

# CMM Youth Concerto Competition FAQ

Q: Are there specific **age limits** for contestants?

A: No. The rules state that the contestant must be in the 7th to 12th grade. Contestants must be considered to be matriculating in the seventh to the 12 grade range. In the case of a home-tutored or other atypical student, equivalency in general intellectual competence and maturity should be indicated. This has never been an issue, but specific questions may be addressed to the Competition Chair. (See below)

Q: May I request an **alternative repertoire selection** not listed in the printed repertoire list?

A: No. The selections on the repertoire list have been carefully selected with a number of issues in mind. Two of those issues follow. They are pieces appropriate to a range of skill levels for young artists. They are works for which the symphony either already possesses the orchestral parts or is able to secure them at reasonable cost. Alternative repertoire will not be permitted.

Q: If I apply via the **on-line application** process at [www.civictimorningmusicals.org](http://www.civictimorningmusicals.org), am I officially registered for the competition?

A: No. If registering on-line, your **registration will not be considered complete** until the following items are received:

- **Completed, signed teacher certification (May be completed online or scanned and sent to [CMMConcertoCompetition@gmail.com](mailto:CMMConcertoCompetition@gmail.com))**
- Non-refundable Application fee of **\$50** made payable to Civic Morning Musicals (may be paid on the CMM website).
- These must be on file with CMM by January 9, 2022.

Q: May I **request a specific audition time**?

A: Yes, you certainly may. However, the logistics of the competition may preclude your request being granted.

Q: Exactly what are the **criteria for winning** the competition?

A: There is only one criterion: demonstrated musical ability consistent with the high performance standards associated with a nationally recognized symphony orchestra. This translates into excellent personal pulse and rhythm, superb technique, mastery of the work, and apparent artistry.

Q: **How many** contestants from each division **go on to the finals**?

A: The judges will send forward contestants whom they deem have demonstrated the ability to successfully perform with the orchestra, given one 20-minute rehearsal with the orchestra (time is money!).

Q: **Will there always be a “winner”** in the final round?

A: Not necessarily. It is completely up to the judge(s) of the final round to determine if a contestant will be offered an opportunity to perform with the orchestra. CMM, Inc. and Symphoria reserve the right to not select a “winner”. In that case, all contestants would receive Finalist Award Certificates and for that year no one would play with the symphony.

Q: What is the **most frequent comment made by judges** discussing which contestants are qualified to be sent to the final round or to play with the symphony?

A: Preliminary judges often comment about contestants who play very well but have “rhythm problems” and therefore cannot be recommended. The final round judge(s) also frequently comment on rhythm issues. All are very clear about the absolute importance of maintaining a steady pulse and playing the internal rhythms accurately.

Q: What is the **second most frequent comment** heard from the judges?

A: Intonation, intonation, intonation.

Q: And the **third**?

A: Every year there are comments to the effect that a contestant has notable talent but does not have an adequate accompanist or is not playing “stylistically” well. Choosing a top-drawer coach-accompanist is an important consideration for each contestant.

Q: Are there any exceptions to the requirement to **play from memory** during the competition?

A: No.

Q: **Can my parents, relatives or friends attend the competition?**

A: The preliminary round is closed. There will be just you and your accompanist on stage and only the judge(s) in the audience. The final round is open to the public and you may invite as many as you would like to attend. However, you and your guests must be **quietly** seated in the hall by the beginning of the competition and plan to remain at least until the last contestant has played. Applause is appropriate at the completion of each audition. The round may take two hours or less, depending upon the number of contestants. There will be a two minute interval between each contestant while the judge(s) complete feedback notes. After the last contestant has played, deliberations generally take 30 minutes. After those are completed, all finalists’ receive a certificate and winners, if any, are announced.

Q: **In the final round, how are winners selected?**

A: As in the preliminary round, winners are selected on the criteria of musicianship, technique and artistry. In any given year, there may be no one selected as a winner, there may be one, or there may be several. There may be one or more selected from one division (piano, strings, winds, percussion) and none from the others. There may be a winner from each division; there may not be.

Judging is subjective. That means that four different judges hearing the exact same performances may have four varying opinions. They may unanimously agree on one or two possible “winners” or then again, they may not.

Keep in mind the “process” of being an artist in the field of music performance. It is the process, not the product that is most important. Any performance, once finished, was just one step in an ongoing journey. Trophies and certificates of yesterday have little to offer to the present moment. The winners of trophies or certificates may never “win” again. This year’s winners may not become professional musicians. Some finalists may go on to have wonderful professional careers, communicating the beauty and artistry of musical creation for countless audiences, and be “winners” time and time again. Each performance is

only one snapshot in time. Some snapshots are superb, and some are windows to seeing how we might create a better snapshot in the future.

The final round performance (or any performance) is an opportunity for every performer to “win” by relishing the preparation process, giving and celebrating a fine performance, gaining insights into the performing process, and broadening a personal perspective of potential growth opportunities ahead. If we were perfect with no potential for growth, there would be no joy of discovery and creation, no potential journey ahead. Directing our consciousness toward our opportunities for growth, and our capacity to recognize and rise to such challenges, is always more fulfilling than resting on our accomplishments.

**Q: Should I publicize my participation?**

A: Absolutely. You should write a press release for your local newspaper in which you announce that you are participating in the jointly sponsored “Civic Morning Musicals and Symphoria Youth Concerto Competition.” Give background information to include your parent’s names, your address, your school, your teacher, the number of years you have studied, and the title and composer of the piece you will perform. Give some background information about the competition which you may freely lift from the **“THE 50th ANNUAL YOUTH CONCERTO COMPETITION”** flyer. Give the date and time of the competition and any other information you think is appropriate. Send it out two weeks before you compete. If you move on to the final round, two weeks before that round and immediately after competing, send out additional press releases giving updates on your performance. Even if these do not get published, it is very important for you to begin developing the knowledge, tools, and experience you will need to support a playing career. And even if you are not intending to play professionally, it is a service to the community to keep it informed of the creative, constructive activities it supports.

**Questions?** (315) 254-0614 or [ttrebick@syr.edu](mailto:ttrebick@syr.edu)