

NCBF Seasons Guidelines

“NCBF is an exemplary example of how to get things right – just brilliant”

(Secondary School Music Teacher – Shropshire)

NCBF offers the opportunity for wind bands and big bands to perform live in festival settings in venues across the UK, celebrating diversity of styles and levels of experience in a supportive environment.

There is a festival atmosphere with each stage of the season from the Regional Festivals to the National Festival. Typically within one year, over 140 bands (6500 musicians) participate in our Regional Festivals at various UK venues, with up to 50 bands being invited to perform at our National Festival at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester.

Below are some outline details to help all participating bands understand better how the process works – to enjoy performing; be inspired by performances of other bands and learn from the comments of our adjudicators. All our adjudicators are working musicians who are specialists in their field of musical expertise, whose role is to listen and provide constructive written and verbal feedback.

Regional Festivals

- Open to any wind band and big band, identified as Junior (up to 13 years old); School; Youth; Community and Open categories
- No minimum performance level is required
- All musical styles welcome in a 20 minute programme (15 minutes for Junior bands) of contrasting pieces with bands having to select at least one piece from the published NCBF Repertoire Lists
- Online entries open on 01 June for the Regional Festivals to be held in the Autumn/Winter
- Dates and venues are to be found on the NCBF home page and bands are encouraged to enter their most local venue
- A list of large percussion instruments and equipment available to all bands will be published for each venue
- NCBF adjudicators give constructive written and verbal feedback based on the NCBF Criteria (suitable for all levels of performance and different categories) to all participating bands and will measure what is seen and heard with a particular level of musical achievement rather than make comparisons between participating bands
- They will present each band with a Platinum, Gold, Silver or Bronze award for their performance
- All bands are encouraged to listen to and support other bands performances with supporters/audience always welcome at each venue

Invitation to the National Festival

- For those bands awarded a Platinum or possibly a Gold at a Regional Festival will receive an invitation to perform at the National Festival in the following Spring

NCBF Seasons Guidelines



National Festival

- The two day weekend event (each invited band would expect to be involved for a least half a day) will be held at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester in late March/early April
- The same entry process (as at Regional Festivals) is adopted for these invited bands
- Performance expectations will hopefully have risen and be realised from a Regional Festival to the National Festival, with the same NCBF Criteria being used by the adjudicators
- Both written and verbal constructive feedback will be given by the adjudicators, who will measure what is seen and heard with a particular level of musical achievement rather than make comparisons between participating bands, plus each band will receive a short 'on stage' adjudication
- Each band will be presented with a Platinum, Gold, Silver or Bronze award for their performance
- A list of large percussion instruments and back line equipment available for all bands will be published prior to the festival
- Supporter/audience tickets are sold in advance and on the day
- A Trade Show to browse and purchase is held throughout the weekend, as are performances from leading Military Bands
- NCBF aims to create a festival atmosphere which celebrates musical achievement, enabling musicians to inspire and be inspired by their peers, and to strive to realise their potential.

NCBF aims to offer additional activities beyond the performances to extend the educational benefits for all participants

national concert band festival
...the UK's largest wind band and big band festival