INFORMATION SHEET

Thank you for your interest in the 2027 International Handel Singing Competition, one of the world's leading competitions for baroque singers.

Alumni of the HSC (*Handel Singing Competition*) have gone on to major success in their careers. Here are some further details to help you with your application.

INTRODUCTION

The International Handel Singing Competition is open to all singers aged between 23-34 on 15 January 2027. It is a showcase for the historically informed performance of Handel's music. In the Semi-Final and Final, all items must be performed without cuts. In all rounds, works must be performed in the original language and original key. Transpositions, including octave transpositions of voice parts, will not be accepted. Items in the preliminary round may be performed at the Semi-Final or Final of the competition. Other than that, items sung in one round may not be repeated in later rounds.

PRELIMINARY ROUND

All candidates must supply a good quality video recording (via unlisted YouTube link format) of them performing an aria by Handel. Ideally, this will include a recitative and should be at least 3 minutes long (including any da capo or dal segno). The performance can be accompanied by any keyboard instrument or ensemble.

FIRST ROUND

The First Round is held at Handel Hendrix House in London on the **15th and 16th February**, and a maximum of 60 singers are selected to be heard live by a panel of 3 judges. (In circumstances where live performance isn't possible, video submissions will be accepted. Requirements are exactly the same as if you were to perform live.) Two arias by Handel (either sacred or secular), one with its preceding recitative and one with da capo or dal segno. One aria must be sung in English; the other in another language. These arias must be performed in the original key and original language. In the first round the maximum performance time limit is 9 minutes. Internal cuts within the aria are allowed in this round to accommodate time constraints.

You will be provided with a harpsichordist but you may bring your own if you prefer.

If you are chosen to sing in the First Round, you will need to submit your proposed arias for the Semi-Final and Final at this stage.

SEMI-FINAL

The Semi-Final will be held in Grosvenor Chapel, London, on 2 March, and up to 12 singers are invited to perform two contrasting Handel arias for up to 15 minutes with a harpsichordist. This is a live performance and open to the public as part of the London Handel Festival.

FINAL

The Final is held at St. George's, Hanover Square, London on **10th March** and is a key date in the diary for the London Handel Festival. A maximum of 5 singers are invited to return to perform an all-Handel programme with the Academy of Ancient Music and Steven Devine. The number of contrasting items in the programme is not limited, but may last no longer than 18 minutes. The orchestra for the Final will consist of two oboes (doubling treble recorders), one bassoon, strings and harpsichord. Arias requiring additional or different instruments will not be accepted.

DEADLINES

Preliminary Round submission deadline	15 January 2027 (23.29 GMT)
Results of Preliminary Round selection	25 January 2027
First Round	15 & 16 February 2027
Semi-Final	2 March 2027
Final	10 March 2027

ADJUDICATORS

There will be 3 adjudicators for the First Round, four for the Semi-Final and five for the Final. Past adjudicators have included Jane Glover, Iestyn Davies, Oliver Mears, Catherine Wyn Rogers, Rosemary Joshua, Lawrence Zazzo and John Mark Ainsley.

PRIZES
First Prize - £5,000
Second Prize - £2,000
Audience Prize - £300

APPLICATION AND PRE-SELECTION

Please register your details and pay via the London Handel Festival website. There is a two-stage application process. Firstly, you must apply via the event, register and pay the £50 application fee. Secondly, please fill in our application form and email this to competition@londonhandelfestival.org.uk along with a link to your video submission.

You will be informed of the results of the pre-selection no later than 25 January 2027, and we guarantee that feedback will be provided in 2027 to all those who are unsuccessful.

REASONS TO APPLY

Both the Semi-Final and Final are open to the public as part of the annual London Handel Festival and are well attended, coveted events. Many agents and promoters attend these performances.

"The Handel Singing Competition was, for me, the perfect platform from which I was able to demonstrate what I thought I could do. I'm not a fan of competition in singing but this competition allows you to focus on the repertoire choices and stylistic decisions you make, first and foremost. For me, it was absolutely the turning point. I secured an agent from my performance which opened a new chapter in my singing career. It really was the taking part that counted; I didn't win!" - Iestyn Davies MBE, 2004 runner-up.

"It came as a big surprise to win the first prize and audience prize all those years ago. Singing in the HSC was a super opportunity to focus on one glorious composer and his unique style, exploring his heavily musical output. I learned so much about Baroque style and vocal technique and it gave me a solid foundation from which to build later repertoire." Ruby Hughes, 2009 winner.

"After a few years as a postgraduate student, winning the HSC was, for me, a great platform that opened many doors as a professional singer. It also meant to me great recognition and projection here and abroad." Joseph-Ramon Olivé, 2015 winner.

"Competitions are a real asset to young singers, and act as a wonderful seal of approval as we continue to apply for the next project or audition. It is wonderful to have the recognition of such a well-known festival to recommend me further as a performer in the world of singing." Helen Charlston 2018 winner.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Is my repertoire limited to opera or are sacred arias allowed?

You may perform either sacred or secular music by Handel in all rounds of the competition.

2. Do I have to sing the full da capos in all my arias?
For the First Round, at least one of the arias must be sung with da capo (you can sing da capo for both if you wish, but please ensure you do not exceed the 9-minute performance time). For the Semi-Final and Final, all arias must be sung with da capo.

3. Is there a preferred language choice for the arias?
In the First Round and Semi-Final you must sing at least two different languages and one of these must be in English.

4. Is the first round open to the public?
No. You will only perform to the three adjudicators.

5. In what circumstances am I able to get a refund if I am not able to attend?
Please inform us as soon as you know you cannot attend. We are only able to offer a refund under exceptional circumstances e.g. illness which has been supported by a doctor's note.

6. Can I bring my own accompanist for any of the rounds?
In previous years we have not allowed candidates to bring their own harpsichordist to the First Round; however, for 2027 you may bring your own harpsichordist for the First Round and Semi-Final. Please note all performances must be accompanied by a harpsichord. If you do not bring your own harpsichordist you will be provided with one. Contact details will be shared upon confirmation of getting through to the First Round/Semi-Final.

7. What sort of keyboard instrument is used for the accompaniment?
A double-manual harpsichord at A=415 is used for the First Round and Semi-Final.

8. Will I get to warm up and practice with my harpsichordist for the First Round?
Yes, you will have a 10-minute warm-up and run through your arias with your harpsichordist. However, if you arrive late to your allocated time slot this may not be possible.

9. Can I rehearse with my harpsichordist in advance?
Yes, you will be provided with your harpsichordist's contact details to arrange rehearsals, if you wish, prior to the First Round. Please note, you will have to cover any costs relating to advance rehearsals.

10. What format can I use to submit my video?
We advise uploading your videos to a private YouTube or Vimeo channel and sending us a link (with any relevant passwords).

11. Can the video supplied in my preliminary application be also be used for the First Round?
No. If you are submitting a video for the First Round, it must be different to your preliminary submission.

12. When will you let us know the results of the preliminary round?
You will be contacted via email no later than 25 January 2027 with the results of the preliminary round.

13. Will you provide feedback if I am unsuccessful in getting through to the First Round?
Yes, for 2027 we guarantee feedback will be provided if you are unsuccessful.

14. How can I book tickets for London Handel Festival events?
Tickets are available through our 'What's On' page.

15. What times are the First Round, Semi-Final and Final?
The First Round is held during the day between 10am-5pm and you will be given a 10-minute time slot. The Semi-Final starts at 3pm and the Final at 7pm.

16. Can I repeat the repertoire from one round to the next?
You can repeat music from your preliminary video recording, if suitable, for the Semi-Final or Final only.

17. When do I need to let you know repertoire choices for the First Round, Semi-Final and Final?
If you are chosen to sing in the First Round, you will need to submit your proposed arias for the Semi-Final and Final at this stage.

18. What is the £50 application fee used for?
The London Handel Festival is a charity dedicated to performing Handel's music and nurturing young talent. Ticket income only covers 40% of our costs, so we rely on our family of supporters for continued success. Your application fee helps us fund the competition, including venue hire, musicians' costs, staff salaries and all administrative costs.

For any further questions, please email: competition@londonhandelfestival.org.uk