



1st MDS CANDON CITY CHORAL FESTIVAL

Candon City, Ilocos Sur
with the MDS Heritage Music Foundation Inc.

September 16, 2025

TO ALL INTERESTED CHOIRS

Dear Ma'am/Sir:

Greetings from the City of Candon, Ilocos Sur!

We are pleased to invite your choir to participate in the **1st MDS CANDON CITY CHORAL FESTIVAL** in Candon City, Ilocos Sur, from February 20-22, 2026.

The MDSCCF honors the legacy of the Great Musician of Ilocandia - the late Mrs. Minervina Dario Singson. This festival is more than a gathering—it's a living tribute to the enduring influence of the late Mrs. MDS, lovingly known as "Nana Ambin," whose passion for music shaped generations and whose compositions echo in the hearts of Candonians and beyond.

For further details of the competition, you may refer to the attached Competition Primer. All interested participants must fill out the application form: <https://forms.gle/HBPCquPUoZszYtSb9>.

Should you have inquiries and clarifications, please do not hesitate to send an email to mdscandoncitychoralfestival@gmail.com or through our official Facebook page at MDS Candon City Choral Festival.

With Sincere Appreciation,

JOHN GLENN GAERLAN

Music Consultant

MDS Heritage Music Foundation Inc.



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1ST MDS CANDON CITY CHORAL FESTIVAL Official Festival Primer

DATE:	February 20 – 22, 2026
CATEGORY COMPETITION VENUE:	Candon City Center for Culture & the Arts and Candon City Civic Center
GRAND PRIX COMPETITION VENUE:	Candon City Arena

I. FESTIVAL INTRODUCTION

“The MDSCCF is more than a competition; it is an invitation to experience the soul of Ilocandia through choral music.”

Located at the heart of Ilocandia, discover the path of history, beauty, and commerce – Candon City! The MDS Candon City Choral Festival (MDSCCF) offers you a crawl of rich culture from participants coming from various places. This event will be your avenue to engage in choral exchange, community immersion, and skills development.

The MDSCCF honors the legacy of the Great Musician of Ilocandia, the late Mrs. Minervina Dario Singson. Immerse yourself in the vibrant legacy of Ilocano music as the MDS Candon City Choral Festival (MDSCCF) transforms Candon City into a stage for harmony, heritage, and hope. This festival is more than a gathering—it's a living tribute to the enduring influence of the late Mrs. MDS, lovingly known as "Nana Ambin," whose passion for music shaped generations and whose compositions echo in the hearts of Candonians and beyond.

Nana Ambin, hailed as the Patron of the Arts of the North, devoted her life to nurturing musical talent and preserving Ilocano culture. From her early days as a prodigious pianist and singer, mentored by her musically gifted parents and esteemed professors at the UP Conservatory of Music, she blossomed into a beloved teacher, composer, and community leader. Her legacy includes 56 original compositions, over 100 liturgical arrangements, and the founding of music schools and choirs that continue to inspire the youth of Ilocandia. The festival continues the work of the MDS Heritage Foundation—established to give young Candonians access to quality music education and mentorship.



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II. FESTIVAL SCHEDULER

DAY 1 | FEBRUARY 20, 2026

- Arrival and Registration
- Stage Rehearsals & Soundcheck
- Opening Ceremony

DAY 2 | FEBRUARY 21, 2026

Morning

- Children's Choir Competition

Afternoon

- Youth Choir Competition
- Open Choir Category Competition
- Folksong Competition
- Friendship Concert (Tentative)
- Announcement of Grand Prix Qualifier

DAY 3 | FEBRUARY 22, 2026

- Meet the Jury
- Grand Prix Competition
- Guest Choir Concert (tentative)
- Awarding of Diplomas and Winners

**The schedule may be subjected to change anytime.*

III. REGISTRATION

- The Application must be submitted through a Google Form Link until **January 10, 2026** only.
- The participating choir must include the following:
 - Choir's Profile and Recent Choir Photo
 - Conductor's Profile and Photo
 - Audition Video
 - The video format must be in mp4
 - The video must not be earlier than August 1, 2025
 - The audition piece must not be more than 6 minutes
 - The video must not have any cuts or sound enhancements.
- All registering choir must pay for the following upon acceptance:
Registration Fee for Category Preference

AMOUNT	NO. OF CATEGORY	DURATION



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EARLY BIRD PROMO (50% Discount)		
Php 5,000.00	1	Until October 31, 2025
Php 8,500.00	2	Until October 31, 2025
REGULAR REGISTRATION		
Php 10,000.00	1	November 1 – January 10, 2026
Php 15,000.00	2	November 1 – January 10, 2026

IV. GENERAL GUIDELINES

- The competition is open to choirs from around the Philippines.
- Each choir may register for more than one category.
- The number of participants singing on stage must be equivalent to the registered members.
- The choir must submit the soft copies of the pieces and must submit 5 hard copies during the opening ceremony.
- Each choir is responsible for the copyright of the songs used in the competition. The committee shall not be held liable for any copyright infringement incurred by the participating choirs.
- Only live accompaniment will be allowed. Pre-recorded accompaniment is strictly prohibited.

V. CATEGORY COMPETITION GUIDELINES

a. OPEN CHOIR CATEGORY

- The choir may be composed of mixed, all-male, or all-female
- The choir must have a minimum of 16 singers and a maximum of 40 singers
- The choir must sing two contrasting pieces; one must be sung a capella**
- The total singing time for both songs must not exceed 12 minutes starting from the first note until the last note.
- There is no age limit.

b. YOUTH CHOIR CATEGORY



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- i. The choir must have a minimum of 16 singers and a maximum of 40 singers
- ii. The composition can be mixed, all-male, and all-female
- iii. The choir must be composed of members from 14 years old to 24 years only.
- iv. **The choir must sing two contrasting pieces; one must be sung a capella**
- v. The total singing time for both songs must not exceed 12 minutes starting from the first note until the last note.

c. CHILDREN'S CHOIR CATEGORY

- i. The choir must have a minimum of 16 singers and a maximum of 40 singers
- ii. **The choir must sing two contrasting pieces; one must be sung a capella**
- iii. The total singing time for both songs must not exceed 12 minutes starting from the first note until the last note.
- iv. The age limit will must be at least 7 years old to 13 years old.
- v. Only 10% of the total singers are allowed to exceed more than the set age limit.

d. FOLKSONG CATEGORY

- i. The choir must have a minimum of 16 singers and a maximum of 40 singers
- ii. **The choir must sing two folk pieces with at least one piece coming from the participant's region**
- iii. The use of ethnic instruments is allowed
- iv. The total singing time for both songs must not exceed 12 minutes
- v. The score to be submitted must have an English translation attached.
- vi. There is no age limit.
- vii. Performance with choreography is allowed, but shall not be included in the criteria of judging.

e. GRAND PRIX ROUND

- i. The Category Winner shall sing one song coming from their repertoire and any song that has not been performed in any stage of the competition.
- ii. The total singing time for both songs must not exceed 12 minutes starting from the first note until the last note.

VI. SOUNDCHECK

- a. Each choir will be given 6 minutes for soundcheck.
- b. Any participating choir unable to attend their scheduled time slot for sound check shall not be given another schedule.



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- c. The participating choir shall be assigned with a holding area and shall only enter the competition area during the set schedule.
- d. The participating choirs advancing to the Grand Prix Round shall be provided with an 8-minute sound check schedule.

VII. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION: Category Competition & Grand Prix

- a. Musicality and Voice Production (40%)
- b. Interpretation of the Piece (20%)
- c. Intonation and Harmony (30%)
- d. Overall Artistic Impression (10%)

VIII. AWARDS AND PRIZES

- a. The diploma will be awarded according to the scores:
 - Gold** – 90% to 100%
 - Silver** – 83% to 89.99%
 - Bronze** – 78% to 82.99%
- b. The choir who will achieve the highest score in each category will be declared as the Category Winner and will receive a certificate and Php 20,000.00.
- c. The choir hailed as category winner will automatically advance to the Grand Prix Round of the competition.
- d. The winners for the Grand Prix Round will receive the following:
 - Grand Prix Champion:** Php 80,000.00, Grand Prix Trophy, Certificate
 - First Runner Up:** Php 50,000.00, Plaque, Certificate
 - Second Runner Up:** Php 30,000.00, Plaque, Certificate

IX. HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

Option A. The choir will have to arrange their transportation and accommodation.

Option B. There will be packages that will be offered should you choose to avail the foundation's offer.

X. VENUE

- a. **Category Competition:** Candon City Center for Culture and the Arts
- b. **Holding Area:** St. Joseph Institute
- c. **Grand Prix Round:** Candon City Convention Center