

National Youth Music Arranging Competition 2025: *Orchestra*



National Youth Arranging Competition Guidelines 2025

Closing Date: Sunday 12th October 10:00pm AEST.

This document outlines general guidelines for the abovementioned arranging competition for 2025. These include:

1. Song Choice
2. Ensemble details – Details of the ensemble for this year's competition
3. Score/ Parts Preparation
4. Symphony Orchestra Instrumentation List and ranges
5. Copyright Composer Information
6. Arrangement Marking Guidelines – What are the competition judges looking for?

Refer to the Guild's Website <https://www.magainc.org.au/competition> for other details such as **eligibility requirements** and links to lead sheets.

If you have any specific questions, please contact "The Secretary" at admin@magainc.org.au.

1. Song Choice

Choose **ONE** of the three options below and arrange for Symphony Orchestra:

1. "Golden Hour" by JVKE - <https://youtu.be/PEMOVs8jf1w>
2. "Crispin the Dreamer" by Elena Kats-Chernin - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bcqcgqSuK68>
3. Minecraft Suite - create a suite using at least two of the following songs:
 - a. "Haggstrom" by Daniel Rosenfeld - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=laZusNy8QiY>
 - b. "Subwoofer Lullaby" by Daniel Rosenfeld https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gpd85y_iTxY
 - c. "Wet Hands" by Daniel Rosenfeld <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSepOYJxB64>

Notes:

1. *The arrangement must be an original arrangement and not an "orchestration" or adaption of an existing arrangement.*
2. *You can transpose to a key that you deem suitable*
3. *The arrangement must not be more than 5 minutes in length*
4. *See the competition page for lead sheets - <https://magainc.org.au/competition>*

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2. Ensemble Details

We are thrilled to announce the ensemble selected to workshop and record the top 3 winning pieces for the 2025 National Youth Arranging Competition is the National Capital Orchestra, Canberra - <https://nationalcapitalorchestra.org.au/>

The workshop is planned to be in Canberra in December 2025 but will be confirmed closer to the competition closing date.

3. Score/Parts Preparation

1. Arrangements should use the full orchestra (instrumentation below), including Harp, Piano and Percussion players as specified. You may use the woodwind doubling instruments as best suits your arrangement
2. Woodwind, brass and percussion parts must be separated to one part each per player (no exceptions)
3. String parts must be prepared to standard orchestral conventions. If complex divisi is used, two staves may be employed within one string part, but please follow standard notational practice which keeps this to a minimum
4. PDF Parts are required with your competition submission entry; please treat these parts as a fully professional set that will be sent to the orchestra if you are a competition winner

4. Symphony Orchestra Instrumentation & Ranges

INSTRUMENTATION

- 2 Flutes (player 2 doubling Piccolo)
- 2 Oboes (player 2 doubling Cor Anglais)
- 2 Clarinets (player 2 doubling Bass Clarinet)
- 2 Bassoons
- 4 Horns in F, 2 Trumpets in B-flat, 3 Trombones, 1 Tuba
- Strings: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, Double Bass
- Harp, Piano
- Timpani, Percussion (2) *
- *Percussion - snare, bass drum, suspended cymbal, xylophone, toys (tambourine, shaker, etc)

RANGES

Please use standard orchestral ranges for all parts, and use this website for advice on the instrumental range limits: <https://www.dolmetsch.com/musictheory29.htm>

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5. Copyright/ Composer Information

The arrangement must include the appropriate copyright information as per the lead sheets well as the correct composer(s) attribution.

6. Arrangement Marking Guidelines

This list is a guide for arrangers entering the Arranging Competition held annually by the Music Arrangers Guild of Australia. The aim of the Guild is to ensure that all arrangements by Guild members are held to the highest possible standard of orchestration, presentation and playability. All works entered the competition are compared to the same high standards and are rated accordingly. To be competitive in this competition, it is highly recommended that these guidelines be followed.

There are four main areas that will be marked on: Presentation, Technical, Creativity and Exceeding the Brief. They are outlined in more detail below.

Note: These are general guidelines for orchestra, wind band, vocal, choral, big band, brass band and others, however, not all items in this list may pertain to the specific ensemble chosen each year. Contact the Secretary for advice.

1. Presentation

a. Score layout

- i. Title of the work and the name of the composer in appropriate text font and size on cover page.
- ii. Basic information about the work (if supplied), approximate duration, full list of instrumentation on next page/s. Include:
 1. any optional instruments,
 2. doublings,
 3. all percussion instruments and an indication of number of players,
 4. special staging requirements, etc.
- iii. First page of music to contain title, composer, performance notes and any other additional information and in appropriate font and size. **(Normally arranger name would be on the score but please do not include to ensure judging anonymity)**
- iv. Pages to be formatted to enable score to be printed either A3, B4 or A4 (portrait).
- v. Minimum score staff size is 4mm. Note heads should be large enough for the conductor to read with ease at the podium.
- vi. Bar lines should be continuous within each family of instruments.
- vii. Correct use of rehearsal marks, see below
- viii. Scores to be formatted double-sided, with music on both sides of the page.

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1. Right-hand pages must be odd numbered in the upper right-hand corner.
 2. Left-hand pages even numbered in the upper left-hand corner.
- b. Parts layout
- i. The front page of each part must include the title, composer, and instrument name (and instrument key where applicable).
 - ii. Pages to be formatted to enable parts to be printed either B4 or A4 (portrait).
 - iii. Recommended part staff size is 6.5mm or 7mm.
 - iv. The page layout must allow page turns. It is preferable for a multi-measure rest to be at the end of a page. If this is not possible, then a page turn should occur in a period of rest or during an unexposed part of the music.
 - v. Do NOT create parts with multiple instruments on a single staff.
- c. Do not rely on default settings in notation programs. These are usually designed to cover a variety of styles and often contain poor choices in some situations. Refer to industry standard references such as *Behind Bars* by Elaine Gould or search for house styles and other notation guidelines (*SCORING EXPRESS* at NYC Music Services is a good place to start).
- d. Meet the deadline (with some time to spare in case of the unexpected).

2. Technical

- a. Correct order of instruments in score
- b. Correct transpositions of instruments
- c. Appropriate registers of instruments
- d. Appropriate voicing within instrumental groups
- e. Correct use of chord symbols and nomenclature
- f. Correct use and placement of double bars (to mark a new section)
- g. Correct use of rehearsal marks and/or section labels, strategically placed at:
 - i. likely starting points during rehearsal
 - ii. the beginning of a new section
 - iii. a change of tempo, character, or texture
 - iv. an important solo entry or a passage with new technical demands
- h. Correct placement of bar numbers (depending on house style)
 - i. score – every bar, at the bottom, centred or at the start of each system, above the clef of the top stave, in italics
 - ii. part – at the start of each system, above the clef, in italics
- i. Correct and creative use of voice leading

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3. Creativity

- a. Write idiomatically, that is, what each instrument does best, either individually or in their families.
- b. Choose accompaniment and textures to suit the style
- c. Ensure the treatment of melody suits the style
- d. Consider blending and balance and ensure that background lines or textures do not get in the way
- e. Reharmonize according to the applicable theory(ies) and chosen style. This will be backed up by analysis
- f. Use a variety of instrumental colours and combinations
- g. Don't overscore, i.e. textures too thick and bland, too many instruments playing the same line.

4. Exceeding the brief

- a. This is where the best arrangers shine. Consider how you might go above and beyond while remaining within the resources and spirit of the task.
- b. Can you add an introduction, outro, shout, vamp or another section not in the form of the set work?
- c. Key changes? Treated correctly, i.e. prepared, modulated, confirmed
- d. Time changes, additive metre, extended techniques, alternative instruments, etc.