



HARP ENSEMBLE FESTIVAL 2027 RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Rules and Regulations of the AHS Harp Ensemble Festival are binding on all participants, ensemble directors, adjudicators, and festival administration. Copies of these rules and regulations will be provided to every participant and all adjudicators.

A. FESTIVAL DIVISIONS AND CATEGORIES

1. The Festival is divided into five (5) Divisions:

Division 1: Primary Division

Up to age 12 as of June 1, 2027

15 minutes maximum performance time limit, including transitions between pieces

Division 2: Middle School/Junior High Division

Ages 12-15 as of June 1, 2027

15 minutes maximum performance time limit, including transitions between pieces

Division 3: High School Division

Ages 14-19 as of June 1, 2027

15 minutes maximum performance time limit, including transitions between pieces

Division 4: Mixed Pre-College Division

Up to age 19 as of June 1, 2027

15 minutes maximum performance time limit, including transitions between pieces

Division 5: Open Division

Any age

20 minutes maximum performance time limit, including transitions between pieces

2. Ensembles in each Division may participate in one or more of the following five (5) Categories. Entry in multiple categories is supported and encouraged:

- Harp Duet (two harps all playing individual parts)
- Harp Trio (three harps all playing individual parts)
- Harp Quartet (four harps all playing individual parts)
- Medium Ensemble (maximum of 12 harpists, players may double and/or divide parts)
- Large Ensemble (more than 12 harpists, players may double and/or divide parts)

B. COLLEGIATE SHOWCASE

Collegiate ensembles may apply to be featured in the Collegiate Showcase performances. The Collegiate Showcase performances will be scheduled on Saturday, June 19, 2027 during the Festival.

1. All collegiate ensemble members must be enrolled in a collegiate program as of Spring 2027.
2. Collegiate ensembles may be of any size, including: duets, trios, quartets, or larger ensembles.
3. Maximum performance time limit is 20 minutes, including transitions between pieces.
4. See all other rules and guidelines below regarding repertoire, eligibility, and more.

C. ELIGIBILITY

All participants and ensemble directors must hold current national membership in the American Harp Society.

All participants and ensemble directors must also register individually for the 2027 AHS Harp Ensemble Festival.

D. REPERTOIRE

1. All programs are free choice. Each program must include at least one work originally composed for harp ensemble. Transcriptions will not count as works that are 'originally composed' for harp ensemble.
2. Each Ensemble must present one (1) original score and one (1) set of original parts for the ensemble, as well as provide scores for all three (3) adjudicators with all measures numbered. It is highly encouraged to prepare adjudicator scores in three (3) separate binders, with music in performance order and measures numbered.

3. Exceptions for allowable photocopies may be granted for music that is out of print, original downloads where multiple printings are granted, or new compositions with written permission of the composer.

E. PRELIMINARY SCREENING

Pending the number of applicants, The AHS reserves the right to implement a recorded screening round to determine the number of participants in any given division and/or category.

F. DIVISION PERFORMANCES

1. Ensembles will perform once before a panel of adjudicators and live audience in the division and category in which they are entered.
2. Every ensemble will be entitled to complete its performance of the program within the prescribed time limits and will not be interrupted by the adjudicators unless the time limit is exceeded.
3. Registered attendees are invited to attend the live division performances.
4. Applause will be held between pieces, but will be allowed at the end of the performance.

G. ADJUDICATORS

1. A panel of three (3) adjudicators consisting of at least two (2) harpists and optionally one (1) non-harpist musician will be assigned to each Category within a Division.
2. Ensembles will receive written comments and ratings on their performance from each adjudicator, unless they have elected to receive comments only and no rating.
3. Adjudicators will refrain from making any public statement whatsoever concerning the activities of the Ensemble Festival.
4. The decisions and ratings awarded by the adjudicators are final.

H. RATINGS & COMMENTS

1. Ensembles will receive written comments on their performance as well as ratings from the panel of adjudicators. Spoken comments will also be given by the adjudicators after the performance as time allows.
2. Ratings shall be awarded as follows:

I (Superior), II (Excellent), & III (Good)

3. Ratings will be based on precision of ensemble playing, blend of sound, quality of articulation and tone, ensemble intonation, ensemble leadership, and musical interpretation of the score. [Ensemble Evaluation Rubric PDF \(download online\)](#)
4. The performance of the ensemble shall be the only factor considered when determining ratings. Rankings such as first, second, third place, etc. will not be awarded within a division or category.
5. Multiple ensembles may earn the same rating within the same division and category.
6. Collegiate Showcase ensembles will receive written comments and ratings only, and will not receive verbal comments from the adjudicators. Collegiate Showcase ensembles receiving ratings will be eligible for Outstanding Ensemble Performance Award consideration.
7. Any ensemble may elect to receive written comments only with no rating. In doing so, that ensemble will not be eligible for Outstanding Ensemble Performance Award consideration.

I. AWARDS

1. Ensembles will be awarded Certificates of Participation.
2. Awards based on ratings are presented at the Closing Awards Ceremony and Concert, following the completion of the final division performances. This concert will be recorded.
3. Participants must be present to receive their awards. Awards will not be mailed.

J. OUTSTANDING ENSEMBLE PERFORMANCE AWARDS

1. An Outstanding Ensemble Performance Award represents the attainment of superior musicianship by an ensemble as demonstrated in their performance at the AHS Ensemble Festival.
2. Within each division and category, Outstanding Ensemble Performance Awards may be conferred at the discretion of the adjudicators.
3. Only ensembles receiving all I (Superior) ratings from each of the adjudicators will be eligible for Outstanding Ensemble Performance Award consideration.

4. Ensembles receiving an Outstanding Performance Award may additionally be invited to perform at the Closing Awards Ceremony and Concert.

5. Outstanding Ensembles who are invited to play at the Closing Awards Ceremony and Concert will be expected to play without remuneration.

K. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

1. Applications open November 15, 2026 and require a \$25 non-refundable deposit which may be applied to the total entry fee for each ensemble.

2. Application forms and all required supporting documentation must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. February 1, 2027 Eastern Daylight Time. There will be no exceptions.

3. All ensemble entry fees are due by March 1, 2027 and are non-refundable.

- Small Ensembles (Duet, Trio, Quartet) = \$25 per ensemble
- Medium Ensemble = \$50 per ensemble
- Large Ensemble = \$75 per ensemble
- Collegiate Showcase = \$75 per ensemble

4. All program repertoire information is due by May 1, 2027.

L. LOGISTICS

1. Festival expenses including event registration fees, ensemble entry fees, AHS membership dues, travel, harp transportation, meals, and lodgings are the responsibility of the participants.

2. The American Harp Society is not responsible for loss or damage to any harp in transit or during the Festival.

M. FESTIVAL CHAIRPERSON(S)

The Chairperson(s) shall be responsible for the management of the Harp Ensemble Festival. The Chairperson represents the American Harp Society to the adjudicators, the participants, and all outside parties in all matters.

1. The Chairperson is entrusted with the investigation of any infringement of the rules that may occur.

2. The Chairperson, in consultation with the elected representatives of the AHS, may take steps required to rectify infringements to the rules of

the Festival, including but not limited to censure, and/or disenfranchisement.

3. The Chairperson or designated surrogate will publish the results.

O. RESTRICTIONS & PENALTIES

1. If behaviors or circumstances warrant, the Chairperson may impose the following penalties:

a. Reprimand

b. Censure

c. Exclusion from the proceedings and/or future events

2. Performance times must be included on the program repertoire form. Performance time limits must be strictly adhered to. Ensemble performances exceeding the prescribed time limits may be stopped once the time limit is reached, will not receive ratings, and will not be eligible for an Outstanding Ensemble Performance Award.