



2026 Syllabus for Composition Competitions

2026 Festival Dates:

Monday 2 to Friday 27 March

and

Saturday 11 April to Saturday 16 May

Composition Competitions at 4:30 pm

on Sunday 26 April

Hampstead Garden Suburb Free Church,
Central Square, NW11 7AG

Adjudicator: Glyn Devey

Information and Rules of Entry

Compositions can be performed live on the day, or by using an audio CD to provide a realisation of the piece. (We are unable to support video recordings). All compositions must be presented with a commentary to introduce the piece prior to its performance.

To be eligible for entry, pieces must be composed using one or more of the fifteen Starting Points for Composition. These can be viewed on the next page of this section syllabus.

The time limits below refer to the maximum length of performance, *including* the commentary presentation. For each entry dependent on age, it is the age on 1st September 2025, so that all the entrants in a class are in the same school year or school years.

If an entrant has been a pupil of the Adjudicator in the 12 months prior to the Festival or is well-known to the Adjudicator, they should contact the Section Head before entering.

The Music Master

The Music Master Publications Ltd will award book prizes to the winners of each category, and an overall winner will receive the title, '*North London Festival Best Composer*' and will be presented with a certificate and trophy during the 2026 end of Festival concert.

		Time Limit (mins)	Fee £
700	Junior Composition — aged 12 years and under.	3	18.00
701	Intermediate Composition — aged 13—15.	5	20.00
702	Senior Composition — aged 16—18 years.	7	23.00
703	Advanced Composition — aged 18 and over.	10	25.00

Closing date for entries Friday 10 April 2026

Enter online via the Festival's website – northlondonfestival.org.uk

Then send your composition — a musical score or graphic realisation, recording and written commentary — to the Section Head, Graham Bennett:

18 Uxbridge Road, Wendover, Aylesbury, HP22 5TA.

tel: 01296 623 351

email: compositionnlf@outlook.com

Starting Points for Composition

1. Compose a solo piece for the pianoforte — any style.
2. Compose a piece which explores counterpoint — free choice of instruments, but no more than five.
3. Compose a Pop Song - must include both chorus and verse.
4. Compose a piece for any stringed instrument — free choice. (This may also include a piano accompaniment)
5. Compose a piece, which reflects an important stylistic feature of the Classical era (1750— 1800).
6. Compose a piece, which reflects an important stylistic feature of the Late Romantic era (1850—1900).
7. Compose a piece for three different instruments. Each instrument must belong to a different family.
8. Compose a piece, which explores and challenges the playing techniques of a solo instrument of your choice. (Solo meaning without accompaniment support.)
9. Compose a piece with two contrasting sections.
10. Compose a piece which explores musical movements of the 20th century; for example, minimalism, serialism, aleatoric music etc.
11. Compose a soundtrack suitable for a film scene. This could be for a well-known film or an imaginary scene.
12. Compose a piece which represents a jazz style (free choice).
13. Compose a percussion piece to celebrate an African harvest festival.
14. Compose a piece inspired by a poem. This could be a well-known poem, or a poem you have written yourself.
15. Compose a piece which brings together two distinct cultures.

Building your Commentary

When writing your commentary please consider the three questions below:

1. What were the stimuli or starting points for your composition?
2. What compositional processes and developments did you explore/discover whilst composing your piece?
3. What challenges did you encounter relating to instruments, textures, and playing techniques?



NORTH LONDON FESTIVAL OF MUSIC, SPEECH & DRAMA

Festival Administrator:

Janice Twiselton, 64 Powys Lane, London N13 4HS

tel: 0208 886 7237 or 07943 117752

email: janicetwist@talktalk.net

For venues, a full list of competitions and an online entry form, visit

www.northlondonfestival.org.uk

or email: enquiriesnlf025@gmail.com