

The 2021 *Palestine National Music Competition*

The sixth edition of the Palestine National Music Competition was originally planned for March 2020. However, with the start of the global pandemic and the arrival of Covid-19 to Palestine, and the Palestinian Authority's announcement of a national lockdown, it was decided within hours of that announcement to postpone the competition until further notice. While facing the virus is still a priority in Palestine, and despite very challenging economic and social circumstances, the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music and others in Palestine and the wider world have embraced distance learning and other technologies, and have made every effort to keep music playing.

The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music (ESNCM) is committed to hold the Palestine National Music Competition. It is the only national competition covering all of Palestine, awarding prizes for Solo Instrument Performance, Piano Duet, Arabic Singing, Composition and Ensemble Playing.

With that in mind, and fully implementing the health procedures outlined by the Palestinian Ministry of health, it has been decided to hold the competition from 1st – 8th December 2021, with the final concert and prizewinners' ceremony on Thursday 9th December 2021.

Despite all the challenges, the conservatory will add two new sections to the competition: Choirs, and Piano Duet. It was also decided to open up the ensemble playing section to include ensembles from all over Palestine and the Palestinian diaspora.

The ESNCM is committed to holding the competition to the highest standards and with the greatest degree of participation possible, and to that end the juries will be external and mainly international, and participants will have the opportunity to take part face-to-face or via video conference or live digital link-up.

When will the competition take place?

1. All participants from all around Palestine will compete in the final rounds from 1-8 December 2021.
2. The Awards Ceremony and final concert will take place at 6pm on Thursday 9 December 2021.

Important Dates

Event	Place	Date
Registration opens for the competition	The website: ncm.birzeit.edu/pnmc2021	1/8/2021

Last date for registration or confirmation of previous registration	The website: ncm.birzeit.edu/pnmc2021	10/11/2021
Publication of names of the participants and opening for alterations	The website: ncm.birzeit.edu/pnmc2021	11 – 15 /11/2021
Preliminary round for the Arabic singing sections	Sharjah Hall, Ramallah branch	19/11/2021
Announcement of final applicant lists and jury members	Via a press conference broadcast on mainstream and social media	24/11/2021
Palestine National Music Competition finals	ESNCM premises in Jerusalem, Ramallah and Gaza	1-8/12/2021
Awards Ceremony and final concert	Ramallah Cultural Palace	9/12/2021

NB: Any previous applicant from 2020 who no longer wishes to compete in the competition is entitled to a refund of the application fee.

Competition Sections

I – Solo Instrument Performance:

- 1- Piano
- 2- Guitar
- 3- Strings (Violin, Viola, Cello, Double Bass)
- 4- Winds: Woodwinds and Brass (Flute, Clarinet, Oboe, Bassoon, Saxophone, Trumpet, Trombone, Baritone, French horn, Tuba)
- 5- Arabic Instruments (Oud, Qanoun, Buzuq, Nay, Oriental Violin)
- 6- Arabic Percussion (Tableh, Riqq, Mazhar, Bandir, Banjaz)

II - Arabic Singing.

- 1- Solo singing
- 2- Choirs (the Palestine Sings Prize)

III – Piano Duet.

Pieces must be performed by two players on one piano.

IV – Ensemble Playing:

Any genre of music is permitted.

Groups must be of minimum three players performing on acoustic instruments without amplification (no voice, no electric or

electronic instruments).

V – Composition (Marcel Khalife Young Composers' Award).

VI – The Arabic Percussion Award

What age groups can participate in the competition?

1. Solo playing: up to 22 years old
2. Ensemble playing, singing and choirs: up to 30 years old.
3. Composition: up to 40 years old.

Competition Age Categories

Solo Instrument Performance (piano, Arabic Music and Strings):

- Category A:** up to age 11 (date of birth on or after 1/12/2010)
Category B: up to age 15 (date of birth on or after 1/12/2006)
Category C: up to age 18 (date of birth on or after 1/12/2003)
Category D: up to age 22 (date of birth on or after 1/12/1999)

Solo Performance (Arabic Percussion):

- Category A:** up to age 12 (date of birth on or after 1/12/2009)
Category B: up to age 16 (date of birth on or after 1/12/2005)
Category C: up to age 22 (date of birth on or after 1/12/1999)

Solo performance (Winds and Guitar):

- Category A:** up to age 15 (date of birth on or after 1/12/2006)
Category B: up to age 22 (date of birth on or after 1/12/1999)

Solo performance (Arabic Singing):

- Category A:** up to age 11 (date of birth on or after 1/12/2010)
Category B: up to age 17 (date of birth on or after 1/12/2004)
Category C: up to age 30 (date of birth on or after 1/12/1991)

Choirs:

- Category A** up to age 13 (date of birth on or after 1/12/2008)
Category B up to age 30 (date of birth on or after 1/12/1991)

Piano Duet

- One age category:** up to age 22 (date of birth on or after 1/12/1999)

Ensemble Playing:

One age category: up to age 30 (date of birth on or after 1/12/1991)

Marcel Khalife Young Composers' Award:

One age category: up to age 40 (date of birth on or after 1/12/1981)

What categories can competitors apply for?

- 1 – Competitors may apply for their own age category.
- 2 – Competitors may apply for older age categories than their own.
- 3 – Competitors may apply for more than one section in the competition.
- 4 – Competitors may **not** apply for more than one age category in the same section.
- 5 – Competitors may **not** apply for a younger age category than their own.

Competition Regulations

- 1 – Competitors may participate in their own age category or an older category.
- 2 - *Solo Instrument Performance* and *Piano Duet* sections: Each instrumentalist or pair must play two pieces.
- 3 - One piece will be set by the ESNCM, and one will be chosen by the participant.
- 4 - Each group performing in the *Ensemble Playing* section must play only one piece of their own choice (see criteria in point 5 - below).
- 5- Singers should sing two songs from lists provided by the ESNCM.
- 6 - Accompaniment: The ESNCM only provides accompaniment for the *Arabic Singing* section. Any other accompaniment required must be provided by the competitor. A piano will be available in each of the locations where candidates will perform.
- 7 - The chosen pieces for solo instrument performance should not exceed the following time limits:

Category A: 4 minutes
Category B: 6 minutes
Category C: 8 minutes
Category D: 10 minutes
- 8 - The chosen pieces for Ensemble Playing and Piano Duet should not exceed 8 minutes.
- 9 – Participants in the Arabic percussion section should play in each category a varied improvised solo in different meters, which should be between 2 and 3 minutes long, and should be played on one or a maximum of two of the permitted percussion instruments.
- 10 - Three prizes are given for any performance category with at least 6 participants.
- 11 - The first prize only will be awarded if there are between 3 and 5 applicants.
- 12 – One prize will be awarded for each category in the Arabic percussion section.
- 13 – Several prizes will be awarded, under different names, in the choir section.
- 14- The Conservatory has the right to remove a category if there are fewer than 5 participants for that category.
- 15 – ALL participants in an ensemble or choir must be within the age category.
- 16 – Ensembles must consist of a minimum of three players.
17. The ensemble competition is for acoustic instruments, and therefore may not include vocals or electronic or electric instruments.
18. One player may not appear in more than one ensemble or piano duet.
- 19 – The ensemble category is open to ensembles from all over Palestine and the diaspora, on condition that all ensemble members are Palestinian or of Palestinian descent.
- 20- A previous first prize winner in any category may not compete in the same age category again, but may apply for an older category if it exists.
- 21 - A penalty of 2% (two percentage points) will be applied to candidates/groups performing an own-choice piece of a duration exceeding the above limits.
22. The performance may also be stopped by the Jury when it exceeds the limit by more than one minute.
- 23 - For age categories with more than 11 participants - in any section of the *Solo Instrument Performance* section - there may be a first round of selection based on the performance of the own choice piece, and a second round with the compulsory piece.
- 24 - For age categories with more than 25 participants the jury has the right to request a third round, in which 10 competitors will be chosen to play either one of their pieces.
- 25 - Half of the players will be selected for the second round (if there is an odd number of participants in the first round, the number of competitors going to the second round will be half of the next higher even number).

26 - The jury panel may decide not to assign the 1st prize if the level of all the participants is unsatisfactory.

What is the minimum number of applicants required to avoid cancellation of any category?

A category will be cancelled if it has fewer than 3 applicants. If there are between 3 and 5 applicants, only one prize will be awarded.

Regulations for the Marcel Khalife Award for Young Palestinian Composers

1. The composition prize is open to any Palestinian musician whose age does not exceed 40 years old.
2. The compositions must be for a minimum of three acoustic instruments (including the human voice as an option).
3. The compositions may be in any genre.
4. The duration of the pieces should be between two minutes and eight minutes.
5. Competitors must complete the online application form no later than 10 November 2021, and applications will not be considered before receipt of the application fee, which may be paid at any branch of the conservatory, via bank transfer or at one of our partner institutions.
6. The composition must be notated and attached in PDF format, in addition to either a recording of the piece (MP3, MP4 or YouTube link) or a MIDI file.
7. Only one prize will be awarded.
8. The general competition regulations apply to this section.
9. The winner will be announced during the Awards Ceremony on 9 December 2021.
10. Submitted compositions may be the result of collaboration of more than one musician.
11. The winning composition will be performed by professional musicians during the Awards Ceremony whenever possible.

The Choir Competition: “Palestine Sings Prize”

This competition is open to:

1. School and University choirs in Palestine
2. Community choirs in Palestine
3. Choirs from the branches of the ESNM
4. Choirs from the other music schools and conservatories in Palestine.

Regulations for the competition:

1. The competition is open to any choir in Palestine.
2. The age categories are divided as follows:
 - Category A; up to age 13 (date of birth on or after 1/12/2008).
 - Category B: up to age 30 (date of birth on or after 1/12/1991).
3. Each choir will sing one song chosen by its leader.
4. Each age category must have at least 5 participating choirs to avoid cancellation of the category.
5. Each choir must have a minimum of 7 singers. There is no upper limit.

Applications

1. The competition is open to any Palestinian musician (and including Syrians from the Occupied Syrian Golan Heights) within the age ranges specified above.
2. All applications must be submitted online at ncm.birzeit.edu/pnmc2021 by 10/11/2021, attaching all required documents:
 - A passport-style personal photograph
 - A clearly scanned copy of their birth certificate or ID
 - A clearly scanned PDF copy of the score of their own choice piece (for solo instrument and piano duet categories). **N.B. If the own choice piece is changed after the application deadline, it is the applicant's responsibility to provide the jury with the new score (3 copies) on the day of the competition.**
 - Application fee (50 shekels), payable at any of several points which will be announced.
 - Previous applicants (2019/20 competition which was postponed) should re-apply for the competition, but are exempt from the fee.
3. Applicants to the *Arabic Singing* section must attach to the application a voice recording of one song (MP3/ YouTube link) By 10/11/2021.
4. Applicants to the *Ensemble* section from Gaza and the diaspora must attach to the application a video recording of the piece they will play (MP4/ YouTube link) By 10/11/2021.
5. The set pieces for each *Solo Instrument* section and the *Piano Duet* section and the lists of songs for the *Arabic Singing* section can be found on the competition website, <http://ncm.birzeit.edu/pnmc2021>
6. Each competitor should use the edition of the set piece provided by the Conservatory.
7. The top three competitors from the Arabic Singing Section will compete live for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes during the final prizewinner's concert and ceremony.

The juries:

1. The judges for this Competition are highly-qualified experienced musicians carefully chosen by the conservatory.
2. A jury member must not be the music teacher of a competitor in his/her section.
3. Jury members for the choirs and ensembles sections will comprise a number of experienced leaders of music institutes.
4. Jury members for the Arabic singing section will be some of the most prominent Palestinian singers.
5. The jury is made up of at least three musicians for each of the competition sections.
6. Marking for the *Solo Instrument*, *Piano Duet*, *Ensembles* and *Arabic Singing* sections: Each judge will give a mark out of 100 to each candidate. Those marks will be announced at the end of each age category round and the average will be calculated, constituting the candidate's final mark.
7. If the jury is composed of 5 members or more, the highest and lowest mark will be discarded and the average of the remaining marks will constitute the final mark.
8. The three best singers of the *Arabic Singing* section, Category C, will have a final round of competition during the Final Concert, when the jury will award the final prizes.
9. The Jury's judgment is definitive and unchangeable.

Awards Ceremony - Final Concert

The prizes will be given during a special **Final Concert** to be held at the Ramallah Cultural Palace on 9 December 2021.

Competition schedule

Please note that the schedule might change if the number of participants is very high. Any changes will be published on the competition website and the ESNM social media accounts. Applicants will also receive the changed schedule by email.

<i>Venues</i>	Suhail Saba Hall - NCM Jerusalem
	Marakesh Hall - Yabous Cultural Center
	Yunis Amra Hall - Turksih Cultural Center
	Sharjah Hall – ESNM Ramallah
	Gaza Hall - NCM Gaza

Friday 19 November 2021			
10:00 – 18:00			Preliminary rounds for Arabic Singing section
Wednesday 1 December 2021			
15:00 – 20:00	Guitar – all categories	Gaza Hall - NCM Gaza - video link	Sharjah Hall - Ramallah - video link
15:00 – 20:00	Winds – all categories		
Thursday 2 December 2021			
12:00 – 20:00	Strings – all categories	Gaza Hall - NCM Gaza - video link	Sharjah Hall - Ramallah - video link
Friday 3 December 2021			
09:00 – 20:00	Arabic Music – all categories	Gaza Hall - NCM Gaza - video link	Sharjah Hall - Ramallah - video link
09:00 – 20:00	Piano solo – all categories		Sharjah Hall - Ramallah - video link
Saturday 4 December 2021			
16:00 – 20:00		Gaza Hall - NCM Gaza - video link	Ensembles and percussion sections
Sunday 5 December 2021			
10:00 – 20:00		Gaza Hall - NCM Gaza - video link	Arabic Singing and Choirs sections
Mon – Wed 6-8 December 2021			
9:00 am - 8:00 p.m	2 nd rounds of any category as needed	Gaza Hall - NCM Gaza - video link	Sharjah Hall - Ramallah - video link

2nd rounds of any category as needed

Thursday 9 December 2021

Final Concert and awards ceremony, final of Arabic singing section, at Ramallah Cultural Palace

Notes:

- ✓ ESNCM offers the possibility of participating via video conference for any participant who is unable to be present in person, whether the reason is checkpoints, quarantine or the participant has not received a permit to enter Jerusalem.
- ✓ ESNCM reserves the right to cancel the financial award for any prizewinner who fails to attend the final concert and ceremony.
- ✓ First prize winners in any section may be invited on jury's recommendations to perform in the Final Concert.
- ✓ All performers should wear appropriate formal clothing for the event.
- ✓ The competition schedule is subject to change based on numbers of participants, and will not be altered after 24/11/2021. Any changes will be announced through all media until that date.

Prizes

Section	Category	1 st Prize	2 nd Prize	3 rd Prize
Solo Instrument Performance (Piano, Arabic Music, Strings)	A	\$125	\$100	\$75
	B	\$250	\$175	\$125
	C	\$500	\$375	\$250
	D	\$1000	\$750	\$500
Solo Performance (Arabic Percussion)	A	\$125	n/a	n/a
	B	\$250	n/a	n/a
	C	\$500	n/a	n/a
Solo Performance (Wind, Guitar)	A	\$200	\$150	\$100
	B	\$500	\$375	\$250
Piano Duet	1 category	\$600	\$400	\$200
Ensemble Playing	1 category	\$1000	\$750	\$500
Arabic Singing and Choirs	A	\$250	\$175	\$125
	B	\$500	\$375	\$250
	C	\$1000	\$750	\$500
Marcel Khalifeh Young Composers' Award	1 category	\$1000	n/a	n/a

Choir Section Prizes

Name of Prize	Value in Dollars
Excellence in performance	250
Best uniform	250
Outstanding conducting	250
Excellence in Formation	250
Excellence in harmony	250
Jury's prize	250
Prize for incentive	250