



RPS INSTRUMENTAL PRIZES

2026 GUIDELINES

Thank you for your interest in our RPS Instrumental Prizes. Here follows information on how to apply. If you may like this information in a different format, for accessibility reasons, please call us on 020 7287 0019 or email RPS Administrator Emily Porter at admin@philharmonicsociety.uk, and we will do our best to help.

There is one application process that is the same whether you are applying for the RPS Emily Anderson Prize for a violinist, the RPS Philip Jones Brass Prize for an individual brass player or brass ensemble, and the RPS Henderson Chamber Ensemble Award.

Please take time to read the following guidelines and criteria before applying, and continue to consult them throughout the process.

WHO CAN APPLY

RPS Emily Anderson Prize: outstanding solo violinists of any nationality based in the UK throughout 2026-27, aged between 18 and 30 at the application closing date.

RPS Philip Jones Brass Prize: outstanding individual brass players or a brass ensemble of up to 5 players of any nationality, based in the UK throughout 2026-27 with the majority of players aged between 18 and 30 at the application closing date. Ensembles must have performed together for a minimum of 2 years: in your application, please specify when the group was formed.

RPS Henderson Chamber Ensemble Award: outstanding chamber ensembles of 3 - 10 performers of any nationality, based in the UK throughout 2026-27, in any combination of string, wind, brass, keyboard or percussion instruments, with the majority of players aged between 18 and 30 at the application closing date. Ensembles must have performed together for a minimum of 2 years: in your application, please specify when the group was formed.

As a charity, we are keen to support a wide range of musicians and initiatives. If you have already received any kind of funding from the RPS within three years of the closing date (since 6 October 2023) we ask you not to apply at this time, but if eligible you may do so in a future year once that period has expired.

WHAT WE OFFER

The selected candidate for each will receive a grant to support their further development over the year ahead:

£1,500 for the violinist who receives the RPS Emily Anderson Prize

£1,500 for the individual player or £2,500 for the group that receives the RPS Philip Jones Brass Prize

£5,000 for the group that receives the RPS Henderson Chamber Ensemble Award

Grants are usually given in two portions: the first half when the grants are awarded in Autumn 2026; the second half around six months later in Spring 2027 to be used in the second half of the year since winning. In some years, grants have been shared by more than one outstanding recipient.

We want to ensure the money we give is of genuine benefit to you, in terms of both developing your musicality and building your profile. Duly, our application form will ask you three key questions requiring short but considered answers (you may write up to 150 words per question):

- In just a few sentences, give us a general picture of your musical studies and progress to date, including any awards and significant performances.
- What further steps do you wish to take in the year ahead to raise your standard and technique musically, and how does this fit into your longer-term musical aspirations? You should include information on how you plan to use the grant where applicable.
- How would you then share and showcase that improved artistry through distinctive performance, digital outcomes, or other means? You should include information on how you plan to use the grant where applicable.

If you have applied for one of these prizes in a previous year, we encourage you to let us know what has been creatively occupying you since your last applied, and what progress you have made in that time. Please do not simply repeat the answers you gave us in a previous year.

While recipients will then be expected to fulfil their plans of their own accord, the RPS team will be here to make supportive suggestions and connections for you through the year. We will also feature you prominently on our website and widely-followed social media. In return, we will ask you at some stage to account your progress for us to share with RPS Members and the kind supporters who make these prizes possible. Also, we believe it's important that all musicians make time to inspire their community, and we like to tell our followers how the musicians we support are doing this. If you are invited to audition for any of our prizes, at that stage we will ask you to share ideas for how you might do this in the year ahead.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications should be submitted via the RPS website. Applicants should complete the form themselves where possible, but may elect another person to complete it on their behalf if needed. Simply visit the page of the prize that interests you and follow the link to the application

form supplied there. There is one application form which covers all three prizes. Brass ensembles eligible for both the RPS Philip Jones Brass Prize and the RPS Henderson Chamber Ensemble Award need only complete one application form. Simply tick the relevant box(es) to indicate which you would like to be considered for.

In the application form, you will be asked the key questions detailed above, and may answer in up to 150 words per question. Additionally, you will be asked to submit some basic information about you or your ensemble and the players within it. Ensembles will need to choose one player to be the designated primary contact. Here, you will also be asked to provide your fixed residential address in the UK. If you are currently a student living away from home in higher education, this should be the address of your family home. You will also need to provide the name and email address of a referee (such as a current or recent teacher, or someone who knows you professionally) who can write a short reference, stating how they know you and why they believe you deserve this support for your plans. You will need ask them to send these by email to admin@philharmonicsociety.uk to arrive no later than the closing date (see below). In the subject heading of the email, they should simply write 'Instrumental Prize reference for' followed by your name. **It is your responsibility to ensure this reference is sent to us by the closing date.** We can only consider applications for which we have a submitted reference.

You will also need to supply some recent footage of yourself which demonstrates a versatile, varied and strong musical character, complying with the requirements below:

1. We would like to see you play two pieces by contrasting composers: these can be complete works or complete movements of works.
2. These should be filmed 'live', with or without an audience, using either one or more cameras, but not edited together from multiple performances.
3. The two pieces can be submitted within the same film or as separate films. If you do not commence playing at the very start of either film, you must provide the time in minutes and seconds at which you do start playing each piece.
4. Filming must have occurred since 2024 (you are asked to supply the date of filming in the application form).
5. Films should be submitted as links (public or unlisted) to YouTube, Vimeo or equivalent platforms. We regret we cannot accept footage in any other format. You may send links to films that are privately listed online if you prefer, but please ensure to include any passwords with your links in the application form.

Across a range of our activities at the Royal Philharmonic Society, we invite participants and applicants aged 18 and over to complete some standard inclusivity monitoring questions, once you have submitted your application. The answers you give are confidential and will be reviewed separately from your application. Thank you for taking a moment to do this, which is so helpful to us all collectively in classical music.

The closing date for applications is 11am on Tuesday 6 October 2026.

We are committed to working with colleagues sector-wide to ensure we are representing excellence, creativity and innovation in music-making within a diverse, multicultural society. We are continually striving to address how we can minimise barriers to the widest possible range of applicants and are proud to have adopted Sound and Music's [Fair Access Principles](#). We particularly welcome applications from under-represented demographics, particularly under-represented demographics, such as those who are Black, Asian and ethnically diverse, those who

are working class and those who are disabled. If you sense that anything in these guidelines could deter you or another eligible candidate from applying, or if there's anything you'd like to talk to us about, please do get in touch using the contact details below. We would be happy to hear from you.

NEXT STEPS

Applications will be reviewed and shortlisted by RPS staff and experts from the music profession newly invited to fulfil this role each year.

We will be in touch with all applicants by Friday 30 October 2026, inviting those shortlisted to audition.

Auditions are set to take place in London on **Sunday 29 November 2026**. If you are applying, we ask that you pencil that date in your diary now, as we do not have scope to offer alternative audition dates.

In the audition you will meet a small, friendly panel comprising key figures from the music profession.

Your audition will last approximately 20 minutes. In this, the panel will look forward to hearing you play and will also take the time to have a short chat with you about the plans you have presented in your application.

Though naturally we will not have time to hear them all, we ask you to prepare three pieces which clearly reflect your musical strengths, personality and interests, and cover a range of genres and styles. At least one of the pieces should be by a living composer. On the day, the panel will ask to hear an extract from each and possibly – if a work has multiple movements – contrasting passages from the same piece.

Repertoire submitted in your application can be included in your final audition, but we also relish the chance to hear you play other pieces too.

Soloists will need to bring their own accompanist to the audition.

After the audition, we aim to let you know the outcome of the audition within a few days.

FEEDBACK

As noted, we can only shortlist a number of applications for audition, and then only offer one entrant each prize. There is considerable competition for this, so please do not be too disappointed if your application is unsuccessful.

We provide feedback to all applicants who are invited to audition. We don't routinely provide detailed feedback on applications before this stage, however, we appreciate that some insight can be useful for your future applications to the RPS and other opportunities. Duly, we endeavour to supply some general feedback notes that we refresh each year in response to the range of applications we have received. We hope these may offer some useful direction and encouragement.

Owing to various commitments for our small team, it can sometimes be several weeks before we can send you feedback, so thank you for your patience.

If you have any further queries not addressed in these guidelines, you can contact RPS Administrator Emily Porter at admin@philharmonicsociety.uk or call us on 020 7287 0019.