



Youth Concerto Competition

INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR THE 2026 COMPETITION

QUESTIONS: PLEASE CONTACT STEVE SHAIMAN
(Director of HHSO Education and Community Engagement):
[YCC@HHSO.ORG](mailto:ycc@hhsso.org)

Eligibility

Musicians who play Violin, Viola, Cello or Bass, are age 18 or younger, and who have not graduated from high school, are eligible to participate in the competition. Applicants must permanently reside in one of the following 11 States (as defined in the National Association for Music Education's Southern region): AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, or WV. Previous first prize winners are not eligible.

Registration

Registration will open on **August 29, 2025**. Online registration is required and must be completed by Thursday, October 31, 2024 (before midnight). Registration form will be available as of 8/29/25 on this page of our website: <https://www.hhsso.org/hhso-youth-concert-competition-2026/>

- You may be asked to reply to an email confirming your registration. Please add our email address, ycc@hhsso.org, to your address book to avoid our having emails going to spam.

Audition Piece Requirements

The Selection must be a recognized single orchestral instrument solo which:

- Does not need to be titled, "concerto."
- Must have orchestral accompaniment for which a score and parts are currently available.
- May not be an arrangement, transcription, or student work.
- Must be a minimum of 6 minutes and a maximum of 15 minutes, with the competitor performing for the majority of the time (played from memory).
- You may submit a video longer than 15 minutes, but the competition will require cuts to meet the 15-minute limit if you are selected for the finals.
- Failure to meet the minimum time requirement will result in disqualification.
- Selection may be reduced to meet the time limit.
- Please email any additional questions to Steven Shaiman, HHSO Director of Education and Community Engagement, at ycc@hhsso.org.

If chosen as a finalist, the selection performed must remain the same for the entire competition (with the only exception being cuts required for that piece to meet the 15-minute limit at the finals).

Application Submission

Online registration is required and will open August 29, 2025. The deadline for submission of all materials is **Friday, October 31, 2025 (before midnight, Eastern Standard Time).** **Earlier submission is highly recommended as no extensions will be granted.** We will confirm receipt of application materials by email within 48 hours of submission.

- **Video:** You are to submit a video recording of your selection, **with piano accompaniment** (electronic keyboard or orchestral accompaniment is not acceptable).
- Please submit a YouTube Link as a **public** or **unlisted** video file on your registration form.
- Other video formats may be accepted upon request, with **PRIOR APPROVAL from the competition director.**
- Your submission must be one continuous performance (a single take) from a fixed camera angle with the accompanist clearly in view.
- Also, it must be evident in the video that your performance is from memory.
- The video **must not be altered/edited** electronically.
- We strongly suggest that your video audition be recorded at the highest quality possible and that you view it BEFORE submission. Poor recording quality (e.g., noise, echo, out-of-tune piano) detracts from the adjudicators' ability to appreciate your performance.
- A \$50 non-refundable registration fee is required. **Payment must be made online at the time of registration (after August 29 and before the deadline).**
- If you have any questions concerning your selection, format, or performance, please email us for clarification, BEFORE preparing your video.

All application materials should be submitted to us electronically using the online form. In the event that you cannot submit any portion of your application electronically, contact the director at ycc@hhsso.org **at least 10 days in advance of the deadline** for instructions.

Finals

Up to 10 finalists will be selected by the screening jury. Applicants will be notified of the named finalists via email by the end of the day on Monday, December 1, 2025.

Finalists will perform their accompanied selection from memory for judges and a live audience, in concert, **Saturday, January 31, 2025 (1:00 pm)**, on Hilton Head Island at St. Luke's Anglican Church (50 Pope Avenue, HHI). We currently plan to livestream the finals on the HHSO YouTube channel, as we have done in recent years.

Finalists are responsible for providing their own accompanist or may use one assigned by the competition.

- The competition engages the services of a local professional pianist to work with finalists who are unable to bring their own accompanist. To use our accompanist, you must be able to arrive on Hilton Head Island by Friday morning, January 30, 2025, at 10:00 AM. Our staff pianist will rehearse with you for up to 45 minutes on Friday at the church. The fee for this service is \$150, which is due to the competition by January 1, 2026. We will make every attempt to schedule those traveling from longer distances for a time slot later in the day.

Finalists have several options for accommodations. If you are coming only with your parents, we would be happy to try and arrange for you to stay with a host family (at no cost). This is not an imposition for us; more than 20 families host a contestant for an entire week for our piano

competition in March. **So even if you will only be staying one night, or arriving late, I encourage you to ask us to find a host family.** If you would like us to try and match you up with a host family, please let us know if you have any special requirements (e.g., allergies; dietary needs) in the **Additional Information Box on the registration form.** If you prefer to stay in a hotel, feel free to contact the competition director for recommendations.

The selection of the prize winners will be announced at the conclusion of the finals concert.

Finalists will receive judges' comments via email from the competition director within approximately 2 to 3 weeks after the competition.

Additional Materials from Finalists

If you are selected as a finalist, you will be asked to submit the following by 5:00pm on Monday, December 15th, 2025. Failure to submit any of the attached information by the deadline could result in disqualification.

- **Musical Score.** A pdf file of your selection showing both the solo line and piano accompaniment, including any cadenza passages. Any cuts must be clearly marked.
- **Biographical Sketch.** A two-paragraph biographical sketch, written in third person, that we can display on our web site and/or print in our program.
- **Photo file.** A recent jpg photo of yourself with your instrument which we can use in publicizing the competition and in our program. The photo need not be professionally done but should be taken with a good quality digital camera and should be submitted as an attachment to an email.
- **Signatures.** You will receive a form to be signed by you and a parent or guardian allowing you to participate in the finals and authorizing the use of any supplied materials for publicity and/or administration of the competition.

Prizes*

First Prize	\$1500 -Cash prize \$ 700 - Scholarship to the Philadelphia International Music Festival A solo performance with the Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra
Second Prize	\$ 800 - Cash prize \$ 500 - Scholarship to the Philadelphia International Music Festival
Third Prize	\$ 500 - Cash prize \$ 500 - Scholarship to the Philadelphia International Music Festival
All Other Finalists:	\$ 200 - Cash prize \$ 300 - Scholarship to the Philadelphia International Music Festival

All finalists will also receive a \$100 scholarship to the Hilton Head Chamber Music Festival in June 2026. Additional area performance opportunities may be available to select finalists.

** NOTE: Any or all of the prizes will be awarded at the discretion of the judges.*

Please email any additional questions to Steven Shaiman, HHSO Director of Educational and Community Engagement, at: ycc@hhsso.org.