

Rotary **YOUNG**
MUSICIAN **COMPETITION**



INFORMATION PACK

2026-27



[ROTARYGBI.ORG](https://rotarygbi.org)

Rotary
Great Britain & Ireland 

Information Pack for 2026-27

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Introduction

The Rotary Young Musician Competition is organised and promoted by Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland (Rotary GB&I).

There are four stages to the competition, each designed to support and encourage the development of musical talent. Some stages may have more than one round to select entrants progressing to the next stage.

The competition is open to all young amateur instrumentalists and vocalists regardless of grade, experience or musical styles including modern genres.

Aims and Objectives

The competition aims to offer young people:

- the experience of performing on a public stage in front of a live audience
- an opportunity to showcase their musical talent
- constructive, impartial feedback and assessment by experienced adjudicators

Who can take part?

The competition is open to all young people who are 17 or under on 31st August 2026 and who live within a Rotary Great Britain and Ireland district, including Gibraltar, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. They may be an individual choosing to enter directly themselves or an entrant through a group or community organisation including schools and colleges, home educated, other young peoples' community organisations, for example, community RotaKids or Interact, Scout Groups, Girl Guides, etc. It should be noted that a competitor who is 17 on 31st August 2026 but turns 18 on 1st September is allowed to enter.

This competition is for amateur musicians. An amateur is considered to be someone whose main source of income does not come from musical performances, although there may be occasions when the receipt of occasional out of pocket expenses or prizes may be received. It is not open to full time students of music or performing arts studying for a qualification above A Level or equivalent standard.

The qualifying criteria of all entrants will be checked rigorously; any entrant who does not meet the above conditions will not be allowed to take part.

There are two categories in the competition:

- solo instrumental
- solo vocal

How to Enter

To enter a local heat, contact your local Rotary club. You can find one using the club finder at the top left-hand corner of the homepage of the Rotary GB&I website www.rotarygbi.org. If you're unable to reach a local club or if you have any questions, please email the Rotary GB&I Competitions Team at competitions@rotarygbi.org.

Entrants should submit their completed entry form, available from their local Rotary club, to the Local Heat organiser by the date they have specified.

Important: Entrants may participate in a competition organised by a Rotary club outside their geographical area but may enter only one local heat.

The Four Stages of the Competition

Please note: some stages may involve more than one round to select those progressing to the next stage.

Local Heats

These are organised by local Rotary clubs, each of which sets its own deadline for entries which are generally between September and December. There may be more than one round to select those progressing to the District Finals.

District Finals

The winners from the Local Heats are entered into the Rotary District Final which is generally completed by mid-February. If there is a high number of entrants, additional preliminary rounds prior to the District Final may be required. Any such rounds must follow the same guidelines.

Sponsoring clubs are responsible for assisting with food and/or travel costs to the District Final venue.

Cluster Finals

The winners of the District Final progress to the Cluster Final, organised by several Rotary districts together and is generally completed by early March.

The dates for local heats, district and cluster finals competitions will be determined locally. Entrants should check dates with their local Rotary club in the first instance. Any entries submitted after the deadline will not be accepted.

Sponsoring clubs are responsible for assisting with food and/or travel costs to the Cluster Final venue.

National Final

Winners from the Cluster Finals go on to the National Final, organised by Rotary GB&I. The National Final will be held on Saturday, 24th April 2027 at a venue to be announced. This is an all-day event and competitors are expected to attend the full day.

The moral support of friends, family and the sponsoring club and district are important at the National Finals.

Sponsoring clubs are responsible in the first instance for the expenses of entrants reaching the National Final. No expenses are funded by Rotary GB&I.

Competition Guidelines

Format

This is a live performance competition. Competitors must perform a work or selection of works of their own choice, with a maximum performance time of 13 minutes at the National Final. **That maximum time may vary at the earlier stages of the competition so entrants should check the detailed requirements for each stage with the organiser.** There is no minimum time requirement though 'short performances, by their very nature, may disadvantage the competitor.

Competitors

- may perform the same pieces/songs at each stage of the competition
- may perform from memory or from music at any stage
- Vocalists should remember that assessment of the performance includes communication with the audience and performing from a copy of music may prevent candidates from fully achieving this criterion
- Vocalists are not permitted to use any form of amplification

Accompaniment

- Performances should be accompanied by a single instrument in sympathy with the piece/songs being performed
- Vocalists may accompany themselves
- For vocal, guitar and percussion candidates only backing tracks are allowed provided they do not contain the part being performed by the competitor. If it does that section of the performance will not be judged

- Backing tracks are solely the responsibility of the competitor who must provide the performing medium (e.g. audio player, amplifier, etc.) and may have someone to operate it. None of this will be the responsibility of the organiser.

In cases where accompaniment is not appropriate (e.g. traditional folk songs or solo compositions such as J. S. Bach's Cello Suites or Debussy's 'Syrinx' for solo flute), no accompaniment should be added if the composer did not intend one.

Instruments

- An acoustic piano (upright or grand, as suitable for the venue) will be provided
- No other instrument will be provided
- Competitors must provide their own accompanists; no 'official accompanist' will be provided
- Solo piano performances must not include additional instruments as this would constitute a duet, trio, quartet etc. and is not eligible

Electrical Equipment and PAT Certification

A current Portable Appliance Tested (PAT) certificate must be shown to the organiser on the day of the competition for electrical instruments (guitar, bass guitar, etc.) and their amplification equipment and for any medium used for permitted backing tracks. Failure to do so would mean

- for an electrical instrument the competitor would be disqualified
- for backing track equipment, it could not be used

Adjudicators

The adjudicators will be people with appropriate skills appointed by the organisers for the Local Heats, District Finals and Cluster Finals accordingly.

At the National level the adjudicators will be appointed by Rotary GB&I and will not be Rotarians.

Judging Criteria

The adjudicators will consider:

- Melodic and rhythmic accuracy
- Intonation
- Tempo and flow
- Tone
- Mood and character
- The appropriateness of the programme
- The holistic view of the performance on the day

After the adjudicators have determined the result of the competition one or more adjudicator will comment on the performances before the results are announced.

The adjudicators will not enter any discussion or correspondence regarding their decision; the decision of the adjudicators will be final and not subject to any appeal.

Recognition

At all stages of the competition, competitors will receive a Certificate of Participation.

Competition Procedure

Arrival

Before each competition, the organiser will conduct a ballot to determine the order of performance. Competitors will be notified of their performance order either in advance or on the day of the competition. In unforeseen circumstances, organisers reserve the right to make changes on the day if necessary.

Copies of music

Three copies of the selected music must be presented at the registration desk on the day of the competition. These should be in a folder and clearly marked with the competitor's name. In cases where the competitor fails to provide the required copies, the

performance will be adjudicated but the assessment may be adjusted accordingly. Photocopying facilities will not be available at the competition venue.

Guitarists must submit copies in staff notation: tablature is not an acceptable alternative, although competitors may perform from it.

Photocopies of music published as individual pieces will not be accepted unless written permission from the publisher is provided. Competitors entering through a school, music centre or club should check whether photocopying is covered under their organisation's PRS Licence.

Photocopies of music not published as individual pieces but, in an anthology, will be accepted provided the competitor has a copy of the original publication with them. All such photocopies will be retained and destroyed by the organiser immediately after the event.

Cuts and variations to competitor's parts

- Cuts to competitors' parts are not permitted
- Any variations to or extemporisation in the competitors' parts must be clearly marked in the copies for the adjudicators
- Cuts to the accompaniment should be avoided. However, cuts are permissible to edit long introductions or extended passages where the competitor is not performing. Any cuts to the music must be clearly marked in the copies for the adjudicators.

Performance

A master of ceremonies will invite each competitor to perform in the order determined by the ballot.

Competitors must introduce their own programme.

The music selected should reflect contrasting styles, which may include different movements from the same composition.

Performers are encouraged to include variety in both style and musical period within their programme. In the event of a tie, the balance and contrast in the programme will be considered by the adjudicators.

In the instrumental category, except for percussion, competitors should play on only one type of instrument. Percussionists may combine tuned and untuned percussion in their performance, although this is not compulsory.

Vocal competitors should choose songs suitable for a family audience, giving due consideration to the appropriateness of the lyrics.

At the National Final the competitors' performance must not exceed 13 minutes. Timing begins when the competitor starts to play or sing. Any portion of the performance that exceeds the time limit will not be adjudicated.

Clubs, Districts and Clusters may apply discretion regarding the maximum time limit but must ensure that competitors are aware of any variations specific to their stage of the competition.

During the performances, there will be no photography, nor the making of video/audio recordings, other than by the Rotary GB&I official photographer and videographer. This is to ensure that competitors are not distracted during their performance.

Results

After the adjudicators have determined the result of the competitions, one or more of them will comment on their observations before announcing the result.

At the National Final the winner of both the vocal and instrumental categories may be asked to perform a maximum of 3 minutes selected from their programme after the results have been announced.

[Rotary Youth Competitions and other opportunities for young people](#)

Take a look at <https://www.rotarygbi.org/projects/young-people/> to explore

- other Rotary Youth Competitions: Artist, Chef, Environmentalist, Photographer, Youth Speaks and Youth Speaks A Debate and Young Writer
- and
- Rotary Young Citizen Awards, Rotary Young Citizen Environmentalist Award, Rotary Young Citizen Peacemaker Award and Rotary Young Citizen Sporting Hero Award

You may wish to enter more than one competition or Award.

You'll also find information about

- Rotary Technology Tournaments which are organised in many areas
- Rotary programmes including RotaKids, Interact, and Developing Future Leaders
- Rotary Youth Exchange and more

There may be additional opportunities available locally - connect with Rotarians in your area to find out what's happening near you.

[Working with Children](#)

Rotary GB&I has adopted this statement of policy in working with children, vulnerable adults and those with disability:

The needs and rights of the child, the elderly, the vulnerable and those with disability take priority. It is the duty of every Rotarian to safeguard to the best of their ability, the welfare of and prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse and neglect of all children, the elderly, persons with disability or otherwise vulnerable persons with whom they come into contact during their Rotarian duties.

Click here to see the [Rotary GB&I Safeguarding Policy](#)