



PRÉSENCE
COMPOSITRICES
RESSOURCES & PROMOTION

in collaboration with

 **OPÉRA**
GRAND AVIGNON

*Présence
Compositrices*
**INTERNATIONAL
MUSIC
COMPETITION**

— 1st edition

29, 30, 31 OCT. & 1ST NOV. 2026

Information & Registration:
www.presencecompositrices.com

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I. ABOUT THE COMPETITION

An international competition to reveal the highest-quality works by women composers

After centuries of invisibility, it remains difficult to know who and what to play, just as it is and to know how and where to access the works. Playing these works in concert represents a decisive step likely to influence their future playability.

These findings, made over many years of observation—notably in that of our festival—led us to create the Centre Présence Compositrices and various educational tools, specifically our database Ask Clara. Despite a shift in favor of women composers in recent years, much remains to be done so that this change is embodied in concrete actions taken by performance venues and teaching institutions of both small and large means.

THE INTERNATIONAL PRÉSENCE COMPOSITRICES COMPETITION HAS FOUR MAIN OBJECTIVES:

1. Accelerate action in favor of recognizing the highest quality works by women.
2. Ensure these works are played by excellent musicians.
3. Provide visibility and support to performers who are committed to promoting this repertoire.
4. Allow programmers easier access to a rich catalog of music by women.

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The aim of our competition is to take steps in favor of recognizing the highest quality works by women composers by being a source of inspiration and knowledge for young artists to undertake research and select pieces relevant to their musical practices. The resulting program will be presented to a jury that will evaluate not only the technical and musical performance, but also the sincerity and boldness of the commitment, as well as the intrinsic quality of the proposed works.

This approach will allow a greater number of works to gain visibility and will enable those already known to benefit from multiple performances, just like many works by male composers. Lastly, it will help make this entire repertoire become part of the standard repertoire performed by professional artists.

A work that has long been forgotten or unknown never receives the unconditional support of those who may discover it, especially if the composer themselves is not often programmed. Performing a given work in competitions can award true legitimacy to the work. This presents a real challenge for performers who bear the responsibility of being one of the few, if not the first, to study it and justify its relevance within their programs. The aim of our competition is to ensure that these works are performed by high-quality artists who can best interpret them and bring, or restore, them to life. It is an exhilarating endeavor which requires genuine commitment, profound musical intelligence, and undeniable technical skill in order to elicit interest and attentive listening from an audience.

In the world of classical music, competitions are regularly imposed on artists. They often act as career accelerators and, on a more personal level, help to strengthen the confidence and sense of legitimacy of young artists. Our competition seeks to raise the profile of and support performers who take the risk of championing this repertoire. As such, it will offer several of the winners future performance opportunities, allowing them to continue performing the works selected for the competition.

Furthermore, a special «Discovery» Prize will be awarded, recognizing the importance of performing a particularly obscure work or program whose qualities are unanimously acknowledged by the jury.

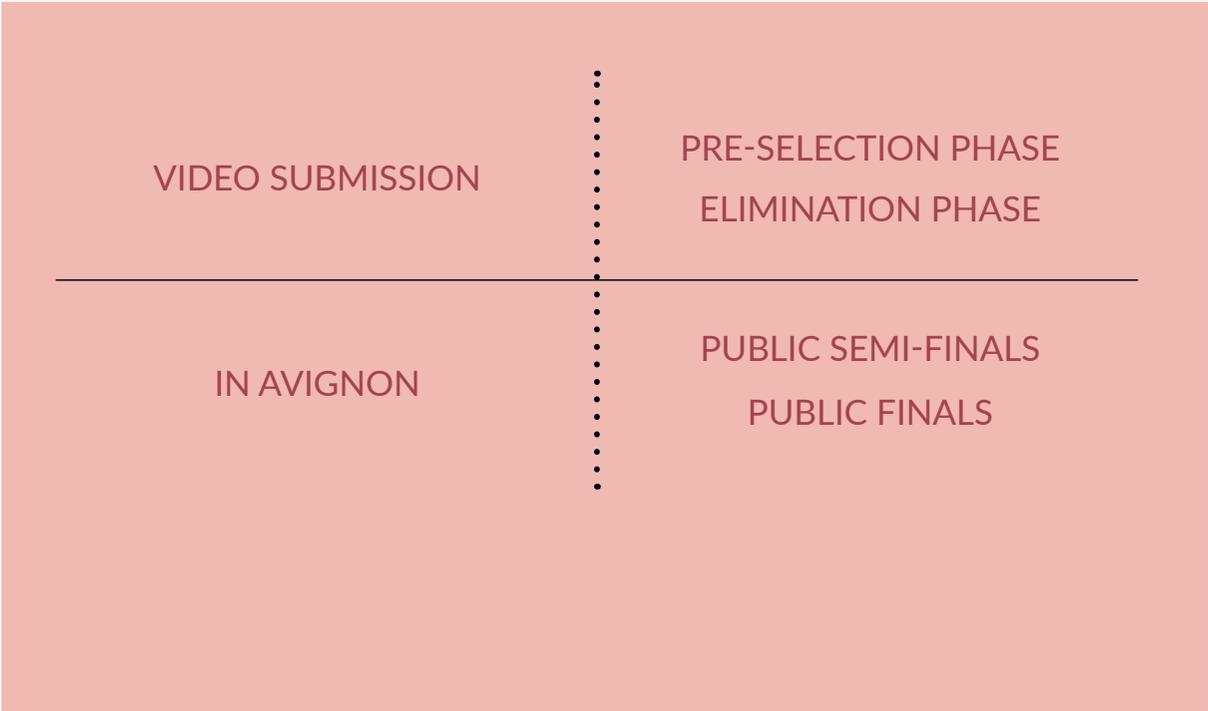
• ASK CLARA
THE ESSENTIAL RESOURCE WHO WILL HELP YOU
WITH YOUR PROGRAM RESEARCH

Each edition of the competition will be an opportunity to enrich the documentation related to existing events and programs within the Centre Présence Compositrices' agenda. Furthermore, and whenever possible, we will provide assistance in accessing sheet music for applicants who request it.

The conditions for this assistance will be detailed in the following sections.

By being supported by the Centre Présence Compositrices, whose tools are well-known and used by a large number of professionals, our competition already has genuine credibility. Directors of performing arts venues often lack the time to conduct the research and evaluation of works themselves. The competition will undertake some of this work for them, and the awards granted by a qualified jury will guarantee the quality not only of the artists but also of the works. In this way, the competition will provide those looking to program musical works with easier access to a rich catalog of music by women.

A 100% women composers platform for the classical music sector.



II. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The **Présence Compositrices International Music Competition**, held every two years, will be open to different ensembles.

The first edition is open to chamber music ensembles of 2 to 4 instrumentalists regardless of gender or nationality with any combination of the following instruments: violin, viola, cello, double bass, or piano.

The maximum age of individual members must be 35 years as of November 1, 2026. The average age of all members per ensemble must not exceed 32 years as of November 1, 2026.

Ensembles must arrive fully formed; no requests for accompaniment or replacement of a candidate will be accepted.

• REGISTRATION

The application information will be exclusively found online at presencecompositrices.com.

The following documents must be submitted for each applicant and compiled into a single application per group.

Application deadline :
May 1st, 2026, at 11:59pm
Central European Time (UTC+1).

The application will only be considered valid if it is accompanied by all the documents listed below, received before the application deadline. The online application form must be completed.

- The registration form found online.
- A copy of a valid national identity card or passport.
- A scanned copy of proof of address.
- A curriculum vitae (CV), one page maximum per person.
- A biography of each performer of no more than 1,000 characters (including spaces).
- A biography of the ensemble including the ensemble's name of no more than 1,000 characters (including spaces) if the group existed prior to this competition.
- One recent, high-quality color photograph of each artist (minimum resolution of 300 dpi).
- One recent, high-quality color photograph of the group (minimum resolution of 300 dpi).
- The approval of the image rights release form.
- The approval of the audio/video recording release form.
- The video recordings required for the pre-selection round.
- A sworn statement confirming compliance with the recording requirements.
- All sheet music in PDF format, without annotations, of the recorded works.
- A list of the program for the first two competition phases, including the names of the movements of the works.
- Proof of payment of the competition entry fees.

• REQUIREMENTS FOR THE VIDEO PRE-SELECTION

- Applicants must submit one or more high-quality video files recorded within the last 12 months.
- Each performer must be visible for the majority of the take.
- Recordings of each piece must be uncut and unedited, even if it is a multi-movement work.
- There are no restrictions on the number of microphones or their placement, provided that high-quality sound is maintained.
- Concert recordings are permitted if the sound quality is satisfactory.

• REQUIREMENTS FOR THE VIDEO ELIMINATION ROUND

- Ensembles are required to provide a video recording of a given program under conditions similar to those of a concert.
- Applicants must submit a single, high-quality video file recorded after their selection has been announced.
- The recording must be made under technical conditions that allow for the continuous visibility of each performer.
- Only one camera with a fixed, wide shot may be used.
- Recordings of each piece must be uncut and unedited, even if it is a multi-movement work.
- There are no restrictions on the number of microphones or their placement, provided that very high quality is maintained.

• REGISTRATION FEES

- The registration fee is 60€ per person, regardless of the number of musicians per group.
- Registration fees must be paid in Euros at the time of registration, and the net amount received by the competition organizers must be €60. You may need to check with your bank regarding any potential exchange rate fees in your country of origin.
- Accepted payment forms are indicated on the registration form found online.
- Registration fees are non-refundable under any circumstances.

• SELECTION PHASES

The competition will take place in four phases:

1. Pre-selection round (video submission)
2. Elimination round (video submission)
3. Semi-final (in Avignon with an audience)
4. Final (in Avignon with an audience)

Results are announced after each round. The jury's decisions are final.

Video Pre-Selection

The pre-selection stage aims to assess the technical and musical level of the ensembles that will participate in the competition.

The quality and originality of the proposed program for the subsequent stages of the competition will also be taken into account.

The names of the individuals and ensembles selected for the online preliminary round will be posted on the competition page of the Présence Compositrices website, as well as on social media (Facebook and Instagram). All selected participants will also receive information regarding the rest of the competition.

All unsuccessful ensembles will receive written feedback on their performance within a maximum of 4 weeks after the results are posted.

Video Elimination Round

This round is the second stage of the competition. It will be broadcast between July 21st-23rd in an order of viewing determined by a random draw.

The results of this round will be published on the Présence Compositrices website and social media.

All unsuccessful ensembles will receive written feedback on their performance by September 30th.

Semi-Finalists' Welcome

The semi-finalists will be welcomed on October 28 at 6:30pm in Avignon at a location to be disclosed later. All participating ensembles are required to attend this event, which will provide an opportunity to share information about the competition format. The order of performance for the semi-finals will be determined by a random draw at this time.

The Semi-Final

The semi-final will be held in front of a live audience at the Avignon Conservatory Auditorium. The results of the competition will be posted on the Présence Compositrices website and social media channels at the end of the day.

The order in which the ensembles will perform in the final round will be determined by a random draw after the results are announced.

The Final

The final will take place in front of a live audience in the main hall of the Opéra Grand Avignon.

The prizes will be awarded at this event, and a social gathering will conclude the evening.

• FUNDING AND REIMBURSEMENT

All costs related to these events are the responsibility of the candidates, with the exception of the ensembles who participate in the finals who will receive a grant of 600€.

Whenever possible, the competition organizers will try to find host families willing to accommodate those who request it by email at the time of registration.

The competition organizers are not responsible for any costs related to illness or accidents incurred by participants in the various events.

• IMAGE RIGHTS

The submission of your application grants the Centre Présence Compositrices and the Opéra Grand Avignon, the right to record, reproduce, and publicly display any images and performances for the purpose of promoting the competition or in any documentary, under the conditions defined below:

- Présence Compositrices and the Opéra Grand Avignon may take photographs and recordings using any technical means, on any medium, and in any format.
- Présence Compositrices and the Opéra Grand Avignon may reproduce and distribute these photographs and/or recordings for public communication worldwide, through any means of dissemination, either directly or through any authorized third parties or organizations.

III. MUSICAL PROGRAMMING

• GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS:

- The technical and musical qualities of the ensembles must be of a high standard. However, given the unique and highly specific artistic focus of the competition, considerable attention will also be paid to the content of the programs and, more generally, to the overall structure of the program across all rounds.
- Our database «Ask Clara» offers numerous works that meet the criteria of the ensembles featured in this inaugural competition and publications to inform programming choices will be made available between February and July 2026.
- Assistance in obtaining sheet music will be provided to those who request it by email: ccontact@presencecompositrices.com, specifying «International Music Competition» in the subject line.
- No memorization will be required.
- Candidates must submit their programme for the pre-selection and elimination rounds at the time of registration. The programme for the semi-final and final rounds will be required after the elimination round. No changes will be permitted, except to the order of the pieces.”
- Depending on each ensemble’s artistic vision, programs may consist of complete works or excerpts. They may also focus on a particular theme, nationality, or aesthetic.
- The works by women composers can be performed multiple times per the conditions outlined below:
 - Only one repetition is allowed per piece or movement.
 - The work may be performed again in its entirety or in part.
 - You may distribute these repetitions across the remaining rounds.
 - The program for the semi-final and the final must be completely different.
- The timings indicated for each round must be strictly adhered to. They are indicated for the musical time, including micro-pauses between movements, for example.
- Each ensemble must provide the complete scores in digital format before each competition.

Video pre-selection (between 20'-30')

The program for this competition is open and may consist of works by men and women composers of various nationalities and periods. Excerpts from existing works are acceptable.

Video elimination (between 20' and 30')

The program for this round is open but must consist entirely of works by female composers. Excerpts or complete works are acceptable.

Semi-final (30') and Final (30')

The program for each of these tests is open but must consist entirely of works by female composers. Excerpts or complete works are acceptable.

The excerpts or complete works must be completely different for each of these tests.

IV. PRIZE AND REWARDS

The following prizes will be awarded:

1ST PRIZE
€5,000

2ND PRIZE
€3,000

3RD PRIZE
€2,000

DISCOVERY PRIZE
€1,000

The Discovery Prize will be awarded to an ensemble for its choice of a work or for a particularly coherent and original program. This could be, for example, the case of a high-quality, previously unperformed work or a program that has been the subject of musicological research, etc.

AUDIENCE PRIZE
€1,000

The Audience Prize will be awarded following a public vote held during the final.

CONCERTS ENGAGEMENTS
€1,000

Various prizes will be awarded in the form of one or more concert engagements.

The Centre Présence Compositrices freely selects the jury members for its competition, ensuring gender parity. Given the competition's specific artistic focus, making it a world first, a musicologist specializing in women composers is automatically appointed.

The list of the members of the jury will be communicated after the pre-selection phase.

The jury members have read and fully comply with the competition rules. Below are some key points:

Video pre-selection phase

At least 2 members of the official competition jury will participate in the selection. Other judges not participating in the competition may be invited to judge this phase.

Video elimination phase

At least 3 members of the official jury will participate in the selection. Other judges not participating in the competition may be invited to judge this phase.

Ethics

Jury members who have regularly worked with the competition candidates during the two years preceding the competition, or who have them as students for the competition year, must inform the jury chair and abstain from voting in the various pre-selection, elimination, and semi-final rounds. Failure to disclose this information may result in the disqualification of the group(s) concerned. Members of the jury are asked to refrain from making any comments to the candidates, or anyone in close contact with the candidates, throughout the duration of the competition and outside of the designated feedback times during the competition.

VI. CALENDAR AND LOCATIONS

MARCH	Registration opens
MAY 1ST	Application deadline at 11:59pm (Central European Time UTC+1)
JUNE 1ST	Announcement of results from the preliminary round
JULY 10TH	Deadline for submitting videos for the elimination round and the fixed program for the semi-final and final round
JULY 25TH	Announcement of results from the elimination round
OCTOBER 28	Welcome of semi-finalists - Foyer Opéra Grand Avignon
OCTOBER 29	Rehearsal of semi-finalists - Amphithéâtre Mozart du Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional du Grand Avignon
OCTOBER 30	Semi-final - Amphithéâtre Mozart du Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional du Grand Avignon
OCTOBER 31	Rehearsal of finalists - Opéra Grand Avignon
NOVEMBER 1	Final - Opéra Grand Avignon

The schedule of the various events will be communicated at a later date to each candidate.

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