



The Middle Tennessee Sinfonietta's 2026 Composition Competition

The Middle Tennessee Sinfonietta invites composers and musicians residing in Middle Tennessee to submit an original composition to be considered for the Middle Tennessee Sinfonietta's 2026 Composition Competition. We will be accepting applicants from the following categories:

1. Young Composers (13-17 years old)
2. Collegiate Composers (18-22 years old)
3. Advanced Composers (23 years old and above)

All submissions will be due by January 12, 2026 by 11:59 pm. In order to be eligible for submission, compositions must be submitted per the specific details outlined below. Compositions that do not abide by the guidelines, rules and regulations will not be eligible for evaluation. Submissions in each category will be voted on by a panel consisting of members of the orchestra and a professional composer. The winning composition from each category will be announced by January 31, 2026. Each winning composition from their respective category will receive a featured performance of their piece at the Middle Tennessee Sinfonietta's Summer 2025-2026 Season Concert in Spring 2026, as well as audio and visual recordings of the composition for personal usage and a small stipend. All participants will have the option to request feedback from the judges regarding their composition.

Rules and Regulations:

- The entrant may submit only one composition for their respective category
- The entrant must be the sole composer of the submitted composition
- The composition must not be published or previously performed
- Plagiarism of copyrighted material is illegal. It is the responsibility of the composer to ensure that the music submitted is not and does not contain copyrighted material
- Previous Composition Competitions winners are not eligible for consideration
- Further rules for individual categories are below:

Young Composers:

The piece should be 2-5 minutes in length* and can be written for the following instrumentations:

- Full Orchestra
2 flutes, 2 clarinets, 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2-4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2-3 trombones, 1 tuba, strings, percussion*

Collegiate Composers:

The piece should be 3-8 minutes in length* and can be written for the following instrumentations:

- Full Orchestra
2/3 flutes, 2/3 clarinets, 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2-4 horns, 2/3 trumpets, 2/3 trombones, 1 tuba, timpani/percussion, strings*

Advanced Composers:

The piece should be 5-15 minutes in length* and can be written for the following instrumentations:

- Full Orchestra
2-3(pic).2-3(eh).2-3(bcl).2-3 / 4-6.2-3.3.1 / timp.2-3perc / str*

** Compositions that are shorter or longer than the requirements listed for each category, as well as additional instrumentations, will be considered on a case-by-case basis and should be pre-approved by MTS before submission.*

Submission Procedure:

All compositions will be submitted online. Please use [this link](#) to submit your composition, complete the form, and upload the necessary files, which include:

- Applicant Acknowledgement Form as a PDF
- The Score as a PDF
- The Audio of your composition. Midi files are acceptable (wav/Mp3/Mp4/M4a)

Criteria for Evaluation:

1. **Compositional Technique**, including the following elements, where applicable:
 - i. Organization of pitch elements (such as melody, harmony, and counterpoint)
 - ii. Organization of rhythmic elements
 - iii. Formal design
 - iv. Appropriate writing for instruments
2. **Overall Musical Appeal**, including the following aspects:
 - i. Stylistic coherence (regardless of the particular style)
 - ii. Effective handling of unity/variety and tension/release
 - iii. Effective use of dynamics, articulations, and expression markings
 - iv. Interaction of all the elements (atmosphere, mood, direction, and the flow of the music)
3. **Originality**, referring to aspects of the piece that reveal the composer's individual voice and distinguish the piece from a musical exercise or a direct imitation of another piece

Please contact our Director of Outreach, Erika Easterly at erika.easterly@mtsinfonietta.com with any questions or for pre-approval of your composition submission.