

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. Refunds will **NOT** be provided unless the Festival cancels the class or denies the entry.
2. The festival reserves the right to divide or combine classes.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Conductors may be either professional or amateur. Conductors may not sing or play with their orchestra, choir or ensemble.
6. 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

7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. Time limits, where specified, will be strictly enforced.
11. 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.
12. 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

13. 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.
14. It is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that students have registered with the correct repertoire in the appropriate classes.

15. Entry fees will not be refunded.
16. Online registrations can be paid by credit card or e-transfer. If paying by e-transfer, please send it to info@hamiltonmusicfestival.ca and **include the invoice number** in the comment section. E-transfers must be received within 24 hours of completing your registration.
17. 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.
18. Participants are limited to one entry per class unless otherwise noted.
19. Participants are required to compete at their current grade or level; however, they may enter one class in the level immediately above.
20. Participants entering grade/level classes must not have completed a conservatory exam at that grade level prior to January 1st, 2026.
21. For all duet, trio and ensemble classes, only one participant enters and pays the fee. Please list partners on the registration form.
22. 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

23. Adjudicators' decisions are final.
24. Adjudicators may not evaluate their own students.
25. 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.
26. 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.
27. 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.
28. Questions should be directed to the secretary or the festival coordinator, not to the adjudicator.
29. **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 for the requirements.

Sinfonia Ancaster Performance Opportunity

In collaboration with **Sinfonia Ancaster**, the Hamilton Music Festival is pleased to offer a special performance opportunity for advanced amateur musicians.

This competition is open to **advanced vocal and instrumental participants** residing in **Hamilton and the surrounding region**. It is designed to provide emerging artists with the potential experience of **rehearsing and performing with Sinfonia Ancaster** during one of the orchestra's **2026–27 season concerts**.

Voice Applicants

Applicants may select **any work for solo voice and orchestra** (symphony, chamber, or string orchestra). Eligible repertoire may include:

- A complete song cycle
- Selected movements from a song cycle
- A set of arias from opera or oratorio literature

The total performance time should not exceed **20 minutes**.

Instrumental Applicants

Applicants should prepare **one movement or two contrasting movements** from the **concerto repertoire**, with a combined duration of **no more than 20 minutes**.

General Requirements

- All works must be performed in their **original key and instrumentation**; **no arrangements** are permitted.
- For festival performances, participants must perform with a **collaborative pianist**, using a **piano reduction** of the orchestral score. **Recorded accompaniment is not permitted**.
- **Memorization is not required**.



Music Festival 2026

Sinfonia Ancaster Performance Opportunity Syllabus

Competition Details

- **Dates:** April 6 – May 1, 2026 (during the 2026 Hamilton Music Festival season)
- **Adjudication:** A panel of distinguished adjudicators, including **Jeffrey Pollock**, music director of **Sinfonia Ancaster**, will evaluate all performances.
- **Performance Opportunity:** Winner(s) will be invited to perform with **Sinfonia Ancaster** in the **2026–27 season**.
- Scholarship may be awarded to the winner(s)

Note: *This class is separate from other festival classes (for example, provincial qualifiers). Participants may use the same repertoire in other appropriate classes.*

Open

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\$50.00