



Sound Espressivo Rules, Regulations, Formats

Download a PDF of Rules [here](#)

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1. Eligibility

Competition is open to classical and jazz musicians of

- all nationalities and all ages
- all instruments and voice
- ensembles and groups of any size and composition

For the Preliminary Round applicants must either submit a recent video of their own performance or choose a date on the Application form to audition LIVE through an Internet Broadcast system.

Semi Finalists and Finalists MUST be prepared to compete LIVE through Internet Broadcast TV method.

Participants for The Sound Espresso competition must have access to broadband internet with a computer that contains a microphone and video camera.

Technical assistance, necessary preparations, consultations, individual remote tech check sessions with Broadcast Producers and Engineers, production of the Broadcast, and Broadcast management are provided by the Sound Espresso partner, a Virginia based broadcasting and production company Virtual Concert Halls.

2. Competition Rounds

Sound Espresso is held in three rounds:

- Preliminary Auditions
- Semi Finals
- Finals

3. Dates and Deadlines

Preliminary Round Auditions are held once each month May-December 2021.

Applicants choose a date on their application

Deadlines to apply for the respective Audition dates:

Semi Final Round and Final Round Dates are TBD, to be held in January 2022

4. Application process and Fees

Contestants apply online through SEC website Portal by filling out the Application Form and completing the \$100 payment through SEC payment system online.

Payment methods: major credit cards and PayPal. Additional payment methods can be requested by an applicant, but not guaranteed.

All contestants who advance to Semi Finals Round will have to fill out a Registration Form and pay \$75 fee by a deadline stated in the Form, in order to confirm their participation in the Semi Final Round.

Contestants who advance to the Final Round will not need to pay any additional fees. For complete instructions about how to fill out the Application Form please refer to [Application Form. Instructions](#).

5. Financial Aid

Full and Partial Scholarships covering Application and/or Registration Fees may be awarded to qualified applicants based on need.

Inquiries and requests for Financial Aid are considered based on the Applicant's unique circumstances and the Competition's ability to provide funds.

Financial Aid may be awarded to qualified applicants towards purchasing and/or renting necessary equipment required for quality broadcasting of the Contestant's performances in Semi Final and Final Rounds ONLY.

No Aid will be awarded towards equipment costs for Preliminary Round Auditions.

6. Groups, Categories, Instruments

SEC accepts all instruments, ages, styles, and voice

In the Preliminary Round of the Competition contestants compete within their respective age and instrumental groups.

- Piano
- All String Instruments
- All Wind Instruments
- Guitar
- Harp
- All Percussion Instruments
- All Baroque Instruments
- All Ensembles
- Voice

Eligible music styles and periods:

- Baroque (Period instruments)
- Classical
- Contemporary including performances of original compositions by contestants and all types of "covers": transcriptions, paraphrases, cadenzas, and other
- Jazz including improvisations, jingles, mixes, standards, and other
- Music from around the world
- Opera and Lieder
- Broadway and Light

In the Semi Final Round contestants compete within their respective age groups in the following Categories:

- Classical Instrumental including ensembles
- Baroque Instrumental including ensembles
- Jazz Instrumental including ensembles
- Voice including ensembles

In the Final Round Contestants are grouped according to their Age ONLY. All instruments, styles, ensembles, and voice, compete in the same respective Categories which is determined by the contestants' Age.

Age Groups, applicable to ALL Rounds:

- 10 and under
- 11-14
- 15-18
- 19-25
- Adult (26+)

7. Repertory and Time Limits

- Contestants are free to choose any repertory, for ALL Rounds; pick what represents you best as a musician.
- If you wish to be considered for special Artistic Awards check the descriptions (Section 12) and plan your repertory accordingly.
- If you advance to the Finals, you are required to perform a completely different program/piece.

Time limits

- For all Preliminary Round Auditions time limit is 10 min., same for prerecorded videos and live performances
- You will not be disqualified for shorter performances
- If you choose one composition which is longer than 10 min., you will not be disqualified for overtime
- Semi-Final and Final Rounds - no time limit.

8. Competition Procedures and Formats

SEC is held globally online.

Video submissions are allowed only for Preliminary Round.

Semi Final and Final Rounds are held in a format of a LIVE Internet TV public Broadcasts.

Technical assistance, necessary technical preparations, consultations, guidance materials (printed, digital, video); individual remote tech check sessions with Broadcast Producers and Engineers, production of the Broadcast, Broadcast management are provided by the Sound Espresso business partner, Virtual Concert Halls, a Virginia, USA based broadcasting and production company.

Videos and Broadcasts of the Competition Rounds are property of Sound Espresso and Virtual Concert Halls which retain full control of the copyrights.

Contestants are eligible to receive sub-licensing and recordings of their OWN performances ONLY, upon requests and upon paying additional fees associated with production of the videos and with processing of sub-licensing agreements.

Contestants who choose LIVE Preliminary Audition will receive the following services:

- Perform live through Internet-TV public broadcast
- VCHS Producers will help you with your tech
- You do not need to download or learn any software
- This is not Zoom, you will look and sound great!
- Group prep tech session
- Individual tech check
- Your live performance will be professionally recorded by broadcasting engineers
- Recording of your performance will be available on SEC YouTube and other channels for replays
- You can request a copy of your performance video (\$75 fee applies)

Contestants who choose to Submit a YouTube (or Vimeo) video link for Preliminary Auditions will receive:

- Your video will be premiered on YouTube, SEC website, Facebook, and other channels
- Your video will be featured in a video Gallery on [SEC website](#)
- Your video will be available for replays after the Premiere
- You can choose "Competitive" and be considered for Sound Espresso Semifinals

9. Adjudication process

Each Preliminary Audition is adjudicated by one member of the SEC Judges' Panel. SEC Judge provides written comments for video submissions or live on-air comments for live audition.

SEC Judge makes a recommendation regarding each Contestant's advancement to the Semi Final Round.

Semi Final and Final Rounds are adjudicated by the Judges Panel consisting of several members. Each contestant will be adjudicated by at least one Judge who specializes in the contestant's instrument/period/voice.

Judges will provide on-air artistic feedback to each contestant immediately after the performance.

Decisions regarding each Contestant's advancement to the Final Round are made by the Judges through collegiate deliberations in a private virtual Judges' Deliberations Lounge.

All decisions by SEC judges are final.

All decisions by companies-sponsors of Prizes are made by the respective companies' representatives and are final.

10. Non-Competitive Category

Applicants can choose to participate in the Sound Espresso non-competitive Category, by checking the respective Option on their Application Form.

Non-competitive option provides participants with

- A low-pressure opportunity to share your art and talent

- Judges' written comments are optional (available upon request)

11. Prizes and Awards

- Each Contestants will receive Judges' comments (written for video submissions, live onscreen for live performances)
 - Certificate of Participation.
- Laureates. Up to 6 (Six) Laureates will be chosen by the Judges Panel in consultation with SEC Board. Each Laureate Award Package is valued at total of \$8,500. Total Award Pool for Laureate Awards is valued at \$51,000.
- Laureate Recital Award. Valued at \$5,000 each. Each Laureate will receive full management service from VCHS necessary to provide the Laureate with an opportunity to present a full solo recital on the VCHS Virtual Stage. Each Laureate Recital will be publicly broadcast on all VCHS platforms. Each Laureate Recital will be promoted through VCHS social networks, mailing lists, media. Each Laureate Recital and its promotion campaigns will be serviced by VCHS producers, graphic designers, copywriters, social media specialists, audio/video streaming engineers. Dates of Laureate Recitals TBD
 - Laureate Interview Award. Valued at \$2,000 each. Each Laureate will receive an Interview Award provided by VCHS. The Award is aimed at helping Laureates launch their careers, promote their artistry, jump-start their presence as musicians of statute. Each Interview will be professionally scripted and services by VCHS production teams and conducted by VCHS Host in a format of a live broadcast. Each Interview is up to 60 minutes in length.
 - Laureate Coaching Award. Valued at \$1,000 each. Each Laureate will receive a Coaching Award, a full course on professional streaming/broadcasting technology and methods provided by VCHS. Valued at \$1,000 each.
 - Laureate Profile Award. Valued at \$500 each. Each Laureate will receive a professionally designed Artistic Profile on SEC and VCHS websites which will be announced throughout social media and delivered to SEC mailing list of approximately 30K recipients – professional musicians, managers, music schools, music companies, and music fans
 - Laureates are eligible to receive additional Prizes sponsored by Companies (check the Prizes Page on SEC website)
- Winners. Up to 12 (Twelve) Winners will be selected by the Judges Panels to receive Winners Package Award. Judges Panels have a complete discession when selecting Winners. Each Winner Award Package is valued at \$3,800. Total Award Pool for Winners Awards is valued at \$45,600
- Judges Panels may choose up to:
 - One First Place Winner, One Second Place Winner, One Third Place Winner in each Age Category
 - Multiple Honorable Mentions may be awarded
 - Winners Concert Award. Valued at \$2,000 each. Up to 12 Winners will be selected by the Judges Panel to receive this award. Each Winner will receive full management service from VCHS necessary to provide the Winner with an opportunity to perform in a group Winners Concert on the VCHS Virtual Stage. Time limit per performer is 20 minutes.

- Winner Group Interview Award. Valued at \$1,000 each. Each Winner will receive a Group Interview Award provided by VCHS. The Award is aimed at helping Winners launch their careers, promote their artistry, jump-start their presence as musicians of stature. Each Interview will be professionally scripted and services by VCHS production teams and conducted by VCHS Host in a format of a live broadcast. Each Interview is up to 60 minutes in length and will present no more than 4 Winners
- Winner Group Coaching Award. Valued at \$500. Each Winner will receive a Group Coaching Award, a full course on professional streaming/broadcasting technology and methods provided by VCHS. In groups of no more than 6 Winners.
- Winner Profile Award. Valued at \$300 each. Each Winner will receive a professionally designed Artistic Profile in a group space on SEC website.

Honorable Mentions. Up to 10 (Ten Awards) Valued at \$1,000 each. Total Award Pool for these Honorable Mention Awards is up to 10, or up to \$10,000. All Finalists who are awarded an Honorable Mention will receive an Honorable Mention Award Package consisting of:

- Designer Certificate
- Profile in an Honorable Mention group page on SEC website
- An invitation to perform in one multicast group concert on VCHS Virtual Stage (time onstage per performer is limited to 5 minutes)

Additional Awards and Prizes

- All applicants are eligible to be selected to compete in Sound Espresso Semifinals in January 2022
- Artistic Awards. All Finalists are eligible and considered to receive Artistic Awards. [See more in Section 11A](#)
- All Finalists, including Laureates, Winners, and Honorable Mentions are eligible and considered to receive scholarship Prizes to participate in masterclasses with distinguished artists around the world
- All Finalists are eligible and considered to receive scholarship Prizes for participation in prestigious summer programs, festivals around the World
- All Finalists are eligible and considered to receive scholarship Prizes for VCHS Broadcasting Seminar
- All Semi Finalists and Finalists receive a Designer Certificate reflecting their respective advancements
- All Applicants receive a Certificate of Participation, unless they advanced to Semi Finals and Finals
- All Applicants receive Recognition Award sponsored by the iClassical Academy, regardless of their advancement
- All Applicants are eligible to receive free passes to observe masterclasses with distinguished artists around the world
- Prizes sponsored by international music companies. All Finalists will be considered by SEC sponsoring companies as candidates for the Prizes (check the list of Prizes on SEC website periodic updates as the Competition regularly accepts more eligible Prizes from companies around the World). Sponsored Prizes are awarded by the companies-sponsors' representatives independently from the Judges Panels. Not all Prizes may be awarded. Companies' decisions are final. [See more in Section 11B.](#)
- Cash Awards. All Finalists, Winners, and Laureates are eligible and will be considered as candidates to receive cash Awards. Specific amounts of each category of cash Awards

will be determined and announced by the SEC Board prior to the start of the Semi Final Round of the Competition in January 2022

- Your family and friends can watch your live performance and cheer in real time
- Your performance will be recorded, and your friends will be able to see it after the date
- If you choose to submit a video, it will be premiered on our channels and available for replays

11a. Artistic Awards

Special recognition Awards for achieving Artistry in Expression (Namesake of the Competition: Sound Espresso).

Artistic Awards are created to help musicians take a deeper look at their own unique artistic value and their personality.

Highest Honor Awards on the spectrum of Sound Espresso Competition.

Artistic Awards monetary and other tangible tokens of recognition will be determined and announced by the SEC Board prior to the start of the Competition Semi Finals in January 2022.

Contestants may choose to aim their presentations towards receiving these Awards, by choosing the repertory to reflect their preferred Artistic Awards' Category, by embellishing their performance with oral, visual, storytelling, other additional formats, and/or by announcing their intention to be considered for a specific Category of Artistic Awards.

Artistic Awards are a separate set of awards from those described in Par. 11.

Artistic Awards can be awarded in addition, in conjunction with other Awards and Prizes, or/and by itself.

There will be no more than ONE Contestant out of the entire Competition chosen for an Award in each of the 9 (Nine) Artistic Categories.

Judges Panels, in consultation with SEC Board, have complete discretion to bestow all Artistic Awards, or some, or none.

Artistic Awards Categories:

- Program
- Virtuosity
- Miniature
- Lyrical
- Profound
- Swift
- Innovative
- Academic
- Music Ambassador

For more details and further descriptions of Artistic Awards criteria for recipients, please refer to the attached Section 11A Artistic Awards document

11b. Prizes sponsored by Partner Companies

There are currently 17 Partner Companies which sponsor Prizes which they choose and design according to the specifics of their business.

The list of Partner Companies and the Prizes is updated on the regular basis, please check periodically the Prizes and Awards page on the website for the most up-to-date information.

Partner-sponsored Prizes include
performance engagements,
management services,
scholarships for prestigious music festivals and summer programs
Scholarships for masterclasses and courses
coaching programs for musicians in career planning, social media for musicians,
professional topics of musicians' health and wellbeing
Scholarships for access to professional and educational resources
Professional audio and video recording services
Professional web design services specific for musicians and artists
Graphic design services for performing artists

All Finalists will be considered by SEC sponsoring companies as candidates for the Prizes (check the list of Prizes on SEC website periodic updates as the Competition regularly accepts more eligible Prizes from companies around the World). Sponsored Prizes are awarded by the companies-sponsors' representatives independently from the Judges Panels.

Not all Prizes may be awarded.
Companies' decisions are final.

12. Teachers' and Educational Institutions' recognition

Sound Espresso Competition Board understands the importance of support which students receive from their community, their schools, and especially from their teachers, for them to grow as musicians.

As our token of appreciation for the hard and creative work which these people and organizations invest in the students' growth and future, we provide Sound Espresso Contestants' School and Teacher with a featured space on the Sound Espresso website.

Each Teacher and School will receive a Profile created on the SEC website, including visual branding and individual Teacher's pictures, we will also provide links for visitors to learn more about these distinguished educators and institutions.

13. Public Broadcasts. Tech requirements and release/consent forms

All public broadcasts of the Competition are provided and managed by Virtual Concert Halls, an independent broadcasting and production company registered and headquartered in Vienna, Virginia, USA.

VCHS will provide each Contestant with who performs on the public broadcasts of SEC events with instructional materials, individual preparation time and tech checks with streaming producers and staff, and all assistance available, to ensure an even field of the

quality of technical presentation for all SEC Contestants. Please refer to the “Technical Requirements” section on the website for more detailed information
All Contestants, Guests, Teachers, Representatives, others who appear on the VCHS Broadcasts of the SEC events must sign release/consent forms, as required by the Virginia local, the US Federal, and the international laws and regulations governing public Internet TV broadcasts. Please note: Each Contestant’s checking of a BOX on the Application Form constitutes their consent and is in place of a separate signature of a separate form. To review the form, click [here](#)
Virtual Concert Halls enjoys the “Allow Listed Broadcaster status from the Warner Music Group which provides VCHS broadcasts with protection against getting “muted,” taken down, or otherwise disfigured by WMG Copyrights Department through copyrights claims. VCHS earned the status through its strict adherence to copyrights and international regulations. All those who appear on the SEC public broadcasts provided by VCHS will enjoy the privileged status which comes with the responsibilities for Contestants and others to only perform music which they have the right to perform.

14. Privacy Policy

SEC Privacy Policy can be reviewed [here](#)

15. Competition Board

Sound Espresso Board of Directors and Advisers is the governing body of the Competition.

SEC Board Officers and Members:

Robert Voisey, President

Anna Ouspenskaya, Secretary

Antara Hebbar, Member, Youth Advisor

Micah Yui, Member, Adviser

Avguste Antonov, Member, Adviser

Mellasenah Morris-Edwards, Member, Adviser

Michal Szostak, Member, Adviser