

# London Philharmonic Orchestra

## LPO Young Composers 2026/27 – Information for applicants

The LPO Young Composers programme aims to find and support the progression of the orchestral composers of the future.

The programme offers a platform for emerging composers to develop their orchestral compositional voice and wider music industry knowledge. Working under the mentorship of the LPO's composer in residence (currently Sir George Benjamin), Young Composers spend a season with the LPO, each creating a new work for chamber orchestra that is performed by Future First musicians and LPO players at a showcase concert. In 2026/27, the brief will be to create a work for solo voice and chamber orchestra.

Along the way, Young Composers workshop their ideas, explore orchestral instruments, attend LPO concerts and rehearsals, meet industry professionals and build their networks and wider skills.

Applications for the 2026/27 season are now open. The deadline to apply is 9am (UK time) on **Friday 27 February 2026**.

### What is involved in the programme?

The programme offers emerging composers the opportunity to develop a new piece ahead of a public performance at Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall. Each composer creates a new work of up to eight minutes for a chamber orchestra of 30 musicians, comprising London Philharmonic Orchestra musicians and [Future First](#) musicians (the Orchestra's talent development scheme for early-career orchestral players).

Along with small group seminars and one-to-one mentor sessions for the participant composers, there will be a workshop in Spring 2027 which allows the participants to hear their works-in-progress, talk with players and receive advice and feedback from George Benjamin. This will be followed by further rehearsals leading to the final concert performance at Queen Elizabeth Hall in summer 2027.

Throughout the year we also offer wider opportunities to deepen the Young Composers' engagement with the Orchestra. These include:

- Opportunity for an exploratory 'Composer Lab' session with LPO players
- Opportunities to engage with professional composers working with the Orchestra, members of the Future Firsts scheme and, where possible, the LPO's wider Education and Community programme
- Professional development in areas relevant to professional composers (e.g. communication, music publishing, music administration)

The overall contact time commitment is approximately 10-12 dates over the year. Face-to-face activity takes place in London.

### Bursary

The LPO Young Composers programme is a professional development scheme for emerging composers. It does not constitute employment, and the new work created by the composers does not constitute a commission. Applicants will need to be able to support themselves financially over the year. A bursary of **£500** will be provided to each LPO Young Composer, to support travel or other costs they may incur, that would otherwise be a barrier to participation.

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## Who can apply?

We are looking for five talented composers at an early stage of their careers, with intriguing and individual compositional voices and an interest in composing for an orchestra.

Applicants need to:

- Be over 18 years of age and not in full-time education (part-time Masters and PHD students may apply)
- Compose at post-graduate level or beyond, or at an equivalent standard
- Be UK-based and able to attend all dates on the scheme (c.10-12 dates over the year in London) and have the time to dedicate to the opportunity
- Be unpublished by a major publisher
- Have not had a work performed by a professional symphonic orchestra in concert (unless as part of an emerging composer programme or scheme)

We are particularly interested in applications from composers from historically under-represented groups such as black, Asian or minority ethnic composers, women composers and disabled composers.

## How to apply

To apply for the 26/27 LPO Young Composers programme, you need to fill out the online application form on the [LPO Young Composers webpage](#). If an online form is not accessible to you, please contact Lowri Thomas on [youngcomposers@lpo.org.uk](mailto:youngcomposers@lpo.org.uk) or 020 7840 4203 to discuss alternatives.

## What questions are on the form, and what materials need to be provided?

The application form is in 4 sections:

1. Applicant details and eligibility
2. About you as a composer: 3 longer questions (see below for more information)
3. Musical examples: submit 2 pieces (see below for more information)
4. Personal background

The 'About you as a composer' part of the form includes the following three questions, for written answers or short video responses:

- Tell us about your musical/compositional journey until now (150 words max, or upload video link max 1 min)
- Why do you want to take part in the LPO Young Composers programme, and what will you bring to the LPO? (150 words max, or upload video link max 1 min)
- Artistically, what interests you most about composing for solo voice and orchestra? \* (150 words max, or upload video link max 1 min)

\*We are planning for the creative brief for 2026/27 to be for solo voice and chamber orchestra, although we reserve the right to change this if circumstances dictate.

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As the form has no 'save and return' function, we recommend you prepare your answers to these questions first, then paste them into the form when you're ready to complete it in full.

The 'Musical examples' section of the form asks you to share **two** examples of your compositions, by uploading scores and sharing audio/video of your music.

We recommend that the scores you share in your application use standard western classical notation, as this is what Young Composers on the programme will need to create for the Orchestra to perform from, and part of the assessment process is to ensure applicants are able to write an orchestral score readable by an orchestra.

These are the parameters for your two composition examples:

- One piece must be for 10 or more orchestral instruments. The other piece can be for any number of instruments.
- One piece should be a live recording.\* The other can be MIDI.
- If you are uploading an audio file, please name the file in this way:  
SURNAME, First name – Name of Composition  
e.g. STRAVINSKY, Igor – Petrushka
- Scores must be PDF documents only
- Please ensure any links are set to allow access to external assessors and that the links won't expire.

*\* Please note that we do not judge the piece on the basis of the recording, so do not be concerned if either the technical recording or performance quality are not of the highest standard.*

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## What is the selection process?

Once the deadline has passed, LPO Education & Community staff filter applications, removing any that are ineligible or incomplete. Applications are then randomly split between a group of assessors from the music industry (e.g. artistic programmers, composers, orchestral players), who narrow their applications down to a shortlist. Their list are merged to form a longlist of composers, which the composer-mentor narrows down to a final small group. These candidates then have a short phone interview with the LPO Education & Community Director, leading to the confirmation of the 5 composers who are officially offered places on the LPO Young Composers programme for 2026/27.

## What are assessors looking for?

These are the elements that the assessors consider when shortlisting applications:

**Creativity:** Individual and interesting compositional voices.  
Are the submitted pieces 'musically successful'? Do you want to hear more from this composer? Are there interesting ideas in the music, soundworld, or approach?

**Skill:** Composers with high level of skill in writing notated work for orchestral instruments, and the potential to write an 8-minute piece for a 30-piece chamber orchestra over c.8 months.

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Are the scores well written? Is the music written appropriately for the instrumentation?  
Does the composer have the technical skills to notate their ideas within the timeframe?  
Does the composer demonstrate understanding of technicalities of orchestral composition?

**Right opportunity?** Composers with an interest in working with the LPO and composer-mentor, at an emerging stage of their career, who would benefit from the scheme.

Assessors are encouraged to ensure their shortlist includes a balance of artistic voices and backgrounds.

## **When will I hear back about my application?**

We aim to get back to all applicants by **mid-August** with the outcome of your application.

Applications will be read and considered carefully, but there are only 5 places available on the scheme, so competition is high. If you are unsuccessful, you are welcome to reapply in the future if you still meet the criteria. Due to anticipated high numbers of applications, we are not able to provide feedback on individual applications.

## **Any questions?**

If you have any questions about the programme or application process, contact [youngcomposers@lpo.org.uk](mailto:youngcomposers@lpo.org.uk) or call Lowri Thomas on 020 7840 4203.