



WORLD SOUNDTRACK AWARDS RULE BOOK

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I. WORLD SOUNDTRACK ACADEMY®

1. Mission Statement

Created and launched by Film Fest Gent in 2001, the World Soundtrack Academy (WSAcademy) is an international community of screen composers and industry professionals that supports the art of film music through cultural, promotional, educational and professional activities.

The WSAcademy promotes film music worldwide through the annual presentation of the World Soundtrack Awards, which recognise outstanding achievements, as well as through the development of other promotional activities. The WSAcademy supports both emerging and established composers for screen.

Through the organisation of film music seminars, masterclasses, workshops and other activities at Film Fest Gent, the WSAcademy actively contributes to the education and study of this art form. The WSAcademy engages itself in the preservation of the history of film music through recordings, publications and the development of an archive.

The WSAcademy also develops initiatives that are aimed at offering public platforms to new film music talent and networking activities for the creative forces and industry professionals involved in music and sound for screen.

2. Membership

2.1. Voting membership

Voting membership is open to **composers for screen** and **professionals active in the film/TV/game music industry**, such as music executives, music supervisors, music editors, agents, managers, producers and publicists. Voting members are required to pay an **annual membership fee**.

To join the World Soundtrack Academy, screen composers and industry professionals can apply through www.worldsoundtrackawards.com. All applicants for voting membership should supply a full biography that proves their active involvement in the film/TV/game music profession. Composers should have at least one (feature-length motion picture, TV series episode or video game) credit. Voting membership costs **100 EUR** per year for screen composers and **150 EUR** per year for other professionals.

Voting members will be invited to cast their vote in the two voting rounds for the categories **Film Composer of the Year**, **Television Composer of the Year** and **Best Original Song**. Belgian voting members are invited to vote for **Belgian Film Composer of the Year** Powered by Sabam in one round. The annual deadline to join the WSAcademy in order to be able to vote on the WSAwards of the respective year is **15 June** (for rounds 1 & 2) / **15 July** (for round 2), but applications are welcome throughout the year.

Membership fees are not refundable. It is within the discretion of the WSA Executive Board to cancel membership or refuse applications. If the application is refused because the above-mentioned requirements have not been met, an administrative processing fee may be charged.



Voting membership is automatically and freely granted to the guest(s) of honour at the annual World Soundtrack Awards Concert and the winners of the Film Composer of the Year, Television Composer of the Year, Discovery of the Year and Lifetime Achievement WSAwards. The winners of the remaining WSAwards receive membership for one year.

2.2. WSA Advisory Board

The **WSA Advisory Board** is the core group of the World Soundtrack Academy. These key members are actively involved in the activities of the WSAcademy and the film music industry in general. The Advisory Board convenes at least once a year during Film Fest Gent. The meeting at Film Fest Gent will be held in person, an additional board meeting will be organised via video conference in February/March.

For membership of the WSA Advisory Board the following criteria apply:

- The WSA Advisory Board consists of a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 40 members, coming from all over the world. Its members can represent an organisation or institution.
- Membership of the Advisory Board is valid for three years. After three years membership can be renewed. There is no limitation on renewals.
- Advisory Board members must vote for all the applicable WSAwards in at least two of those three years.
- Advisory Board members must attend the WSA Film Music Days at least once of those three years, and must attend at least one Board meeting each year or give a proxy to another Board member.
- If they fail to vote or attend, membership is renewable only by voting.
- If seats are available, the Executive Board and the Advisory Board can nominate new members. If they are not yet part of the WSAcademy, the suggested persons should first become a member.
- Invitations to join the Advisory Board are sent out by the Executive Board, which has the final decision over whether a member is asked to become part of the Advisory Board.
- It is within the sole and confidential discretion of the Executive Board, upon the advice of the Advisory Board, to cancel or refuse membership or to alter the rules of application. The Advisory Board shall resolve all differences in interpretation and questions with regard to membership applications.

The Advisory Board strives for a balanced composition, with no more than 50% of its maximum membership coming from the same country (determined by their living and working location), and representing the following organisations and professions: author rights organisations, talent agencies, film and music production companies, record labels, educational institutions, film festivals, music supervisors, publicists, film music journalists and composers.

2.3. WSA Honorary Board

The **WSA Honorary Board** consists of the honorary members of the World Soundtrack Academy. These film music experts are consulted whenever necessary. Honorary members follow the general WSAcademy voting process.



Recipients of the Lifetime Achievement Award are automatically incorporated into the WSA Honorary Board.

2.4. WSA Executive Board

The **WSA Executive Board** consists of the World Soundtrack Awards team at Film Fest Gent, which is responsible for the programme and the organisation of the annual film music events at Film Fest Gent and the activities of the World Soundtrack Academy. The Executive Board makes and carries out decisions in the name of the World Soundtrack Academy.

3. Administration and Revenues

The administrative activities of the WSAcademy are conducted by Film Fest Gent. Film Fest Gent keeps the membership of the WSAcademy up-to-date and invites members to renew their annual membership and to update their contact information.

The operating revenues of the WSAcademy are obtained from the voting memberships, sponsorships, the organisation of special events and the possible sale of rights.



II. WORLD SOUNDTRACK AWARDS®

1. Awards Definitions

The World Soundtrack Awards (WSAwards) shall be presented annually to mark and celebrate **outstanding achievements** in scoring music for motion pictures, television and video games and to honour other achievements as provided for in the rules. The WSAwards take the form of trophies and shall be given at an annual ceremony.

The following achievements shall be honoured annually with a World Soundtrack Award, elected by the World Soundtrack Academy:

- 1) **Film Composer of the Year**
(Award presented for a body of work in film music in the past year.)
- 2) **Television Composer of the Year**
(Award presented for a body of work in TV music in the past year.)
- 3) **Best Original Song**
(Award presented for a song written for a film or TV series in the past year.)
- 4) **Discovery of the Year**
(Award presented to an emerging talent in film scoring for a given film score in the past year.)
- 5) **Belgian Film Composer of the Year**
(Award presented for a body of work in film music in the past year by a Belgian composer.)

The following WSAwards shall be presented annually but are not elected by the WSAcademy:

- 6) **WSA Public Choice Award**
(Award presented for the general public's favourite original film score of the past year.)
- 7) **WSA Game Music Award** - chosen by the public
(Award presented for the general public's favourite original score for video game and/or other interactive media in the past year.)
- 8) **Award for Best Original Composition by a Young Composer**
(Award presented to the winner of the **WSA Film Music Composition Contest**.)

The following special WSAwards shall be presented not necessarily every year but at such times as, in the judgement of the Executive Board, it is deemed opportune to honour deserving recipients:

- 8) **Lifetime Achievement Award**
(Award presented for an extraordinary body of work and career in film music.)
- 9) **Major Contribution to the Art of Film Music and Sound**
(Award presented for special achievements, such as creative use of existing material in a soundtrack and sound editing.)
- 10) **Industry Award**
(Award presented to film music industry professionals for special achievements.)



2. Voting Rules

It is within the sole and confidential discretion of the Executive Board to determine what WSAwards shall be presented. In case the Executive or Advisory Board considers the number of valid candidates in one category insufficient, it may be decided either to cancel the category for that year or to appoint a winner directly.

The Advisory Board shall resolve all possible interpretations of the rules and all questions of eligibility. In the event of any dispute concerning eligibility, the Executive Board reserves the right to declare any achievement ineligible and to withhold any award until the dispute is resolved. In the event a nominated achievement is declared ineligible after all nominations have been announced, it will not be replaced and the category will remain with one nomination less.

The information provided on **IMDb/IMDbPro** and/or by the producer will be used to check eligibility of scores.

2.1. Eligibility

- a) Only the **principal composer(s)** or **song writer(s)** responsible for the conception and execution of the work as a whole shall be eligible for a WSAward.
- b) Only **original scores** or **songs** are eligible. The work must be the result of the creative collaboration between the film-, TV- or game maker(s) and the composer(s) or songwriter(s). An **original score** is a substantial body of original music in the form of dramatic underscoring. An **original song** must contain original music. A clearly audible and significant rendition of the song must be used in the body of the film or TV series or as the first song of the end credits. (The song does not need to be presented visually.) It is the film/TV version of the song that will be considered.
- c) Scores and songs will qualify as eligible if the motion picture or TV series for which the score or song was composed has had its **world premiere screening or initial theatrical release between 16 June 2025 and 15 June 2026**.
- d) Unless noted otherwise, scores for motion pictures will be eligible if they are used in a **feature-length fiction or documentary film** (of at least 70 minutes) that was part of the official selection at one of the **film festivals** accredited by FIAPF (see [here](#)), Sundance, TIFF, CPH:DOX, IDFA, Visions du Réel or Tribeca Film Festival, or received its initial **commercial theatrical release**. The minimum amount of original score in the film should be 30 minutes. (Exceptions may be allowed.) Additionally, for the award Belgian Film Composer of the Year, a selection at a Belgian film festival also qualifies.
- e) Scores for television series or miniseries will only be eligible if they are used in (a season of) a **dramatic episodic series** that had its **world premiere** on a **public network**, on **pay television** or on **streaming TV services** that commission original content. Sitcoms and DVD premieres are excluded from consideration.
- f) Scores for video games are eligible when the project for which it was written is released for purchase or download by the public **between 16 June 2025 and 15 June 2026**. If a game is in “Early Access” or “Game Preview” it has not been officially released and therefore is not yet eligible for consideration.



- g) Composers will be eligible for the WSAward category **Discovery of the Year** if they submit an eligible **original score for a motion picture** and if they have scored **maximum five feature-length fiction or documentary films** that have had a **commercial theatrical release in two countries or more**, up to and including the film in question for which the submitted score has been composed. (Thus short films, TV films and TV series are not counted.) In case there are multiple eligible original scores during the qualifying period, the composer can choose what score to submit for consideration. Candidates can only submit one original score for this category per year. If a composer has won the Discovery of the Year WSAward previously or if he or she has already been nominated twice, the composer will be excluded from participation in this category. If more than one composer is credited for the film score, each composer should meet the eligibility criteria.
- h) Composers will be eligible for the WSAward category **Belgian Film Composer of the Year Powered by Sabam** if they submit one or more eligible original scores for a motion picture and if they have the **Belgian nationality**.
- i) For the **Public Choice** WSAward, only **original scores for feature-length fiction or documentary films** that had a **commercial release** during the qualifying period are eligible.
- j) Composers will be eligible to participate in the **WSA Film Music Composition Contest** if they are under the age of 36 on the date of the World Soundtrack Awards Concert in the respective year. More information and the rules, available in a separate document, can be found at www.worldsoundtrackawards.com.

2.2. Election Process

Unless noted otherwise, voting for nominations and awards shall be by **secret ballot**, and **PwC Belgium** will oversee the World Soundtrack Awards **secured electronic voting** process. All nominations shall be announced and placed on the final ballot **in alphabetical order**. A maximum of five nominations shall be presented per category unless there is a tie.

The nominees receiving the highest number of votes in the final voting round will be the winners in the respective categories. In the event that a score or song was **written in collaboration**, the award will go to the composer considered to be the team's key member (unless the Executive Board decides otherwise).

In case of a tie for the last place in the first voting round, the number of nominees will be increased. In case of a tie for first place in the final balloting, the WSA Advisory and Executive Board will vote for the winner.

The various World Soundtrack Award winners are determined through the following voting procedures:

- a) For the WSAward categories **Film Composer of the Year**, **Television Composer of the Year** and **Best Original Song** the process consists of three phases:
- Longlists are created from submissions by members of the World Soundtrack Academy and a selection by the WSA Executive Board on the basis of the eligibility criteria. All members of the World Soundtrack Academy are able to submit composers or songs for consideration. The final longlists are established by the WSA Executive Board and approved by the Advisory Board.



- In the first voting round (1 July - 30 July, 23:59 CEST / WEST, 2:59 PM PDT), which determines the nominations, all members of the WSAcademy will be invited to cast their vote on the five film and the five television composers whom they consider as having produced the best body of work (which may consist of one or several original scores), regardless of whether the scores have been released on a soundtrack album, and on the five songs which they consider to be the best original songs written for a film or TV series during the eligibility period.
 - In the second voting round (5 August - 15 August, 23:59 CEST / WEST, 2:59 PM PDT), all members of the WSAcademy will be invited to elect the winners from the five nominees per category.
- b) For the WSAward category **Discovery of the Year** the process consists of two phases:
- All eligible composers are able to submit an original score. The WSA Executive Board carries out an eligibility check on all submissions.
 - Voting is organised in one round (1 July - 15 August, 23:59 CEST / WEST, 2:59 PM PDT). The nominees and winners are elected by the **WSA Executive and Advisory Boards**. The Board members will rank the three candidates of their choice on the basis of the film and score material submitted by the composers.
- c) For the category **Belgian Film Composer of the Year Powered by Sabam**, the process consists of the following two phases:
- All composers are able to submit an original score. The WSA Executive Board carries out an eligibility check on all submissions.
 - Voting is organised in one round (1 July - 15 August, 23:59 CEST / WEST, 2:59 PM PDT). The nominees and winners are elected by **all Belgian members of the WSAcademy and by the WSA Executive and Advisory Boards**. They will rank the three candidates of their choice on the basis of the film and score material submitted by the composers.
- d) The **Industry Award** winner is selected by the WSA Executive Board on the basis of suggestions by the WSA Boards.
- e) For the **Public Choice Award** the process consists of the following three phases:
- The longlist is established in collaboration with the Composers Diversity Collective (CDC), the UK & European Guild of Music Supervisors (GMS), the Alliance for Women Film Composers (AWFC), and the International Film Music Critics Association (IFMCA). Each organisation submits a list with their 20 best film scores of the past year and a back-up list of 5 titles. No more than 50 percent of the composers in the submitted lists can originate from the same country (determined by their living and working location).
 - Based on the submitted lists, the WSA Executive Board establishes the final longlist, solving potential overlap through the submitted back-up lists. If needed, the Executive Board completes the list with a maximum of 15 titles to ensure the final voting list is representative of the screen music industry as well as the preceding year in screen music.



- From that final longlist the nominees and winners are elected by the **general public**. Voting takes place via www.worldsoundtrackawards.com **between 26 June and 15 August, 23:59 CEST / WEST, 2:59 PM PDT.**
- f) For the **WSA Game Music Award**, the process consists of the following three phases:
- The longlist is established in collaboration with the Composers Diversity Collective (CDC), the UK & European Guild of Music Supervisors (GMS), the Alliance for Women Film Composers (AWFC), and the International Film Music Critics Association (IFMCA). Each organisation submits a list with their 15 best game scores of the past year and a back-up list of 5 titles. No more than 50 percent of the composers in the submitted lists can originate from the same country (determined by their living and working location). Besides, all members of the World Soundtrack Academy are able to **submit scores for consideration**.
 - Based on the submitted lists, the WSA Executive Board establishes the final longlist, solving potential overlap through the submitted back-up lists. If needed, the Executive Board completes the list with a maximum of 15 titles to ensure the final voting list is representative of the screen music industry as well as the preceding year in screen music.
 - From that final longlist the nominees and winners are elected by the **general public**. Voting takes place via www.worldsoundtrackawards.com between **26 June and 15 August, 23:59 CEST / WEST, 2:59 PM PDT.**
- g) The nominees and winner of the **Award for Best Original Composition by a Young Composer Powered by Vienna Synchron Stage** are elected by the professional jury of the Composition Contest, selected by the WSA Executive Board and chaired by Dirk Brossé, music director of Film Fest Gent.

3. Submissions

3.1. Film Composer of the Year / Television Composer of the Year / Best Original Song / WSA Game Music Award

All members of the World Soundtrack Academy can submit scores, composers and songs for consideration in the categories Film Composer of the Year, Television Composer of the Year, Best Original Song and the WSA Game Music Award via www.worldsoundtrackawards.com. Submissions are open between 15 April and 15 June and are free of charge, but membership of the World Soundtrack Academy is required.

3.2. Discovery of the Year

To be considered for the **Discovery of the Year** WSAward, eligible composers must submit an original score to the WSAcademy.

The following terms and conditions are applicable:

- a) The composer needs to register via www.worldsoundtrackawards.com and pay an administrative fee of **€ 35** for processing and consulting costs. **From 15 May onwards** the fee will be **€ 45**. This fee is non-refundable.



- b) All members of the World Soundtrack Academy can submit composers for consideration in the category Discovery of the Year free of charge, if the composer is also a member of the World Soundtrack Academy.
- c) Submissions are open **between 15 April and 15 June 2025**. Registration (including all the required film and score materials) and payment should be completed by 15 June at the latest. Scores submitted after the deadline will not be accepted and incomplete submissions will be disqualified.
- d) Submissions must include the following material:
 - A link to download the **complete score** (preferably in high quality), to be provided in the online form.
 - A link to download a **selection of max. 5 cues** (totalling no more than 15 minutes) that are **representative of the submitted score**, to be provided in the online form.
 - A link to view the **screener** in high resolution, containing the motion picture as it appeared in commercial cinema theatres, to be provided in the online form. The screener must contain the original language version with English subtitles. (For English-language films this is recommended but not mandatory.) In case the film studio does not grant permission to provide a link to the full screener, a selection of key scenes featuring the score may be accepted as an alternative.
 - A professional biography and photo of the composer, to be provided in the online form.

The **links** to the score and screener **must remain valid until 15 August**. Rightsholders agree to the submission of the material for WSAward consideration. All score and film materials and links will be handled **confidentially** on the WSA voting platform and shared only with the members of the WSA Executive and Advisory Boards for voting purposes.

3.3. Belgian Film Composer of the Year Powered by Sabam

To be considered for the WSAward **Belgian Film Composer of the Year powered by Sabam**, eligible composers must submit one or more scores to the WSAcademy.

The following terms and conditions are applicable:

- e) The composer needs to register via www.worldsoundtrackawards.com and pay an administrative fee of **€ 35** for processing and consulting costs. **From 15 May onwards** the fee will be **€ 45**. This fee is non-refundable.
- f) All members of the World Soundtrack Academy can submit composers for consideration in the category Belgian Film Composer of the Year Powered by Sabam free of charge, if the composer is also a member of the World Soundtrack Academy.
- g) Submissions are open **between 15 April and 15 June 2025**. Registration (including all the required film and score materials) and payment should be completed by 15 June at the latest. Scores submitted after the deadline will not be accepted and incomplete submissions will be disqualified.
- h) Submissions must include the following material:



- A link to download the **complete score** (preferably in high quality), to be provided in the online form.
- A link to download a **selection of max. 5 cues** (totalling no more than 15 minutes) that are **representative of the submitted score**, to be provided in the online form.
- A link to view the **screener** in high resolution, containing the motion picture as it appeared in commercial cinema theatres, to be provided in the online form. The screener must contain the original language version with English subtitles. (For English-language films this is recommended but not mandatory.) In case the film studio does not grant permission to provide a link to the full screener, a selection of key scenes featuring the score may be accepted as an alternative.
- A professional biography and photo of the composer, to be provided in the online form.

The **links** to the score and screener **must remain valid up until 15 August**. Rightsholders agree to the submission of the material for WSAward consideration. All score and film materials and links will be handled **confidentially** on the WSA voting platform and shared only with Belgian members of the WSAcademy and the WSA Executive and Advisory Boards for voting purposes.

3.4. Award for Best Original Composition by a Young Composer Powered by Vienna Synchron Stage

To be considered for the **Award for Best Original Composition by a Young Composer Powered by Vienna Synchron Stage**, eligible composers must participate in the **WSA Film Music Composition Contest**. The terms and conditions are available in a separate document at www.worldsoundtrackawards.com.