

2026
**AZRIELI
MUSIC
PRIZES**

THE AZRIELI COMMISSION FOR CANADIAN MUSIC 2026 Call for Submissions

Focus: Works for Choir, Symphony Orchestra
and optional soloist(s)

Launch date: February 7, 2025
Application Deadline: May 2, 2025

Applications accepted online:

muvac.com/competition/the-azrieli-foundation-canadian-commission

Created in 2014 by Sharon Azrieli CQ for the Azrieli Foundation, the Azrieli Music Prizes (AMP) offer opportunities for the discovery, creation, performance and celebration of excellence in music composition.

The Azrieli Commission for Canadian Music

The Azrieli Commission for Canadian Music is open to all Canadian composers with the aim of encouraging a deep engagement with the complexities of composing concert music in Canada today*.

**Please see below the Foundation's reflection on what constitutes Canadian music to ensure that the proposed work complies with its definitions.*

A commissioning prize of \$50,000 CAD is awarded biennially to the composer who proposes a response to this challenge that displays the utmost creativity, artistry, technical mastery and professional expertise.

The musical work resulting from the Commission will be:

- premiered at the AMP Gala Concert during the 2026/2027 season;
- given two subsequent international premieres; and
- professionally recorded for a future commercial release.

The winning composer is expected to attend the rehearsals, performances and recordings of their prize-winning work, and will be publicly honoured at the AMP Gala Concert in Montreal.

Altogether, the total prize package for the Azrieli Commission for Canadian Music is valued at over \$200,000 CAD.

Eligibility

- Composers of Canadian citizenship or permanent residency in Canada may apply.
- Composers of all faiths, backgrounds, gender, ages and levels of experience may apply.
- Eligible composers must prove within the body of their submission the relevancy of their proposed composition to the Prize theme – a celebration of excellence in new Canadian music.
- Proposals that explore cultural material outside of the composer's primary cultural background are eligible, provided that the proposal demonstrates a respectful and responsible approach free of cultural misappropriation.

The Proposal Package

Please note: all documents and supporting media must be submitted electronically via the AMP online application portal between February 7 and May 2, 2025. Applications received after May 2 at 11:59 PM EST (GMT +5) will be disqualified.

All Proposal Packages must include:

- a completed application form;
- a current curriculum vitae (CV) highlighting relevant training, experience, performances and awards;
- a one-page works list detailing a key selection of the composer's original and completed musical works, their premiere dates and recordings, where applicable;
- a written proposal (not to exceed 1,000 words) describing the proposed work, including pertinent technical and aesthetic details, as well as an explanation of the proposed work's relevance to the Prize theme;
- proof of permission or commission for any cultural materials (e.g. text, music, audio recordings, or the like) that might appear in the finished work, where such materials are not originally created by the applicant (see "Guidelines for Proposals" section below); and
- scores and audio recordings for two examples of the applicant's musical works:
 - Selected examples should demonstrate the applicant's aptitude for writing music for choir & orchestra.
 - Scores must be submitted in PDF format, audio recordings in MP3 format.
 - MIDI or piano reduction recordings may be submitted where live audio recordings are unavailable.

Guidelines for Proposals

All proposed works must meet the following guidelines to be given consideration by the Jury. Any proposed work that does not meet these guidelines will be disqualified.

- Proposals must be for new works yet-to-be-written (i.e. the work may not be completed at the time of submission.)
- Proposed works must be scored for choir and symphony orchestra (see Appendix 1 for exact instrumentation).
- In addition, works can optionally include:
 - up to a total of four (4) additional soloists (vocal and/or instrumental); and
 - pre-recorded digital media (see Appendix 1).
- All genres will be considered, including, but not limited to, concert work, choral symphony, oratorio, cantata, requiem, opera scene and opera-in-concert.

- Proposed works must be a minimum of twelve (12) minutes and a maximum of eighteen (18) minutes in duration when performed.
- Proposals to create a section of a larger work (e.g. an act, scene, or excerpt) are permitted, provided the proposed section is musically and thematically coherent as a standalone piece. In other words, the Prize Package only includes the performance & recording of the 12–18-minute section proposed.
- Proposals should be for works that are in the concert format (i.e. unstaged).
- Extra-musical elements that are common in the concert format, including video projections or simple lighting, may be proposed and will be discussed for feasibility with the composer, if the proposal is successful.
- Extra-musical elements including, but not limited to, stage direction, choreography, costume, makeup, adornments, set, props, dancers, actors and additional artistic personnel such as directors, dramaturgs and designers will not be considered. Proposals including such elements will be disqualified.
- If using a text (or libretto), applicants should use a portion of their proposal to describe the text on which their work will be based. If the text is not in the public domain in Canada, applicants must provide proof that they have the rights to use the text. If the composer wishes to commission a new text, they should include a letter from the intended author confirming their connection to the proposal. This letter should include:
 - the intended author's name and contact information;
 - a brief biography and description demonstrating the author's suitability for the project;
 - an agreement to write the proposed text, if the applicant is successful; and
 - an agreement to grant the applicant all necessary rights to the text, if the applicant is successful.

Please note: The composer is responsible for all costs associated with commissioning a new text and/or securing rights for a copyrighted text (if applicable).

The composer who wins the Azrieli Commission for Canadian Music agrees to:

- adhere to the Prize Guidelines published by AMP, including but not limited to duration and instrumentation for the commissioned work;
- engage in the composition of their proposed work during the time allotted between their selection as the Prize Laureate and the deadline for submitting the score and parts for the AMP Gala Concert;
- update the Specialist, Azrieli Music Prizes and other AMP representatives (as required), according to a pre-approved schedule, including such details as progress made towards completing the commissioned work and/or identifying any major deviations from the original proposal;

- ensure that all copyrighted materials used in the commissioned work have been disclosed to the Specialist, Azrieli Music Prizes, and that all rights have been granted in writing (if applicable);
- work closely with their commissioned author, in the event that a composer commissions a new text, to ensure all guidelines and timelines are met (if applicable);
- work with a copyist or editor to prepare the final score and performance set for delivery;
- have their work premiered as part of the AMP Gala Concert; premiered as part of two additional international concerts; audiovisually captured, livestreamed and distributed via one or more digital platform(s); and professionally audio recorded, mixed and mastered for future commercial release;
- be available in person (either physically or virtually, as conditions dictate) for the rehearsals and performances of their Prize-winning work (at AMP's expense);
- grant the Azrieli Foundation the right to serve as sole commissioner, thereby retaining performance rights for the premieres as well as first recording rights;
- provide any information required by AMP representatives relating to their score, its performance, or other information which might be useful from a marketing, public relations or social media perspective in a timely manner; and
- participate in outreach events (workshops, press conferences, media interviews and other such promotion and education activities) as they relate to the Azrieli Music Prizes and its objective to educate the general public about the enduring appeal and artistic importance of the works that result from engaging with the Prize theme.

Some Considerations for a Successful Submission

In addition to the guidelines and requirements stated above, the AMP Juries have provided the following considerations to help shape a more successful submission:

1. Don't worry about how 'Canadian' you are (or are not) before considering a submission to this prize. People from all faiths, backgrounds and communities are equally welcome to apply their artistry, creativity and musicality in response to the Prize theme. In fact, one of the Foundation's hopes for AMP is to generate productive understandings through a rich consideration of what Canadian music is and can be.
2. Carefully consider the written reflection below in addressing how your proposal constitutes Canadian music. A successful submission will suggest an interesting, appropriate yet compelling response to this reflection in the shape of a musical work. We are calling on composers to display their own creativity, curiosity and thoughtfulness in seeking out their response. We are also calling for a deeper, more purposeful and conscious consideration of Canadian values and experiences that extend beyond simple representations of Canadian people or subjects, or simple incorporations of Canadian secular, sacred and/or traditional musical materials. We are seeking proposals that are authentic, original, honest and convincing.

3. A submission package must be conceptually and musically balanced. Strong musical examples accompanied by an insubstantial and/or ill-researched proposal will not advance within the competition. The inverse is also true: a strong proposal will not compensate for weak musical examples. The two must go hand-in-hand.
4. Please note that the quality of submitted scores and recordings greatly affects the Jury's ability to evaluate your application. Please be sure that submitted scores are easily legible and that recordings are as clear and undistorted as possible. If the quality of the score or sound is so poor that it's difficult to ascertain the artistic product, this will negatively impact the adjudication.
5. The winning works will be rehearsed and performed as in the orchestral tradition (i.e. several days of music rehearsals followed by a performance). While proposals for opera-in-concert, oratorio and other narrative-driven works are welcomed, applicants should keep in mind that workshopping, designers, dramaturgs and directors will not be available.
6. Please be certain that your CV and musical examples demonstrate an ability to compose for the available musical forces described in these guidelines.
7. A successful proposal will be technically, artistically and thematically coherent. It need not be the most ambitious in scale or length. The feasibility of the proposed work and the composer's proven capacity to deliver to the commission's specifications are taken into consideration.

For questions regarding the substance of the application, please contact music@azrielifoundation.org.
For technical assistance, please log in and visit Muvac's support page, or email support@muvac.com.

Review Process and Criteria

Once received, submissions are first registered and screened by AMP staff for eligibility and completeness. Submissions are then pre-screened by a small team of staff and Jury members to evaluate their fit and relevancy to the Prize theme. Those submissions that clear the pre-screening process are then delivered as qualified submissions to the **AMP Canadian Music Jury** for their evaluation.

The Jury reviews and grades the qualified submissions using the following criteria: Artistic Merit, Technical Merit, Thematic Fit and Capacity to Deliver. These criteria are separately weighted to arrive at a score out of 100.

Artistic Merit (60 points)

This is the most important criteria the Jury applies in evaluating each submission. It is directly tied to the composer's proven ability to write original music for choir and orchestra of high artistic merit.

The Jury will determine:

- the level of creativity displayed in the conceptual, formal/structural and musical ideas of each qualified submission;
- the ability of the submitted musical examples to sustain a listener's attention over their entire length;
- the level of authenticity and distinctiveness displayed in the composer's artistic voice;
- the composer's ability to work successfully within the complex format of choir and orchestra; and
- the composer's capacity to generate high quality, original and professional musical material based on the 2026 AMP guidelines for instrumentation and duration.

Technical Merit (15 points)

The Jury will evaluate each qualified submission with the aim of identifying how well thought-out it is regarding its use of form, rhythm, melody, harmony, timbre, texture, dynamics, articulation and orchestration. They will evaluate these elements especially in regard to how well they express or positively reinforce the composer's purpose and intention for the proposed work.

Thematic Fit (15 points)

The Jury will evaluate whether the qualified submission offers a topical and original fit to the objectives of the Azrieli Music Prizes based on the Guidelines for what constitutes Canadian concert music.

Capacity (10 points)

The Jury will evaluate the qualified submissions for the candidates' ability to execute the project as proposed. Given the circumstances of requesting a commission and its premiere performance, can the proposal be realistically and successfully achieved? Does the composer demonstrate enough previous experience to assure the Jury that they will deliver on their proposal in the time allotted and with high artistic and technical results? Those proposals for which the Jury can answer these questions in the affirmative will advance in the competition.

All decisions made by the AMP Juries are final and non-negotiable. There is no appeal process.

What is Canadian Music? A Reflection

For the purpose of the Azrieli Music Prizes, the Azrieli Foundation treats the term 'Canadian music' as broadly as possible. It takes into account the rich multicultural fabric of this country, which is woven together by a diversity of languages, religions, social traditions, histories, geographies and their cultural expression, including all of the music that has found its home within the nation's borders.

The Foundation understands Canadian music to be rooted in the country's diverse histories, customs and traditions, yet also as forward-moving, progressive and dynamic. Thus, it invites composers to explore themes and content drawn from contemporary Canadian life and experiences that express not only historic concerns and current conditions but also future aspirations.

Canadian music can:

- be based purposefully and consciously on musical materials traditionally perceived as belonging to a specific community, region, nation or culture;
- incorporate sacred or secular musical materials from numerous traditions;
- be based on historical subjects, events, characters, legends or themes;
- incorporate ritual/religious practices, traditions, texts and/or symbols;
- draw on languages and/or dialects;
- include or be founded upon cultural texts and literature (e.g. prose, poetry or dramatic writings);
- depict in musical terms visual images of cultural connection, such as landscapes, built heritage and scenes of everyday life;
- give voice to culturally specific ideas or concepts; and/or
- have been composed expressly for a commemoration, celebration, ceremony, or other occasion – conceived in some way to represent the nature of that occasion.

APPENDIX 1: Instrumentation

The proposed work, for choir, symphony orchestra and optional soloists must respect the following maximum instrumentation as listed below. Please be mindful of the balance between orchestra and choir as amplification may not be available.

CHOIR

Maximum of 48 singers

- SATB up to forty-eight (48) choristers, twelve (12) choristers per section;
- Maximum of three (3) divisi per section; and
- Chorister solos of up to sixteen (16) measures per section are permitted.
- Duets, trios, quartets, antiphonal choirs and other small ensembles that require 1 voice per part may be counted as chorister solos. If you are considering using extensive solo or small ensemble sections, please consult with us first via email at music@azrielifoundation.org.

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Please note: orchestral solos will need to be discussed during the writing process to ensure they meet union parameters.

2222 – 4231 – timp + 3 perc – hp – pno – strings (14-12-10-8-6)

2 flutes (the second may double on piccolo)
2 oboes (the second may double on English horn)
2 clarinets (the second may double on E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet and/or saxophone)
2 bassoons (the second may double on contrabassoon)
4 horns
2 trumpets (may double on piccolo trumpet)
3 trombones (2 trombones and bass trombone)
1 tuba
timpani (1 player)
percussion (max 3 players) – see below
harp
piano and/or keyboard (1 player)
14 first violins
12 second violins
10 violas
8 violoncelli
6 double basses

PERCUSSION

5 timpani	Variety of cymbals, crash and suspended	Tambourine
Marimba (4 octaves C to C)	6 tam-tams from low to high	Castanets
Xylophone (3 1/2 octaves F to C)	2 wind machines (small and large)	Bell tree
Vibraphone (3 octaves F to F)	wood-blocks	Mark-tree
Glockenspiel (3 octaves F to E)	5 temple blocks	Guero
Tubular bells (1 ½ octave C to G)	Whip	Jingle bells
Low tubular bells (C-D-E-G-C)	Claves	Flexatone
2 bass drums	Maracas	Pair of bongos
Snare drums	Triangles (large-small)	4 toms
Military drum		Crotales (2 octaves C to C)
Provençal drum		

Please note: All proposals that fall outside of the maximum instrumentation risk disqualification. If the composer has a question about instrumentation, please contact music@azrielifoundation.org.

SOLOISTS (OPTIONAL)

Soloists are optional. If the nominated work includes soloists, there may be up to a total of four (4). Soloists may be any combination of singer(s) or instrument(s). Instruments do not need to be from the list above and may include non-standard and non-western instruments.

PRE-RECORDED DIGITAL MEDIA (OPTIONAL)

Pre-recorded digital media is optional. If you choose to include pre-recorded digital media, you must follow the guidelines below. Pre-recorded digital media can be audio-based and may also include video. Please describe the nature and format of the digital media in your proposal, as well as any technical requirements for performance.

Guidelines for the use of digital media materials outside of the composer's own intellectual property:

- The material can be in the public domain in Canada.
- If the material is not in the public domain, applicants must provide proof that they have the rights to use the material.
- If the composer wishes to commission new material, they should include a letter from the intended creator confirming their connection to the proposal. This letter should include:
 - the intended creator's name and contact information;
 - a brief biography and description demonstrating the creator's suitability for the project;
 - an agreement to create the proposed material, if the applicant is successful; and
 - an agreement to grant the applicant all necessary rights to the text, if the applicant is successful.

Please note:

1. The composer is responsible for all costs associated with commissioning new material and/or securing rights for copyrighted material (if applicable).
2. Additional artistic personnel such as directors, designers, dramaturgs, additional sound engineers etc. will not be available.