

11th International Competition of Duos with Harp

10-12 April 2026 in Cieszyn (Poland)

COMPETITION RULES

Place of the competition: Cieszyn Castle, 3 Zamkowa Street.

1. The competition is organised by the Polish Center of Art Education in Warsaw and co-organised by the Polish Harp Society.
2. The aim of the competition is to foster love of chamber music and to give harp duos the opportunity to present and compare their achievements internationally.
3. The competition is intended for pupils of Polish and foreign elementary and secondary music schools and students. The age of the participants must not exceed 26 years, and the age of all participants is determined on the day of the competition performance. The competition is open to duos of any composition involving the harp, and the age difference between the members of a duo may not exceed two years, for student duos it may not exceed three years. Determination of the age of the participant in each category of the competition applies to the harpist.
4. Competition auditions will be conducted in the following categories:

Category 1 - Duos of pupils aged up to 9 years - performance time 6 - 10 minutes

Category 2 - Duos of pupils aged up to 13 years - performance time 8 -12 minutes

Category 3 - Duos of pupils aged up to 16 years - performance time 10 - 15 minutes

Category 4 - Duos of pupils aged up to 19 years - performance time 12 - 17 minutes

Category 5 - Duos of students aged up to 26 years - performance time 15 - 20 minutes

Category 6 - Competition of new compositions (first public performances) - duration of work up to 10 minutes.

Each participant has the opportunity to perform in any number of duos.

5. A composition submitted for the premiere competition (category 6) must be written for a duet (2 performers / 2 layers), with multimedia works excluded. A "layer" of the work is understood as:
 - a) a part for an acoustic or electronic instrument,
 - b) a solo human voice,
 - c) a layer of live-performed stereophonic electronics.

6. PROGRAMME REQUIREMENTS OF THE COMPETITION:

- the programme for categories 1-2 is free,
- the programme for categories 3-4 should include pieces (or parts thereof) from different eras, stylistically diverse, and at least one piece must be original,
- the programme for category 5 should include pieces (or parts thereof) from different eras, stylistically diverse, including a piece of 20th/21st century contemporary music, one transcription is allowed,
- the piece submitted for the composition competition must have been written after 31st December 2024, and must not have been: awarded in any other competition, or publicly performed or published. The composition submitted for the competition must be signed with the composer's full name, notated in music notation software as a full score, and submitted as a PDF file together with the application form by March 22, 2026.

7. The competition auditions are open to the public:

- 10th April 2026- auditions in categories 5, 4
- 11th April 2026 - auditions in categories 1, 2, 3
- 12th April 2026 - auditions in category 6.

8. The letter of the alphabet which will determine the alphabetical order of the performances of the competition duos separately for each category will be drawn in the presence of a notary 2 weeks before the date of the competition. The list will be published on the competition website www.harfa.pl
9. In all matters not covered by the regulations, decisions are made by the Executive Board of the Polish Harp Society.
10. The participants' performances will be judged by a Jury consisting of 5 prominent Polish and foreign musicians and educators, approved by the Director of the Polish Center of Art Education. The decisions of the Jury are final and irrevocable. The Jury will evaluate competition performances in five criteria (A. interpretation and stylistic performance of works, B. intonation and quality of sound of the ensemble, C. selection and stylistic diversity of the repertoire performed, compliance with the statutory requirements concerning the selection of repertoire, D. cooperation of the musicians in the ensemble, stage presentation, E. musicality and artistic sensitivity) in each criterion, awarding points from 0 to 5. The laureates in each category are selected by the jury after deliberation on the basis of the scoring ranking (recorded in a summary scoring sheet drawn up for the jury by the secretary of the jury). The title of laureate goes to the winners (duos) of the first three places in each category and the Grand Prix, while the title of finalist goes to the runners-up.
11. The Polish Harp Society reserves the right to record the performances of participants, especially of works performed in category 6, and to publish these recordings as a CD (for its own archival purposes).

12. PRIZES IN THE PERFORMANCE COMPETITION:

Grand Prix – cash prize for the ensemble: **3,600 PLN**,

1st Prize:

Categories 1–2: **1,000 PLN** for the ensemble

Category 3: **2,000 PLN** for the ensemble

Category 4: **2,600 PLN** for the ensemble

Categories 5–6: **3,000 PLN** for the ensemble

2nd Prize:

Categories 1–2: **700 PLN** for the ensemble

Category 3: **1,500 PLN** for the ensemble

Category 4: **2,000 PLN** for the ensemble

Categories 5–6: **2,400 PLN** for the ensemble

3rd Prize:

Categories 1–2: **500 PLN** for the ensemble

Category 3: **1,200 PLN** for the ensemble

Category 4: **1,600 PLN** for the ensemble

Categories 5–6: **1,800 PLN** for the ensemble

Laureates recognized by the jury will perform in a concert in the chamber hall of the National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra in Katowice, on a date mutually agreed upon by NOSPR and PTH.

The prize in the composition competition will be awarded separately to student-composers (up to 19 years old) and adult composers:

1st Prize for a student-composer – 1,500 PLN

1st Prize for a composer – 2,000 PLN

Special Prize for the best composition for a duet with Celtic harp for children – 2,000 PLN

The jury may award non-statutory prizes.

Prizes and diplomas will be presented on the closing day of the competition at the Winners' Concert, which will take place on 12th April 2026 at 3 p.m. in the concert hall of the National House (Dom Narodowy) in Cieszyn. The selection of repertoire for the Prize Winner Concert is made by the Jury. The awarded duos are obliged to perform at the Laureate Concert.

The winner and finalist of the competition shall acquire the rights referred to, respectively, in Article 44zh of the Educational System Act of 7 September 1991, Article 132 of the Education Law Act of 14 December 2016 or the regulations issued pursuant to Article 162 of the said Act.

13. Participant applications in Polish or English are accepted until 22nd March 2026, through the participant registration system on the website www.harfa.pl. In case of an excessive number of applications, priority will be given based on the order of submission.
14. Participants must submit high-quality PDF scans of the scores of the works they will perform along with their application.
15. Participants in the composition competition (Category 6) are required, together with their application, to submit an electronic version of the submitted work (PDF, max 25 MB) through the participant registration system on the website www.harfa.pl by March 22, 2026. Receipt of the work (PDF file) by the competition office will be confirmed via email by March 24, 2026.
16. During the competition, the organizers will provide participants with new harps (lever and pedal) for a 20-minute acoustic rehearsal as well as for their competition performance.
17. All participants in the competition consent to the processing of their personal data by the Polish Center of Art Education in Warsaw and the Polish Harp Society with its registered office in Cieszyn Rynek 12 (data controller) exclusively for the purposes of conducting the competition, awarding prizes and organising two public concerts, in accordance with Article 13 (1)-(2) of the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation). The relevant declarations by the participants of the competition regarding their consent to the processing of their personal data are included in the application form published at www.harfa.pl.
18. All participants in the competition agree that the name and surname of the winners, their image, as well as the image recorded during the course of the Competition in the form of a photograph or a video, without territorial or temporal limitation, may be made public for information and promotional purposes of the Competition.
19. The Polish Harp Society reserves the right to make changes to these Regulations after obtaining the relevant approvals.

20. Participation in the Competition is tantamount to acceptance of these Rules.

Additional information on the competition (news) can be obtained after January 1, 2026 from the Executive Board of the Polish Harp Society at www.harfa.pl