

Thank you for your interest in the 2022 Handel Singing Competition, one of the world's leading competitions for baroque singers. Alumni of the Handel Singing Competition have gone on to major success in their careers.

Here are further details to help you with your application. Please note that the Semi-Final and Final are both open to the public as part of the London Handel Festival, and will be held at St George's, Hanover Square in London, Handel's own church.

INTRODUCTION

The Handel Singing Competition is open to all singers aged between 23-34 on 1 February 2022, and is a showcase for historically informed performances of Handel's music.

After a pre-selection based on video or sound recordings submitted with the application, all the remaining rounds are in London.

Pre-Selection all candidates must supply a good quality sound recording or video of them performing a short aria by Handel, ideally to include the recit for that aria although this is not compulsory. The aria should be at least 3 minutes long (including any da capo). The recording can be accompanied by a keyboard instrument.

First Round (Craxton Studios, North London daytime) max 90 singers selected to be heard live by the panel. Two arias by Handel (either sacred or secular), one with its preceding recit and one with da capo. These arias **must** be performed in the original key and original language (Italian, English, German). Maximum time- 10 minutes. You will be provided with a harpsichordist.

Semi Final (St George's, Hanover Square, 6pm) max 12 singers invited to perform with a harpsichordist, two contrasting Handel arias up to 15 minutes.

Final (St George's, Hanover Square, 7pm) max 6 singers invited to return, perform an all-Handel programme with London Handel Orchestra, conducted by Laurence Cummings. A contrasting programme up to 18 minutes (no specific number of arias required).

If you are successful at reaching the First Round, you will receive further details

APPLICATION DEADLINE	28 January 2022
RESULTS OF PRE-SELECTION ANNOUNCED	Latest, 4 February 2022
FIRST ROUND	23 - 25 February 2022
SEMI FINAL	18 March 2022
FINAL	8 April 2022

ADJUDICATORS

Names to be announced. Past adjudicators in recent years have included Jane Glover, Rosemary Joshua, Lawrence Zazzo, John Mark Ainsley, Iestyn Davies, Tim Mead, Oliver Mears and Catherine Wyn Rogers.

PRIZES

First Prize - £5,000;
Second Prize - £2,000;

Audience Prize - £300;
Finalists Awards - £300.

All Finalists in the Handel Singing Competition are also guaranteed lunchtime recitals in the 2022 London Handel Festival, and many past finalists are also asked to perform solos in other prestigious concerts during the Festival and in other Handel Festivals abroad.

For example, the 2019 London Handel Festival featured no fewer than 20 past Finalists and there are also recent Finalists performing at the Handel Festivals both in Goettingen and Halle. The winner of the 2019 competition was also invited to perform the solos in *Messiah* with the Huddersfield Choral Society, under the direction of Jane Glover, and to present a prestigious recital with the City Music Society.

APPLICATION & PRESELECTION

Please apply and pay via the London Handel Festival website. There is a two-stage process – firstly you must apply via the event and pay, secondly please fill in the application form as indicated. You must submit a sound or video recording of a Handel aria with your application – please see the application form for full details. Please include a short paragraph or a few sentences directly here from two referees (in their own words) and fill in their e-mail so that we may contact them if required. One of the referees should be your current or most recent singing teacher, the other one can be someone you have worked with professionally i.e. opera director, and does not need to be a singer.

You will need to submit your repertoire choices for the First Round at this stage – please note that your proposed programme should be 10 minutes in total, to include both arias and the recit. You may repeat the music from your video or sound recording in another round if it is eligible, but no music may be repeated from the First Round to the Semi-Final and from the Semi-Final to the Final.

Please note that you will not be required to submit your repertoire choices for the Semi-Final or Final until you are informed if you are through to the First Round no later than 4 February 2022 but please note that we will need this information quite soon after, so please think about likely repertoire you may wish to present at each stage.

For the First Round, you are required to sing two arias by Handel (either sacred or secular), and both arias should not exceed 10 minutes. At least one of the arias must be sung with its preceding recit and at least one of the arias must be sung with da capo one. Accompaniment is harpsichord at A=415, and the London Handel Festival will allocate an accompanist.

For the Semi-Final there is a maximum time of 15 minutes allocated to each singer. You are invited to submit a contrasting programme comprising one recitative and aria plus a second aria – no further music allowed, all by Handel. One aria should be in English. All singers are required to attend in person. Accompaniment as for First Round.

For the Final there is a maximum time of 18 minutes allocated to each singer. You are invited to submit a contrasting programme, all music by Handel – there is no specific number of pieces required. All singers are accompanied by the London Handel Orchestra, directed by Laurence Cummings.

You will be informed of the results of the pre-selection by no later than 4 February 2022 and all those who are not successful will be provided with some feedback at this stage.

REASONS TO APPLY

Both the Semi-Final and Final are open to the general public as part of the annual London Handel Festival and are well attended, including by many agents and promoters. Past finalists of the Competition include Iestyn Davies, Ruby Hughes, Lucy Crowe, Tim Mead, Sophie Junker, Anna Starushkevych and Grace Davidson.

“The London 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 at the time. 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 Handel competition was a super opportunity to focus on one glorious composer and his unique style, exploring his heavenly 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 Handel Singing Competition was for me a great platform that opened many doors as a professional singer here in the UK. It also meant to me great recognition and projection here and abroad, where the HSC is very much appreciated as well.” *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 competitive world of singing.” *Helen Charlston, 2018 winner.*

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

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

You may perform both 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 arias if you wish, but please ensure you do not exceed the 10 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?

At each stage, (first round, semi-final and final) you must sing at least two different languages. At least one of these arias must be in English.

4. Is the first round open to the public?

No, you only perform to the three adjudicators.

5. In what circumstances can I 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 to be supported by a doctor's note.

6. Can I bring my own accompanist for any of the rounds?

No, everybody must use one of the Festival's official accompanists.

- 7. What sort of keyboard instrument is used for the accompaniment?**
The competition is for historically informed performance so a double-manual harpsichord at A=415 is used for the First Round and Semi-Final.
- 8. Is there warm up space at Craxton Studios?**
Yes, you may have a 10-minute warm-up of your voice, right before running through the arias with your accompanist.
- 9. Will I get to have a run through with my harpsichordist in the first round?**
Yes, you will have 10-minutes to run through before you go on.
- 10. Can I rehearse with my accompanist in advance?**
Yes, you will be provided with your harpsichordist's contact detail to arrange rehearsals prior to the First Round if you wish, Please note, you will have to cover any costs relating to advance rehearsals.
- 11. What format can I use to submit the recordings in the application?**
We advise uploading your videos to a private Youtube or Vimeo channel and sending us the link (with any relevant passwords). Otherwise, you can submit videos via email or, if they are too large, send via WeTransfer.
- 12. If I supplied a video with my application, can that be used for the first round?**
No, the first round must be performed in person at Craxton Studios.
- 13. What is the age limit for this competition?**
You must be between 23 - 34 on 1 February 2022.
- 14. How can I book tickets for events in the London Handel Festival?**
Tickets are available through the 'What's On' page on the website when events are running.
- 15. When will you let us know the results of the pre-selection?**
You will be contacted by 4 February 2022.
- 16. What times are the First Round, Semi-Final and Final?**
The First Round is held during the day and you will be allocated a 10-minute slot. The Semi-Final is at 6pm and the Final at 7pm.
- 17. What kind of references are required?**
We need two references from a current or recent singing teacher / vocal coach. Please supply text from them in their own words (a few sentences or short paragraph will suffice) and past this directly into the application form. We also need their emails in case we need to contact them.
- 18. When do I need to let you know my repertoire choices for the Semi-Final?**
We require this if you have been selected to perform in the First Round. These will need to be submitted alongside your repertoire choices for the First Round.
- 19. Can I repeat repertoire from one round to the next?**
You can repeat music from your video recording, if suitable, in subsequent rounds but only once.
- 20. If I get through to the Semi-Final, can my friends and family come and watch?**
Yes, the Semi-Finals are open to the public and we offer complimentary tickets to each performer.
- 21. What is the 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 supported for continued success. Your application fee will be used to help us fund the competition including; venue hire, musicians costs, staff salaries and all administrative costs.