

# Birmingham Music Festival 2026 Syllabus

All classes at Birmingham Music Festival are for pianoforte solo.

Each entrant can enter any number of classes for which they are eligible.

PARENTS and/or TEACHERS ENTERING CHILDREN should bear in mind that it can be a stressful experience for a child to enter multiple classes in a high-quality competitive festival. Your attention is drawn to our **Child Protection Policy** – visit <https://www.birminghammusicfestival.co.uk/policies>

Please note the following **important rules** (see [Festival Regulations](#) for a full list):

- **Previous winners:** Any person winning an open class is not allowed to perform the winning piece again at the Festival for a **period of 3 years**. So a person winning a class in 2023 cannot perform the winning piece again in any class at the BMF until 2026.
- **Transcriptions:** There are no restrictions on playing arrangements or transcriptions in the majority of open classes, except Class 14 Baroque Masters and Class 16 Sonata. Any transcriptions entered must not be a simplification of the original music.
- **Video recording:** Recording performances is a serious breach of the Festival Rules and our [Child Protection Policy](#). Should anyone be spotted making a recording, the performer will be disqualified, and those in the performer's family will be asked to leave immediately for the rest of the Festival weekend. No compensation will be paid for missed performances.
- **The same piano piece** cannot be offered by the same participant in different classes.

All categories are 'own choice' of music.

## Grade Classes (Classes 6 - 9):

- Grade limits refer both to the music performed and the skills of the performer.
- Players should **not** play repeats in the Grade classes (classes 6 - 9), except for DC and DS indications.
- These classes must have music from the relevant **current** grade syllabuses for the Associated Board, Trinity College London or London College of Music.

## Repeats:

- Repeats may be played in classes (other than grade classes - see above) provided that the time limit is not exceeded.

'Open' classes are open to any age group but are all restricted to a **minimum of Grade 5 standard**.

## Classes 14 and 16:

Please note that classes 14 and 16 require an original piece of keyboard music to be performed. Arrangements and transcriptions, even by the original composer, are not permitted.

## PLEASE NOTE:

- Classes will take place on Saturday and on Sunday, 11 and 12 October 2025, between 9am and 8pm.
- Players must be prepared to come on either day, or possibly on both days if playing in more than one class.
- We will confirm by email a personal schedule of your performance day and start times once all entries have been received and the Festival schedule drafted.
- We appreciate the understanding of entrants, their parents, and/or teachers if classes are scheduled at the beginning or at the end of the day. While we strive to be as accommodating as possible, we cannot guarantee class times in advance.

Class	Class Name	Additional Information	Time	Fee
1	<b>8 Years and under: Non-Competitive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; This is a non-competitive class.</li> <li>&gt; Own choice of music no higher than Grade 2 standard.</li> <li>&gt; Players must have been learning for less than 2 years.</li> <li>&gt; Players must be 8 years or younger.</li> <li>&gt; Players may not enter any other class except Class 6: Grades 2 and 3.</li> </ul>	2 mins	<b>£8.00</b>
2	<b>8 Years and under: Competitive</b> (minimum Grade 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; This is a competitive class.</li> <li>&gt; Players must be 8 years or younger.</li> <li>&gt; All music is own choice.</li> <li>&gt; A minimum of Grade 3 standard is required.</li> </ul>	3 mins	<b>£9.00</b>
3	<b>9 - 10 Years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Class only open to specific age groups.</li> <li>&gt; All music is own choice.</li> </ul>	3 mins	<b>£10.00</b>
4	<b>11 - 13 Years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Class only open to specific age groups.</li> <li>&gt; All music is own choice.</li> </ul>	4 mins	<b>£11.00</b>
5	<b>14 - 17 Years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Class only open to specific age groups.</li> <li>&gt; All music is own choice.</li> </ul>	6 mins	<b>£13.00</b>
6	<b>Grades Two and Three</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; One piece selected from the <b>current</b> Grade syllabus for the Associated Board, Trinity College London or London College of Music.</li> <li>&gt; Class open for all age groups BUT players should not enter grade classes lower than their grade level or ability.</li> <li>&gt; Players should not play repeats in the Grade classes, except for DC and DS indications.</li> </ul>		<b>£10.00</b>
7	<b>Grades Four and Five</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; One piece selected from the <b>current</b> Grade syllabus for the Associated Board, Trinity College London or London College of Music.</li> <li>&gt; Class open for all age groups BUT players should not enter grade classes lower than their grade level or ability.</li> <li>&gt; Players should not play repeats in the Grade classes, except for DC and DS indications.</li> </ul>		<b>£11.00</b>
8	<b>Grades Six and Seven</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; One piece selected from the <b>current</b> Grade syllabus for the Associated Board, Trinity College London or London College of Music.</li> <li>&gt; Class open for all age groups BUT players should not enter grade classes lower than their grade level or ability.</li> <li>&gt; Players should not play repeats in the Grade classes, except for DC and DS indications.</li> </ul>		<b>£12.00</b>

9	<b>Grade Eight</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; One piece selected from the <b>current</b> Grade syllabus for the Associated Board, Trinity College London or London College of Music.</li> <li>&gt; Class open for all age groups BUT players should not enter grade classes lower than their grade level or ability.</li> <li>&gt; Players should not play repeats in the Grade classes, except for DC and DS indications.</li> </ul>		<b>£14.00</b>
10	<b>Junior Recital (17 Years and under)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The programme must consist of at least 2 but not more than 3 contrasting pieces by different composers.</li> <li>&gt; Entrants in this class may not also enter the Open Recital Class (Class 19).</li> <li>&gt; Class only open to entrants aged 17 years old and under.</li> </ul>	10 mins	<b>£15.00</b>
11	<b>30 years and Over</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Class only open to specific age group indicated.</li> <li>&gt; All music is own choice.</li> </ul>	6 mins	<b>£13.00</b>
12	<b>French - Open</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Any piano piece by a French composer.</li> <li>&gt; As well as the music of the best-known French composers, competitors are encouraged to consider the piano music of lesser-known but attractive composers such as Alkan, Chaminade, Farrenc, Ibert and Severac, as well as the French baroque composers.</li> <li>&gt; Class open to all age groups.</li> <li>&gt; A minimum of Grade 5 standard is required.</li> </ul>	6 mins	<b>£13.00</b>
13	<b>Your Piano Favourites – Open</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Any piano piece by any composer that you particularly enjoy.</li> <li>&gt; Players are encouraged to state what attracts them to the piece, in one minute or less.</li> <li>&gt; Class open to all age groups.</li> <li>&gt; A minimum of Grade 5 standard is required.</li> </ul>	7 mins	<b>£14.00</b>
14	<b>Baroque Masters – Open</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Any original keyboard piece by <b>J.S. Bach, F. Couperin, L.-C. Daquin, G.F. Handel, J.-P. Rameau, D. Scarlatti.</b></li> <li>&gt; Class open to all age groups.</li> <li>&gt; A minimum of Grade 5 standard is required.</li> </ul>	8 mins	<b>£15.00</b>
15	<b>My Piano Showpiece – Open</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Any piece which you play particularly well such that you could play it as an encore</li> <li>&gt; Virtuoso pieces are encouraged but not essential.</li> <li>&gt; A minimum of Grade 5 standard is required.</li> </ul>	6 mins	<b>£13.00</b>
16	<b>Sonata – Open</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; One complete movement (excluding Minuet and Trio) of a sonata.</li> <li>&gt; Class open to all age groups.</li> <li>&gt; A minimum of Grade 5 standard is required.</li> </ul>	10 mins	<b>£16.00</b>

17	<b>Romantic Connections – Open</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Any original piano composition by <b>Brahms, Chopin, Grieg, Liszt, Fanny Mendelssohn (Fanny Hensel) or Felix Mendelssohn, and Clara or Robert Schumann.</b></li> <li>&gt; Class open to all age groups.</li> <li>&gt; A minimum of Grade 5 standard is required.</li> </ul>	7 mins	<b>£14.00</b>
18	<b>Eastern European – Open</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Any piano piece by an Eastern European composer.</li> <li>&gt; We welcome piano pieces by composers from Poland, the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Russia or any other Eastern European country.</li> <li>&gt; Alongside familiar names like Rachmaninoff, Tchaikovsky, and Bartók, consider Sergei Bortkiewicz, George Enescu, Viktor Kosenko, Mykola Lysenko, Valentin Silvestrov, Karol Szymanowski or Pancho Vladigerov.</li> <li>&gt; <u>Do not enter this class with works by Chopin</u> - his music is welcome in open classes 13, 15, 17, 19, as well as appropriate grade and age classes.</li> <li>&gt; Class open to all age groups.</li> <li>&gt; A minimum of Grade 5 standard is required.</li> </ul>	6 mins	<b>£13.00</b>
19	<b>Recital – Open</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The standard expected in this class is very high. Players should be experienced public performers playing at or beyond diploma level although it is not required that players necessarily hold a diploma.</li> <li>&gt; The programme must consist of at least 2 but not more than 3 contrasting pieces by different composers.</li> <li>&gt; Minimum duration is 18 minutes.</li> <li>&gt; Programmes deemed to be of insufficient length or difficulty will be rejected on entry.</li> <li>&gt; Entrants are expected to observe all elements of public performance in respect of programme and presentation.</li> <li>&gt; Class open to all age groups.</li> <li>&gt; Numbers entering this class may be limited. Early entry is advised.</li> <li>&gt; The winner of this class will receive the BMF's nomination to play in the Emanuel Trophy Competition in April next year. The BMF will also fund the entry fee.</li> </ul>	20 mins	<b>£25.00</b>