**ABU DHABI INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION FOR COMPOSITION (ADICC)**

2025: RULES

Article1 the Abu Dhabi International competition for composition is holding a competition, which will take place in the month of December 2025. The purpose of this competition is to select the contemporary works that will be performed in the Abu Dhabi Festival in 2026.

# TIMETABLE

Article 2 15 September 2025 deadline for sending applications

15> 20 October 2025 examination of the scores by the international jury

15 December 2025 the final date by which the laureate and finalists will be informed of their selection is 1 February 2026 final date by which the laureate must have sent the orchestral material

1 April 2026 Press winners announcement

April 2025 premiere of the work and awards ceremony

# PART 1: APPLICATIONS

## GENERAL CONDITIONS

Article 3 The work, which can be in any form, must last about 10 minutes and be written for solo instrument and a symphony orchestra[[1]](#footnote-1)  depend on the category that the Participant is applying.

The world premiere of the winning work will take place during the Abu Dhabi Festival 2026 in April 2026.

The performance will also be recorded.

Article 4 Scores must be submitted anonymously, no later than 15 September 2025, to the Secretariat of the Abu Dhabi International Competition, in accordance with the stipulations of Article 14 of these rules.

Article 5 The composer of the winning work will be informed personally and confidentially, by December 2025 at the latest.  
The laureate composer must not reveal their identity or the title of the work before the official press announcement. They must not engage in any communication related to the work, unless expressly authorized by the Competition management.

Article 6 The winning composer is responsible for preparing and delivering the full orchestral material as well as the piano reduction of the score. This material must be submitted by 1 February 2026 at the latest.  
The Competition will contact the composer in confidence regarding these matters.

Article 7 The winning work must remain confidential until the official press announcement on 1 April 2026.  
At that time, the composer and the winning composition will be officially presented to the press and the public.

Article 8 The laureates will receive the following prizes: USD 35,000 (First Prize), USD 13,500 (Second Prize), and USD 7,000 (Third Prize), along with a certificate. The winning work will be recorded and broadcast online. The laureate will be invited to Abu Dhabi, with travel and accommodation expenses covered by the Abu Dhabi International Competition, to:

* Attend rehearsals (from XX to XX April 2025),
* Be presented at a press conference (20 April 2026),
* Meet the orchestra conductor, and
* attend the awards ceremony (XX April 2026)—i.e., from XX April to XX April 2025.

Article 9 Cession of rights:

By Participating in the competition, the winner cedes to the Competition, free of charge:

* The exclusive performance rights for the world premiere of the winning work during the Competition period;
* The right to record, reproduce, and distribute all performances of the winning work, within the Competition’s context, on formats such as CD, SACD, soundtrack, cassette, video disc, CD-ROM, DVD, minidisc, or any current or future medium;
* The right to broadcast the performances publicly—via TV, radio, internet, satellite, cable, or any other medium, live or recorded, both in Belgium and internationally.

This cession is valid for a period of 50 (fifty) years from the date of the recording.  
The composer retains full entitlement to any author’s rights payments related to public performances, as collected by relevant rights management organizations.

Article 10 Composers whose works have been selected for the final will be notified no later than 15 December 2025.  
In accordance with the confidentiality requirement outlined in Article 34, they must not reveal their identity or the title of their work until the press conference held immediately before the opening of the Abu Dhabi Festival in 2026.

Article11 Candidates not selected for the final will receive, during December 2025, a list of the code names of all Participating works, along with the stage each work reached in the competition.  
Composers who wish to retrieve their non-prize-winning works may do so upon written request, which must include the work’s code name and the address for return. Works will be sent back after the conclusion of the Abu Dhabi Festival, no later than May 2026. After that date, the Competition will no longer retain unreturned scores.

Article12 The international jury is composed of individuals appointed by the Executive Committee of the Abu Dhabi International Competition.

## ACCEPTANCE AND REGISTRATION

Article 13 Only works by living composers born after 15 September 1975 are eligible for submission.  
The Competition is open to composers of all nationalities, provided they have not previously been laureates of an earlier edition of the Abu Dhabi International Competition for Composition.

Article 14 Candidates must send their applications by registered post, bearing a postmark dated no later than midnight on 15 September 2025, to the following address: Secretariat of the Abu Dhabi International Competition for Composition—Makeen Tower — 9th street — Al Zahiyah — E16 — Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates). Applications sent by fax or e-mail will not be accepted.

Article 15 The application sent by registered post must include the following documents:

* 1. the orchestral score,
  2. the soloist’s score,
  3. a sealed envelope containing
* a printout of the application form, completed and signed by the candidate. The form must be downloaded on the Abu Dhabi International competition’s website.
* One or more official documents (originals or certified copies) establishing the candidate’s nationality and date and place of birth,
* a short biography.

### Remarks:

* Incomplete applications will not be accepted.
* Scores will be submitted anonymously to the jury. Therefore, no identifying information should appear on the scores. Failure to comply will result in disqualification.
* Each composer must select a code name, made up of letters and/or numbers only. This code name must appear clearly on every document submitted.
* Scores should, where possible, be presented on A3 paper and be laser-printed.

Article 16 **Registration**

All scores will be registered and numbered upon arrival. A complete list of entries will then be provided to the Secretary of the Jury.

# PART 2: PROCEDURES OF THE COMPETITION

## GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 17 The Abu Dhabi International Competition for Composition is conducted in four stages:

* 1. A preliminary examination aimed at selecting works that comply with the rules and meet the required Artistic standard to be admitted into the competition.
  2. The first round, during which a maximum of 20 works, will be chosen to advance to the second round.
  3. The second round, in which up to five works will be selected for the final round.
  4. The final round, where the selected works are ranked, and First, Second, and Third Prizes are awarded.

Article 18 The competition will be held under the supervision of the Abu Dhabi music and Arts Foundation.

## PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

Article 19 The purpose of the preliminary examination is to identify works that comply with the competition rules, particularly in terms of orchestration and duration, and that demonstrate a sufficient Artistic standard to be accepted into the competition. This initial selection is conducted prior to the competition by the Artistic Committee.

Works eliminated at this stage due to insufficient Artistic quality will nevertheless remain accessible to members of the international jury, who may, if they wish, review them individually. If, following such an individual review, one or more jury members believe a work should be reconsidered for the first round, they may notify the Secretary of the jury, and the work will be admitted to that round.

Article 20 If fewer than 20 works are accepted into the first round, the international jury may proceed directly to the second round.

## FIRST ROUND

Article 21 During the first round, the jury will conduct an initial reading and review of all submitted works.

Article 22 The jury will then hold a secret vote to determine the 20 works to be admitted to the second round.

Article 23 For this purpose, each jury member will receive a ballot paper listing the numbers and code names of the competing works, arranged according to their registration order. Opposite each code name, the jury member will write YES or NO to indicate whether they believe the work should advance to the second round.

Each completed and signed ballot paper will be submitted to the Secretary of the jury. After counting the votes, the 20 works with the highest number of YES votes will advance. If the 21st work (or any subsequent works) receive the same number of votes as the 20th, they will also be admitted. If the vote count reveals a significant gap in support, the total number of works advancing may be fewer than 20. In such a case, the final decision rests with the President of the Abu Dhabi International Competition (or their representative), in agreement with the Executive Committee.

Article 24 All signed ballot papers will be retained by the Secretary of the Jury for official records.

## SECOND ROUND

Article 25 The purpose of the second round is to select from among the works that passed the first round, those to be admitted to the final round.

Article 26 Following their individual review, members of the jury may engage in a brief discussion on the technical aspects of the works before proceeding to a secret ballot.

Article 27 Each jury member will receive a ballot paper listing the numbers and code names of the works admitted to this round, arranged in order of registration. Jury members must assign each work a score between 50 and 100 points. Marks below 50 will be disregarded, and Article 38 will apply where relevant.

The score should reflect the members’ overall judgement of the work, based on the quality of the composition and the opportunity it provides the soloist to demonstrate their abilities, in alignment with the objectives of the competition (see Article 3). All signed ballot papers will be submitted to the Secretary of the jury.

Article 28 The works will be ranked based on the total number of points awarded by the jury members.

Article 29 If the point difference between the work ranked fifth and the work(s) immediately below it is less than or equal to 1% of the total score of the fifth-ranked work, those works will be considered tied and ranked equally.

This tie may also include works ranked above fifth, but in such cases, the lowest relevant score will serve as the 1% reference point.

All works tied in this way may be admitted to the final round. Conversely, if a clear disparity in the number of votes received suggests that fewer than five works are strongly supported by the majority, the total number may be reduced.  
In such cases, the decision will be taken by the President of the Abu Dhabi International Competition, with the agreement of the ministerial official.

## THE FINAL ROUND

Article 30 The purpose of the final vote is to rank the works that have reached the final stage and to designate the three Prize-winning compositions.

Article 31 To this end, jury members will receive a ballot paper listing the numbers and code names of the finalist works, arranged in order of registration.

Each member will assign a score between 60 and 100 points to each work. Any score below 60 will be excluded from the count, and Article 38 will apply in such cases. The signed ballot papers will then be submitted to the Secretary of the jury.

Article 32 The finalist works will be ranked based on the total number of points awarded by the jury members.

Article 33 **Tie Situations and Voting Procedure**

If the difference in points between a work and the work ranked immediately above it is less than or equal to 1% of the total number of points awarded to the latter, the works will be considered tied (ranked equally).  
This tie may also involve two or more higher-ranked works, in which case the lowest score among them is used as the basis for calculating the 1%.

In such situations, the jury shall decide the final ranking by simple majority, using a recorded vote. Each jury member will receive a ballot paper, stamped and signed by the Secretary of the jury, and will indicate the code name of the work they believe should be ranked higher.

All signed ballot papers will be retained by the Secretary of the jury.

This vote may be preceded by a discussion among the jury members regarding the technical aspects of the tied works.

If, after two consecutive votes, the tie remains unresolved, the works will be ranked according to the total number of points they received. If the points are still equal, the ranking will be based on the scores obtained during the second round.

Article 34 **Caveat**

If a circumstance arises that prevents the performance of the winning work, or if the laureate composer breaches the confidentiality requirement regarding their name or the winning work before 1 April 2026, the management of the Abu Dhabi International Composition Competition will be obliged to award the prize to the work ranked second. If similar issues arise with the second-ranked work, the same process will apply to the next in line. Such decisions will be taken only after consultation with the Legal Committee and under the supervision of the Secretary of the Jury.

## COUNTING THE VOTES

Article 35 The President of the Board is responsible for counting the ballot papers, which each jury member submits to the ministerial official in a sealed envelope. This process is carried out under the supervision of the ministerial official.  
Members of the jury are not permitted to enter the room where the vote counting takes place. Only the President of the Board and/or an appointed representative may be present during any of the jury’s procedural operations.  
The ballot papers are to be sealed by the Secretary of the jury, and these seals may only be broken with the consent of the Legal Committee.

Article 36 Any corrections made on a ballot paper must be initialled by both the jury member concerned and the Secretary of the jury.

Article 37 If the reading of a ballot paper presents legibility issues or ambiguities that may result in an error, the Secretary of the jury may request the jury member to complete a new ballot paper.

Article 38 If a jury member does not award points to a particular work, the total points for that work will be adjusted as follows:

Add to the total of that work’s points the average score it received from the other jury members, multiplied by the average of the scores given by the absent jury member to all other works, and divided by the average of the scores attributed to all works by the remaining jury members.

Article 39 All voting and score-counting procedures are strictly confidential. The jury will be informed only of the following results:

* The list of works admitted to the second round, without indication of ranking;
* The list of works admitted to the final round, without indication of ranking;
* The final ranking of the prize-winning works, identified solely by their code names.

Article 40 The ballot papers, duly signed by the members of the jury and subsequently sealed by the Secretary of the jury, will be archived and preserved in the official records of the Competition.

# PART 3: PRIZES AND AWARDS

Article 41 The three laureates of the Abu Dhabi International Competition for Composition 2025 will each receive a prize: USD 35,000 (First Prize), USD 13,500 (Second Prize), USD 7,000 (Third Prize), along with an official certificate.  
The laureates will be invited to Abu Dhabi for the final of the Competition (with travel and accommodation expenses covered by the Abu Dhabi International Competition), from XX April to XX April 2026.

If the candidate has not prepared the work using a software program, the Abu Dhabi International Competition will cover the costs of preparing the orchestral material, without prejudice to the composer’s rights regarding rental payments for future performances.

The winning work will be performed by musicians and orchestras invited to the Abu Dhabi Festival 2026.

Article42 The composers of the works selected for the final will receive the official title of “finalist.”

# PART 4: THE COMPETITION AUTHORITIES

## THE JURY

Article 43 the Executive Committee of the Competition has exclusive authority to appoint the members of the jury. The number of members is not fixed, and they are selected for their international renown in the field of music, regardless of racial, ideological, political, or linguistic factors. The jury composition may vary from one round to another.  
The jury for the 2025 competition will include the following individuals, among others: XXXXXX. This list is subject to change.

Article 44 Unless otherwise explicitly stated in these rules, the sole mission of the jury is to rank the works according to the procedures set forth in these rules. The jury has no administrative role.

Article 45 The work of the jury will be overseen by a chairperson, appointed by the Competition management, who will be assisted by a secretary. The Chairperson does not participate in the voting process.

Article 46 If a jury member is aware that one of their students has submitted a work, the jury member must determine the code name of that work and inform the Competition management. The jury member in question must not participate in the vote regarding that work; Article 38 will apply in such cases.  
A list of the code names of all the works admitted to the competition will be provided to each jury member.

Article 47 No jury member may submit work to the competition.

Article 48 Each jury member must sign the rules, and the list of works admitted to the competition.

Article 49 Each member of the jury will furnish the secretariat of the Competition with the following declaration, duly signed:

*I, the undersigned and member of the jury of the Abu Dhabi International competition for composition, hereby declare that I have read the rules of the competition. I acknowledge that, in the event of a dispute, only the English texts are legally binding. I agree to abide by these rules.*

*The work identified by the number… and the code name… is by one of my pupils.*

Article 50 If the declaration referred to in Article 49 is found to be false, the signatory will be excluded from the jury.

Article 51 For the entire duration of the competition, jury members must refrain from making any statements regarding the works, the jury’s activities, or the organization of the competition, except during the discussions explicitly permitted by the rules (Articles 26 and 33).

3 Journey in economy class, by air or by train.

Article 52 The jury’s deliberations for each round shall be documented in a formal set of minutes, each covering one complete round. Two identical copies shall be prepared. These will be read aloud at a jury meeting and signed by all jury members and the Secretary. After the conclusion of the round, one copy shall be submitted to the ministerial official, while the other will be retained in the Competition’s archives.

Article 53 All jury votes shall be conducted by secret ballot.

Article 54 Under no circumstances may jury members disclose to one another the scores they have awarded to any of the works.

Article 55 The Competition places emphasis on the independent personal judgment of each jury member. Consequently, members are strictly prohibited from engaging in any form of consultation, except as explicitly allowed in the rules (see **Article 51**). Should a jury member observe that a work violates the competition rules, they must notify the Secretary of the jury.

Article 56 Jury members may only evaluate the rounds for which they have been officially appointed. If a member is unable to attend one or more sessions due to circumstances beyond their control, the Competition’s management may either nullify the scores awarded by that member for the entire affected round or apply the provisions outlined in **Article 38**.

In the event that a work not judged by the absent member is later tied with another in that round, the absent jury member may not participate in the vote to resolve the tie.

## THE LEGAL COMMITTEE

Article 57 A Legal Committee shall be established for each edition of the Competition, composed of no fewer than three members. Its role is to resolve any administrative, civil, or disciplinary disputes that may arise between candidates, jury members, the Competition’s authorities, and the Executive Committee. The decisions of the Legal Committee are final and not subject to appeal.

Article 58 The members of the Legal Committee are appointed by the Executive Committee of the Competition, which also designates one member as Chairperson. In the event of a dispute being referred to the Legal Committee, the Executive Committee shall appoint three of its members to serve as arbitrators, forming an arbitration board.

Article 59 The names and responsibilities of the Legal Committee members will be communicated to the jury.  
By taking part in the Competition, jury members acknowledge and accept the jurisdiction of the appointed arbitrators.

Article 60. The Chairperson of the Legal Committee shall appoint a Secretary to support the Committee’s work.

Article 61 If an appointed arbitrator becomes unable to fulfill their duties, a replacement shall be named by the Executive Committee as per Article 58. If this is not feasible, the remaining arbitrators will appoint the substitute.

Article 62 All complaints or arbitration requests must be addressed directly to the Chairperson of the Legal Committee, with notification sent to the Competition organizers.

Article 63 To be considered valid, complaints must clearly identify the individual(s) against whom the complaint is being made.

## THE MANAGEMENT OF THE COMPETITION

Article 64 The Abu Dhabi International Competition is a project initiated by the Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation (ADMAF).

Article 65 The Competition is administered by an Executive Committee, which is responsible for all administrative matters and represents ADMAF in legal and external affairs. This is without prejudice to any responsibilities specifically assigned to other bodies or authorities under these rules.

Article 66 The Executive Committee is also charged with ensuring the proper implementation of the rules. It may adopt any measures necessary to enforce compliance and to safeguard the integrity and orderly conduct of the Competition. In cases of rule violations, it is empowered to investigate and refer such matters to the Legal Committee.

Article 67 The Executive Committee may, under its own responsibility, delegate specific powers or responsibilities to individuals not otherwise engaged in the Competition, for the purpose of managing its administrative affairs.

## THE ARTISTIC COMMITTEE

Article 68 The Artistic Committee supports the Competition’s management in all matters related to the technical and Artistic aspects of the discipline. It is responsible for evaluating submissions during the preliminary review and selecting those deemed suitable for admission to the Competition. Members of the Artistic Committee may also serve as members of the jury.

## THE SECRETARY OF THE JURY

Article 69 The Secretary of the Jury shall be appointed by the Executive Committee. The Secretary is responsible for documenting all relevant proceedings and for recording any facts required during the course of the Competition. Additionally, the Secretary will open the sealed envelopes to verify the ages of the participants. This information remain strictly confidential and will not, under any circumstances, be disclosed to the members of the jury.

## SANCTIONS

Article 70 The authorities of the Abu Dhabi International competition for composition can impose the following sanctions on members of the jury and on candidates:

* 1. A reprimand
  2. An official warning
  3. Exclusion from involvement in a particular year’s competition
  4. A permanent ban, which may involve:
     1. Irrevocable exclusion from all present and future involvement in the Competition and its affiliated events
     2. Forfeiture of all current and future benefits conferred by the Competition
     3. Denial of access to all premises used by the competition (including offices, meeting rooms, concert halls, etc.) occupied by the management of the Competition.

Reprimands may be issued by the Executive Committee. Official warnings are issued by the Chairperson of the Legal Committee. All other sanctions can be imposed solely by the Legal Committee.  
No other administrative body within the Competition holds legal or disciplinary authority.

Article 71 In addition to the disciplinary actions detailed above, the Legal Committee—acting in coordination with the Executive Committee and in consultation with the Artistic Committee—may rule on any matter legitimately submitted to it. This includes the authority to impose penalties involving the payment of damages and interest to aggrieved parties.

Article 72 Any composer who violates the obligation of complete confidentiality regarding their identity or the identity of their winning work prior to the official announcement of the final results will forfeit all benefits associated with the Competition. In such cases, the work ranked second shall replace the disqualified work as the official winner.

Article 73 In the event of any disputes, only the English version of these rules shall be deemed legally binding.

### ABU DHABI INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION FOR COMPOSITION: RULES

[TIMETABLE 1](#_Toc196822497)

[PART ONE: APPLICATIONS 1](#_Toc196822498)

[I. GENERAL CONDITIONS 1](#_Toc196822499)

[II. ACCEPTANCE AND REGISTRATION 3](#_Toc196822500)

[PART TWO: PROCEDURES OF THE COMPETITION 3](#_Toc196822501)

[I. GENERAL PROVISIONS 3](#_Toc196822502)

[II. PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION 3](#_Toc196822503)

[III. FIRST ROUND 4](#_Toc196822504)

[IV. SECOND ROUND 4](#_Toc196822505)

[V. THE FINAL ROUND 5](#_Toc196822506)

[VI. COUNTING THE VOTES 5](#_Toc196822507)

[PART THREE: PRIZES AND AWARDS 7](#_Toc196822508)

[PART FOUR: THE COMPETITION AUTHORITIES 7](#_Toc196822509)

[I. THE JURY 7](#_Toc196822510)

[II. THE LEGAL COMMITTEE 8](#_Toc196822511)

[III. THE MANAGEMENT OF THE COMPETITION 8](#_Toc196822512)

[IV. THE ARTISTIC COMMITTEE 9](#_Toc196822513)

[V. THE SECRETARY OF THE JURY 9](#_Toc196822514)

[VI. SANCTIONS 9](#_Toc196822515)

1. . The orchestra must have a traditional seating plan and must, in no case, exceed the following line-up:

   WOODWIND: 3 flutes (including the piccolo)—3 oboes (including the cor anglais)—3 clarinets (including the bass clarinet and/or the soprano clarinet)—3 bassoons (including the double bassoon)

   BRASS: 4 horns—3 trumpets—3 trombones—1 tuba

   PERCUSSION: 4 percussionists (or 1 timpanist and 3 percussionists)

   HARP: 1 musician

   CELESTA, GLOCKENSPIEL: 1 musician

   STRINGS: 14 – 12 – 10 – 8 – 6 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)