



The LSO Helen Hamlyn Panufnik Composers' Scheme 2026/27

Background Information

The LSO Helen Hamlyn Panufnik Composers' Scheme offers six emerging composers the opportunity to write for a world-class symphony orchestra. Devised by the Orchestra in association with Lady Panufnik, in memory of her late husband, the composer Sir Andrzej Panufnik, and generously supported by Lady Hamlyn and The Helen Hamlyn Trust, the programme has now supported 117 composers since its launch in 2005.

The Scheme is guided by renowned composer Colin Matthews, with support from Christian Mason and Hannah Kendall. Together with additional tailored support, the Scheme enables composers to experiment with orchestral writing skills through developing a three-minute composition over twelve months. Collaborative relationships are developed with LSO players and the resulting compositions are performed and discussed by the LSO in a public workshop rehearsal at the culmination of the Scheme.

Two of each year's composer cohort are commissioned to write an additional 5- or 10-minute piece, to be played by the LSO on the Barbican mainstage in the following season. Additional commissions from LSO Discovery are sometimes offered for other programme strands.



Photos from Public Workshop in July 2025, from left to right:
First row: Yunho Jeong, Jack Sheen
Second row: Monika Dalach Sayers, David Alberman, Laila Arafah, Christian Mason
© Kevin Leighton



How does the LSO Helen Hamlyn Panufnik Composers' Scheme work?

The Scheme will begin with an induction day called "Reality Day" on Tuesday 10 February 2026 at LSO St Luke's in London. Attendance is essential for selected composers, so please keep this date free until hearing the results of your application.

Over the course of the year, the six composers benefit from:

- *Mentoring from renowned composers:* Colin Matthews, Christian Mason and Hannah Kendall hold regular 1:1 and group sessions with all composers
- *Workshops with LSO players:* designed to help composers experiment with ideas and learn about individual instruments, these typically include two string quartet sessions, a wind quintet session, a percussion session and a harp session
- *Access to LSO rehearsals and concerts:* composers are encouraged to get to know the Orchestra by attending as many sessions as possible
- *Additional tailored support:* where required, composers with less experience in writing for orchestra can be provided with an extra tutor suited to their individual musical styles and needs
- *Assistance from a professional copyist:* all composers work with an LSO copyist to create scores and parts for the orchestra

The Scheme culminates in a public workshop in June 2027, during which a three-minute work by each composer will be rehearsed and workshopped by the London Symphony Orchestra at LSO St Luke's.

Am I eligible?

The Scheme welcomes applications from composers with a diverse range of musical approaches and backgrounds who are interested in writing for full symphony orchestra but have never had a full orchestral work performed in concert by a professional orchestra.

We are particularly interested in applications from composers from historically under-represented groups such as minority ethnic and ethnically diverse composers, women or non-binary composers, composers with disabilities and composers from non-classical musical backgrounds who would like to learn to write for a classical symphony orchestra.

In addition, applicants must:

- Be aged 18 or above
- Have the right to reside in the UK, and be based in the UK for the duration of the Scheme (ending June 2027)
- Not be on another LSO composer scheme (except Soundhub Associates) and have sufficient time to dedicate to the opportunity
- Never have had a full orchestral work performed in concert by a professional symphony orchestra (previous experience working with instrumental ensembles is beneficial, but not essential)



The LSO supports Sound and Music's [Fair Access Principles](#), a code of best practice for running successful, open and inclusive artist development programmes, competitions and awards for composers.

If you require support or adjustments to the application process, including receiving the application guidelines and form in an alternative format, please email joyce.lam@lso.co.uk. Tailored on-scheme support is offered to enable all participants to reach their full potential.

Are expenses provided?

Each composer receives a bursary of £1,100, and travel reimbursements are available to those living outside London.

Timeline

Monday 5 January 2026 (4pm GMT)	Applications close
By Friday 30 January 2026	All applicants informed of results
Tuesday 10 February 2026	2026/27 Reality Day
February 2026 – February 2027	Development period including but not limited to: workshops with LSO players, mentoring, access to LSO rehearsals and concerts
Monday 16 March 2026	2025/26 Panufnik Public Workshop
March 2027	LSO copyist generates parts with composers
7 June 2027	2026/27 Panufnik Public Workshop

How are composers selected?

A selection panel made up of a diverse range of representatives from across the music sector (to include composers, an LSO Member and industry professionals) aims to select a group of six eligible composers demonstrating a wide range of musical approaches and styles, whilst looking for:

- individual compositional voices with a high level of skill in writing notated work in contemporary classical or any other musical genre, and with the potential to write a three-minute full orchestral work for the public workshop
- applicants who demonstrate substantial personal development potential through this scheme
- applicants who have not previously had a full orchestral work performed in a concert by a professional orchestra
- applicants who have limited access to professional artist development schemes in the industry

Due to the high volume of applications received, only approximately 10 applications that reach the panel's final shortlist will receive individual feedback.



How do I apply?

To apply, please complete our online application form by Monday 5 January 2026 (4pm GMT).

Link: <https://forms.office.com/e/vvPUS6tuJn>

Along with basic contact and application tracking details, you will need to provide:

1. A CV
 - PDF (2 sides of A4 maximum, no photo of the applicant)
2. Two contrasting scores and recordings (if available), ideally including one for large ensemble
 - Scores in PDF format
 - LSO Discovery will produce A4 hard copies of both scores for selection purposes. Applicants may choose to submit their own, provided copies are received by the above deadline – please contact Joyce Lam (joyce.lam@lso.co.uk) if you are interested in doing so.
 - If the submitted work(s) is longer than 15 mins, please select an excerpt and indicate the location of the excerpt (in letters / bar numbers) and timeframe of the recording for review, on the application form.
3. Answers to the following:
 - a) What are your current musical interests and how does that relate to the orchestra? We are interested in artistic concerns rather than career progression. (Max. 1000 characters)
 - b) OPTIONAL QUESTION: We are interested in making this opportunity available to the broadest range of applicants – apart from the provisions outlined above, is there any additional support which could help you to realise a three-minute orchestral piece? (Max. 1000 characters)

NB: Links to application materials should be made accessible to anyone and be valid until 30 January 2026. The links will be shared with the selection panel.

We also ask that you fill in our online [Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form](#). This is not used in the selection process and is kept in an anonymous format for monitoring purposes only.

Contact details

If you have any questions about your eligibility or the application process, please contact:

Joyce Lam, Programme Manager, Composers
E: joyce.lam@lso.co.uk
T: 020 7382 2566

Sign up to LSO's Composer News mailing list: <https://r1.surveysandforms.com/3940g6ce-5433c23f>



Data

We need to ask you for a few details in order to process your application and for the purposes of your potential involvement in this LSO Discovery project. The LSO will securely hold and process the data provided to plan and deliver the best artistic and educational experiences and to ensure the safety of all participants. For further details on the way we handle personal data please read our Privacy Policy lso.co.uk/privacy.



The LSO Helen Hamlyn Panufnik Composers' Scheme is generously supported by Lady Hamlyn CBE and The Helen Hamlyn Trust.