



41st Nova Scotia Provincial Music Festival
5 and 6 June, 2026
Official Rules and Regulations

Venue, Live Festival
Acadia University, Wolfville

Host, Recorded Stream
FMFNS

Provincial Music Festival
registration deadline - 16 May, 2026

Martha Healy, President, FMFNS
fmfns.healy23@gmail.com
902-489-7528



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For Junior Local Festival students going into the Non-Competitive Education Stream, please refer to https://fcmf.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/2026-FCMF-National-Music-Festival-Syllabus_Final.pdf

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IMPORTANT

Local and provincial festival administrators should advise teachers and students to check the local, provincial, and national syllabi carefully when choosing music for festival entries. Administrators should also ensure their adjudicators are aware of class requirements when recommending students to the next level of competition.



WHAT'S NEW FOR 2026:

- A. **Intermediate Voice** - new maximum performance time is 15 minutes. Minimum requirement remains the same: Two (2) recommended selections by the Local Festival adjudicator OR participation in a Provincial/National Class. One additional piece may be added.
- B. **Solo disciplines - length of student program (Intermediate and Senior/Advanced) - new wording:** Additional works may be added to your program within the time allotted. This wording replaces the following: "It is expected that additional selections will be added to your program. Competitors are expected to use the performance time allotted to them to maximum advantage."
- C. **Musical Theatre** - Competitors may use props and simple costumes as part of their performance. It is recommended that costume changes be minimal (change of hat, adding a scarf/cape, etc.). All time taken for these changes is included in the total performance time. **Leaving the stage for costume changes is NOT permitted.**
- D. **Canadian and Indigenous composers** - Lists of works by Canadian and Indigenous composers can be found here: <https://fcmf.org/repertoire-resources/>
- E. **Optional Local Festival Solo Repertoire Selection Model - Intermediate and Senior/Advanced (for Local Festivals without designated Provincial/National solo discipline classes)** - Instead of approving only two selections, local solo adjudicators may approve all eligible repertoire they have heard and consider suitable for Provincials. Competitors may then choose their two Provincial program pieces from this approved repertoire and may include additional approved pieces from this list, provided they are within the time limit. Local Festivals may continue to use their existing solo repertoire selection process if preferred. For additional movements of a multi-movement work in Senior/Advanced classes, please see page 7, #8.
- F. **Class standings, Provincial Music Festival** - All solo Provincial Intermediate and Senior/Advanced disciplines will include 1st, 2nd, 3rd place standings, at the discretion of the adjudicator. Cash Prizes will be awarded to first-place winners.
- G. **Recommendations to the National Music Festival - Intermediate and Senior/Advanced** - First- and second-place solo Provincial Intermediate and Senior/Advanced students may be recommended to the National Music Festival at the adjudicator's discretion, provided their performances attain a satisfactory standard. An adjudicator may award first- and second-place without recommending the performer(s) for National competition. Alternates may be recommended at the discretion of the adjudicator should a satisfactory standard be obtained.
- H. **Time limits** - If a performance reaches the maximum allotted time, the performance will be stopped at that point. The adjudicator will assess the performance based solely on the the portion that has been heard. **Reaching or exceeding the time limit will NOT result in disqualification.**
- I. **Expectations** - Behave appropriately and respectfully during performances or adjudication workshops. Alcoholic beverages, **cannabis, and other controlled or** illegal substances are not allowed on the Festival site. Any infringement of this rule will lead to disqualification.
- J. **Memorization** - memorization of pieces is required in all levels of competition in all classes except Woodwinds, Brass, Percussion, Chamber Ensembles, and **String sonatas.**

Note: Rules I. and J. include minor wording updates for clarity and currency and are subject to ratification by the Board at the next regular meeting.

1. FORMAT

The 2026 Provincial Music Festival will be held in a dual format: live festival and recorded stream. The live festival will take place at Acadia University, Wolfville. The recorded stream will be hosted by FMFNS.

Live classes:

- Piano
- Strings
- Voice
- Woodwinds
- Brass
- Musical Theatre
- Chamber
- Original Composition

Recorded stream:

- Choir

Not offered at 2026 Provincial Music Festival:

- Band/Orchestra
- Percussion

NOTE: *Other classes, e.g. Guitar, may be added to the Recorded Stream list as deemed necessary.*

NOTE: *The FMFNS reserves the right to change the format of any Provincial Music Festival Intermediate and Senior/Advanced Solo class from a live to a virtual format if registration numbers of a particular class are deemed low enough. These decisions will be made after close of registration. If a change is necessary, students and teachers will be notified.*

2. NUMBER OF NOMINEES PER LEVEL FROM LOCAL TO PROVINCIAL

- JUNIOR LEVEL - **Please note:** Junior Level is **not** included at the Provincial Music Festival. Junior Level students go directly from their local festival to the National Music Festival in the Non-Competitive Education Stream (NCES), bypassing the Provincial Music Festival. Each local Festival may send maximum of two (2) students per discipline to the National Music Festival (plus 1 Alternate, if deemed appropriate. See #3).
- INTERMEDIATE LEVEL - maximum of two (2) nominees (plus 1 Alternate per discipline, if deemed appropriate. See #3.) from the local Festival to the Provincial Music Festival solo and recorded stream classes. This includes Solo and Ensemble Composition classes;
- SENIOR/ADVANCED LEVEL - maximum of two (2) nominees (plus 1 Alternate per discipline, if deemed appropriate. See #3.) from the local Festival to the Provincial Music Festival solo and recorded stream classes. This includes Solo and Ensemble.

3. ALTERNATES PER LEVEL FROM LOCAL TO PROVINCIAL

Adjudicators may recommend one alternate per class if the standard of performance is met. If a registered competitor is unable to participate, the named alternate can replace the competitor. Registration fees (with an administrative deduction) will be returned to the original person and a new registration fee must be paid for the alternate.

4. ADVANCING FROM LOCAL TO PROVINCIAL - THREE STEPS TO REGISTRATION

- After a discipline is completed at the Local level, those students recommended to advance to the Provincials will receive an invitation from their Local Festival coordinator. Students must confirm with their Local Festival coordinator within 48 hours whether they will accept this invitation;
- The Local Festival then submits Provincial Recommendation Forms (one per discipline) with the names of all students who have accepted the invitation to the FMFNS President by the end of their Local Festival. The email address of the President will be provided on the form. The blank forms will be emailed to all local festival presidents by the middle of March;
- Students who have accepted the invitation to advance to the Provincials must register online for the Provincial Music Festival via the FMFNS website by **16 May, 2026**.

5. CLASS REQUIREMENTS

There is the expectation that a well-rounded recital will be presented. Refer to FMFNS and FCMF syllabi: both should be checked very carefully for details as they relate to each level of competition and discipline. <https://fmfns.ca> <https://www.fcmf.org/syllabus/>

- **Brief Introductory Remarks:** Competitors are allowed to make brief introductory remarks for some/all of their pieces. These comments are included in their overall performance, for purposes of timing, but are not considered by the adjudicator in making his/her decisions re: music performance.

6. IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR COMPETITORS AND TEACHERS

6.1 **Expectations of Competitors and Participants [competitors, accompanists, and teachers] at a Provincial Music Festival:**

Please note: This information is provided to assist all participants in having a positive experience at the Nova Scotia Provincial Music Festival.

- You are the guests of the host music festival and the Federation of Music Festivals of Nova Scotia;
- After arriving at the Festival, contestants are encouraged to remain for the duration of the Festival and take part in all functions: e.g. competitions, adjudications/workshops, and attend the Stars of the Festival and Awards Concert;
- Performance adjudications will be planned into each competition program;
- Contestants are encouraged to attend the Stars of the Festival and Awards Concert where winners at both the Intermediate and Senior/Advanced Level will perform, and at which time awards will be presented and Nova Scotia's teams to National competitions will be announced.
- It is expected that all Competitors will:
 - Respect the pianos by not moving them or placing anything other than music on them, without specific authorization;
 - Respect the venues by proper disposal of garbage and recycled items, and observance of

posted signs;

- Respect other competitors by observing the guidelines given for practice / rehearsal times and not leaving personal belongings at departure;
- Dress appropriately in suitable semi-formal concert attire for competitions and workshops; and, more formal concert attire if performing in the Stars of the Festival and Awards Concert. Costumes are appropriate wear for Musical Theatre classes;
- Behave appropriately and respectfully during performances or adjudication workshops. Alcoholic beverages, cannabis, and other controlled or illegal substances are not allowed on the Festival site. Any infringement of this rule will lead to disqualification;
- Number the first bar of every line in their music scores (**required**);
- Be available at least 15 minutes before the beginning of their class.
- Competitors are prohibited from being in contact with adjudicators until competitions are completed;
- The Federation of Music Festivals of Nova Scotia is not responsible for lost or damaged musical instruments.

6.2 Official rehearsals may be offered in all disciplines if and where time and facilities permit.

6.3 At a Live Provincial Music Festival, a festival piano is provided in all venues and is the accompanying instrument. Recorded accompaniments are **not** permitted at a Live Provincial Music Festival. Unless otherwise informed, each performer in need of an accompanist must arrange and pay for such a person.

6.4 Photography & Videography are permitted from a designated seating area of a performance venue. Flash photography is not permitted. Audience members may only photograph or video performances with the competitor's permission. Adjudicator's comments and workshop may not be recorded.

6.5 Coaching from audience members of a performing student is not allowed, and will result in student's immediate class disqualification. Examples of coaching: gesturing, mouthing words to student while they are onstage, etc.

7. ELIGIBILITY: Local festivals may determine who represents them at the Nova Scotia Provincial Music Festival in one of two ways:

7.1 **Either:** The Local Festival can add provincial classes to their syllabus and students enter those classes if they are interested in being eligible for the Provincial Music Festival. The local adjudicator would determine which student(s) should represent the festival in each class.
OR: The Local Festival adjudicator could choose a student or students from the appropriate grade and/or age levels for each class, making sure they have appropriate repertoire to meet the requirements of the class for which they are being recommended;

7.2 A minimum mark of 85 is required at the local festival to be recommended to the Nova

- Scotia Provincial Music Festival;
- 7.3 To be eligible to advance to the FCMF National Music Festival from the Nova Scotia Provincial Music Festival, the Competitors(s) must reside in Nova Scotia or study in Nova Scotia;
 - 7.4 A Local Festival may send TWO (2) competitors in each of the NS Provincial Music Festival Finals. Local Festivals are encouraged to have the adjudicator for each eligible discipline name an alternate competitor and complete the necessary paperwork, in case a first choice competitor is unable to attend for any reason;
 - 7.5 In disciplines with age requirements, the competitor's age will be determined as of 31 December prior to the Provincial Festival. Local festivals must offer proof of age, if requested;
 - 7.6 Participation is limited to non-professional musicians. A non-professional musician is defined as a person whose principal means of livelihood is not obtained from the performance of music in the particular category in which he or she is competing. This stipulation does not, however, preclude such a person having occasionally received remuneration for musical services rendered, even in the area in which he or she is competing;
 - 7.7 Competitors may only be recommended to the Provincial Music Festival Finals from ONE local festival per discipline. Each competitor must accept, or decline, a recommendation from a local festival within 48 hours;
 - 7.8 Competitors are eligible to play within the same discipline on different instruments and/or different levels;
 - 7.9 At a live Nova Scotia Provincial Music Festival, recorded accompaniments are not permitted. Each competitor must arrange and pay for his/her own accompanist;
 - 7.10 Accompaniments are restricted to the piano, unless otherwise indicated in the score;
 - 7.11 Accompanists must abide by copyright rules and restrictions whether playing from a paper or a digital score;
 - 7.12 A Registration fee is non-refundable unless the entry is declined by the FMFNS. Once an entry has been accepted, no changes to repertoire will be allowed;
 - 7.13 Alternates: Adjudicators may recommend alternates in any class if the standard of performance is met. If a registered competitor is unable to participate, the named alternate can replace the competitor. The alternate will be required to pay the entry fee in full prior to participation;
 - 7.14 For Chamber groups, if a recommended competitor from the Local Festival level is unable to participate at the Provincial level, they can be replaced by an alternate. There is a maximum of one substitution permitted for each Chamber group.

8. REPERTOIRE: The minimum repertoire requirements to be performed at the NS Provincial Music Festival, as outlined in the Provincial Syllabus, must have been heard by the recommending adjudicator at the Local Festival. This may be in a specifically designated Provincial Class or through a combination of performances in classes at the Local Festival. If performing additional repertoire beyond the two recommended pieces, this additional music must also have been heard and recommended by the local adjudicator. For Senior/Advanced solo students, this requirement does not apply to additional movements of a multi-movement work. Senior/Advanced students may include additional movements in their Provincial program that were not heard by the Local Festival adjudicator, provided the total performance time remains within the maximum time allotted.

IMPORTANT: Refer to FMFNS syllabus <https://fmfns.ca/> and FCMF Syllabus <https://www.fcmf.org/syllabus/> for specific repertoire details.

- 8.1 A Concerto or Concerted Work is defined as any composition written for solo instrument with orchestral accompaniment;
- 8.2 Sonatinas, Sonatas and Concertos can be from any musical time period if they have been graded, as per syllabus requirements. A one-movement Sonatina or Sonata meets the requirements for the Intermediate level (Developing Artist Stream);
- 8.3 A **selection** is a composition or song cycle that is meant to be one body of work as indicated by the composer. Competitors may choose to perform partial or complete works based on syllabus requirements and time restrictions. A second selection cannot be another movement or song from the same work;
- 8.4 In disciplines with graded repertoire requirements, the level of difficulty of their repertoire will usually be that of the Royal Conservatory of Music [RCM]. Complete and accurate information on registration forms allows for checking the appropriateness of repertoire, and the resolving of any problems before competitions proceed;
- 8.5 Competitors are encouraged to reflect a variety of styles and periods in their choice of repertoire. They are also encouraged to use Canadian and Indigenous composers in their performances. Lists of works by Canadian and Indigenous composers can be found here: <https://fcmf.org/repertoire-resources/>

9. COPYRIGHTS / COMPETITIONS, PERFORMANCE ADJUDICATIONS / WORKSHOPS

COPYRIGHT: All copyrights must be observed.

- Junior & Intermediate competitors must provide original scores of music for the adjudicator;
- Senior/Advanced competitors must present an original score containing both solo and accompaniment;
- Chamber Ensembles must submit a full score;
- Legally downloaded music is permissible, but it shall be printed double sided and placed in a binder (not in sheet protectors) for the Adjudicator;
- Please indicate the source of the download by including payment receipt or proof of Public

Domain;

- Competitors playing with a score [String sonatas, Woodwind, Brass, Percussion, and Chamber classes] must perform from original scores.

Failure to do so automatically disqualifies the competitor.

- 9.1 In Intermediate classes, transposition is permitted, unless otherwise noted, but the performance key must be indicated on the submitted score. In Senior/Advanced classes, the submitted score must be in the performance key.
- 9.2 The accompanist must have an original score on the piano. Accompanists are permitted to use digital scores on tablet computers such as iPads, provided they can clearly show upon registration that copyright laws have been observed. These scores are separate from the originals which must also be presented to the adjudicators.
- 9.3 **Memorization** of pieces is required in all levels of competition in all classes except String sonatas, Woodwinds, Brass, Percussion, and Chamber Ensembles. **Failure to play from memory in required classes will result in disqualification.**
- 9.4 **Time limits** for classes listed in the syllabus must be followed. Timing shall be from first note or introductory remark to last note, including pauses between pieces and costume changes. Competitors are allowed to make brief introductory remarks for some/all of their pieces. These comments are included in their overall performance time, but are not considered by the adjudicator in making his/her decisions re: music performance. If a performance reaches the maximum allotted time, the performance will be stopped at that point. The adjudicator will assess the performance based solely on the the portion that has been heard. Reaching or exceeding the time limit will NOT result in disqualification.
- 9.5 Competitors disqualified from the competition for any reason including, but not limited to playing with music or use of photocopied music, will:
- Be disqualified from award placement, even if the lone competitor in a class;
 - Be disqualified from receipt of award monies;
 - Be disqualified from advancing to the FCMF National Music Festival in the current year;
 - Receive their adjudication comments and Participation Certificate;
 - Be required to attend the adjudication workshop and announcement session.
- 9.6 All competitors must attend their adjudication/workshop and announcement session. Failure to do so will automatically disqualify the competitor from:
- Receiving a written adjudication;
 - Receiving an award placement;
 - Receiving award monies;
 - Proceeding to the current FCMF National Music Festival;
 - Future participation in the Provincial competition for a period of one year in the discipline in which they were disqualified. Participation in other disciplines will be permitted.

10. CLASS STANDINGS, PROVINCIAL MUSIC FESTIVAL

All solo Provincial Intermediate and Senior/Advanced disciplines will include 1st, 2nd, 3rd place standings, at the discretion of the adjudicator. Cash Prizes will be awarded to first-place winners.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE FCMF NATIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL

First- and second-place solo Provincial Intermediate and Senior/Advanced students may be recommended to the National Music Festival at the adjudicator's discretion, provided their performances attain a satisfactory standard. An adjudicator may award first- and second-place without recommending the performer(s) for National competition. Alternates may be recommended at the discretion of the adjudicator should a satisfactory standard be obtained.

Note - it is possible for an adjudicator to award a first place in a class but not recommend that the performer proceed to National competitions.

12. FCMF NATIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL

Competitors entering classes eligible for advancement to the FCMF National Music Festival are STRONGLY encouraged to read the FCMF National Music Festival Syllabus to guide their selection of repertoire at the Local and Provincial Music Festivals: <https://www.fcmf.org/syllabus/>

- 12.1 At the National level, the Non-Competitive Education Stream (Junior Level) and the Developing Artist Stream (Intermediate) will be held virtually. The Emerging Artist Stream (Senior/Advanced) will be live.
- 12.2 Previous FCMF National Music Festival 1st-place winners - except the Grand Award Competition Winner - are eligible to compete in the FCMF National Music Festival in subsequent years;
- 12.3 For up-to-date FCMF details on prize money, affiliation fees (for local/provincial festivals) and entry/registration fees, please check FCMF website. <https://fcmf.org/landing/>
Also, it is possible for an adjudicator to award a first place in a class but not recommend that the performer proceed to National competitions.

13. RECORDING REGULATIONS – *If the festival is held as a virtual competition*

- 13.1 Professional recordings are not required for the competition, but good audio and visual quality are very important. The quality on most cell phones is adequate.
- 13.2 Video recording can be done in home or studio or other location:
 - Must include a clear picture of the student performing showing face or facial profile, hands (in the case of pianist and instrumentalist), and instrument;
 - Camera angle must remain consistent throughout the performance;
 - Editing or splicing in any form is strictly prohibited;
 - After checking for balance, video picture, etc., the submitted recording must be one take;
 - The complete performance of all pieces should be performed consecutively on one video without stopping the camera during breaks. Please be aware of time limits.
- 13.3 Video file is uploaded to a private YouTube channel as an 'unlisted' video. These videos can only be viewed by someone with the link.

13.4 A PDF file of the score for each selection performed is to be named with the same naming convention:

Discipline_Level_LocalFesFval_ClassNumber_CompetitorName_Selection_Composer

and uploaded to a cloud format [DropBox, Google Drive, iCloud etc.].

Example:Piano_Junior_QueensCounty_202_JaneSmith_PreludeNo.6_JohannSebastianBach

- The PDF must include the cover and/or title page of the book and all pages of music performed in the competition;
- The first bar of each line must be numbered;
- If the selection score is a digital download, the receipt for digital purchase or proof of Public Domain must be included in the PDF file.

13.5 Recorded entries must be submitted online on or before the deadline announced on the FMFNS website fmfns.ca:

- The recording for the complete performance named as outlined in #3 above;
- A clear, scanned copy of each score with the first bar in each line numbered, and named as outlined in #4 above;
- A headshot photo of the competitor.

END FMFNS RULES AND REGULATIONS 2026