



Young Instrumentalist Prize 2026

Application Guidelines

Queensland Symphony Orchestra (QSO) is proud to present the 27th edition of the Young Instrumentalist Prize (YIP), a competition designed to encourage talented Queensland secondary school students along their music pathways. This competition has launched the performing dreams of many young musicians.

The competition is open to all Queensland secondary school students studying an orchestral instrument (including saxophone but not including keyboard instruments) at a level equivalent to AMEB Grade 8 or higher. Students from regional and remote Queensland are encouraged to apply. If selected for the Young Instrumentalist Prize Finalist Recital, travel costs for students whose primary residence is outside South East Queensland may be subsidised.

Applicants initially apply using an online form and pay the entry fee. Applicants will then be notified by Queensland Symphony Orchestra if they are successful and will be invited to submit a video audition and additional material. From these auditions, six finalists will be selected, along with the winner of the Brennan Keats OAM Violin Loan Prize. The six finalists will perform in person at the YIP Finalists' Recital: a public performance held at the QSO Studio in South Bank, Brisbane. A winner will be determined from this recital and will be given the opportunity to work with Queensland Symphony Orchestra in 2027. All six finalists will receive a combination of cash prizes and complimentary tickets to select QSO concerts of their choosing.

The Young Instrumentalist Prize is proudly supported by the Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Society (ADFAS), Brisbane and YFG Shopping Centres.

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KEY DATES

Stage 1 applications open	Friday 31 October 2025, 10am
Stage 1 applications close	Monday 1 December 2025, 5pm
Applicants receive audition invitation by (Unsuccessful applicants also informed by this date)	Tuesday 2 December 2025
Stage 2 application deadline	Friday 30 January 2026, 5pm
YIP 2026 Finalists notified by (Brennan Keats OAM Violin Loan Prize winner & unsuccessful applicants also informed by this date)	Friday 27 February 2026
YIP 2026 Finalists' Recital	Saturday 2 May 2026, 6:30pm

FINALIST PRIZES

First prize	\$5,000
Second prize	\$3,000
Third prize	\$2,000
Fourth prize	\$1,000
Fifth prize	\$500
Sixth prize	\$500

All prize money is in AUD. Any prize money must be spent on the recipient's continuing music education or towards the purchase of an instrument. All Young Instrumentalist Prize Finalists will also receive complimentary tickets to select Queensland Symphony Orchestra concerts of their choosing. If applicable, a seventh prize of \$250 may be awarded.

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ELIGIBILITY

Young Instrumentalist Prize applicants must meet all the following criteria:

- Be enrolled in year 7–12 at any Queensland secondary school (including home schools) in 2026
- Play an orchestral instrument (including saxophone but not including keyboard instruments) to a standard which is equivalent to AMEB Grade 8 or higher
- Have completed the [online application form](#) and paid the entry fee to Queensland Symphony Orchestra by 5pm on Monday 1 December 2025, 5pm
- Are not a previous First Prize winner of the Young Instrumentalist Prize. Applicants who have auditioned in previous years who wish to re-enter the competition are welcome to re-apply however, they must prepare a different concerto movement to that ever performed previously in this competition.

ENTRY FEE

Applicants must submit an [online application form](#) and pay the entry fee of \$100.00 by Monday 1 December 2025, 5pm. The entry fee must be deposited into Queensland Symphony Orchestra's account to be considered "received". The entry fee is only refundable if an applicant is deemed ineligible to audition by Queensland Symphony Orchestra.

Entry Fee: \$100.00

Account Name: Queensland Symphony Orchestra

Due date: 5pm, Monday 1 December 2025

Payment details - BSB: 084 004

Payment details – ACN: 888435786

Reference: Please use the naming convention *YIP_surname_first name* when making the deposit (eg. YIP_Smith_John)

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APPLICATION PROCESS

Stage 1:

Applicants must complete the [online application form](#) and pay the \$100.00 entry fee by 5pm on Monday 1 December 2025, 5pm. Applicants will receive a confirmation email from Queensland Symphony Orchestra, notifying them if their application is considered eligible and, if it is eligible, they will be invited to audition by 5pm on Tuesday 2 December 2025.

Stage 2:

Invited applicants must then submit the following;

- an [audition form](#)
- 1 file with the **solo sheet music to be performed**
- 1 file with the **piano accompaniment sheet music**
- a **link** to their recorded audition (see “Recorded Audition requirements” below)

When submitting each file/link listed above, please follow the relevant naming convention:

YIP_applicant surname.first name_form (eg. YIP_Smith.John_form)

YIP_applicant surname.first name_solo (eg. YIP_Smith.John_solo)

YIP_applicant surname.first name_piano (eg. YIP_Smith.John_piano)

YIP_applicant surname.first name_audition (eg. YIP_Smith.John_audition)

These materials must be submitted in one email to edcom@qso.com.au, no later than 5pm on Friday 30 January 2026. Any videos submitted after this date will not be considered. Applicants will receive a confirmation email notifying them if their audition is considered complete within 1 week of their submission. If selected as YIP Finalists, applicants must perform the same music performed in their successful recorded audition, unless otherwise negotiated with Queensland Symphony Orchestra.

ACCOMPANIST

Applicants must organise their own accompanist, at their own cost, for their recorded audition and the Finalists’ Recital, if selected. Queensland Symphony Orchestra can assist with organising Brisbane-based accompanists for regional or remote students selected as semi-finalists and/or finalists.

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RECORDED AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

Once an applicant is invited to audition, they must submit a video recording of themselves. The criteria for this recorded audition is;

- The repertoire must be from a movement or movements from a recognised concerto, or a work for solo instrument and orchestra. If more than one movement is selected, the movements must be from the same concerto.
- The recorded audition must be **strictly between 8–12 minutes of played music**. Spoken introductions are not considered part of this time limit. Auditions where less than 8 minutes or more than 12 minutes of music is played will not be considered.
- Cuts can be made in the selected work to allow the performance to be within the strict 12-minute music time limit.
- The recorded audition must include a live piano accompanist.
- Two versions of music should be submitted with the video audition; 1 solo version of the music performed and 1 version including piano accompaniment.
- All submitted sheet music must match exactly with what is played in the recorded audition. Any cuts to the music must be clearly marked on both the solo and piano accompaniment parts. This sheet music will be used by the adjudicators.

If an applicant is unsure about the eligibility of a selected work, they should contact the QSO Education team at edcom@qso.com.au. If selected to be a Young Instrumentalist Prize finalist, the applicant must perform the same music performed in their successful recorded audition, unless otherwise negotiated with Queensland Symphony Orchestra.

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BRENNAN KEATS OAM VIOLIN LOAN

All violin applicants may elect to be considered for the Brennan Keats Violin Loan Prize in their YIP application. One violinist will be selected by YIP adjudicators to receive the loan of the AE Smith 1961 violin. The loan recipient will have use of the violin from the day that year's YIP Finalists Recital to the day before the following year's YIP Finalists' recital. This instrument has been kindly donated to the Queensland Symphony Orchestra for use by an outstanding young violinist. The original donor, Brennan Keats OAM, entrusted the instrument to the National Instrument Bank created by Music Australia, and in 2020, ownership of the instrument was transferred to Queensland Symphony Orchestra in its own right.

The winner of the Brennan Keats OAM Violin Loan Prize must organise their own instrument insurance and, upon providing the insurance policy receipt, be reimbursed by Queensland Symphony Orchestra. Violin applicants requesting to be considered for this prize should include how being loaned the AE Smith 1961 violin would benefit them as a young musician. The successful recipient of the Brennan Keats OAM Violin Loan is responsible for obtaining instrument insurance before they can receive the AE Smith violin. Please read the *"Competition Conditions"* section in this document for more information.

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APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Stage 1:

☐ Complete the [online application form](#)

☐ Pay the entry fee

Stage 1 application criteria must be received by QSO by 5pm on Monday 1 December 2025. Please wait for a response from QSO, inviting you to audition and submit your materials.

Stage 2:

Upon being invited to audition and submit your additional materials, please create an email and attach the following 3 files and 1 link separately in it. Please do not create a ZIP file or send all documents in 1 combined .pdf file.

☐ Complete the [audition form](#)

☐ 1 solo version of the music performed in your audition (any cuts must be included)

☐ 1 version of the music performed in your audition including piano accompaniment (any cuts must be included)

☐ 1 link to your audition via Dropbox, One Drive, Google Drive, etc. Please ensure that your sharing permissions allow for edcom@qso.com.au and communityeducationqso@gmail.com to view your audition.

☐ When attaching each file/link to your email, please follow the relevant naming convention:

YIP_applicant surname.first name_form

YIP_applicant surname.first name_solo

YIP_applicant surname.first name_piano

YIP_applicant surname.first name_audition

Stage 2 application materials must be sent in one email to edcom@qso.com.au by 5pm on Friday 30 January 2026.

Both the Young Instrumentalist Prize application and audition forms referenced and linked throughout this document are also available at

www.qso.com.au/education/programs/young-instrument-prize

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COMPETITION CONDITIONS

Queensland Symphony Orchestra defines Southeast Queensland based on the definition by the Australian Bureau of Meteorology. Applicants may only apply to this competition once per instrument. If an applicant wishes to apply twice or more on different instruments and they are invited to audition, they will be expected to pay the entry fee per application. An application is not considered complete until the entry fee has been deposited into Queensland Symphony Orchestra's bank account. The entry fee is only refundable if an applicant is deemed ineligible to audition by Queensland Symphony Orchestra. If an applicant is invited to audition, failure to submit the recorded audition and additional materials by the stated deadline will result in the application being considered incomplete and immediate disqualification of the applicant from the competition. Recorded auditions where the applicant plays less than 8 minutes or more than 12 minutes of music will not be considered. Applicants must perform the same music performed in their successful recorded audition, unless otherwise negotiated with Queensland Symphony Orchestra. All YIP applicants must supply their own instrument and accompanist at all times. Submitted headshots/bios may be used for promotional purposes and at the Finalist's Recital.

The successful recipient of the Brennan Keats OAM Violin Loan is responsible for obtaining instrument insurance before they can receive the AE Smith violin. The loan recipient will have use of the violin from the day that year's YIP Finalists Recital to the day before the following year's YIP Finalists' recital. There will be no extensions to this timeline. In order to maximize their time with the violin, the loan recipient must organize their instrument insurance in advance.

The recipient must obtain a quote and send it to Queensland Symphony Orchestra for approval before purchasing the insurance policy. Once a policy is approved by Queensland Symphony Orchestra, the recipient must supply proof of insurance and total cost of the policy. Queensland Symphony Orchestra will then reimburse the recipient for their instrument insurance policy. An instrument policy obtained prior to QSO's approval will not be reimbursed.

Both the Young Instrumentalist Prize application and audition forms referenced and linked throughout this document are also available at

www.qso.com.au/education/programs/young-instrument-prize

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