

2025-26 Original Composition Program

Purpose: The purpose of the event is to promote and encourage student composition
Eligibility: Students in grades K-12, undergraduate collegiate members and PMEA members

Composition Requirements:

- **Students in grades K-8:** Compositions should be written for at least a solo (instrument or voice) with piano accompaniment or a small instrumental ensemble; pieces should be 3-5 minutes in length
- **Students in grades 9-12 and undergraduate collegiate students:** If writing for an ensemble, compositions should be written for at least a small ensemble (4-6 parts) or four-part choral with or without piano accompaniment (with original text or borrowed text (credit must be given)); Pieces may also be written for solo instrument with accompaniment or electronic ensembles. pieces should be 3-6 minutes in length;
- **PMEA Members:** Compositions may be written for a standard elementary or middle school instrumental or choral ensemble (with or without piano accompaniment (with original text or borrowed text (credit must be given)) OR written for a large ensemble, either concert band or full symphonic orchestra or percussion ensemble (10 or more parts), full jazz ensemble or a minimum four-part SATB (Divisi if applicable) with or without piano accompaniment (with original text or borrowed text (credit must be given)); pieces should be 5-8 minutes in length.

Program Rules and Procedures:

1. Students in grades K-12 must be sponsored by a PMEA member; undergraduate college students and music teachers who apply must be PMEA members.
2. Entries must be unpublished original compositions. No transcriptions or arrangements will be eligible.
3. The purpose of the program is to encourage and promote composition. Therefore, the composition must be conceived and constructed solely by the composer.
4. Compositions must be submitted with a full score in PDF format and a recorded performance or digital audio file.
5. Be sure that your name is **NOT** listed anywhere on the score or in the audio file.
6. All entries must be received by **11:59 p.m. December 3, 2025**. Entries received after the deadline will not be considered.
7. All rights, including copyrighting, remain with the composer.
8. Compositions submitted must not be published (printed or available publicly on streaming services) and must not have won any other competitions.
9. The panel of judges will include qualified university composition faculty, university music education faculty and/or music educators. Their decisions will be final, with the right to withhold the award in the event that no entry is judged to be worthy of winning.
10. A composer may submit multiple compositions; however each one must be written for a different ensemble/genre. A separate application is required for each composition submitted.
11. The top compositions will be featured during the 2026 PMEA Annual In-service Conference, April 23-25 at the Kalahari Resort & Convention Center in the Poconos. Composers of selected compositions will be asked to submit a recording of their piece to be played during the conference session.

Evaluation criteria:

- Creative use of the elements of music
- Appropriate use of voice and/or instruments (range/playability, texture, tone color, text if applicable)
- Compositional technique and development
- Presentation (correct musical notation)

Results:

The top composition(s) will be recognized and will have their pieces featured during the 2026 PMEA Annual In-service Conference. All applicants will receive feedback on their compositions.

Entry Fee: \$15

Applications will be accepted from Monday, September 29 until 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, December 3.

Questions: Please email: info@pmea.net