com

This is the third year of the Ludlow Song Young Composers Workshop in its current format. In 2025, the participants were Ben Pease Barton,, George W Parris, Gregory May, Roseanna Dunn and Tyler Zwink. You can read more about them here:

www.ludlowenglishsongweekend.com/young-composers/

Participants in the previous Young Composers' Platform include Michael Betteridge, Carmel Smickersgill, Lara Agar, Hugh Morris, Leoni King, Derri Joseph Lewis, Will Harmer, Emily Pederson, Dominic Wills, Christopher Churcher.

“The workshop helped me gain insight into how the voice works and how singers approach a song. I think the discussion around text will influence me considerably as I unpack all the aspects we discussed. It is also really useful to hear the other composers’ material and learn from each other.”

Archie John

Who this opportunity is for...

- composers who will be aged 16–25 on 1st November 2026*.
- who are facing financial barriers to pursuing their musical practice.

We recognise that this currently applies to a lot of young people in a wide range of circumstances. The application form asks a couple of simple questions, and gives you an opportunity to tell us about the barriers you are facing. This information will be used to check your eligibility and will not be seen by the shortlisting panel.

- It is equally open to composers who are in or out of formal education, and to those just beginning their journey as a composer, or those already embarked on a professional career. Applicants will initially be shortlisted based on an anonymous assessment of a submitted score.

*Please note: participants who are under 18 on the workshop day will need to be accompanied by an adult.

How to Apply

To apply please fill in the online form here by 12:00 noon on 28th August 2026:

<https://forms.gle/UhezKXQHwrxXoEwH9>

If you have any problems with the form, or you require it in a different format, please email ludlowsong@gmail.com. The form shouldn't take more than a few minutes to complete.

It asks you for:

1. Some basic details about yourself.
2. To confirm your eligibility, by answering a few simple questions about your age and financial circumstances.
3. To attach 1 (one) PDF score which reflects your current compositional practice. This DOES NOT need to be an English song. We advise you to choose a vocal work if possible, but if you cannot it will not negatively affect your application. Please note, your score will initially be assessed anonymously for shortlisting and must not include your name.
4. You are encouraged to attach a sound file of the same piece (either a recording or a software generated sound file), but if you cannot, this will not negatively affect your application. Please note, we cannot accept web links to recordings in order to preserve anonymity in the shortlisting process.

Timeline

- We will notify all applicants of the result of their application before the end of Friday 4th September 2026.
- Successful applicants will be asked to submit a song - or group of songs - in progress, by 16th October 2026. Further guidance will be given to successful applicants, but if you have questions you can contact Steve on ludlowsong@gmail.com. There will be an optional zoom call to help with the choice of text.
- Ludlow Song Young Composers' Workshop will be held at [Royal Birmingham Conservatoire](#) on Sunday 8th November 2026, followed by a free public performance (timing tbc).
- Ludlow English Song Weekend 2027 will take place from Friday 9th to Sunday 11th April 2027.

"It gave me a very early opportunity to start truly workshopping pieces. We weren't expected to come with finished pieces, we came with drafts, we came with ideas, and we worked through them with the performers and really looked at their potential... It was not just the platform itself but all the friendships and connections I made through it, and I felt that it really shaped the course of my career as a composer."

Christopher Churcher