



## 2026 DON BUSHELL CONCERTO COMPETITION RULES

**APPLICATION DEADLINE:** The Application Window will open on **Saturday, February 28th, 2026**. All required application materials must be received via our website by **Saturday, April 25th, 2026**. The Competition Committee will review all completed applications and select up to **15** candidates most qualified to compete in the 2026 Don Bushell Concerto Competition. Entry fees are non-refundable.

**Finalists will be announced to all applicants by e-mail on or before May 2nd, 2026.**

**COMPETITION DATE:** Saturday, May 23rd, 2026

**COMPETITION SITE:** Music Center of the Northwest, Seattle, WA

**Please read these policies carefully before filling out your application.**

### ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICANTS

To be eligible to perform at the 2026 Don Bushell Concerto Competition, applicants must comply with all of the following entry requirements:

1. The competition is open to musicians in any of the orchestral instrument classes: piano, string, percussion, woodwind and brass. Compositions and contestants featuring two or more solo parts are admissible. Singers are welcome to audition with works for solo voice and orchestra.
2. All applicants must be sixteen (16) years of age or older on the day of competition (May 23rd, 2026).
3. All applicants must be a current resident of the State of Washington.

### APPLICATION PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS

1. **Complete the application form online or by mail:**
  - a. Visit our [website](#) to complete the online application form:
    - i. Website URL: <http://seattlephil.org/about/bushell-concerto-competition>
2. **Submit the application fee: \$50.00**
  - a. Application fees are non-refundable
3. **Submit an audio recording demonstrating the applicant's skill level and performance of the selected work**
  - a. Audio recordings will be uploaded via our website. **File names for digital recordings must include the applicant's name and the name and composer of the applicant's composition.** Applicants submitting the audio recording by mail must label recording materials with this information.
  - b. Recordings must highlight selections from the piece chosen for the competition, and must not exceed three (3) minutes in duration. Please choose selections carefully and do not submit more recording material than necessary.

- c. Audio recordings are evaluated by the Competition Committee only for the purposes of choosing the appropriate candidates for the in-person audition. Recording quality will not be a factor in the selection process: therefore, amateur or homemade recordings are acceptable and will not affect candidate selection.

**All required materials must be received by April 25th, 2026.**

## HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

Applicants invited to audition for the 2026 Don Bushell Concerto Competition must observe health and safety guidelines as required by the Seattle Philharmonic, the competition venue, Washington State law and/or guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These requirements may include, but are not limited to:

- **Proof of full COVID-19 vaccination + Booster**
  - For a participant to be considered fully vaccinated, two weeks must have elapsed from the second dose of a two-dose vaccination or from the single-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine, and the participant must have received a booster dose. Acceptable documentation includes vaccine cards or records from the Washington State vaccine database (MyIR or MyIR Mobile). Please be prepared to show these documents the day of the audition.
- Use of facial and instrument coverings
  - Masking is highly recommended but NOT required during the day of the Auditions.
- Help Prevent Spreading
  - If you are symptomatic (sore throat, cough, fever, etc.), please do not attend the audition and contact the Competition Chair, Kerry Bollinger, at [bushell@seattlephil.org](mailto:bushell@seattlephil.org) or at the number provided to you the week leading up to the auditions.

As the circumstances surrounding COVID-19 and its variants continue to evolve, requirements for this event may change in accordance with applicable government rules and public health recommendations. Applicants who are unable to comply with health and safety requirements may be denied access to the audition site.

## MUSIC AND REPERTOIRE SELECTION GUIDELINES

Competitors must audition with the piece they would ultimately perform should they be the winner. **Be prepared to perform from memory a complete major work for soloist(s) and orchestra.** Works for duets, ensembles and/or other soloist groups composed or arranged for accompaniment by orchestra are also accepted.

In order to keep our programming as varied as possible, the Seattle Philharmonic would prefer not to perform any works that we have done in recent seasons. **Please avoid preparing the following concertos for this competition:**

BACEWICZ: Violin Concerto No. 4  
BACH: Cantata No. 54  
BACH: Concerto for Two Violins in D minor  
BACH: Keyboard Concerto No. 6  
BARBER: Violin Concerto  
BEETHOVEN: Piano Concerto No. 5, *Emperor*  
BIZET: Carmen: Seguidilla, Habanera

BLOCH: Schelomo  
BRITTEN: Violin Concerto  
CHAUSSON: Poème  
CHOPIN: Piano Concerto No. 1  
DECRUCK: Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra  
GORDELI: Flute Concerto  
GRIEG: Piano Concerto in A minor  
GUARNIERI: Concerto No. 1 for Piano and Orchestra  
IBERT: Concertino da Camera for Saxophone and Chamber Orchestra  
KORNGOLD: Violin Concerto  
LISZT: Concerto No. 1 in E-flat for Piano and Orchestra  
MOZART: Clarinet Concerto  
MOZART: Piano Concerto No. 24 in c  
PROKOFIEV: Piano Concerto No. 1  
RAVEL: Concerto for the Left Hand  
RAVEL: Shéhérazade  
SHOSTAKOVICH: Violin Concerto No. 1 in a  
SIBELIUS: Two Serious Melodies, Op. 77  
SIBELIUS: Violin Concerto  
STRAUSS: Allerseelen, Cäcilie, Morgen!, Die Nacht, Ständchen, Zueignung  
TARTINI: Sonata for Violin and Orchestra, *The Devil's Trill*  
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: Piano Concerto

**It is essential to confirm accessibility of the score and instrumental parts for your selected work.**

(The winning performance piece must be available for the following season's performance with the Phil.) Applicants should ascertain the availability of performance materials, whether on rental from the work's publisher, on sale from a music retailer (e.g. Luck's Music Library), as downloads from the Petrucci online music library, or otherwise from another source. The Philharmonic will assume responsibility for obtaining score and parts for the performance.

- Inaccessibility of the score and orchestra parts could result in forfeiture of the award and soloist appearance.
- The anticipated music rental period is **Spring 2027**.
- Please ensure that the duration of your selected work does not exceed 30 minutes.
- Please also ensure that your work's orchestration does not exceed the standard romantic/early 20th-century ensemble: triple woodwind; four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba; timpani; percussion; keyboard; strings.

## THE AUDITION

- **Competitors will perform selections from each movement, from memory. Pre-edit the music performance to include select portions from ALL movements. This is a self-edit by the musician to select passages that demonstrate skill, expression and breadth.**
- **Play time is strictly limited to no more than ten (10) minutes.** Should the performance exceed 10 minutes, the judges reserve the right to signal an end to the performance at any moment after the first 10 minutes. Total scheduled time per contestant is enforced at a maximum of fifteen (15) minutes. This includes entrance, tuning with accompanist, introduction and exit.
- Please provide at least one extra copy of the piano score for adjudicators to follow as you perform, either in exact form or with the excerpts you intend to perform clearly marked and tagged.
- **Please note that no sheet music is allowed in the audition,** except for copies provided to the judges and accompanist(s). **Competitors are expected to perform from memory.**
- No substitutions of composition or contestant will be accepted on the competition day.
- Competitors must provide their own accompanist for the competition performance and are responsible for supplying their accompanist with all information relevant to their performance.
- **Audio or video recording of auditions is not permitted for any purpose.**
- Please arrive thirty (30) minutes prior to your scheduled competition time. A private warm-up room will be provided for you and your accompanist at that time. Please do not arrive earlier to the warm-up rooms than your appointed warm-up time.
- **Competitors must be able to perform at any time between 12:00 p.m. (noon) and 7:00 p.m. on the competition day.** Time preferences or other special needs regarding the competition assignment must be noted on the application form. Specific time requests will be considered, but cannot be guaranteed.
- Competitors will be assigned an appointment and notified by e-mail in advance of the competition day.
- There is no allowance in the schedule to permit late performances: therefore, a missed appointment will be considered forfeiture.
- Please notify the Competition Chair if you have any issues that arise that may affect your ability to perform as scheduled: Kerry Bollinger, [bushell@seattlephil.org](mailto:bushell@seattlephil.org).

## DISQUALIFICATION

The Seattle Philharmonic Orchestra Board of Trustees reserves the right to disqualify any entry or performance based upon the stated guidelines. Any changes to the competition will be announced to competition participants by e-mail.

## **FINAL AWARD NOTIFICATION**

Contestants will be notified of the final award decision by e-mail within two (2) days following the event. The winner of the 2026 Bushell Competition will be notified by phone.

## **AWARDS**

The winner of the 2026 Bushell Competition will be invited to play a complete performance of their competition piece with the Seattle Philharmonic during the 2026-2027 season. The winner will also receive a grant prize from the Seattle Philharmonic Orchestra to aid in his/her/their artistic development.

The winner agrees to participate in any promotional events (interviews, radio spots, etc.) as requested and as arranged in advance by Music Director, Adam Stern and marketing staff, and that his/her/their image may be used by the Philharmonic on the website and elsewhere for purposes of marketing and communications. The soloist agrees to participate in rehearsals and concert(s) as agreed upon with the Music Director. Seattle Philharmonic rehearsals are scheduled for Wednesday evenings from 7:15 to 9:30 p.m. (specific dates for soloist rehearsals to be assigned)

A First and Second Runner Up will be awarded, as well as Honorable Mentions at the Judges' discretion. All decisions will be final.