

Rules and Guidelines for the 2026 Young Artists Auditions

NOTE: These rules and guidelines are reviewed and updated annually.

The Huntsville Symphony Orchestra (HSO) Young Artists Auditions provide an opportunity to perform in a public forum and gives recognition to dedicated young musicians for their talent and accomplishments. In addition, an opportunity to perform at a HSO sponsored program may be awarded.

Preliminary Submission Due:	by Monday, January 12, 2026
Final Recital:	Sunday, January 25, 2026

Eligibility

Previous 1st place Winners of the Young Artists Auditions are not eligible to compete in the auditions on ANY instrument during the season immediately following their selection.

Otherwise, **any student through Grade 12** in at least **one** of the following categories is eligible:

- A resident of one of the following counties:
Alabama: Colbert, Cullman, DeKalb, Franklin, Jackson, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Marion, Marshall, Morgan, Winston. *Tennessee:* Giles, Franklin, Lincoln.
- A member of the Huntsville Youth Orchestra or Huntsville Symphony Orchestra.
- A son, daughter, or ward of a member of the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra.
- A student of a music teacher residing in Madison County, Alabama.
- A student of a member of the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra.

Music teachers of YAA contestants must contact the HSO Director of Education at sharon@hso.org, to schedule a brief orientation meeting via conference call in order for their students' submissions to be considered. To accommodate teachers from out of town, an orientation will be conducted via conference call, in person, via zoom or phone call.

Adjudication

- There is **one (1) round** of the Young Artists Auditions: the online Submission via the *Accepted* website. All judges will be drawn from a pool of prominent musicians.
- Contestants will be judged on the degree of difficulty of their repertoire, tone, rhythm, style, execution, memory, musicianship, and professionalism.
- Judge(s) reserve the right to choose more than one winner, or not to select a winner.
- **Contact with judge(s)** prior to completion of the Final Recital is **not allowed** by participants, parents, or teachers. Students will be disqualified if any such contact is made.
- Participants will receive comment sheets from the judge(s) from each round.
- **Winners will be announced after the Final Recital.**

Auditions/Selection

- All applicants must be available for the Final Recital on **Sunday, January 25, 2026.**
- Contestants will submit an application and an audition recording via the *Accepted* website no later than **Monday, January 12, 2026.** An application fee of **\$35** is due at the time of submission.
- The contestant (student), parent/guardian, and music teacher must all read, agree to, and abide by all rules and regulations governing this competition.
- The judge(s) will utilize a blind reviewing option when evaluating application materials on the *Accepted* web site. The Final Recital round will not utilize a blind reviewing option.
- The **instrument, title, movement, and performance length of the piece** are to be indicated when submitting the recording to *Accepted*. **Any piece over the 10-minute time limit will be immediately disqualified.** No change of repertoire will be allowed between rounds of the audition.
- The Recital will be held on **January 25, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.** in Roberts Recital Hall on the campus of UAH. The facility will be open from 1:00 p.m. forward so that contestants can check in with staff and then warm-up/practice if they wish. **All contestants must check in by 1:45 p.m. in person at the venue in order to remain eligible for participation in the Final Recital.**
- The Final Recital is open to the public at no charge.
- Absolutely NO audio or video taping is allowed at the Final Recital.
- Performance order for the Final Recital is determined at the discretion of the HSO staff.
- During the Final Recital. **participants will be allowed to warm-up until the participant prior to them takes the stage. At that time, the next participant will be required to be backstage.**
- The **backstage area will be closed to all persons except Recital participants, accompanists, and YAA/HSO/HSO Guild staff.**
- **Dress Code:** Sunday dress is acceptable. No formal wear (tuxedos or evening gowns) is allowed. No flip-flops or tennis shoes are allowed.
- *Girls:* Dresses or skirts with blouses (a cardigan in the color of your choice worn over the dress is acceptable). No sequins. Female cellists or bassoonists may wear dress pants if desired. *Boys:* White or black shirt with collar (no T-shirts, and no ties). Black or khaki trousers with belt (no jeans). Dress shoes. Male bassists do not require a belt and/or buckle.

Repertoire

- Each contestant is to perform **one movement** of a concerto or long-form piece from the standard Concertante repertoire. To qualify, the selected repertoire must be an original composition for solo instrument with orchestral accompaniment. Arrangements do not qualify.
- Duration of the selection **must be ten (10) minutes or less.** Selections longer than ten (10) minutes will be automatically disqualified.
- **Contestants must perform repertoire selections from memory.**

- **Each contestant must provide an accompanist** to perform the orchestral part of the audition in **both** the Preliminary Submission on *Accepted* and in the Final Recital at Roberts Recital Hall.
- Each contestant must provide one high-quality copy or one original copy of his/her music to the judge. If the music is provided in a book, the first page of the selection must be clearly identified (a paper clip is recommended). Failure to meet this requirement will result in disqualification.

Awards/Winner(s)

- **All contestants who perform in the Final Recital will receive recognition on the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra and Huntsville Symphony Orchestra Guild websites. The top 3 winners will receive a cash prize.**
- The winner will be asked to perform at the FREE Family Concert on Saturday, February, 21, 2026 at the Mark C. Smith Concert Hall, VBC.
- The HSO Music Director may revoke the Winner's privilege of performing at the FREE Family Concert at any time for any violation of the published rules.

THANK YOU for your interest in the 2026 Young Artists Auditions!

Please address any inquiries to Sharon Hicks,
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