

## **Concerto-Aria Competition 2026-27 Academic Year**

The 2026-27 Concerto-Aria Competition will be held on Sunday, November 1, 2026 in Schneebeck Concert Hall.

### **Dates and Deadlines:**

- Application Window Opens: 9am, Thursday, September 3, 2026\*
- Application Window Closes: 5pm, Monday, September 14, 2026 (*no applications will be accepted after 5pm on September 14, 2026*)
- Students/teachers notified of confirmation of participation: Thursday, September 17, 2026
- Competition day schedule (with specific time slots) communicated to contestants by Monday, October 12, 2026
- Musical scores due to competition coordinator: Friday, October 16, 2026
- Competition Date: Sunday, November 1, 2026
- Spotlight Recital: Wednesday, November 4, 2026 12pm, School of Music, Schneebeck Concert Hall
- Winner(s) perform with large ensembles: TBD in consultation with ensemble directors and soloists.

\*Return completed form to the School of Music Main Office 109. Forms must be submitted as hard copies.

### **Important Reminders:**

- Application forms must be signed by both your applied teacher AND the appropriate ensemble director.
- The 2026-27 Competition will have one round and will be judged by outside judges.
- Judges will select a winner or winners who will perform with the orchestra or wind ensemble and Spotlight Recital performers who will perform with piano on the Spotlight Recital.
- The number of competitors will be limited to no more than 20. See paragraph 17 for more information.

### **Rules/Procedures:**

#### *General:*

1. The competition will take place on **Sunday, November 1, 2026** in Schneebeck Concert Hall. The 2026-27 competition will be one-round only. Judges will select

both the Concerto-Aria Winner(s) and the Spotlight Recital performers. Decisions will be announced at the end of the competition day.

2. The Concerto-Aria Competition Winner(s) will be given an opportunity to perform with the School of Music's Symphony Orchestra or Wind Ensemble (or other large ensemble) as appropriate, on a concert program at a later date. In that concert, the winners are expected to perform the same repertoire with which they entered the competition, in its entirety. However, final determination of ensemble concert programming is at the discretion of the director of the accompanying ensemble and situations could arise in which repertoire substitution is required.
3. The Spotlight Recital will feature performers from the Concerto Aria Competition not designated as winners, but whose performances were outstanding. The Spotlight Recital will occur on Wednesday, November 4, 12pm. Students chosen as Spotlight Performers will perform with piano. Spotlight Recital honorees are expected to perform the same repertoire with which they entered the competition, in its entirety. The number of Spotlight performers will be determined by the judges. This number may vary depending on the length of the pieces (the total number of performance minutes will not exceed 45).
4. In the event that the competition cannot proceed as planned due to public health concerns or university regulations, the format and schedule may be modified at the discretion of the competition coordinator.

*Repertoire Guidelines:*

5. Repertoire selections must be approved by both the applied teacher and appropriate ensemble director (see paragraph 15 below for more info).
6. The general time limit for repertoire entered into the competition is up to 15 minutes in total performance length. This 15-minute limit refers to the full length of the musical selection(s) as they would be performed with Large Ensemble in the event that the contestant is named a Winner of the competition (i.e. the full length including the planned accompaniment). Possible exceptions to this limit: 1) single, continuous movements that cannot be divided or cut in a musically appropriate way will generally be accepted up to 20 minutes in length; 2) other similar exceptions may also be approved in consultation with the director of the appropriate accompanying ensemble. To request an exception, please include a detailed written explanation in your application.
7. Repertoire should consist of works or groups of works for soloist and ensemble (either orchestra or wind ensemble), within the time limit described in paragraph 8. This can include single-movement works for soloist and ensemble, a movement or movements from longer concertos or solo pieces, pieces for multiple soloists with ensemble, a song or aria with ensemble accompaniment, or a group of such songs/arias – all of these are appropriate. Entries of shorter and

longer durations will be judged on the quality of the performances, without regard or preference for the length of the selection.

8. Depending on the number of competitors, audition time slots may be limited to 10 minutes. *If necessary, competitors will be asked to make cuts to their submissions to fit within the time limit.* The competition coordinator will notify students and applied teachers of the 2026-27 Competition time limit on or by September 17, 2026, depending on the number of approved competitors.

A note on cuts: Every effort should be made to shorten orchestral tuttis *first* before cutting solo sections.

If chosen as winners, students will perform the entire movement [or movements if applicable] without cuts with the appropriate large ensemble or on the Spotlight Recital.

9. Competition repertoire should be presented in the competition with piano accompaniment (playing a reduction of the ensemble score). To request an exception to this rule, please include a detailed written explanation in your application. It is the responsibility of the contestant to make arrangements with a collaborative pianist, to provide the collaborative pianist with a piano score, and to set up rehearsal time(s). The School of Music will provide financial support for the following 2026-27 Concerto-Aria Competition pianists: Dr. Isabella Jie, Dr. Kim Davenport, Dr. Jessica Hall and Ms. Jinsill Yi . Contestants may also choose other collaborative pianists at their own expense.
10. Rehearsals for the Concerto-Aria Competition and Spotlight Recital should be arranged as part of your allotted time with your assigned pianist for the semester. The School of Music will cover payment for collaborative pianist services for the Concerto-Aria Competition performance and Spotlight Recital performance (if applicable) however, this financial support only applies to the following collaborative pianists: Dr. Isabella Jie, Dr. Kim Davenport, Dr. Jessica Hall and Ms. Jinshil Yi. If you choose to work/perform with someone not on this list, you are responsible for all payments to your collaborative pianist. If you have questions about collaborative piano assignments, please reach out to Dr. Jie ([ijie@pugetsound.edu](mailto:ijie@pugetsound.edu)).
11. In general, solos must be performed from memory. Contestants may request an exception to this rule for chamber ensembles (2 or more soloists) or for pieces that are so new or so complex that the standard approach in professional concerts would not assume memorization. To request an exception, please include a written explanation in your application.
12. No repertoire changes can be made after the form is submitted.

*Application Information:*

13. To enter the competition, contestants must print and complete the application form available on the [website](#). The deadline to submit the application form, fully completed, is 5:00 pm on Monday, September 14, 2026. Students must turn in a printed (hard copy) of their signed application to the School of Music Main Office. *All applications are subject to approval of repertoire by the appropriate faculty.*
14. Sign-up for the competition will open at 9am on the first Thursday of the semester, **September 3, 2026**, and close at 5pm on the Monday of the third week of the semester, **September 14, 2026**. *No applications will be accepted after 5pm on September 14, 2026.*
15. Forms must be signed and approved by both the **applied teacher** and the appropriate **ensemble director**: Symphony Orchestra: Dr. Anna Jensen; Wind Ensemble: Dr. Rachel Zephir. These signatures are essential to ensure that the repertoire is suitable for the ensemble as well as the soloist. *Ensemble Directors have the right to veto repertoire submissions.*
16. Applicants must submit a score for the judges (either a piano reduction score or the full orchestral score) by or before October 16, 2026 (specific instructions for score submission will be provided upon application).
17. The number of competitors in the Concerto-Aria Competition will be limited to no more than 20 participants. If more than 20 students submit signed applications for the competition, competitors will be chosen in the following order:
  1. Senior/5<sup>th</sup>-year Music Performance Majors
  2. Junior Music Performance Majors
  3. Senior/5<sup>th</sup>-year Music Majors (non-performance) and non-majors
  4. Junior Music Majors (non-performance) and non-majors
  5. Sophomore Music Performance Majors
  6. Sophomore Music Majors (non-performance) and non-majors
  7. First-year Music Performance Majors
  8. All other first-year students

If decisions need to be made between students in a single category (for example, if there are only 2 spots left for “all other first-year students” and there are 5 students in this category), participants will be chosen in the order their application is received.
18. Confirmation of participation will be sent to students and teachers by Thursday, September 17, 2026.
19. The competition day schedule (with specific time slots) will be set and communicated to contestants by Monday, October 12, 2026.

Eligibility:

20. The Concerto-Aria Competition is open to students currently registered at the University of Puget Sound for 3 or more academic units.
21. Winners of any previous University of Puget Sound Concerto-Aria Competition are not eligible.
22. Contestants must have permission from their studio teacher and appropriate ensemble director in the School of Music to enter the competition.
23. University of Puget Sound students who do not currently have a studio teacher within the School of Music may apply for an exception.
24. Contestants must be ready to perform their entire competition repertoire in order to enter.

Questions not addressed in these Rules can be directed to competition coordinator, Maria Sampen (msampen@pugetsound.edu).