

RULES BROCHURE



NATIONAL YOUTH MUSIC COMPETITION 2026

30 NOV – 5 DEC 2026

ENDLER HALL, STELLENBOSCH

PRESENTED BY:

**THE NATIONAL YOUTH
MUSIC COMPETITION**

AND

**THE DEPARTMENT
OF MUSIC**
STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY



**THIS IS THE LATEST AND ONLY VERSION OF THE 2026 RULES FOR THE
NATIONAL YOUTH MUSIC COMPETITION.**

ALL OTHER VERSIONS ARE NULL AND VOID.

NATIONAL YOUTH MUSIC COMPETITION 2026

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1. THE COMPETITION

- 1.1 The Competition is intended for young classical musicians who are pianists or orchestral instrumentalists; and is open to candidates who are not younger than 14 years or older than 19 years on 05 December 2026.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Competition is to:
- Identify and promote the talent and abilities of young classical musicians;
 - Expose the competitors to the requirements of professional careers as soloists and orchestral musicians;
 - Develop the stage presentation and performance skills of our young classical musicians.

2. DATES AND VENUE

- 2.1 A qualifying audition round of the Competition will take place, based on Competition website submissions and upload to the Competition website of the recordings of the audition works.
- 2.2 Candidates who played in the third and final rounds of the 2025 National Youth Music Competition are exempted from auditioning for the 2026 Competition.
- 2.3 The four competitive rounds will be held at the Endler Hall, Department of Music, Stellenbosch University. The first three rounds will take place from 30 November to 04 December 2026 and the final round and gala concert will take place on 05 December 2026.
- 2.4 At the final round and gala concert on 05 December 2026, finalists will be performing their selected concertos with the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra.

3. CATEGORIES

- A. Piano B. String instruments C. Woodwind instruments D. Brass instruments
E. Other orchestral instruments (e.g. harp, percussion)

4. PRIZES, MEDALS AND AWARDS

- | | | |
|---|--------------|----------|
| • First Prize – The Michael Maas Memorial Prize | Gold Medal | R 36 000 |
| • Second Prize | Silver Medal | R 15 500 |
| • Third Prize | Bronze Medal | R 10 000 |
| • Categories: Prize Winners | Silver Medal | R 6 000 |
| Runners-up | Bronze Medal | R 3 500 |
| • All final-round competitors | | R 3 000 |
| • All third-round competitors | | R 2 500 |

⚠ (Note that the first prize of R36 000 includes the category prize) ⚠

- | | |
|---|---------|
| • Prizes for promising candidates in each category, who do not play in the 3 rd and 4 th rounds | R 2 000 |
| Polina Burdukova Prize for the best performance of a work by a Russian composer performed by a string instrumentalist | R 5 000 |
| • Pauline Nossel Prize for the best performance of a classical work by a pianist. | R 5 000 |
| • Best performance of a concerto in the final round | R 5 000 |
| • Best performance of a South African work in any round | R 3 500 |

- Unisa Prize for category winners to allow them to enter a Unisa grade examination in 2027 at no cost.
- Winners of prizes at the National Youth Music Competition, can be invited to perform in concerts held in collaboration with other organisers, in various venues throughout the year. Arrangements will be made directly between the National Youth Music Competition and Stellenbosch University Department of Music, with the prize winners.

5. ENTRY

5.1 **The closing date for entries is 23 June 2026. All entrants will be notified of the results by 21 July 2026.**

5.2. A website upload of the applicant's own playing of the audition works (see 6.4.2). **Each work must be recorded as a separate track, during the same recording session.**

- Orchestral instrumentalists must include works with piano accompaniment.
- The recording must be of excellent technical quality. Poor quality disadvantages candidates.
- The applicant's face and hands must be visible throughout the recording.
- The recording must be clearly and visibly labelled, showing the applicant's full name and place of recording.

The procedure for uploading the recording directly to the Competition website is as follows:

1. Go to nymc.co.za
2. Click on the upload video link on top of the page in the right corner or in the footer section under online documents.
3. Login using username: **nymc** and password: **nymc2026**
4. Browse for the file you have recorded on your computer and click upload.
5. Wait for the upload to **completely finish** before closing the window.

5.3 **The entry form and payment must be completed online at www.nymc.co.za, and the following is required:**

5.3.1 A non-refundable entry fee of R350, paid into the University of Stellenbosch account by EFT or bank deposit.

Account name:	Stellenbosch University
Bank:	Standard Bank
Branch Code:	050610
Branch Code (EFT)	051001
Account number:	073006955
Beneficiary Reference:	R2623-NYMC-Surname (eg: R2623-NYMC-Jones)
Email proof of payment to:	amm@nymc.co.za

5.3.2 The entrant's *curriculum vitae* of no more than 120 words, to be included in the entry form.

5.3.3 The website upload of the audition works.

5.3.4 A **head-and-shoulders photograph** of the entrant in **JPEG format** with a DPI of not less than 1 MB to be uploaded with the entry form.

5.4 **For enquiries contact:**

Aileen Maas: Co-ordinator

National Youth Music Competition

Tel: 082 654 0630

E-mail: amm@nymc.co.za

6. COMPETITION RULES

By completing, submitting and uploading the entry form and other documents, the entrant accepts all the rules and regulations of the Competition and the decisions of the jury. Failure to comply with these rules and regulations may lead to disqualification.

6.1 ELIGIBILITY

- 6.1.1 The Competition is open to pianists and orchestral instrumentalists.
- 6.1.2 Competitors may not enter for more than one instrument in the same year.
- 6.1.3 Competitors may not be younger than 14 years or older than 19 years on 05 December 2026.
- 6.1.4 A maximum of twenty-five (25) competitors will be admitted to the competitive rounds.

6.2 ADJUDICATION

- 6.2.1 The Competition is judged cumulatively over the four public rounds.
- 6.2.2 The decision of the jury is final and will be announced at the end of the second, third and final rounds.
- 6.2.3 After the third round, the Jury will give feedback to those competitors who do not progress to the final round.
- 6.2.4 Medals will only be awarded to third round competitors and finalists.
- 6.2.5 Prizes will not be awarded to competitors who do not adhere to all the rules.
- 6.2.6 The adjudicators are under no obligation to award prizes if performance standards do not warrant this.
- 6.2.7 No correspondence will be entered into regarding the decisions of the jury; and competitors may not appeal against the decisions of the jury.

6.3 ROUNDS

- 6.3.1 The Competition will consist of a qualifying audition round per video recording, uploaded to the Competition website, and the competitive rounds which are open to the public.
- 6.3.2 Should related instruments need to be switched for the purpose of a performance, this must not interfere with the timing of the programme. The competitor must consider very carefully whether the switch will cause intonation problems because no allowance will be made for problems resulting from the change.
- 6.3.3 All competitors selected by the jury during the audition round will play in both the first and second rounds at the Endler Hall, University of Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch; after which the first elimination of competitors will take place.
- 6.3.4 A maximum of twelve (12) competitors will be selected for the third round and a maximum of six (6) competitors will be selected for the final round.

- 6.3.5 Competitors selected to participate in the four rounds of the Competition in Stellenbosch are not allowed to accept other performance engagements during the period of the Competition and must ensure that they are available for all scheduled Competition sessions, including rehearsals with the orchestra, where applicable. **Special arrangements to accommodate outside activities will not be made for individual competitors.**
- 6.3.6 **The organisers have the right to change the order of performances, when necessary to accommodate logistical requirements.**

6.4. REPERTOIRE

6.4.1 General

- All works are to be chosen by the competitor, subject to the requirements stipulated below.
- **Important: NO works may be repeated in the first three competitive rounds.**
- The chosen repertoire for the different rounds should consist of contrasting works from different style periods.
- Competitors may not perform their own compositions or own transcriptions. Transcriptions by recognised composers are allowed.
- Full details of each work of the applicant's repertoire must be listed on the entry form and should include (in block capital letters)
 - a. Name of composer;
 - b. Full title of the piece;
 - c. Catalogue/Opus Number;
 - d. Movement;
 - e. Approximate duration.
- When selecting repertoire for solo rounds, competitors should bear in mind the following criteria:
 - a. Musicianship and virtuosity;
 - b. Musical expressiveness and interpretative ability;
 - c. Contrasts in tempo and character;
 - d. An understanding and portrayal of different musical style periods, i.e. Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Contemporary.
- Any repertoire changes must be submitted in writing and signed by both the competitor and the teacher. **No changes to the repertoire will be allowed after 24 August 2026.**
- Different movements from a work played will be considered collectively as one (1) work. However, different movements from a substantial sonata, played in different rounds, will be allowed as separate pieces.
- The order in which pieces are to be performed in each round is at the discretion of the competitor.
- Repeats are not required, but *da capos* should be performed.
- Pianists are required to perform all works from memory.
- Concertos for all instruments in the third and final rounds must be played from memory.
- Pianists may perform only solo works in the audition round and in rounds 1 and 2 (i.e. no concerto movements or other works with second piano accompaniment). This applies also to the recital part of the third round.
- Competitors, who present a work consisting of variations, are not allowed to omit any variations.

- The jury retains the right to stop the performance if the competitor exceeds the allotted time.
- **Competitors, who play less than the minimum time or more than the maximum time allocated for the different rounds, will be penalised by a percentage point reduction from their allotted mark for each minute or part of a minute played shorter or longer than the allocated time. They may also be disqualified.**
- Competitors may be requested to provide copies of scores.
- All Competition repertoire is subject to approval by the Competition organisers.

6.4.2 Qualifying Audition Round (Website Upload)

- A video recording of a programme consisting of two (2) contrasting works, not exceeding 10 minutes must be uploaded to the Competition website.
- These works must form part of the competitor's repertoire for the recitals in the first three rounds.
- One of these works should be from the Baroque (or pre-Baroque) or Classical period.
- Each work must be recorded as a separate track, during the same recording session and uploaded onto the website.
- The procedure for uploading the recording directly to the Competition website is as follows:
 1. Go to nymc.co.za
 2. Click on the upload video link on top of the page in the right corner or in the footer section under online documents.
 3. Login using username: **nymc** and password: **nymc2026**
 4. Browse for the file you have recorded on your computer and click upload.
 5. Wait for the upload to **completely finish** before closing the window.

6.4.3 First and Second Rounds

- **At least 4 (four) works from three (3) different style periods**, one of which must be a **South African work** must be presented as follows:
- One (1) of the works performed during the first or second round must be a movement from a Classical or Romantic sonata. A sonata movement from a later style period is allowed for brass instruments, saxophone and percussion.
- First Round: Two (2) contrasting works from different style periods: **minimum duration of 8 minutes and a maximum duration of 10 minutes.**
- Second Round: At least two (2) new contrasting works from different style periods: **minimum duration of 12 minutes and a maximum duration of 15 minutes.**

6.4.4 Third Round

The third round consists of two compulsory sections.

- **SECTION 1:** A recital with a **minimum duration of 20 minutes and a maximum duration of 25 minutes**, consisting of contrasting works; **and**
- **SECTION 2:** A **movement from a concerto** (1st or 3rd movement); or a single work for the chosen instrument and orchestra; or two movements from a concerto (slow and fast movements); or a complete concerto - all subject to a **maximum duration of 20 minutes** (to be performed with piano accompaniment). For further requirements regarding the concerto, see 'Final Round'.
- Candidates will be allowed a **5-minute break between the recital and the playing of the concerto.**

6.4.5 Final Round

- Repeat performance of the concerto performed in the third round, accompanied by the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra.
- **Competitors are required to check the availability of materials for their chosen concerto for the final round from the CPO's Orchestra Librarian, Kyle Rother at kyle@cpo.org.za**
- In the event that the competitor cannot find an appropriate concerto on this list, an application to present another concerto, which must include the following information, needs to be submitted:
 - ❖ Full title of chosen work and composer.
 - ❖ Publisher of the work.
- Approval of the concerto is subject to the suitability of the work within the context of the Competition and availability of the necessary orchestral parts in South Africa. **Should the orchestral parts of the chosen concerto not be available in South Africa and have to be sourced from abroad, the competitor will be held responsible for all the costs incurred.** The decision of the Competition organisers on this matter is final.

7. ACCOMPANISTS

Qualifying competitors are responsible for arranging and payment of their own accompanists. The Competition Co-ordinator can be contacted to assist with providing names and contact details of accompanists.

Competitors who reach the final round, must ensure that their accompanists are available to rehearse with the conductor from **10:00 on Friday 4 December 2026** in the orchestral rehearsal room at Artscape Theatre, Foreshore, Cape Town. This will be followed by rehearsals with the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra in the afternoon and evening. On **Saturday 5 December 2026**, the final dress rehearsal will start at 13:30 in the Endler Hall Stellenbosch.

8. STAGE DEPORTMENT AND DRESS GUIDELINES

Stage deportment and dress form an important and vital part of any performance. In this regard, competitors are referred to the *Stage Behaviour Guidelines: The Whys & Hows*, compiled by Dr Becky Steltzner. The document can be requested from the Competition organisers.

9. ACCOMMODATION, TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

Qualifying competitors are responsible for arranging their own accommodation, travel and transport. The Competition Co-ordinator can be contacted about suggestions for accommodation close to the Competition venue.

10. RECORDING OF PERFORMANCES

The organisers reserve the right to record all performances during the Competition, to be used at their discretion for radio and television broadcasts. By signing the entry form, each competitor renounces all rights, fees and claims relating to such recordings, films and broadcasts.

Rights regarding the Competition performance, recordings, or films, belong to the National Youth Music Competition. No fee is payable to any competitor on account of these performances or any recordings or broadcasts thereof (whether live, streamed, on the internet or otherwise.)

11. WITHDRAWING FROM THE COMPETITION – IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Should an entrant successfully pass the DVD audition and be selected as a participant for the National Youth Music Competition; but needs to withdraw from selection for whatever reason, we respectfully request the entrant to contact the administrator **within two (2) weeks** of being informed of selection. This is to ensure that the next candidate on the shortlist can be given the opportunity to enter and perform.