

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra
Rushworth Composition Prize 2025

Application Pack



What is Liverpool Philharmonic?

Liverpool Philharmonic enhances and transforms lives through music.

At the heart of our work is the critically-acclaimed Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra (the UK's oldest) and Choir; an extensive programme of participatory work with young people and others across our community; and presentation of almost 400 concerts and events each year at our home, Liverpool Philharmonic Hall.

Liverpool Philharmonic reaches more people than any music organisation outside London

- Over 250,000 people attend Liverpool Philharmonic concerts each year.
- 73,000 young people participate in our Youth Company and associated ensembles, attend concerts or take part in our In Harmony programme.
- Around 900,000 people in 92 countries listen to our recordings each month on Spotify, more than any UK orchestra outside London.
- Over 21,500 people have benefitted from our Music and Health programme over the last 15 years.

Liverpool Philharmonic is rooted in our city

We are central to Liverpool's cultural offering, being the largest music organisation and one of the largest cultural organisations in the city, employing over 290 people. As well as our work in Liverpool, our Orchestra represents the city with performances and broadcasts across the UK and around the world.

The city's young people are a central focus of our work. Our In Harmony programme provides an intensive, daily music-making programme for over 1750 children in Everton and Anfield, North Liverpool, and we run more than 5,000 workshops and events in community settings for all ages across the city. Liverpool Philharmonic Youth Company provides a range of opportunities for music-making for young people, including the Liverpool Philharmonic Youth Orchestra, Liverpool Philharmonic Youth Choir, Children's Choirs, and Rushworth Young Composers programme.

Our Music and Health Programme works in partnership with NHS Trusts, including Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust, Clatterbridge Cancer Centre NHS Foundation Trust, The Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust, Alder Hey Children's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and Improving Me; using music to benefit health and wellbeing. The Music and Health programme has been running continuously since 2008 and has worked to benefit over 21,500 individuals across the Liverpool 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 Ensemble 10:10.

Ensemble 10:10

Ensemble 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, in particular, supporting composers from Liverpool and the North-West region.

As part of Liverpool Philharmonic's collaboration with the University of Liverpool, in April 2022 Ensemble 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 2025/26 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 Ensemble 10:10, which is performed as part of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra 2026/27 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 Ensemble 10:10 and an opportunity to meet with the conductor before the premiere.
- Ivors Academy membership, which may include access to further mentoring and development sessions with other Ivors Academy members.

Previous Winners' Testimonials

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 22 September 2025 – 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.

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 Ensemble 10:10 workshop and premiere dates.

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

Timeline

Applications Open	5 June 2025
Applications Close	22 September 2025
Contacting all shortlisted and unsuccessful applicants	December 2025
Winner contacted	January 2026
Composing begins	February 2026
Premiere	January 2027

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 22 September 2025**. 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 Nikita Robinson: learning@liverpoolphil.com