

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra
Rushworth Composition Prize 2026

Application Pack



What is Liverpool Philharmonic?

Liverpool Philharmonic is one of the country's leading music organisations with a mission to create powerful music experiences that bring people together. First established in 1840 it is the largest music organisation in the city, collaborating with the next generations of artists and audiences to shape the future of Liverpool and beyond.

At the heart of Liverpool Philharmonic is the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, the UK's oldest professional symphony orchestra. The historic, Art Deco Liverpool Philharmonic Hall is one of the UK's leading concert halls and alongside the Music Room venue present over 400 diverse concerts and events each year.

Rooted in the city, Liverpool Philharmonic is committed to providing musical experiences that reach beyond the concert hall. Their extensive learning programme is recognised as a leader in its field for quality, reach and impact. Over 130,000 people participate in Liverpool Philharmonic's learning and community engagement programmes each year

Our Orchestra and our Venues

Led by Chief Conductor Domingo Hindoyan, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra gives over 100 performances each season, attracting renowned artists to the city and sharing world-class music globally through sell-out BBC Proms appearances, international tours and 13 million listeners across 180 countries on Spotify. The iconic Grade II-listed Art Deco Hall hosts internationally-acclaimed artists, while the intimate Music Room champions local and grassroots talent. Together, both venues present around 400 concerts and events each year to over 300,000 people, connecting Liverpool to the world and ensuring the city continues to inspire and innovate as a UNESCO City of Music.

Learning and Community Engagement

Liverpool Philharmonic is at the forefront of positive change, through some of the widest-reaching and longest-running music-based youth and community engagement programmes in the UK. Each year, more than 130,000 people access music through activities, performances and award-winning partnerships. This includes Music and Health - our long-standing partnership with the NHS which has supported over 35,000 people to date and In Harmony and Youth Company, which together provide music activities to 2,280 young people, each week - giving young people opportunities to develop their passion for music and shape the future of the city region.

Liverpool Philharmonic is committed to diversity and inclusion

We work hard to reach right across our community through our learning work and concert programme.

We attract world class artists to perform at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall and our smaller venue, Music Room, with a diverse programme ranging from classical, contemporary, rock, pop, folk, roots, and jazz to comedy, film and spoken word. We work with many organisations and cultural partners in the city to ensure that the artists and performances we put on stage, and the audiences we attract, truly represent our community.

And we are working hard to ensure that our workforce is as diverse as possible.

What is the Rushworth Composition Prize?

A funded year-long opportunity for an early- career composer to build a collaborative and creative relationship with Liverpool Philharmonic and Liverpool Philharmonic's 10:10.

Liverpool Philharmonic's 10:10

Liverpool Philharmonic's 10:10 was founded in 1997 by members of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. It soon became integrated into the regular concert giving of Liverpool Philharmonic, able to draw on the talents of the whole orchestra as required. It is central to Liverpool Philharmonic's commitment to new writing and supporting composers from Liverpool and the North-West region.

As part of Liverpool Philharmonic's collaboration with the University of Liverpool, in April 2022 Liverpool Philharmonic's 10:10 started a new era as it became resident at the Tung Auditorium within the University's Yoko Ono Centre.

What is the opportunity?

In the 2026/27 Season, Liverpool Philharmonic will welcome an early career composer as the winner of the Rushworth Composition Prize.

The Rushworth Composition Prize, in association with the Rushworth Foundation, provides an exceptional range of opportunities for an early-career composer aged 18+ with no upper age limit.

The prize winner will have access to a range of bespoke practical workshops, mentoring, networking and career support throughout the duration of the prize, and beyond. A prize of £1,000 is awarded to the winner and the prize culminates in writing a new work for Liverpool Philharmonic's 10:10, which is performed as part of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra 2027/28 season. Travel expenses are paid for throughout the duration of the prize.

We are building a network of previous winners to connect music creators working across North West England. To find out more about former Rushworth Composition Prize winners, follow [this link](#). Previous winners have worked with us after their year has ended, and benefited from continued support, guidance, and commission opportunities.

The winner will:

- Have an understanding of writing for contemporary classical ensembles and orchestral instruments.
- Be at an early stage of their career.
- Be 18+ years of age when they apply. **There is no upper age limit.**
- Be partnered with a mentor either of their choice or one suggested by Liverpool Philharmonic.
- Meet regularly with their mentor throughout the year, having up to 10 sessions with them.
- Receive up to five bespoke instrument workshops with Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra musicians.
- Observe Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra rehearsals.
- Have access to free tickets for Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra performances.
- Have a workshop reading with Liverpool Philharmonic's 10:10 and an opportunity to meet with the conductor before the premiere.

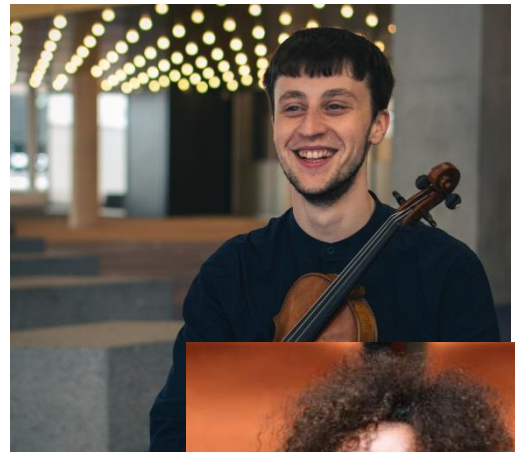
Previous Winners' Testimonials

Andrew Barney (2025 winner)

“The Rushworth Composition Prize is easily one of the best things that has ever happened to me. As a largely self-taught musician and that I never considered myself a composer, it has completely uncovered a part of me that I never knew existed. Winning the prize has given me so many opportunities; not just to compose for my favourite orchestra and choir, but also to follow my dream and passion to be a classical artist. This is priceless, especially since I'd had a ten-year career working in things completely unrelated to music just until winning the prize. But it changed everything for me and I am so grateful for this incredible programme. My advice to anyone considering applying, you simply do not know what you are capable of until you just give it a go. You don't have to be a young conservatoire graduate or have a masters in composition: being a composer is an extension of your creativity, you just need the drive and curiosity to create something new.”

Sam Kane (2023 winner)

“The Rushworth Composition Prize was an extraordinarily experience. Having my own music brought to life by Ensemble 10:10 under Domingo Hindoyan was absolutely unforgettable. I had the chance to work closely musicians from the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra who really helped to shape my own compositional voice and kick-start my dream career. I learned so much over the year, and it meant so much to share music of traditional Irish influence in a city that feels so close to home. I am so grateful for all the support I've received, which has led to further commissions and performances. I cannot thank RLPO enough for this life changing experience and would encourage any emerging composer to apply.”



Nneka Cummins (2021 winner)

“Liverpool is where my passion for music was nurtured and as a teenager, I played in venues across the city as part of Saturday Morning Music Centre’s Liverpool Youth Orchestra. I’m grateful to Liverpool Philharmonic for this opportunity and very much look forward to working with Ensemble 10:10. It’s great to be deepening my musical connection to Liverpool.”

Grace Evangeline-Mason (2017 winner)

“The prize was a wonderful introduction to Liverpool Philharmonic and I was elated to have been given the opportunity to write for such fantastic and supportive musicians. My ongoing relationship with the Orchestra has been a highlight of my career so far and it is a true privilege to make music with them; a relationship I continue to value immensely.”



Eligibility Criteria – what are we looking for?

Applicants should demonstrate that they:

- are at an early stage of their career as a composer
- are at least 18 years old on 28 September 2026 – there is no upper age limit for applicants
- currently live, work, or were born in the North West of England (Merseyside, Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Cumbria), or are a registered student at a Northwest-based Higher Education institution.
- Hold right to work in the UK

There are no minimum qualification requirements for applicants.

What is the time commitment?

The Rushworth Composition Prize is a 12-month commitment. The winner of the prize should adhere to the deadlines set by Liverpool Philharmonic. They must also ensure they are available for the Liverpool Philharmonic's 10:10 workshop and premiere dates.

Liverpool Philharmonic have committed to offering every shortlisted applicant constructive feedback on their application.

Timeline

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| Applications Open | 8 June 2026 |
| Applications Close | 28 September 2026 |
| Contacting all shortlisted and unsuccessful applicants | December 2026 |
| Winner contacted | January 2027 |
| Composing begins | February 2027 |
| Premiere | 2027/28 Season |

How to apply

Please provide the following materials on the [application form](#).

1. A supporting statement, which should:
 - a. Detail any composing experience to date, including any professional work you may have undertaken. Don't worry if you haven't had any professional experience to date - this is not required for this opportunity.
 - b. Outline why you have applied, what you would hope to gain from this prize and from developing a relationship with Liverpool Philharmonic, and how you would describe your personal composition style and approach.
 - c. Tell us about any other musical experience or interests that you think are relevant for us to consider

2. Audio recordings and scores of two examples of original works for orchestral instruments, alongside a short explanation of why you have chosen to submit these works.
 - a. Scores must be submitted electronically in PDF format only.
 - b. Audio recordings should be submitted as a digital file or link to an online version e.g. Soundcloud or similar. Digital recordings of works which have not had a live performance are acceptable.

To support fair access to the Rushworth Composition Prize, we also accept video applications as part of this process. Please see the application form (link above) for details.

Applications close at **12pm on Monday 28 September 2026**. Late applications will not be accepted. Liverpool Philharmonic accepts no responsibility for applications not received.

Liverpool Philharmonic are signatories to Sound and Music's [Fair Access Principles](#), designed to act as a code of best practice for running successful, open and inclusive artist development programmes, competitions and awards for composers.

If you have any questions about the application, or should you have any access requirements and additional support needs in completing your application, please get in touch with Montserrat Fuentes- Romero: learning@liverpoolphil.com.