



KPO NSW SECONDARY SCHOOLS CONCERTO COMPETITION 2026

COMPETITION RULES – please also read the FAQs at kpo.org.au

1. The 42nd NSW Secondary Schools Concerto Competition is open to all students in Years 7 to 12, aged 18 years and under on the date of the Finals, Sunday 28 June 2026, and living or studying in NSW or the ACT.

2. There are 2 sections in the 2026 Concerto Competition:

Junior Solo Concerto – age, 14 years and under on the date of the Finals (28 June 2026)

Senior Solo Concerto – age, 15 years to 18 years on the date of the Finals (28 June 2026)

3. There are 3 stages in the Competition:

Stage 1, the Auditions: video recorded solo concerto with piano accompaniment.

Stage 2, the Semi-Finals: live solo performances with piano accompaniment.

Stage 3, the Finals Concert: solo performance with the Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra (KPO).

4. The key dates and venues for each stage of the 2026 competition are:

Registrations open: **Monday 1 December 2025.**

Registrations close: **When 100 Solo Entries are reached or 10 pm Monday 16 February 2026** (whichever comes first). NB the last two years we have reached 100 solo entries well before February.

Submission of recordings for the 100 entrants close **10 pm Monday 23 February 2026.**

Competitors may enter on more than one solo instrument.

Stage 1, viewing the video auditions **Sunday 8 March 2026** (3 adjudicators assessing a downloaded and collated reel of all 100 performances, together at a private venue). Semi Finalists will be notified by email later that evening.

Stage 2, Semi-Finals of the Solo Concertos The 20 Semi-Finalists perform live to an open audience, **Sunday 29 March 2026**, from 11.00 am to 5.00 pm at Abbotsleigh Senior School, Wahroonga (venue to be confirmed)

Stage 3, the Finals Concert: **Sunday 28 June 2026 at 3.00 pm** at The Concourse, Chatswood.

5. **Stage 1** will be adjudicated by assessment of submitted video recordings. Each recording must include a short, spoken introduction of the entrant's name and the title of the work being performed. The total length of the recording, including your introduction, must not exceed 5 minutes. Please discuss with your teacher the "best sections" of your concerto movement or movements to submit for the Stage 1 adjudication. Keep in mind that there are only 3 weeks to prepare for the Semis if you are chosen so please make sure that the complete performance is very well prepared. (Not just a perfect 5 minutes!)

Stage 2, Semi-Finals, Performance Timetables will be available on kpo.org.au/cc after Monday 16 March 2026. Competitors must be prepared to perform at their scheduled times at Stage 2, the Semi Finals.

Any special Stage 2 requests (staging, school or accompanist commitments etc) must be indicated on the registration form **before the closing date (February 16)**. All requests will be reviewed and accommodated where possible.

Please note: Under no circumstances can changes be made to the schedule once it is published. (The timetable is arranged so that accompanists with multiple entrants have time to warm up and perform with each Semi-Finalist.)

The Finals Concert rehearsals with the orchestra, will be on Tuesday evenings and will commence on Tuesday 26 May 2026. Finalists will be sent a rehearsal schedule by email two weeks in advance. Finalists must inform the committee of any clashes with school or other commitments on those Tuesday evenings before the end of April.

6. Competitors must nominate to perform a concerto, movement(s) of a concerto or an instrumental solo with orchestral accompaniment. The entry form must state the total performance time for the nominated movements that will be played at the Finals Concert, should the competitor proceed through the Auditions and Semi-finals.

Please note. It is important to understand that for the Finals Concert:

Music chosen by competitors must have an orchestral score and parts readily available in Australia. Scores and parts which are not available to be hired by the KPO in Australia will incur additional costs for competitors. In the past three years, some overseas score hires and performance rights have cost over \$1000. (Please personally check with score hire companies eg, Clear Music Australia or Zinfonia. There are more details in FAQ on the website)

If orchestral parts are not available, the competitor must withdraw from the competition.

The **choice of work and movements nominated** on the registration form cannot be altered after the final closing date for entries (16 February 2026). Please discuss your concerto and movement choice with your instrumental teacher before entering the competition.

7. For Stage 1, the Auditions, upload your 5 minute video recording (including a very short introduction of your name and work) as described on the Concerto Competition website.

Twenty competitors will be selected to proceed to the Semi-Finals, including at least one Junior, and at least one Senior.

8. For Stage 2, the Semi-Finals, the allocated time for each solo competitor is up to 15 minutes. (Cuts to orchestral tutti's help to feature your performance).
9. For the Finals Concert, longer works may require some sections to be cut. The conductor of the Finals Concert will make the final decision.

As a guide for time limits, please refer to the 15 minute limit for the Semis. Sometimes the conductor will consider allowing a slightly longer program (eg 2 movements to a length of 18 minutes). However, a full 25 minute concerto is too long for the competition.

10. For Stages 1 and 2, the Auditions and Semi-finals, competitors must perform with piano accompaniment. Competitors may provide their own accompanist or choose an accompanist from the KPO's database of accompanists, available upon request.
11. Competitors should provide a copy of their music, piano reduction or full score, for use by the adjudicators at the Semi finals. Authorised copies and original parts can be collected from the front desk during the allocated breaks. Photocopies will be retained and destroyed by the KPO in accordance with copyright law.
12. The following awards will be presented following the Finals Concert:
 - a) Overall winner, awarded to the best performer across both the Junior and Senior sections: \$6,000 plus the opportunity to perform a full concerto with the KPO as a guest artist.
 - b) Barbara Robinson award: \$1,500
 - c) Barbara Cran award: \$1,500

At least one Junior section finalist and one Senior section finalist will receive two of these top three awards. (There have been times in the past when a junior performer was the overall winner and the two next awards went to a senior and junior performer)
 - e) Perpetual cups, awarded to schools of the overall winner, Barbara Robinson award winner and the Barbara Cran award winner
 - f) The Dual Crescendo Award for Great Potential: \$800
 - g) KPO players' award, awarded to the best solo performer (as voted by KPO players and the KPO finals concert conductor) during the KPO finals concert rehearsals: \$500.00.
 - h) All solo finalists will receive \$250.00 and a certificate.
 - i) Other possible prizes, from our generous Sponsors, will be confirmed closer to the time of the Finals Concert, at the discretion of the Concerto Competition Committee.
13. The overall winner cannot enter the competition again in subsequent years on the same instrument. A Junior section winner of either the Barbara Cran or Barbara Robinson award cannot enter as a Junior again on the same instrument but may compete in the Senior section.
14. Video and audio recording is only permitted during the dress rehearsal for the Finals Concert. No other recording of any competitor will be permitted during any public performance. The Finals Concert will be recorded and possibly live-streamed on Australian Digital Concert Hall.
15. All competitors perform at their own risk and KPO will not accept responsibility for any accident or misadventure.

16. No provision will be made for private rehearsal time in competition venues. For the Semifinals and Finals, warm-up times at the venue will be assigned before the performance time.
17. The decision of the adjudicators is final, and no discussion will be entered into. Please, do not approach or contact the adjudicators after the performances.
18. The KPO reserves the right not to award prizes.
19. Registration Fees: \$75.00. The registration fee includes:
 - a) One student ticket to the Finals Concert
 - b) adjudicator report from Stage 1, the Auditions
 - c) adjudicator report from Stage 2, the Semi-Finals
20. All registrations and payments must be made online at www.kpo.org.au.
21. All Registrations must be received by 10 pm, Monday 16 February 2026. Only the first 100 solo entrant registrations received up to this date will proceed through to the auditions. (Please note: in 2025 the 100 entry limit was reached in mid January so please do not leave entries until the closing date)

The adjudicators' names will be published on the KPO's website at www.kpo.org.au as soon as details become available.
23. All competitors must abide by these Competition Rules and KPO's Privacy Policy, available at kpo.org.au/privacy.
24. By submitting the NSW Secondary Schools Concerto Competition entry form, all competitors consent to the KPO using any information contained in the entry form (plus any photography, videography or audio recordings taken at the competition) for media publication (including on KPO's social media pages in accordance with KPO's Social Media Policy, available at kpo.org.au/socialmedia).
25. If a competitor does not comply with these Rules, they may be disqualified from competing in the competition at the Concerto Competition Committee's absolute discretion.

Please also read the FAQs on the KPO website

<https://www.kpo.org.au/current/concertocomp> which contains important information, and will help with understanding these Rules. All enquiries should be emailed to concertocomp@kpo.org.au.