

Scholarship Competitions 2026

Saturday 29th August

The annual NCMA Scholarship Competition gives student members an opportunity to challenge themselves, gain performance experience and receive feedback from expert adjudicators. It is open across a wide range of instruments and ability levels, including Soundplay for students working in rock, pop and contemporary music.

Entry eligibility: Entry is open to NCMA enrolled students who are currently receiving lessons from an NCMA accredited teacher. NCMA student membership for 2026 is \$45. Entries for the 2026 competition are now closed.

Entry fees: Thanks to the generous support of Debug Nelson, entry to the 2026 competition is free.

Adjudicators: Colleen Rae-Gerrard (piano and voice), Caitlin Morris (strings and other instruments), and Trudi Wilson (Soundplay).

Classes: Entries are placed by skill level: Beginner = grades 0-2 | Intermediate = grades 3-5 | Advanced = grades 6-7 | Expert = grade 8 and above. The final class structure may be adjusted once entries are received.

- For music that is not from an established exam syllabus, NCMA will assess the closest equivalent level. Published difficulty levels are a guide and do not necessarily correspond directly to an examination grade.
- Where a class has only one or two entrants, it may be combined with the closest comparable level or with another instrument at the same level. Each performer will still be assessed against the standard appropriate to their own level and instrument.
- Combined classes may still have separate winners by level or category where separate scholarships are available.
- Each student may enter a maximum of two skill-level classes within a category. Entrants should perform a different piece of music for each class, except where the nature of the class requires otherwise.
- Ensemble level is determined by the complexity of the most difficult part. Soundplay includes both solo and band entries.

Music and scores: The adjudicator must receive a copy of the music for each entry where a score is available. Music should be submitted digitally or provided to the NCMA office for copying. Contemporary or improvised repertoire without a conventional score should be discussed with the office.

Marking: Performances are marked out of 60: Honours = 54/60 | Distinction = 48/60 | Merit = 42/60 | Pass = 36/60. Adjudicators consider accuracy, technical control, musical understanding and communication. The strongest performance in relation to the appropriate standard will receive the scholarship; performing the most difficult piece does not necessarily provide an advantage.

NCMA 2026 Major Scholarships - up to \$900

Three major scholarships are available, each providing up to \$900 towards tuition at NCMA for the remainder of the year. The adjudicators may award one scholarship in each eligible field.

Teapot Valley Choral Camp Scholarship for Classical Voice

Cisela Wilde Scholarship for Piano

Anne Trengrove Scholarship for Strings

The major scholarships recognise musicality, technique, dedication and potential. Awards are at the adjudicator's discretion and are made from eligible performances across the relevant

NCMA Scholarship Classes 2026 - Based on Entries Received

CATEGORY	CLASS	LIMIT	PRIZE
SOUNDPLAY	Bands	5mins	\$50 per participant
	Solos	5mins	\$100
PIANO	Beginner	3mins	\$100
	Low Intermediate	3mins	\$100
	Intermediate	3mins	\$100
	Advanced	5mins	\$100
	Expert	8mins	\$100
PIANO ACCOMPANIMENT	Open	6mins	\$100
VOICE	Beginner	3mins	\$100
	Intermediate	3mins	\$100
	Advanced	5mins	\$100
	Expert	6mins	\$100
VIOLIN	Beginner	3mins	\$100
	Intermediate	3mins	\$100
	Advanced	5mins	\$100
	Expert	6mins	\$100
ALL OTHER INSTRUMENTS	Beginner	3mins	\$100
	Intermediate	3mins	\$100
	Advanced	5-6mins	\$100
	Expert	6-8mins	\$100

How the final classes are determined

Once entries close on **Sunday 23 August**, we review all entries and the repertoire being performed before confirming the final competition classes.

Wherever possible, we aim to have more than one entrant in each class so that the competition is meaningful. This may mean combining classes with only one or two entrants or grouping different instruments at a similar level.

The final class structure will therefore vary from year to year depending on the number and range of entries received and the level of the music being performed. Where classes are combined, each entrant will still be assessed against the standard appropriate to their own instrument and level.

Where separate scholarships are available within a combined class, separate winners may still be awarded.