



IFAC HANDA AUSTRALIAN SINGING COMPETITION

COMPETITION PROCESS

OVERVIEW

The 2026 National Adjudicator is **Donna Balson**.

Please ensure you read and understand the Rules and Conditions of the Competition. If you have any queries, please contact the Competition by email or phone.

2026 RULES & CONDITIONS

1. ELIGIBILITY

1.1 An entrant of the IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition (“the Competition”) must be –

- (i) under 26 years on 23 June 2026 (must be born *after* 23 June 2000).
- (ii) a citizen or resident of Australia. Students with temporary residency visas are still eligible to enter. MOST reserves the right to verify Australian residency.
- (iii) an amateur or professional classical singer.

It is recommended that the entrant be over 19 years of age.

1.2 A previous winner of The Marianne Mathy Scholarship is ineligible to enter.

1.3 Entrants must ensure that they are available to attend all the events listed for the Competition. **Check the Timeline for this year's dates.**

1.4 Interstate entrants must ensure they are willing and able to travel to Sydney for the Competition Semi-Finals and Finals concerts at their own expense.

1.5 All stages of the Competition will be filmed & photographed, and entry indicates consent to have this material shared at the organisation's discretion including on websites, newsletters, and social media.

1.6 All entrants must be fully vaccinated and must adhere to any and all Covid-safety measures put in place by the organisers.

1.7 The Entry Fee is not refundable.

2. REPERTOIRE GUIDELINES

2.1 Please note: Entrants **must** verify that the orchestral scores of items chosen to sing at the Finals Concert on **8 October 2026** are available in Australia. Entrants should contact the Music Library of Symphony Services International or other Australian providers. Pay particular attention to the correct orchestration and key. It is an essential requirement that entrants perform this check at the time of entry.

If the item is unavailable, the full score (with orchestral parts) may be imported at the **entrant's expense**.

2.2 Entrants should give careful consideration to selecting repertoire in which they are already proficient. This should showcase vocal quality, flexibility, style, range of expression and technique.

2.3 All items must be performed from memory and in the original language. There must be at least **3 languages** in the repertoire.

2.4 Submitted repertoire can only be changed before the Heats, provided that it remains in accordance with the Rules and with the approval of the National Adjudicator.

2.5 The total repertoire must not exceed a performance time of 30 minutes and must include at least **one item** from **each** of the following categories:

A — works by a Classical or Baroque composer such as *Monteverdi, Handel, Bach, Purcell, Gluck, Haydn or Mozart*

B — songs for voice and piano from the repertoire of the 19th Century to the present, e.g. lieder, art song and chanson

C — works from the international operatic repertoire

D — a song with orchestral accompaniment (which may also be part of a song cycle) and/or a solo from a choral/orchestral work – oratorio, cantata, mass etc. written for performance with orchestra (an excerpt for solo voice only, not including chorus).

Each song must be assigned to a single category and cannot be used to cover multiple categories.

HEATS

2.6 Contestants will perform one item of their own choice from the submitted repertoire and the Adjudication Panel may select additional item/s.

SEMI-FINALS

2.7 Semi-Finalists will be required to prepare **four items** from the submitted repertoire, some or all of which may be heard by the Adjudicators.

- 1 item must be from category A
- 1 item must be from category B, and this one must be performed at the Public Semi Finals
- the remaining two items can be from any category (A, B, C, or D)
- the total time of the items for the concert must be over 6 minutes but less than 10 minutes

For the Private Adjudication component, Semi-Finalists usually perform the two items not chosen for the Public Concert though Adjudicators may ask to hear some or all of an item chosen for the Concert.

For the Public Concert, **two of the four items** will be performed, of which one must be from **CATEGORY B**.

Timing: Together, the items for the Public Concert should total a **minimum of 6 minutes and not exceed 10 minutes**. Entrants must check the timing to ensure that the maximum limit is adhered to.

2.8 Semi-Finalists will receive an Orchestral Repertoire Form from the Australian Singing Competition which must be completed and returned to the office by **Friday 17 July 2026. No change will be permitted.**

FINALS

2.10 Finalists must present **2 items** from the submitted repertoire selected in consultation with the Adjudicators following the Semi-Finals. These items must be available to be sung with orchestral accompaniment.

Timing: Together, the items should total **a minimum of 8 minutes and not exceed 12 minutes**. Entrants must check the timing to ensure that the maximum limit is adhered to.

2.11 If the music is unavailable in Australia in the required key with full score and orchestral parts, the item may not be performed at the Finals unless the singer arranges to obtain the music, with all orchestral parts, at their own expense. (Please refer to 2.1)

3. ACCOMPANIMENT

3.1 Contestants must engage their own accompanist for the Heats. An accompanist may be scheduled with the help of the IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition if required.

3.2 The Official Accompanist for the Semi-Finals is **Bradley Gilchrist**. Rehearsal times will be allocated for a one-hour rehearsal that is funded by the Competition. Additional rehearsal time may be made by arrangement with the Official Accompanist at the singer's expense.

3.3 Finalists will perform with the Opera Australia Orchestra. Rehearsal time will be allocated prior to the Finals Concert. Dates and times to be confirmed.

3.4 Semi-Finalists and Finalists are obliged to attend all rehearsals as specified.

4. ADJUDICATION

GENERAL

4.1 Adjudication will take place over three stages: Heats, Semi-Finals and Finals. The decision of the Adjudicators at all stages is final.

4.2 Contestants will be judged on:

- (i) Performance;
- (ii) Technique;
- (iii) Potential;
- (iv) Personality; and
- (v) Study Plan.

HEATS: AUSTRALIA

4.3 Any of the scheduled Heats may be cancelled if insufficient numbers register to be auditioned.

4.4 At the Heats, contestants will sing 2 items from their repertoire. The first will be their choice, and the subsequent piece(s) will be selected by the Adjudicators. After singing, each contestant will be interviewed by the panel.

SEMI-FINALS

4.7 The Semi-Finals will take place in Sydney. A new panel of Adjudicators will join the National Adjudicator. The Competition reserves the right to alter the presentation of the Semi-Finals concert should it become impossible to conduct a live event for health and safety reasons.

4.8 The Semi-Finals Adjudication over 2 days consists of:

- (i) a private performance and interview in Sydney on **Friday, 14 August**.
Allocated times will be advised, and
- (ii) a public concert on **Sunday 16 August**.

FINALS

4.9 The Finals Adjudication panel will include a non-voting Chair.

4.10 The National Adjudicator may be present at the General Rehearsal.

4.11 The Finals Concert will be staged in the Concourse Concert Hall on **Thursday, 8 October**. The Competition reserves the right to alter the presentation of the Finals concert should it become impossible to conduct a live event for health and safety reasons.

5. WORKSHOP

5.1 Semi-Finalists will be required to leave **Thursday 13 August** available to attend a workshop presented by the National Adjudicator.

5.2 The Workshop is not intended to form part of the adjudication process and is instead designed to provide an educational activity for the participants.

6. MASTERCLASS

FINALISTS

6.1 Finalists selected at the Semi-Finals will be invited to participate in a public MasterClass on **Monday, 17 August**.

6.2 The MasterClass is not intended to form part of the adjudication process and is instead designed to provide an educational activity for the participants.

7. MUSIC

HEATS

7.1 A copy of the music of all items to be performed at the Heats must be brought for the Adjudicators.

SEMI-FINALS

7.2 Semi-Finalists must provide the Official Accompanist with their scores by **Monday, 13 July**. Scores must be scanned and sent via email (no photographed scores will be accepted).

7.3 A copy of the music of all items to be performed at the Semi-Finals must be brought for the Adjudicators.

8. INFORMATION AND LEGALS

8.1 By entering The IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition (“the Competition”) you agree to comply with the terms and conditions attached to each Scholarship, Prize or Award.

8.2 The duration of any Scholarship will be for the period necessary for the successful recipient to complete the program of study undertaken.

8.3 All awards must be drawn within five (5) years of the recipient winning unless an alternative agreement is reached or stipulated in the ‘Prize Fact Sheet’. Requests for funds must be made in writing, with a budget detailing the proposed use.

8.4 The Competition and Music & Opera Singers Trust Limited (“MOST®”) takes no responsibility for the acceptance of scholarships, which involve overseas travel. This decision is taken solely at the discretion of the recipient. Recipients are advised to check the current status of the country in question with the Australian Government’s Department of Foreign Affairs at the time of travel.

PERFORMANCE RIGHTS

8.5 MOST® has the right to video, film, record or photograph and retain all stages of the Competition for archival or promotional purposes (“the Material”). MOST® has the right to retain the material on websites or any other analogue or electronic/digital media without fee to the singer and any personal information relating to the Competition. Broadcast, and narrowcast rights remain with MOST® and the Competition.

8.6 MOST® has the right to distribute, post the Material in any medium (including and without limitation on YouTube, Vimeo, Instagram, Twitter, Flickr, Facebook, Tumblr, TikTok), in whole or in part for an unlimited period, without remuneration, for the purpose of promoting MOST® or the IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition and associated entities.

8.7 The Competition and MOST® have permission to use the Material in any way that may otherwise infringe an entrant’s moral rights pursuant to the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth), including but not limited to, an entrant’s moral rights associated with their live performance in the 2026 IFAC Handa ASC when used for any promotion or publicity of MOST® or the Competition in any media without limitation for an unlimited period.

8.8 All approaches to the media must be made through and with the approval of MOST®. Contestants will be required to be available for media calls by arrangement.

9. GENERAL

9.1 Recipients are required to provide a report (not exceeding 1,200 words) to MOST® within 12 months on the benefit that the Scholarship, Prize or Award has had on their career.

9.2 All recipients of Prizes, Scholarships and Awards are encouraged to acknowledge the prize giver with a letter of thanks.

TIMELINE 2026

TIMELINE 2026

ENTRIES

Friday 6 February 2026 / Opening date for Entries

Friday 13 March 2026 / Closing date for Entries

Monday 16 March 2026 / Closing date for Late Entries (late fees apply)

HEATS

Monday 20 April 2026 / Heats: Sydney

Tuesday 21 April 2026 / Heats: Sydney

Wednesday 22 April 2026 / Heats: Melbourne

Friday 24 April 2026 / Heats: Perth

Sunday 26 April 2026 / Heats: Brisbane

SEMI-FINALS

Thursday 13 August 2026 / Semi-Finals Workshop

Friday 14 August 2026 / Semi-Finals Private Adjudication

Sunday 16 August 2026 / Semi-Finals Public Concert

MASTERCLASS

Monday 17 August 2026 / MasterClass for Finalists

FINALS

TBC / Piano Call

TBC / Sitzprobe

Thursday 8 October 2026 / General Rehearsal

Thursday 8 October 2026 / Finals Concert

MOST® and the IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition reserve the right to make changes without notice.