



2026 Bruce P. Carlson Student Scholarship Competition STRINGS

Strings Divisions

Level I: grades 7-9

Level II: grades 10–12

Level III: college freshman through age 23

Level IV: age 24–28

Preliminaries: Online, *Videos Due January 25, 2026*

Finals: March 21 & 22, 2026 at Macalester College

Winners Recital – Musicians on the Rise:

Saturday, April 25, 1:00pm at Ordway Concert Hall

General Rules

Please read the entire rules thoroughly before filling in the application form. Be sure to keep these rules as a reference for important competition information.

Applications Open: October 13, 2025

Rules, application forms, and other materials will be available at schubert.org/competition

Application Deadline: Monday, January 12, 2026

- Completed applications must be received online no later than Monday, January 12, 2026. *Incomplete applications will not be accepted.*
- Applicants will receive an email acknowledgment within a week of submitting. Your performer number and the video submission form will be included in your application confirmation email. If you wish to change your repertoire between your application and video submission, please email Gweni Smith at gsmith@schubert.org

Video Submission Deadline: Sunday, January 25, 2026

Age: The age of contestants is determined as of September 1, 2025.

Eligibility Requirement: Applicants must be a resident of or enrolled in a learning institution within the 5-state region (MN, WI, SD, ND or IA).

- Schubert Club staff, Board or Board Committee members, and immediate family members of full-time or administrative staff** may not participate in the competition for cash prizes during their time of service and up to 6 months (to the competition event date) following their departure. They are, however, welcome to participate for judges' comments only.
- Immediate family members of Board members, Board Committee members, or part-time non-administrative staff** may compete for cash prizes. However, the Board member, Board Committee member, or staff member may not participate as a volunteer or paid staff for that year's competition.
- Previous winners:** No past 1st Prize winner in a division level may compete again in that same division level. You must wait until you qualify for the next age level in order to compete again.

Competitive Divisions & Prizes:

1st, 2nd, and 3rd Prizes will be awarded in each Finals division level (for exceptions see "Minimum applicants required" below). Applicants agree to use their prize to further their musical education.

Strings Level I & II: Cash awards are \$2,000 for 1st Prize, \$1,500 for 2nd Prize, and \$500 for 3rd Prize

Strings Level III & IV: Cash awards are \$2,500 for 1st Prize, \$1,750 for 2nd Prize, and \$500 for 3rd Prize

Repertoire Changes: Repertoire changes will be accepted until **Sunday, January 18, 2026.**

Limits on Enrollment: Only the first 30 applications received for each division level will be accepted.

- Some division levels may fill prior to the deadline.
- **Submitting an application by the deadline does not guarantee that space to participate will be available.**
- Complete applications received after a category is full will be placed on a waitlist.

Competing on two instruments: Applicants may perform on two instruments as long as they are not in the same instrument division (e.g. may perform on violin and piano but may not perform on both violin and cello). Please fill out an application for each division.

- **Different Pitched Instruments:** Brass and Woodwind applicants may perform on multiple pitched instruments within the same family during the same audition (e.g. on soprano and alto saxophone or piccolo and flute, though NOT saxophone and trombone).

Minimum applicants required: A minimum of ten applicants is required in a division level for a Preliminary competition to be held.

- If at least five but fewer than ten students apply in a division level, competitors will perform at Finals only and Schubert Club may elect to award only one, rather than two prizes.
- If fewer than five applications are received for a division level it will be canceled. The applicants will be notified.

Compliance: By submitting your application, you agree to submit an honest and complete application, to follow the procedures and rules for performance, and (if applicable) to secure a collaborative pianist prior to submitting your application.

- Performance repertoire must be chosen according to the classifications required by the Schubert Club rules.
- Competitors must perform in person for Finals to qualify for prizes.
- Recipients of prizes from Schubert Club agree to use their prize money to further their musical education.

Performance Requirements

Memorization: *Optional*

Use of printed music will not influence the judge's decision and memorization is not a component within the judge's scoring criteria.

Musical Scores: Sheet music does not generally need to be provided for judges during Preliminaries or Finals.

Occasionally, a judge might ask for sheet music of a lesser-known work. If this happens, a representative from Schubert Club will contact you.

Collaborative Pianists: Competitors must provide their own pianists.

- If both of your selections are **unaccompanied works** (e.g. Bach's *Partita for Solo Violin*), please indicate in your application notes that you will not have a collaborative pianist for your audition.

Performance Requirements:

- Literature: Prepare 2 contrasting selections from 2 different style periods
- **VIRTUAL Preliminary Round:**
 - **2 videos total: 1 video per repertoire piece**
 - Maximum **TOTAL** performance time (both videos): **10 minutes TOTAL**
 - Minimum length per video: 2 minutes (if complete piece is 2 minutes or longer)
 - Recommended Minimum total (both videos): 6 minutes
- **IN-PERSON Finals Round** (if you advance):
 - Maximum **TOTAL** performance time for the **finals round only:** **15 minutes TOTAL**
 - **Options for dividing the performance time** between the same two selections performed in the virtual Preliminary round:
 - 1) **You may determine the exact division.** In rehearsal prior to the competition, you determine the division of time between both works keeping in mind that you must demonstrate mastery of two different styles. This option allows you to include for example an important climax or a specific technical passage in one piece while still allowing time to present a solid portion of the second selection. In the competition, you perform what you have planned and the timer stops you only at the end of the allotted time.
 - 2) **You may ask the Schubert Club volunteer to stop you at the halfway point** at Finals (7.5 minutes), so that you may begin your second piece. For this timing option, the halfway point and end are the only allowable stop times.

Repertoire Requirements:

- **Two contrasting selections**
- Selections must **differ in tempo and technique**
- Selections must be from **two different time periods** as listed below.
 - **Pre-1827**
 - **19th Century/Romantic**
 - **Impressionistic & Early 20th Century**
 - **Mid 20th–21st Centuries**
- Competitors are not required to perform each piece starting at the beginning or at the start of a movement, allowing a student to feature a segment of the piece that showcases more technical or musical skill.
- Eliminate all repeats.
- If choosing a sonata, please include the opus number and key. Also indicate the specific movement(s) that you are performing by number and tempo (e.g. Coleridge-Taylor, Samuel: Violin Sonata in D minor, Op. 28, mvt. 3, "Allegro vivo con fuoco").

—Preliminary Video Submission Guidelines—

After you submit your online application, you will receive a confirmation email with your performer number, repertoire verification, and a video submission form link.

Please have the following information ready to submit:

- Student Name & Email
- Performer Number
- Division (e.g. Strings I)
- Collaborative Pianist Name & Email and/or Accompaniment Source
- Repertoire Submission No. 1 & 2
- Unlisted YouTube Links of competition pieces
- **Important: Before Submitting**
 - please double check your performer number
 - please double check your repertoire and **YouTube title and description**

When making your video - other important points:

- **No student or teacher names should appear anywhere in the video or upload (*title, description, YouTube account name*)**
- No speaking in the video.
- Please do not include a warm-up in the video.
- If possible, to ensure quality and consistency of the videos among entrants, set up the camera from the audience perspective, limit background noise, and make sure the performance space is well lit.
- The video should show the **student's full body and instrument or piano keyboard**.
- Collaborative Pianists are not required to be visible in the video.
- Students are encouraged to wear nice clothes as though they were performing at the in-person competition, although there is no specific dress code.
- **You may use previously recorded performances of the piece (e.g. from a recent recital) that were filmed no earlier than June 1, 2025.**

Upload your competition pieces as **Unlisted videos** to the YouTube platform.

- If you do not already have a YouTube account, you will need to create one.
- Record the videos *first*, then upload to YouTube. Recording within the YouTube app may cause file compression and reduced sound quality.
- Your videos must be unedited and contain no fade ins or fade outs. You may trim the video, but submitted excerpts should be one unedited take.
- Length requirements:
 - 2 total videos: 1 video per repertoire piece
 - Minimum length per video: 2 minutes (if complete piece is 2 minutes or longer)
 - Recommended Minimum total (both videos): 6 minutes
 - **Maximum total (both videos): 10 minutes TOTAL**
- **Basic Info**
 - **Video Title:** Performer number Composer: piece title, movement/op. no.
 - e.g. S101 Coleridge-Taylor, Samuel: Violin Sonata in D minor, Op. 28, mvt. 3, “Allegro vivo con fuoco”
 - **Video Description Example:** Schubert Club Student Scholarship Competition 2026, Strings I
 - **VERY IMPORTANT: Do NOT use teacher or student names as identifying information in videos.**
 - Tags: none
 - Privacy Settings: Change to “Unlisted”
 - Disable all comments and responses (All boxes under Comments and Responses must be unchecked)

When making your video - technical points:

- A range of options to record your video are acceptable: video camera, smart phone, tablet, computer, etc.
- We recommend that you test your audio quality before filming your final take. While many devices are adequate for filming auditions, not all will capture classical music audio well.
- You'll be uploading to YouTube. YouTube accepts these types of files for upload: <https://support.google.com/youtube/troubleshooter/2888402?hl=en>

First time uploading to YouTube? Here are some helpful tips:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BEqKzEUYv-Q> (video)
- <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/57407?co=GENIE.Platform%3DDesktop&hl=en> (written)

Please **verify that your link works and includes the entire piece or excerpt *before* submission**. Incorrect links may result in disqualification/exclusion from the competition and the student not receiving a critique.

The form to submit video links and all relevant information is in your email and at: <https://schubert.org/competition/>

- Submit the complete video submission form including the link by **Sunday, January 25, 2026 11:59 p.m.**
- Keep the unlisted YouTube link active until **June 30, 2026**.