

BBC  
Proms

# *The Elite*

OSEA Choral Programme with  
the VOCES8 Foundation  
London

2026



# Programme Overview

The 2026 OSEA Choral Programme with the VOCES8 Foundation is a prestigious eight-day immersive choral training experience for young vocalists aged 12 to 18. Taking place in July 2026 at the renowned VOCES8 Centre in the heart of London, this programme offers students a transformative journey of music-making, international friendship, and personal growth.

Designed for passionate young singers, the programme blends professional ensemble coaching, solo and group masterclasses, vocal technique training, and stage performance workshops. Students will perform at a final concert led by Paul Smith, co-founder of VOCES8, and international musician Daniela Mars. The experience also includes unique cultural explorations in London and Cambridge, offering rich insight into Britain's musical heritage and performing arts scene.

Hosted by the world-class educators of the VOCES8 Foundation, participants will gain first-hand experience of what it means to be part of a globally recognised vocal ensemble—learning from those who inspire audiences worldwide.

# OSEA CHORAL PROGRAMME WITH THE VOCES8 FOUNDATION

## Areas of Focus:

### Vocal Technique & Ensemble Skills

Daily masterclasses at the VOCES8 Centre explore tone, blend, breath support, and musical phrasing, helping students develop refined ensemble musicianship.

### Artistic Interpretation & Storytelling

Workshops focus on text expression, musical storytelling, diction across languages, and emotive delivery—empowering young artists to sing with purpose and personality.

### Stage Presence & Confidence

Dedicated sessions enhance concert presentation, body language, and audience connection—skills essential for any aspiring performer.

### Professional Insights & Career Guidance

Students engage in a candid Q&A with VOCES8 artists, gaining rare insights into life as a professional musician and the realities of ensemble careers.

### Cultural Exchange & Creativity

Highlights include a collaborative session on selected repertoire and a recording session with VOCES8 Studios, offering a unique artistic keepsake.

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## Programme Highlights

- **World-Class Training:** Study at the award-winning VOCES8 Centre in London, guided by Paul Smith and the VOCES8 Foundation team.
- **Performance Opportunities:** End-of-program concert at the VOCES8 Centre with formal certification presented by programme leaders.
- **Recording Experience:** Participate in a professional audio/video recording session—a valuable asset for portfolios and music resumes.
- **Cultural Adventures:** Explore iconic locations such as Westminster Abbey, Covent Garden, and King's College Chapel in Cambridge.
- **Personal Development:** Develop confidence, teamwork, and artistry in an inclusive and supportive international community of peers.

# ABOUT THE VOCES8 FOUNDATION

The VOCES8 Foundation is a globally recognised vocal music education charity dedicated to inspiring people through the transformative power of singing. With a mission to enrich lives through music, the Foundation engages communities of all ages and backgrounds across the UK and internationally.

At the heart of the Foundation is its award-winning ensemble VOCES8, whose members –acclaimed for their precision, warmth, and artistry—perform to tens of thousands of audience members annually. In tandem with their performance work, the Foundation delivers a broad spectrum of education programmes, from grassroots workshops in schools to elite artist development schemes, supporting both emerging talent and experienced educators.

Headquartered at the VOCES8 Centre in the City of London, the Foundation serves as a hub of artistic excellence and inclusive musical outreach. Whether through live performances, recordings, masterclasses, or digital resources, The VOCES8 Foundation champions the belief that music has the power to unite, uplift, and inspire.



# MEET MARS:SMITH

MARS:SMITH is a critically acclaimed duo offering a unique, educational concert experience that blends performance with participation. Through the expressive use of instruments, voices, and piano, Daniela Mars and Paul Smith invite audiences—especially students and young musicians — into a deeper understanding of music across genres and cultures. Their concerts are designed not only to inspire but also to teach, incorporating interactive elements that explore musical storytelling, global traditions, and the art of collaboration. MARS:SMITH programmes feature their original compositions alongside works by composers from Bach to Tom Jobim, creating a rich, cross-cultural dialogue. In 2024-25, their concerts, workshops, and community residencies bring this educational mission to Europe, Asia, South America, the US, and Australia.

## THE ARTISTS

As artists, **Paul Smith**, co-founder of the Grammy-nominated ensemble VOCES8, is internationally known for his innovative approach to ensemble performance and music education.



**Daniela Mars** is an acclaimed flautist, composer and a global ambassador for Trevor James Flutes. Their outreach and community engagement programmes are central to their mission as artists, with a focus on education, access, and inspiring the next generation of musicians.

They regularly lead workshops, residencies, and collaborative projects with schools, universities, and cultural institutions.



# Artistic Curriculum Framework

The 2026 OSEA Choral Programme with the VOCES8 Foundation is designed to cultivate artistic excellence, musical sensitivity, and ensemble mastery. This comprehensive framework blends technical training, interpretive refinement, and performance artistry, enabling young singers to develop both as musicians and as expressive performers within a globally recognised choral context.

## 1. Vocal Development & Ensemble Craft

### Focus Areas:

- Vocal Health and Technique
- Choral Blend and Balance
- Ensemble Musicianship

### Key Sessions:

- Foundations of Choral Tone: Breath control, resonance, and pitch alignment in ensemble singing.
- Group Vocal Coaching: Led by Paul Smith, these sessions explore vowel unification, tuning, and dynamic control.
- Ensemble Repertoire Lab: Rehearsals focused on sectional integration and cohesion.

### Artistic Growth Outcomes:

- Enhance tonal consistency and vocal stamina.
- Understand the role of the individual within the collective sound.
- Build awareness of harmony, phrasing, and tuning in a choral context.

## 2. Interpretation, Expression & Vocal Storytelling

### Focus Areas:

- Textual Analysis
- Emotional Resonance
- Multilingual Diction

### Key Sessions:

- Expressive Singing & Text Delivery: Explore how phrasing, articulation, and dynamics serve narrative intent.
- Cross-Cultural Vocal Artistry: Interpret texts in English and other languages to develop authenticity and clarity.
- Solo & Small Group Clinics: One-on-one and chamber ensemble settings for artistic feedback and interpretive coaching.

### Artistic Growth Outcomes:

- Deepen emotional engagement with music.
- Refine interpretative skills for solo and ensemble performance.
- Expand stylistic versatility through diverse musical genres and languages.

### 3. Performance Technique & Stage Presence

#### Focus Areas:

- Concert Preparation
- Non-verbal Communication
- Audience Connection

#### Key Sessions:

- Stagecraft & Presence Masterclass: Explore posture, movement, and confidence-building strategies for live performance.
- Final Concert Rehearsals: Polish repertoire through guided full ensemble practices.
- Live Concert Production: Real-world performance experience at the VOCES8 Centre.

#### Artistic Growth Outcomes:

- Cultivate self-awareness on stage and perform with poise.
- Project musical intention through physical presence and gesture.
- Deliver a compelling and communicative concert experience.

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### 4. Professional Musicianship & Creative Industry Insight

#### Focus Areas:

- Artistic Careers in Vocal Music
- Studio Recording & Media Performance
- Creative Collaboration

#### Key Sessions:

- Musical Careers Roundtable: Insights from VOCES8 artists on sustainable careers, auditions, and artistic resilience.
- Studio Recording Experience: Participate in a professional audio or video project in the VOCES8 Studios.
- Cultural Collaboration Lab: Teach and perform traditional repertoire (e.g., Mo Li Hua), fostering intercultural artistic dialogue.

#### Artistic Growth Outcomes:

- Gain exposure to the realities of the choral profession.
- Develop media performance skills for recording and broadcast.
- Collaborate across cultures through shared musical traditions.

### 5. Immersive Cultural Enrichment

#### Focus Areas:

- Musical Heritage
- Interdisciplinary Inspiration
- Arts Appreciation

#### Key Sessions:

- Guided Visits to London Landmarks: Including Westminster Abbey and the Tower of London, connecting music to history.
- West End Musical Experience (Optional): Exposure to theatrical performance at a professional level.
- Cambridge Music Trail: Visit to King's College Chapel and other sites rich in choral legacy.

#### Artistic Growth Outcomes:

- Contextualise classical choral traditions within cultural history.
- Broaden artistic horizons through exposure to diverse performance forms.
- Nurture curiosity and appreciation for the arts beyond the rehearsal room.





# THE CONCERT

This immersive educational concert experience invites children to become part of the performance. Prior to the concert, MARS:SMITH leads an engaging workshop where children learn songs and musical concepts that they will later perform live alongside the duo. The culmination of this collaborative experience is a dynamic concert where the children join the duo onstage, singing the pieces they've prepared and creating a powerful shared musical moment.

MARS:SMITH performs live in tandem with their original cinematic films, giving audiences a unique chance to connect visually and emotionally with the breathtaking landscapes that inspired the music. Their latest film, shot in the Faroe Islands provides a stunning backdrop to the live performance. The concert also features the rarely seen contrabass flute, played by Daniela Mars, adding a layer of wonder and discovery to the musical journey.

## RECORDING SESSION

One of the most memorable and enriching moments of the programme is the opportunity to step into the professional world of music recording. Under the guidance of Paul Smith and the expert team at VOCES8 Studios, participants will experience the artistry and precision of capturing choral performance in a studio environment.

Whether creating a beautifully crafted audio track or a visually engaging performance video, this session offers young musicians a rare insight into the creative process behind professional production. It is not only a cherished keepsake of their musical journey in London, but also a compelling addition to any performer's portfolio — a testament to their growth, discipline, and artistic expression.



# ITINERAR

## Day 1: Arrival & Welcome

- Arrivals throughout the day; transfer to student accommodation at University College London (UCL).
  - Settle in and prepare for a week of inspiring music-making.
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## Day 2: Technique & Ensemble Foundations

- Welcome Reception: Meet the VOCES8 Foundation team and fellow participants.
  - Opening Session: Programme overview, vocal assessments, and team-building activities.
  - Breath & Tone Masterclass: Explore core concepts of blend, balance, and group sound, led by Paul Smith co-founder of VOCES8.
  - Introduction to repertoire: A session exploring the repertoire for the week together.
  - Evening Activity: Attend a live performance by a premier London choir (e.g., the Temple Church Choir).
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## Day 3: Artistry & Interpretation

- Storytelling Workshop: Focus on bringing music to life, thinking about text, phrasing, and emotional delivery, working with English and other languages.
  - Optional Solo & Small Ensemble Coaching: Student masterclass on selected pieces for individual and group feedback.
  - Tutti Rehearsal: Refine the concert programme under the guidance of Paul Smith and the Foundation team.
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## Day 4: Performance & Professional Insights

- Stage Presence Workshop: Build confidence in concert presentation, and audience engagement.
  - Choral Rehearsal: Continued refinement of concert repertoire.
  - Q&A with VOCES8 Foundation Artists: A candid discussion on musical careers, ensemble life, and sustaining artistry.
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## Day 5: Final Rehearsals, Optional Recording Session or Cultural Exchange

- Full-Day Rehearsal: Final polish for the end-of-week concert performance.
- Recording Session: Work with Paul Smith and the VOCES8 Studios technical team to record an audio track or professionally produced performance video – a wonderful lasting memory and a great addition to student CVs for future career building.
- Cultural Spotlight: Optional session featuring student-led teaching of a selected repertoire.

### Days 2–5 (Monday–Thursday): Intensive Masterclass Series

Daily Schedule: 10:30 AM–4:00 PM  
at the VOCES8 Centre

Each day features dynamic workshops and rehearsals led by the VOCES8 Foundation's team of world-class educators and artists.





# ITINERAR

## Day 6: Final Concert & Celebration

- **Concert Preparation:** Final sound check and artist briefings.
  - **Performance:** Culminating concert at the VOCES8 Centre led by Paul Smith, Daniela Mars and the VOCES8 Foundation team.
  - **Certificate Ceremony:** Graduation and presentation of participation certificates (designed by OSEA and presented by Paul Smith Daniela Mars and William Connor).
  - Celebrate the week's achievements with friends, family, and mentors.
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## Day 7: Exploring London

A day of culture and adventure in one of the world's greatest cities:

- **Morning:** Guided visit to the Tower of London and Westminster Abbey.
  - **Afternoon:** Leisure time in Covent Garden and Hyde Park.
  - **Evening:** Optional group outing to a West End musical (e.g., Les Misérables or Phantom of the Opera).
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## Day 8: Day Trip to Cambridge

Discover the musical and architectural heritage of England's most famous university town:

- **Morning:** Travel by coach or scenic train to Cambridge.
  - **Activities:**
    - Guided visit to King's College Chapel, home of one of the world's leading collegiate choirs.
    - Explore Cambridge's musical landmarks and traditions.
  - **Afternoon:** Return to London for a farewell gathering ahead of departures.
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## Day 9: Departures

- **Morning:** Airport transfers and optional sightseeing for those with later flights.



# INFORMATION

**Dates**

12 - 20 July 2026

**Ages**

12-18

**Venue**

The VOCES8 Centre, City of London

**Organised by**

OSEA Alliance Group  
VOCES8 Foundation

V O C E S 8  
FOUNDATION

# MEDIA MARS:SMITH



OCEAN IN MINOR



SEA IN MINOR



CREPUSCULAR - PERFORMED  
WITH THE VOCES8 SCHOLARS



HERE THERE BE MERMAIDS  
PERFORMED WITH LYYRA

# How to apply

## Eligibility

**Voice Types:** Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass

**Level:** Minimum AMEB Grade 6+ (or equivalent).

**Age:** Participants must be enrolled in high school at the time of the study experience and have multiple years of choral experience. Recommended for students in Years 9–12.

### Summer Program Inclusions:

- London airport pick-up
- 8 days tuition, masterclasses and rehearsals
- Accommodation in London including breakfast
- Weekend outings to London and Cambridge
- Professional recording session
- Concert performance in London
- Certificate of Participation

### Additional costs for families:

- Flights
- Travel Insurance
- Lunch and Dinner
- Spending Money

## Audition Requirements

### Submission:

An audition recording must be hyperlinked within the online application form.

### Content:

- Two contrasting pieces (no longer than 5 minutes in total)

[Complete Online Application Form here.](#)

