



CHESAPEAKE CHAMBER MUSIC
COMPETITION

12th

CHESAPEAKE INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER MUSIC COMPETITION

for Young Professionals

RULES AND HOW TO APPLY

Prizes

- Lerman Gold Prize Winner | **\$10,000** *plus paid performance at the 41st Chesapeake Chamber Music Festival in June 2026*
- Silver Prize Winner | **\$5,000**
- Awards to remaining Finalists | **\$1,000** per ensemble
- Audience Choice Prize | **\$1,000**

Lodging for the live final round weekend will be provided by Chesapeake Music, as well as select meals. Local travel will be provided by Chesapeake Music.

All finalists will receive feedback/critique from the judges, as well as an additional 60-minute concert opportunity during the live final round weekend. Chesapeake Music invites other presenters and promoters to the live final round weekend, as well as through Chesapeake Music's live stream (also broadcasted by The Violin Channel) — creating additional exposure for each Finalist Ensemble. Past experience indicates that new concert opportunities arise as a direct result of ensemble participation in the live final round weekend.

All prizes are conditioned upon full compliance by the ensemble and each of its members with the rules and requirements of the Competition. Chesapeake Music retains the right to distribute, divide, or withhold awards at its sole discretion.

Eligibility

- The ensemble must consist of 3-5 members
- At the application deadline (December 15, 2025), the average age of ensemble members shall be less than 30 years, 11 months, and 30 days
- Open to acoustic instrumental ensembles
- Voice as an acoustic instrument is not allowed or accepted
- The ensemble may not have more than one piano

How to Apply

- Each ensemble selects one of its members to serve as coordinator for the group; this individual will initiate the online application and provide a single point of contact to be used for the duration of the competition
- Contact and information on each ensemble member must also be provided within the application
- Application fee is \$40 per ensemble member (e.g., \$160 for a quartet), to be paid in one installment by credit card upon application submission
- A recording must be uploaded within the application and will serve as the sole basis for review
- Recording must be audio only
- Recording should be approximately 30 minutes of music, including at least 2 works or movements of works contrasting in style and character
- To maintain applicant anonymity, recording should consist of only the performed music, with no verbal introductions or reference to the ensemble or any of its members
- To maintain applicant anonymity, the name of the uploaded file should not include any identifiers such as the name of the ensemble or any of its members
- Recording must be in one take with no splicing, editing, or post-production (including effects such as reverb)
- Applications must be submitted during the application period: September 1–December 15, 2025 (11:59 pm); late materials will not be considered

About the Review Process and Live Final Round Weekend

First/Preliminary Round judges will review and rate all applicant materials anonymously, and will ultimately select between 4–6 Finalist Ensembles to participate in the live final round weekend (April 10–12, 2026) in Easton, Maryland. Up to two Alternate Ensembles may also be selected.

When Finalist Ensembles are notified of their advancement to the live weekend round, they will be given instructions on additional material to be provided in advance, such as (but not limited to) select marketing material, their 45-minute live final round program, and PDF files of each work being performed on the program.

Finalist Ensembles must travel to Easton, Maryland for the live final round weekend. Finalist Ensembles will be housed and receive local transportation at the expense of Chesapeake Music. An orientation and rehearsal period will take place on April 10, 2026.

On April 11, 2026, the live final round of the Competition will take place in the historic Ebenezer Theater at Prager Family Center for the Arts, featuring a Hamburg Steinway handpicked by Gabriela Montero. Each Finalist Ensemble will have 45 minutes to deliver their final round performance to an audience of classical music lovers — both in the venue and via live stream (also broadcasted by The Violin Channel).

Competition final results will be announced that same evening in the Theater.

The following morning, on April 12, all Finalist Ensembles will attend a special brunch where they will meet privately with the finalist judges to receive critique/feedback, and they will also converse with Competition patrons & key personnel, as well as other concert presenters/

promoters present. Later in the afternoon/early evening, each ensemble will present a 60-minute program of their own choosing at another local venue as arranged by Chesapeake Music.

The Gold Prize Winner will be invited to return to Easton in June 2026 to perform as part of the 41st Chesapeake Chamber Music Festival.

Terms and conditions for Finalist Ensembles

Results from the first/preliminary round of the competition are anticipated to be released in mid-January 2026.

Acceptance of the invitation to participate in the live final round weekend of the competition shall constitute agreement by the Finalist Ensemble and each of its members to the terms below:

- The ensemble will stay in complimentary housing in private homes in the greater Easton area, organized and administered by Chesapeake Music
- The ensemble will arrive and participate in an orientation and rehearsal on April 10, 2026, with timing details determined by Chesapeake Music
- The ensemble will participate in the live final round competition on April 11, 2026, and attend the awards presentation that same evening
- The ensemble will attend a brunch on April 12, 2026, to meet privately with the judges as well as converse with Competition patrons & key personnel, as well as other concert presenters/promoters present
- The ensemble will participate in the Sunday Finalist Concert Series by presenting a 60-minute program at another venue in the community as determined by Chesapeake Music
- If selected as the Lerman Gold Prize Winner, the ensemble will make themselves available to participate in the 41st Chesapeake Chamber Music Festival in June 2026
- All travel and housing, select meals, and an artist fee will be provided by Chesapeake Music for Festival participation
- Ensemble participation will either be during week one of the Festival (June 8–14) or week two (June 15–20), with exact dates to be determined in coordination between the ensemble and Chesapeake Music
- The ensemble permits Chesapeake Music to record and live stream the live final round of the competition at The Ebenezer Theater, and grants Chesapeake Music full ownership of such video recordings to be used without condition or limitation to promote the competition and its mission; the ensemble will receive a digital copy of their final round performance
- By February 1, 2026, the ensemble will provide marketing material, including but not limited to ensemble/musician photographs, brief ensemble biography, any social media handles; Chesapeake Music is granted permission to use such material without condition or limitation to promote the competition and its mission
- By February 15, the ensemble will provide a listing of their 45-minute live competition program, including PDF scores of each work listed to be used by the competition staff and judges
- By February 15, the ensemble will provide a listing of their 60-minute Sunday Finalist Concert Series program (no PDF scores are required)