



CORNWALL INTERNATIONAL MALE CHORAL *festival*

2026 INTERNATIONAL COMPOSERS COMPETITION RULES AND ENTRY DETAILS

1. SUBMISSION DETAILS

- 1.1. The Competition is open to any composer.
- 1.2. The Competition has no age restrictions.
- 1.3. Cash prizes, each of £500 will be awarded to the winner of 'Best Composition from an International Composer' (non UK resident), 'Best Composition from a UK Composer' (non Cornish resident), 'Best Composition from a Cornish Composer' and 'Best Composition for Cambiata Choir' (Composer of any nationality).
- 1.4. Other 'Certificates of Commendation' may be awarded. In the event of an entry being submitted by two or more people (e.g. lyricist and composer) the cash prize will be shared.
- 1.5. The composition must be completely original. Arrangements are not allowed. However, lyrics can be used which the composer can prove are out of copyright or for which the composer has written permission for their use and which must accompany the entry.
- 1.6. The composition must not have previously been submitted for any form of publication (including self-publishing on any internet site), any form of competition, or previous performance.
- 1.7. The composition must be set for male choir (TTBB or Cambiata*). Scores not appropriately laid out for the selected ensemble will be rejected from the adjudication process. * see Background on page 3
- 1.8. The composition should not exceed three minutes in length and may be accompanied or unaccompanied. The composition will be judged on its musical merit, appropriateness for the selected genre and the suitability of the text setting. The actual choice of lyrics / text will not be adjudicated.
- 1.9. If the composition is not of English text/lyrics, then a translation into English must also be provided.
- 1.10. By entering this Competition, the composer gives permission for the Festival to copy and distribute any entry for four distinct purposes only:
 - 1.10.1. for the winning entry to be sung by an ensemble at CIMCF 2026
 - 1.10.2. for any choir wishing to sing a Competition entry during the 2026 Festival and specifically for the winning entry to be officially premièred during the 2026 Festival;
 - 1.10.3. for choir learning audio tracks to be produced to facilitate learning of the music;
 - 1.10.4. for the winning entry to be available on our website and for use of participating choirs of the Festival, and at any point present or future (see note under 'Publication and Copyright').
- 1.11. In all cases, the decision of the Adjudicator is final. No correspondence will be entered into.

2. SUBMISSION DETAILS

- 2.1. Entries must be submitted electronically using the online form.
- 2.2. Electronic submission can be in any music scoring software format though Sibelius is preferred. Please discuss (by email or telephone) other formats with the Festival Director prior to submission.
- 2.3. If using Sibelius, please also send a version in Sibelius Student, and a PDF.
- 2.4. Please be aware that all entries (in whatever file format) will be scanned into Sibelius for ease of adjudication and for purposes as described in 8 above.

2.5. Scanned entries as image or PDF files must be submitted only on white background, A4 size manuscript format, in black script. Please be aware that whilst every effort will be made to ensure the accuracy of the finished electronic file following the entry being scanned into Sibelius, no guarantees are either given or implied that such scanning will result in a 100% accurate copy of any manually submitted original. The Festival cannot be held liable for any scanning errors and scanned files will not be returned to composers for proofing. If a handwritten score proves incapable of being scanned, the composer will be notified and offered advice for resubmission (as long as the competition closing deadline can still be met). Handwritten scores along with their electronic equivalent will be submitted together for adjudication.

2.6. If by special arrangement Composers are allowed to submit entries on paper, they are advised to keep copies. The Festival accepts no responsibility for the non-arrival of any entries submitted by post. The Festival is unable to return any material submitted on paper.

2.7. Since all scores will be submitted to the adjudicator anonymously, entries (in any format) must only contain the title of the piece (which can be repeated as a footer on each page if desired). Entries **must NOT** be identifiable by containing either copyright information or the composer's name. Pages should be numbered sequentially. If composers feel insecure regarding copyright issues, the UK Copyright Service (<http://www.copyrightservice.co.uk/copyright>) has further information on the matter.

2.8. The cost of entry is £30 per item submitted. You may submit more than one entry.

2.9. Entries must be submitted online using the entry form link. Fees must be submitted online. The final day for submission of entries and fees is 30th September 2025.

2.10. On receipt of an invoice produced by the Festival, Fees must be paid by bank transfer or internet bank payments in GBP sterling and all charges must be met by the applicant. The details are:

Payment using UK Banking Systems

Bank:	Barclays, King Street Truro Branch
Sort Code:	20-87-94
Account Number:	20851167
Account Name:	Cornwall International Male Choral Festival Ltd (or CIMCF LTD)
Reference:	Please quote the reference on your invoice

(N.B. if payments arrive to our account without the correct reference, your entry will not be valid)

Additional information for payment using International Banking Systems

SWIFT Code:	BARCGB22
IBAN:	GB53 BARC 2087 9420 8511 67

2.11. Entries are automatically acknowledged online.

3. PUBLICATION AND COPYRIGHT

3.1. The winning composition(s) will be put onto the Festival website, and then available as a PDF for any choir to download and use it/perform it without charge. This will give the composition maximum coverage and hopefully be sung by many more choirs than could be imagined otherwise, enabling the composer to become more widely known and thus leading to future commissions and projects.

3.2. From October 1st 2026, the winner shall have the option of continuing to allow the composition to be accessed via the website, as above, or having it withdrawn for the purposes of publication independently. If the latter is chosen, then this request must be made in writing to the Festival Director any time from 1st June 2026, allowing 4 weeks from the date of the notification for the removal from the website.

3.3. Compositions may be placed on the Festival website for one year from the date of the competition for use by choirs. The aim of this is to enable new works to be performed by choirs and to promote new composers and their work.

4. ADJUDICATION AND PRIZE PRESENTATION

4.1. Adjudication will take place during Oct - Feb 2025/2026.

4.2. The Prize winners of each category and those receiving commendations will be notified during March 2026 and then subsequently announced on the Festival website and in a press release.

4.3. The prize and any commendation certificates will be awarded at the Presentation Evening as part of CIMCF 2026 (date TBA) in Truro or virtually in an online presentation. All competition entrants will be invited.

- 4.4. The Festival is unable to pay any expenses towards entrants attending the Presentation Evening.
- 4.5. The winning items will be sung by an appropriate ensemble to an audience of sponsors, patrons, board and company members, and other invited guests.
- 4.6. During the Presentation Evening, the Adjudicator will make general remarks related to the quality of the compositions and important issues he feels need expanding upon. He will also comment briefly on selected individual entries. He will outline his reasons for selecting the winning entry and any selected for special commendation. Time will not permit a detailed adjudication on each entry during the evening. However, a short-written critique of each entry will be provided to composers attending the Presentation Evening or in the post afterwards.
- 4.7. The Adjudicator will be available for short discussion with individual composers following announcements and the presentation.

2023 COMPOSERS COMPETITION – BACKGROUND AND TIMELINE

Male Choirs traditionally perform a wide range of music from Welsh and English Hymnody, American spiritual and folk music through to classical opera choruses, modern pop song arrangements and some folk arrangements. The music is sung in four harmonising parts, usually (but not exclusively) accompanied by piano (sometimes organ) but rarely other instrumental formats. Choirs average 45 members.

The vocal range for male voice choir parts are: second bass, the octave and a half below middle C (but very occasionally up to the E above middle C); first bass (or baritone), approximately a tenth below the E above middle C; second tenor, from the E below middle C to no higher than the F above middle C (and then only by exception); first tenor, the G below middle C to the A, or exceptionally, the B or C above middle C.

Unlike Barbershop where a clear “Lead” is surrounded by other harmonising parts, male choir scoring frequently enables “the tune” to be sung by any part with others (and any accompaniment) harmonising around above or below it.

Male voice scoring is in traditional polyphony format with little contrapuntal movement. The majority of singers cannot read music and learn mostly by rote. However, that does not prevent some quite stunning effects, sounds and dynamics. It just takes longer to learn! Length of learning time and complexity of format are critical in the assessment by musical directors as to whether items will be selected for performance by choirs.

Most male choirs keep items in repertoire for a considerable time (two or more years is not unusual) because of the learning involved. The winning piece in this competition needs to be able to stand the test of time and be used in a variety of performance venues throughout the singing year and for a variety of audiences. Most male choirs perform in churches though many also use concert halls and similar venues. Audience size averages 150 but many choirs perform to much larger audiences on occasion.

It should be remembered when composing for male voice choirs that a National Championship, very successful for many years into the 1980s, eventually floundered because the pieces being composed as “test pieces” became increasingly difficult to learn. Fewer and fewer choirs had the time, will and skill available, and no matter how stunning the piece, are now very rarely if ever performed.

***Cambiata choirs** are a relatively new concept. They cater for the changing voice that all boys experience. Many new Cambiata choirs are being established across the country. Composers are being encouraged to write for this new genre and publishers are anxious to make new items available. Professor Martin Ashley, the UK’s most highly renowned specialist on the subject, has much more information on this fast-growing trend in boy/youth changing voice choirs on his website www.martin-ashley.com and www.boys-keep-singing.org

The ranges of boys’ voices as they change are quite different from those of a traditional male choir, an SA Men ensemble or SATB choir. Please see range references [here](#).

The last competition (held in 2024) attracted over 30 compositions from many different composers. Each successive competition (the first was held in 2004) has attracted more entries than the previous one. As a result, the

requirements for entry have been further modified to streamline the administration of the competition and ensure that the Adjudicator has appropriate assistance for his work. And, in so doing, the Festival is also able to maintain (and slightly increase) the overall prize fund. Your co-operation with the new requirements will be greatly appreciated.

TIMELINE

Competition announced and entries welcomed from	June 2025
Deadline for receipt of entries	31 st of Oct 2025
Adjudication	Nov - Feb 2025/2026
Placed entries announced internally and composers notified	March 2026
Formal Presentation Ceremony; performance of winning entry	May 2026 as part of the CIMCF

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