



## Festival Rules

**NEW for 2026:** To be eligible for recommendation to the provincial level in **solo** disciplines, participants **must** register for and participate in the **Provincial Qualifier Class** for their discipline. If selected, the participant **MUST** perform all the same pieces from the Qualifier Class at the provincial competition.

### General

1. The Hamilton Music Festival Board shall oversee the administration of the competition. All questions not expressly covered herein shall be referred to the Board, whose determinations shall be final and binding upon all participants.
2. Refunds will **NOT** be provided unless the Festival cancels the class or denies the entry.
3. The festival reserves the right to divide or combine classes.
4. Where age limits are specified, participants must be of the prescribed age on December 31st of the year prior to the festival to be entered.
5. All competitors must be amateurs. For the purposes of this festival, an *amateur* shall be defined as: an individual whose primary source of income is **not** derived from performing or teaching music in the specific category in which they are competing, even if they occasionally receive payment for musical activities on a part-time or casual basis. Competitors who are full or junior members of either ACTRA or EQUITY are considered professional and are ineligible, unless they are competing in a different discipline that is not in line with the reason for their ACTRA or EQUITY membership.
6. Conductors may be either professional or amateur. Conductors may not sing or play with their orchestra, choir or ensemble.
7. Please note that the festival will run on weekdays and Saturdays, from 8:30am until 9:00pm, and classes may be scheduled at any time during that period. Participants are expected to be present at their scheduled time, and **no changes will be made once the program has been set.**

### Performance

8. RCM stands for the Royal Conservatory of Music, and CC stands for Conservatory Canada. The most recent Conservatory Syllabus edition must be used. In the event of a new RCM or CC Syllabus, crossover times will follow the standard practices of either conservatory.
9. All pieces must be performed from memory. The use of music will result in adjudication only, with no mark given. Exceptions are noted in individual classes.
10. Unless otherwise specified in the RCM or CC syllabus, all instrumental pieces must be played without repeats. Da Capos and Dal Segnos must be observed.
11. Time limits, where specified, will be strictly enforced.
12. Vocal, strings, and woodwinds participants must provide their own live accompaniment. Exceptions are noted in individual classes. Accompanist fees are **not** included in registration fees and are the responsibility of the participants.
13. All participants must supply an original copy of their music for the adjudicator. Accompanists are permitted to use photocopies **as long as the original, legally obtained score is present at the piano.**

### Entries

14. All entries **must be received** by **11:59pm, February 15** and accompanied by the appropriate fee for each class. Late entries *may* be considered at the committee's discretion and, if accepted, will be subject to an additional fee.



# Music Festival 2026

15. It is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that students have registered with the correct repertoire in the appropriate classes.
16. Entry fees will not be refunded.
17. Online registrations can be paid by credit card or e-transfer. If paying by e-transfer, please send it to [info@hamiltonmusicfestival.ca](mailto:info@hamiltonmusicfestival.ca) and **include the invoice number** in the comment section. E-transfers must be received within 24 hours of completing your registration.
18. With the exception of the Sinfonia Ancaster Performance Opportunity class, a selection may **not** be used in more than one class. Repertoire performed the previous year in the Hamilton Music Festival must not be repeated.
19. Participants are limited to one entry per class unless otherwise noted.
20. Participants are required to compete at their current grade or level; however, they may enter one class in the level immediately above.
21. Participants entering grade/level classes must not have completed a conservatory exam at that grade level prior to January 1st, 2026.
22. For all duet, trio and ensemble classes, only one participant enters and pays the fee. Please list partners on the registration form.
23. Participants' schedules will be available online in March. Parents, teachers and accompanists who have been linked to the participant will also be able to view the schedules.

## Adjudication

24. Adjudicators' decisions are final.
25. Adjudicators may not evaluate their own students.
26. Participants may be required to certify that the festival rules have been followed. If an infringement occurs, adjudication may be given, but no mark awarded.
27. The adjudicator will discuss the performance of each participant, but only the marks of the top three performers may be publicly announced. All participants will receive the adjudicator's written comments.
28. To be eligible for a scholarship, a student **must** enter and participate in two or more classes within the same discipline. (*Exceptions: Music Writing and Choirs.*) All scholarships are awarded at the discretion of the adjudicators.  
**Note:** Classical Voice and Musical Theatre are considered separate disciplines. *Pop/Jazz* and *Songs from the Screen and More* are included under Musical Theatre.
29. Questions should be directed to the secretary or the festival coordinator, not to the adjudicator.
30. **NEW for 2026:** To be eligible for recommendation to the provincial level in **solo** disciplines, participants **must** register for and participate in the **Provincial Qualifier Class** for their discipline. If selected, *all* pieces performed in the Qualifier Class must be presented at the provincial competition.

\*\* Those hoping to receive a recommendation to advance to the provincials, please visit: [www.omfa.ca](http://www.omfa.ca) for the requirements.



## Music Writing

The composition title and the competitor's name must appear clearly on the first page of the score. Scores may be created with notation software or written by hand; handwritten scores must be neat and easy to read. All scores must include essential musical details (such as tempo, dynamics, and articulations), with the first measure of each system numbered and page numbers included. For works involving multiple instruments, a complete score—not individual parts—must be provided.

**All scores must be submitted by email in PDF format to [info@hamiltonmusicfestival.ca](mailto:info@hamiltonmusicfestival.ca) by March 15th, labeled as follows: Competitor's Name\_Class\_Title of Work.** For the Singer-Songwriter class only, an MP3 audio file or MP4 video recording of a performance must be submitted in addition to the written score. These files may be sent by email or through a shareable link to [info@hamiltonmusicfestival.ca](mailto:info@hamiltonmusicfestival.ca).

## Composition without Performance

Participants must submit one original composition for any instrument (including voice) or any combination of instruments. The notated score will be evaluated as of the submission date, and competitors will receive feedback and class placements during a live session at the festival. The piece will *not* be performed.

Suitable submissions for this class include, but are not limited to: original works that exceed the competitor's current performance abilities, works the competitor prefers not to perform, or multi-instrument compositions for which organizing a performance is not practical.

80101 - Beginner: Ages 6 - 8

*The music must be entirely the student's own creation, though an adult may assist with the notation. The composition may not exceed 5 minutes in length.*

\$35.00

80102 - Primary: Ages 9 - 10

*The music must be entirely the student's own creation, though an adult may assist with the notation. The composition may not exceed 5 minutes in length.*

\$35.00

80103 - Elementary: Ages 11 - 12

*The music must be composed and fully notated by the student. The composition must not exceed 10 minutes in length.*

\$40.00

### Composition without Performance (continued)

|                                    |   |         |
|------------------------------------|---|---------|
| 80104 - Junior: Ages 13 - 14       | <i>The music must be composed and fully notated by the student. The composition must not exceed 10 minutes in length.</i> | \$40.00 |
| 80105 - Intermediate: Ages 15 - 16 | <i>The music must be composed and fully notated by the student. The composition must not exceed 15 minutes in length.</i> | \$45.00 |
| 80106 - Senior: Ages 17 - 18       | <i>The music must be composed and fully notated by the student. The composition must not exceed 20 minutes in length.</i> | \$45.00 |
| 80107 - Advanced: Ages 19 - 28     | <i>The music must be composed and fully notated by the student. The composition must not exceed 25 minutes in length.</i> | \$50.00 |
| 80108 - Adults: Ages 29 & up       | <i>The music must be composed and fully notated by the student. The composition must not exceed 20 minutes in length.</i> | \$45.00 |

### Composition with Performance

Participants must submit one original composition for any instrument (including voice) or any combination of instruments. The notated score will be adjudicated as of the submission date, and feedback and class placements will be provided during a live festival session, where the piece must also be performed. Although the work will be evaluated solely on its compositional qualities, competitors (or performers of their choosing) are required to present the piece in performance.

This class is intended for competitors who wish both to submit an original composition and to have it performed for a live audience at the festival. Competitors are responsible for arranging all instrumentalists and/or singers needed for the performance.

### Composition with Performance (continued)

|                                    |   |         |
|------------------------------------|---|---------|
| 80201 - Beginner: Ages 6 - 8       | <i>The music must be entirely the student's own creation, though an adult may assist with the notation. The composition may not exceed 5 minutes in length.</i> | \$40.00 |
| 80202 - Primary: Ages 9 - 10       | <i>The music must be entirely the student's own creation, though an adult may assist with the notation. The composition may not exceed 5 minutes in length.</i> | \$40.00 |
| 80203 - Elementary: Ages 11 - 12   | <i>The music must be composed and fully notated by the student. The composition must not exceed 10 minutes in length.</i>                                       | \$45.00 |
| 80204 - Junior: Ages 13 - 14       | <i>The music must be composed and fully notated by the student. The composition must not exceed 10 minutes in length.</i>                                       | \$45.00 |
| 80205 - Intermediate: Ages 15 - 16 | <i>The music must be composed and fully notated by the student. The composition must not exceed 15 minutes in length.</i>                                       | \$50.00 |
| 80206 - Senior: Ages 17 - 18       | <i>The music must be composed and fully notated by the student. The composition must not exceed 20 minutes in length.</i>                                       | \$50.00 |
| 80207 - Advanced: Ages 19 - 28     | <i>The music must be composed and fully notated by the student. The composition must not exceed 25 minutes in length.</i>                                       | \$55.00 |
| 80208 - Adults: Ages 29 & up       | <i>The music must be composed and fully notated by the student. The composition must not exceed 20 minutes in length.</i>                                       | \$50.00 |



### Singer Songwriter

Participants will submit an original song in a popular style (e.g., folk, pop, rock, etc.) with accompaniment. The song can be fully notated with lyrics and accompaniment, or in lead sheet format, with lyrics, structure and chord progression. A recording of a performance of the song is required upon submission of the score. Competitors will also perform their work during the live festival session.

80301 - Any age

*The length of the song may not exceed 10 minutes*

\$40.00