

**2026 West Cork Chamber Music Festival
Composition Competition for Young Composers
Call for scores**

String Quartet Composition Competition for Irish citizens/residents under 35

The winning works will be premiered at
The West Cork Chamber Music Festival 26 June – 5 July 2026

The West Cork Chamber Music Young Composers' Competition is now open for submissions. We accept submissions from all Irish and Irish-resident composers under 35. Past judges of the competition include Deirdre Gribbin, Lera Auerbach, Brett Dean, Bushra El-Turk and Andrea Tarrodi. We are delighted to welcome back to Bantry, **Donnacha Dennehy** as this year's judge.

Past winners of the Competition include Seán Doherty (whose work 'I am the World' was commissioned by the European Federation for Choral Music), Solfa Carlile and Amanda Feery, (both winners of the Seán Ó Riada competition), Robert Coleman (NCH Jerome Hynes competition winner) and Finola Merivale (a Dean's Fellow at Columbia University). Congratulations again to the 2025 winners, Aoife Kavanagh, Daniel Vives-Lynch and Rory Murphy

The work:

- Scored for string quartet (2 violins, 1 viola and 1 cello). Works requiring other instruments, pre-recorded sounds or electronics are not eligible for consideration.
- 5-8 minutes duration.
- Has not been performed in concert prior to its performances at the 2026 West Cork Chamber Music Festival.

The competition will be judged anonymously and the international judge will select three winning scores on equal footing. Each of the three composers will receive:

- €1,000 prize money.
- 3 nights' accommodation at the festival.
- 2 public performances of their work by a conservatoire quartet at the West Cork Chamber Music Festival. The second will be the official World Premiere played at the quartet's concert in the Young Musicians Series (a date in early July).
- The first performance will be at a workshop attended by all three composers and the public. The composer will have a chance to discuss their work with the international adjudicator and the musicians. The assigned conservatoire quartets will perform the works as they are workshopped and experiment with compositional suggestions.

- Each composer will have an opportunity to work with the performers prior to the work's Young Musicians Series performance.
- *Competition entry is free.*

Conditions of entry:

1. Entrants must be under the age of 35 on 1st January 2026.
2. Entrants must either hold Irish nationality, be born in or domiciled on the island of Ireland, be an International student at an Irish third-level institution, or be currently living and have lived in Ireland for at least one year.
3. Each entrant can submit one work only each year.
4. We can accept submissions from previous entrants and past winners under the age limit. Any works entered in previous years *cannot* be resubmitted.
5. Works that have been performed in public prior to the Festival (26 June – 5 July 2026) are not eligible for consideration.
6. Scores must be submitted to West Cork Music by 23:59 on Wednesday 25th March 2026. All scores must be submitted electronically. Submission must include a sound MIDI or MP3 file of the composition, **clearly labelled with the composition title**. Please use the subject line YCC 2026 when submitting.
7. **Compositions** will be assessed by an adjudicator chosen by West Cork Music.
8. This competition is adjudicated anonymously. **Any indication of the composer's name or address on the score or on the MIDI file will lead to disqualification.**
9. Winning compositions will be announced on www.westcorkmusic.ie by Friday 22nd April 2026. The three winning composers will be notified directly by email.
10. All winning composers must submit instrumental parts by Wednesday 29th April for distribution among members of the conservatoire quartets.
11. It is a condition of entry that composers agree to attend the workshop in Bantry on Monday 29th June. *In the event of non-attendance, prizes will be withheld.* The festival will offer 3 nights' accommodation to facilitate the composers' attendance. All other expenses incurred are the responsibility of the winning composers.
12. West Cork Music reserves the right to alter dates and times of the Young Composers Forum and subsequent performances.

Failure to meet these criteria will result in disqualification and withdrawal of prizes.

Please submit the full score electronically to Helen Dawson at: music@westcorkmusic.ie

Submitting the Work:

1. Attachment in PDF format
2. MIDI sound file
3. Please use subject line YCC 2026
4. Please return the Submission Form that contains the following information
 - Name
 - Date of birth
 - Gender identity
 - Current address
 - Phone number
 - Title of composition
 - Details of Irish citizenship/residency
 - Current place of study/work
 - How you heard about the competition, e.g. university email or noticeboard/WCM website/past-entrant/word of mouth/teacher