

The Pittsburgh Philharmonic Young Composer Contest 2026

Rules and Policies

Eligibility:

1. Applicants must be no older than 35 at time of submission.
2. Applicants must be residents of the Greater Pittsburgh area, including Allegheny, Butler, Beaver, Washington, and Westmoreland Counties.
3. The Pittsburgh Philharmonic reserves the right to determine eligibility.

Application Rules and Requirements:

1. Applicants must submit the following to pghphilstudentprograms@gmail.com by March 8, 2026:
 - PDF score
 - PDF of a first violin part of their work
 - Recording or audio rendering in MP3 or WAV format (MIDI realizations must also be in MP3 or WAV format)
2. There is no application fee.
3. The competition winner will be notified by **March 15, 2026**. All decisions will be final.
4. The winner must provide a full set of parts with sufficient string count (8-8-6-6-2) by the date requested by the Pittsburgh Philharmonic. Parts are acceptable on letter-sized paper. Staff size for parts is between 7 and 8.5mm

Piece Rules and Requirements:

1. Duration of work should be no longer than 12 minutes.
2. Entire piece must be completed at time of submission. No alterations to the composition will be allowed once the rehearsal process has started unless approved by the Pittsburgh Philharmonic Music Director
3. Piece may not be extreme or virtuosic in demands. For instance, No difficult harmonics (natural or artificial) for strings; avoid writing in thumb position for cello; avoid overly difficult key signatures.
4. Text (spoken or sung) cannot be included.
5. No concerto will be considered.
6. Scores must be on legal or tabloid sized paper in portrait orientation only.
7. Parts are acceptable on letter-sized paper. Staff sized for parts is between 7 and 8.5 mm.
8. Previously performed works are acceptable.
9. Orchestration will not exceed the following:
 - 2 flutes, one may double piccolo
 - 2 oboes, one may double English Horn
 - 2 Bb/A clarinets, one may double Bass
 - 2 bassoons
 - 4 F horns
 - 2 Bb or C trumpets
 - 2 trombones
 - 1 bass trombone
 - 1 tuba

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- 1 timpani
- percussion (Snare drum, triangle, bass drum, glockenspiel and cymbals). Winner may be asked to provide any percussion instruments not on this list at performance and rehearsal.
- Strings 8-8-6-6-2 with only up to 2-part divisi in string parts

Competition Winner Information:

1. The Winner will receive a \$300.00 prize.
2. Winner will be provided with a professionally performed recording of their piece from the concert.
3. The competition winner will provide a short biography and publicity photo for use in the Concert program, website, and media outlets.
4. The competition winner will be available for rehearsals with the orchestra on one or more of the following rehearsal dates: **April 13, 20, 27, May 4, 2026** at 7:15 at PYCO or Greater Pittsburgh Masonic Center.
5. Performance will be held at the Greater Pittsburgh Masonic Center on **May 10, 2026**.