



2025 YOUNG COMPOSER AWARD SUBMISSION CRITERIA, GUIDELINES AND ADJUDICATING PROCESS

SUBMISSION CRITERIA

The world premiere performance of the First Prize composition for 2025 will occur on Sunday 4 May 2025 2:00 PM by the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra as part of subscription series concert [The Lark Ascending](#), conducted by the Associate Conductor of the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra, Dr Sarah Penicka-Smith.

- Maximum length of work: 6 minutes;
- Orchestration: 2 Flute, 2 Oboe (1 English Horn doubling- Optional), 2 Clarinet, 2 Bassoon, 4 French Horn, 2 Trumpet, 1 Trombone, Timpani, 1 Percussion (no mallet percussion), Strings. *Note: Entrants are not required to use all instruments listed though compositions cannot exceed the listed orchestration;*
- Previous First Prize winners of the Willoughby Symphony Young Composer Awards are not eligible for current or future submission;
- Works already submitted to the Willoughby Symphony Young Composer Awards are ineligible for resubmission, regardless of whether or not they have been changed (for example but not limited to, re-orchestration, re-arranging, change of title, change of length);
- The submitted work must not have been performed previously;
- Application is free of charge;
- All entrants are required to provide their submission via the online link. Submissions received by email or post will not be eligible for consideration;
- All applicants are required to submit a PDF score and an audio recording as an mp3 file;
- Score submissions should be in PDF format and labelled only with the work's title (e.g. "**Title.pdf**");
- Please also submit an audio recording (from your music notation software) as an .mp3 file, not to exceed 25MB in size. Label file only with the work's title (e.g. "**Title.mp3**");
- Scores should include a title page listing orchestration and duration of work;
- Do not include your name or any other identifiable material on any pages of the score;
- Rehearsals of the winning composition will commence two weeks prior, and the composer is strongly encouraged to attend rehearsals on consultation with the Associate Conductor;
- After responding to any feedback from the panel, the winner must provide Willoughby Symphony Orchestra with a typeset score and parts for their composition by Friday 21st March 2025 5:00 PM;

- The winner will be featured in publicity to promote the Award, Performance, and Willoughby Symphony Orchestra, and may be required to participate in media interviews, photo shoots or video recordings. This may also extend to the Highly Commended and Encouragement Award winners;
- The winner may feature on websites, social media, in hard copy publications and other promotional material. This may also extend to the Highly Commended and Encouragement Award winners; and
- The recording of the First Prize work may be shared with media for broadcast and publication.

GUIDELINES

The following comments are drawn from the experience of previous adjudicating panels, and may be helpful to you in shaping your submission:

- Treat the submission process like a commission process. Do your research about the orchestra, the players, and the audience. Form an educated idea of the kinds of works that suit the performers you'll have at your disposal, and the demographic of the audience likely to attend. Previous reviews, photos and video, the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra website, and past programs can all assist you.
- Keep your work achievable for the rehearsal timeframe. The Willoughby Symphony Orchestra prides itself on being the most highly-regarded community orchestra in Australia. Many players are professional musicians; others are highly talented tertiary students. While the level of individual excellence is high and the orchestra is capable of performing complex music, remember that your piece will only make up 6 minutes of a program that will be 60-90 minutes long. The program includes a concerto and a choral work. Everyone needs to be accorded a fair amount of rehearsal time, and we generally only have 5 rehearsals per program. Do the maths, and save the technical fireworks for when you have a longer commission.
- Bear our audience in mind. Consider the other pieces on the program, [Lark Ascending](#), and who might like to come to such a concert. Think about how you can create something that will appeal to them, and make them keen to hear more of your work.
- Consider what you're trying to say. Where and how does your work differ from the composers who influence you the most? What distinct voice and perspective do you have to offer, and how can you best showcase that?
- Remember the hallmark of a skilled composer is knowing how to develop your material. In a six-minute work, consider how you can show off your skills in this area, instead of crowding in too many ideas.
- Yes, our musicians love a challenge. But if you want to challenge them, consider short solo features that showcase different sections, rather than making your whole work technically challenging. Similarly, if your style runs to intricate textures that take a lot of time to put together in rehearsal, choose less technically-challenging building blocks so the orchestra doesn't have to rehearse both difficult individual lines and good ensemble in difficult layers.

- Finally, the 2025 submission criteria is deliberately designed for a modest classical orchestra. This size of orchestra is common among Australian community orchestras. While Willoughby Symphony might have a high degree of technical skill, you can also think about how you could create a work that contributes to accessible repertoire for all Australian orchestras. Repeat performances are better for a composer in the long run than one blockbuster premiere.

ADJUDICATING PROCESS

The YCA will be adjudicated by three industry experts, including the conductor of the program, Dr. Penicka-Smith. Entries will be assessed anonymously, and no correspondence will be entered into with entrants as to award outcomes made by the adjudicating panel, chaired by Dr. Daniel Rojas. Award recipients will be announced Friday 7th March 2025.

Enquiries regarding submission or conditions of entry can be made via email wso@willoughby.nsw.gov.au .