



6th Solo Harp Composition Contest – 2018 Frequently Asked Questions

Is this contest open to composers from every country?

It is! So far, we have had 41 countries represented and we will be pleased to have even more this time!

I don't see any age limit?

That is because we do not have one. Our youngest contestant until now was 13, and the oldest was "over 74."

Where do I find more information about the harp?

Writing for the Pedal Harp by Ruth K. Inglefield & Lou Anne Neill (available at www.vanderbiltmusic.com) gives many specific helpful details including notational procedures and necessary technical information. Orchestration books are not usually sufficient.

Is there a specific format for the size of my score?

Yes. The publisher requests that you use US letter size. European A4 or other "similar" sizes are NOT acceptable for publication. The stipulation is as follows: "The score should be page formatted at 8.5" x 11" with a 1/2" minimum margin -- portrait preferred if possible -- and the note size should be comfortably legible when seated at the harp, approximately three feet away."

What if my piece is a little longer than 8 minutes?

If it is much longer than 8 minutes, it will be disqualified. We will take into consideration if the submitted recording is a little longer because the harpist is not playing as fast as the score indicates. Your safest approach would be to aim a little lower than 8 minutes.

What if my piece is a little shorter than 6 minutes?

A work shorter than 6 minutes will be disqualified. We are looking for a substantial addition to the harp repertoire.

Are there any other reasons for disqualification?

All scores received will be reviewed in an initial screening round. The works that do not qualify in terms of the contest rules will not be passed to the international jury round. Since the winning composition will become part of the required repertoire for a major international performance competition, we do expect a high level in terms of both substance and proficiency required of the performer. On occasion, we have disqualified works that are too easy (an advanced-level harpist should be able to tell you if this is a problem!). Works that are truly unplayable will not be accepted – again, count on your performer to let you know.

May I submit individual movements of a larger work?

If the individual movements are intended to be played as separate pieces AND you would be perfectly happy to have only the movement(s) submitted end up being published, yes. In this case, you should dismantle your multi-movement composition ahead of time, and submit only the chosen portion.



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Do you want a specific format or program (Finale, Sibelius) used to prepare the score?

The winning composition will be published exactly as submitted – should you win the competition, you will be asked to send immediately an identical copy of the score with your name on it. Although we do not specify an approach, please represent yourself appropriately. Also, be sure to use the score size specified above and in the Rules.

I don't use a software notation program. Can I submit my handwritten score?

We do not accept handwritten scores, but an occasional exception may be made for one that is graphic or otherwise non-traditional. To be safe, please consult the Contest Chair well ahead of the submission deadline.

Why can't I submit a midi recording?

There are two reasons for this: 1) Some jury members do not feel that listening to a midi recording gives a true representation of how well the resources of the harp are being used; and 2) if you are working with a harpist, your piece will avoid common harp compositional mistakes. A midi recording will disqualify your work.

Is the recording mandatory or just optional?

It is absolutely required – your work will be disqualified if you do not send a recording.

How can I send a recording if the work has to be “unrecorded?” Does that mean just a home recording, not in a concert, or what?

The contest rule says, “not commercially recorded” – in other words, not released on an album. The winning composition is often released on the Harp Competition's winning performer's album, and this is to ensure that it won't already be published elsewhere. The recording you send may be made at home, in a studio, or be taken from a live recording of a concert.

How high does the quality of the recording need to be?

You should plan to submit the best possible recording. However, not everyone has access to harpists, harps, and recording equipment of equal quality - the jury understands this and takes it into consideration.

Why are there two different submission dates?

*In the past, composers have frequently waited until just before the deadline to find a harpist. Some have missed the deadline because the harpist did not want to submit something that amounted to sight-reading. We **STRONGLY** encourage composers to identify a performer far in advance, and work with that individual throughout the compositional process.*



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What if I need the deadline extended by just a day or two?

Deadlines are firm, but if you think your circumstances are so unusual that we might consider them (ex: enormous natural disaster), you are welcome to email the Composition Contest Chair.

What if I can't find a harpist?

Harpists around the world are aware of our competition and a surprising number of them are willing to take time out of their busy schedules to help composers! If you are having difficulty, contact your closest music conservatory/school or symphony orchestra. If you live in a country where there is currently no working harpist, you may find one in a neighboring country who can be of assistance. If all else fails, contact the Composition Contest Chair for further assistance far in advance. Last minute requests for assistance will not be possible.

Can I write for prepared harp?

Yes as long as the materials used to prepare the instrument are readily available everywhere.

What does “other instruments welcome if played by the harpist” mean?

Additional instruments may be integrated into the composition, but cannot require additional personnel. An example is a passage where the harpist plays with one hand on the strings while the other hand plays bongos, a bell tree, or etc. – or where additional instruments were used to produce sounds on the harp, as in scraping the wire strings with a small cymbal or using a bow on the bottom string.

I am a harpist as well as a composer. I plan to enter the composition contest and to apply for admission to the performance competition. Is this allowed?

Yes, it is, and good luck with both! Please note, however, that if your composition wins, you will not be eligible to win the prize for best performance of the winning composition.

Can my composition be recorded by a harpist who applies to participate in the performance competition?

Yes, however, please note that if your composition wins, the harpist will not be eligible to win the prize for best performance of the winning composition.

May I enter more than one work?

Yes.

Why do I need to submit a biography?

A biography is required because if your piece is chosen as the winning work, the short bio you submit will appear along with the Composition Contest announcement and in the Harp Competition program book. The contest jury does not see your biography.

What exactly do you mean by “anonymous PDF” of the score?

Only the Competition Secretary will know which score is yours. Please follow the exact procedures described to ensure that she will have accurate information, while the jury will be able to judge without knowing who has composed any of the works.



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Can I take an existing piece and arrange it for harp?

That depends on how much "arranging" you do. If you choose a famous opera aria and compose a set of virtuoso variations around that theme, the answer would likely be yes -- the intent here is really "composition" rather than "arranging."

How many jury members are there? Are any composers included on the jury?

The jury is composed of 7-9 members. At least one of these is a composer; the others are professional harpists from around the world.

Will I be able to receive feedback about my composition from the jury?

No.

If your question was not answered here, feel free to email the Chair of the Composition Contest, Dr. Ruth K. Inglefield: rkinglefield@gmail.com.