



26th WSA Film Music Composition Contest Rule Book

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I. Introduction

Each year, the **World Soundtrack Academy** (an initiative of NPO **International Film Fest Gent**) organises a composition contest for young international film composers. The contest provides young talents under the age of 36 with the chance to demonstrate their skills as a screen composer by writing a symphonic score for a selected film or TV series excerpt. Chosen by a professional jury, the winner will be honoured with the **World Soundtrack Award for Best Original Composition by a Young Composer Powered by Vienna Synchron Stage** and will be presented the [Synchron Series Package](#) from Vienna Symphonic Library (worth € 7,899).

The jury will select three finalists, whose compositions will be performed live in world premiere by the **Brussels Philharmonic conducted by Dirk Brossé** during the World Soundtrack Awards Concert in the Music Center De Bijloke, Ghent Belgium on **10 October 2026**. The finalists will also be invited to attend the film music events at Film Fest Gent, such as the WSA Nominees Celebration and the WSA Talks & Masterclasses. At these events the finalists will have the chance to meet professionals from the international film music industry.

This year, the film music composition contest celebrates its 25th edition.

II. Terms and conditions

1. ELIGIBILITY AND REGISTRATION

- Art. 1 Composers of any nationality and place of residence are eligible to participate in this contest.
- Art. 2 The contest is open to individual composers of legal age and who are **born after 15 October 1990** (under the age of 36 on the day of the performance, 10 October 2026).
- Art. 3 **Each participant is allowed to submit only one application per year.** Finalists can only be nominated once. From the year of the nomination onwards, finalists and winners cannot participate again.
- Art. 4 In order to take part in the competition, the participant needs to register and pay a fee of **€75** for handling and consulting. This fee is **non-refundable**. Upon receipt and approval of the registration form, the participant will receive an email with a link with a digital version of the excerpt for which music needs to be composed. The registration and payment of **€75** should be executed by **15 May 2026**. Registration for the contest is only possible via our website. A downloadable link to the excerpt will be included in the registration confirmation email.
- Art. 5 Applications shall be accepted between **2 March 2026** and **15 May 2026**.

Art. 6. By taking part in the competition, the participants accept the competition's regulations without reservation. In case of disputes, only the courts of Ghent will have jurisdiction.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONTEST

Art. 7 The participant should write a composition for a selected excerpt from the TV show ***Ratched*** (Ryan Murphy, Evan Romansky, 2020).

Art. 8 The participant should write an original composition for the following (maximum) symphonic orchestration. **Extra instruments are not allowed.** A composition that is not performable with this instrumentation cannot be nominated:

3 flute (1.2.3/pic).3 oboe (1.2.3/Eh).3 clarinet (1.2/Ebcl.3/bcl).3 bassoon (1.2.3/cbsn) – 4 horn.3 trumpet.3 trombone.1 tuba – 1 timp 3 perc – 1 harp 1 piano/celesta – strings

Art. 9 It is not possible to use additional digitally produced audio tracks and/or live electronics.

Art.10 A jury consisting of minimum four professionals with experience on the international scene will appoint **three finalists**, who will be invited to the **film music programme** at **Film Fest Gent**. The invitation includes:

- full accreditation for Film Fest Gent;
- VIP ticket for the WSA Ceremony & Concert;
- three hotel nights in Ghent (single room);
- access to the WSA Talks (seminars & panels);
- invitation for the WSA Nominees Celebration.

The three finalists will have the opportunity to receive **feedback from conductor Dirk Brossé**. Their composition will be **performed live** by the **Brussels Philharmonic** at the **World Soundtrack Awards Concert on 10 October 2026**.

Art.11 Immediately after the live performance of the three compositions on 10 October 2026 at the WSA Concert, the **winner** will be announced. The winner will receive a [Synchron Series Package](#) from Vienna Symphonic Library (worth € 7,899). Film Fest Gent will be in contact with the winner after the WSA Concert to arrange the prize.

Art.12 The three finalists give permission to Film Fest Gent and the World Soundtrack Academy to use (part of) their compositions for informational and promotional purposes for the composition contest. This permission is valid for the entire duration of the copyright on the composition and for all countries worldwide. Film Fest Gent will make payment arrangements for use of the composition with the collection agencies for composers and musicians.

Art.13 The organisation will ensure that the competition is held correctly, following strict policy rules.

3. DOCUMENTS TO BE SUBMITTED

In order to finalise a submission for this competition, it is not sufficient to register online. The participation will be considered only valid when the **registration form** has been completed correctly, **payment** has been effected and **all materials** have been submitted correctly.

Art. 14 The following documents can be **submitted online until 15 May 2026** (11:59 pm CET):

- entirely completed online **submission form**;
- a detailed **CV** and a short **biography (not anonymous)**;
- the **conductor's score** as a PDF file (**an anonymous version with registration number only**):
 - The score must be written with **music notation software** and must be performable with the orchestration defined in Art. 8.
 - Please **provide music materials as follows**:
 - full score formatted for 13x19 inch or 480 mm x 330 mm;
 - full score: minimum stave width 5 mm or more;
 - group flute 1&2, hobo 1&2, clarinet 1&2, etc., on one stave in order to reduce the number of staves;
 - for more detailed information, please check the **Mola Guidelines for Music Preparation** at <https://mola-inc.org/resources/11631>.
 - The first page of the score should include the following information:
 - if it is transposed;
 - a **list of names and quantity of instruments** (including percussion) in English;
 - your **registration number**.
 - The score should contain the **timecode** of the beginning of the music and at specific hits, and **bar numbers** at least at the beginning of each new system. The timecode starts at the beginning of the film fragment itself.
 - Please make sure that all details of the conductor's score are **clearly legible**. Preferably with not too much information on one sheet.
- **two video files**:
 - both saved in .MOV or .MP4;
 - if possible HD 1920x1080 i50 or p25
 - both containing a video track identical to the original excerpt (do not change the video countdown speed);
 - the first file should contain a stereophonic audio track (with the existing sound of the clip, and your original score). Use the video with time code.
 - the second file only with the click track. Use the video without time code.
- **three .MP3 audio files**:

- o a mock-up of the submitted score;
- o a mock-up of the submitted score and click track, with 8 clicks (4/4) or 6 clicks (3/4) before bar 1;
- o only the click track, with 8 clicks (4/4) or 6 clicks (3/4) before bar 1.
- o three files as **WAV 48kHz 16-bit**

Upload instructions can be found in the **confirmation email after your registration**. Please make sure the files are downloadable until **31 July 2026**.

Art.15 Please mention **only your registration number** on the score documents and in the file names. The personal information within the CV and biography should not be anonymous, as these are not shared with the jury.

4. OBLIGATIONS IN CASE OF NOMINATION

Art. 16 If nominated, the composer commits him- or herself to grant Film Fest Gent and the World Soundtrack Academy the permission, and up until 10 October 2026 the exclusive right, to perform the composition during the World Soundtrack Awards Concert without limit and free of charge and in this respect to use it for promotional purposes. The nominees agree that the live recording made during the concert may be published on the internet.

Art. 17 If nominated, the participants commit themselves to deliver following materials:

- complete performing materials as PDF files. Please provide **music materials** as follows:
 - o full score formatted for 13x19 inch or 480 mm x 330 mm;
 - o parts formatted for A4 format or B4 364x257 mm;
 - o full score: minimum stave width 5 mm or more;
 - o parts: minimum stave width between 7.5 mm;
 - o group flute 1&2, hobo 1&2, clarinet 1&2 etc. on one stave;
 - o parts: all right-hand pages must have at least 1 bar rest, preferably 3 or more in order to turn the page;
- for more detailed information, please check the **Mola Guidelines for Music Preparation** at <https://mola-inc.org/resources/11631>.
- if requested audio files needed for the performance;
- an official headshot (including copyright credit);
- a short biography of 2,500 characters.

5. POINTS OF ASSESSMENT

Art.18 Participants who have failed to submit their work within the deadlines will be disqualified.

Art.19 As mentioned before, no correspondence will be entered into. Likewise, queries made by telephone will not be answered. **Dirk Brossé**, chairman of the professional jury, and conductor and music director of Film Fest Gent, will provide feedback to the three finalists during their visit to the festival in October.

Art.20 During the assessment, the jury will take into account the following points:

1. **Punctuality:**

All material should be submitted within the set deadline. If this is not the case, the participant will be disqualified.

2. **Synchronisation:**

The written composition needs to be synchronised as closely as possible with the excerpt.

3. **Composition:**

- o Attention should be paid to playability for all the instruments.
- o Attention should be paid to the page turns.
- o The typesetting of the music should be good (using Sibelius or Finale).
- o The individual scores submitted should be of good quality.
- o Repetitions need to be clearly indicated on the scores.
- o The timecode should be visible on the score throughout the piece.

4. **Demo:**

A mock-up of the submitted score in good quality is required.

5. **Original music:**

- o **Only original music**, which has never been performed before, is allowed in this competition.
- o No quotes from other works or by other composers are allowed.
- o The participant declares that the submitted composition as well as all of its components are the exclusive outcome of his/her/their creative work.

6. **Rights:**

- o By participating in this competition, the participant automatically grants the organiser the right to perform his/her/their music for five years. Consequently, when the music is performed (possibly with recordings), no rights can be claimed.
- o Rights for use of the videos will not be released for any purpose. Videos of personal compositions shall not be published online. Failure to comply with this rule will result in the participant being disqualified.

6. PROGRAMME FOR FINALISTS

As guests of Film Fest Gent, the finalists can participate in the events organised for our VIP guests. The invitation for the film music programme is **valid for one person**. Please subscribe to our industry mailing at <https://www.worldsoundtrackawards.com/en/press-industry/industry-mailing> and contact the Music Office (info@worldsoundtrackawards.com) for more information and **to confirm your participation**.