



ETM-LA Songwriting Contest (for Choral Ensemble)

Education Through Music-LA (ETM-LA) is excited to announce the **2026 ETM-LA Songwriting Contest!** The purpose of this contest is to produce an inspiring, high-quality, original song that speaks to the theme of *music's ability to unite the world*. The winning piece will be premiered by choir students at the annual **Music Unites the World Festival**, a two-day event bringing together student performers from many of our over forty partner schools in Los Angeles County. For more info on ETM-LA's mission, visit etmla.org.

PROCESS:

- Application materials are accepted via the online application only found at etmla.org/song26/
- Songwriters/Composers are asked to submit a score (full score and part-only score) and recording (optional) of an unpublished work on the theme of **music uniting the world**.
- Songwriter/Composers will write for:
CHOIR: Young treble voices (2 Part) - Soprano & Alto voicings; Range of B ♭ 3 to D5
- Piece should celebrate the diversity of cultures and identities represented across our communities, inspiring freedom of expression and unity through music. Creativity with style and genre is highly encouraged. ex. Jazz, modern, world music, music production, show choir, etc.
- **FEE: \$5 (USD) submission fee.** All fees are payable online and are non-refundable.

PRIZE: The winning piece will be premiered at the annual Festival during March 2026 (Date TBD) in Los Angeles, CA, performed by ~60 student musicians in Grades 4-8 and accompanied on piano.

The winner will be invited to attend the premiere where each winning composer will receive a **\$2,000** cash prize. In addition, the composer will **meet and work** with the ensemble and director. Music industry professionals, educators, celebrity film composers, and other leaders will be in attendance. Past festival celebrity coaches/artists include: **Rickey Minor** (Aretha Franklin), **Randy Spendlove**, **Lisbeth Scott** (Shrek, Chronicles of Narnia), **Carmen Twillie** (The Lion King), **Sally Stevens** (The Simpsons), **Christophe Beck** (Frozen), **Baraka May**, **Zanaida Robles**, **Joseph Trapanese** (Straight Outta Compton), **Sebastian Kryz** (Shakira, Luis Fonsi, Juanes), **Judith Hill** (The Voice, Prince), **CeCe Sammy** (American Idol), **NOMAD** (Babyface), & more.

TIMELINE:

- **June 16, 2025:** Applications open.
- **August 15, 2025:** Applications due 11:59 pm PT. Pre-screening begins.
- **September 2025:** Winner consults with ETM-LA on song and delivers final manuscript.
- **January 2026:** Winner publicly announced.
- **March 2026:** Winning song will be premiered by ETM-LA Honor Ensembles at the 2026 Music Unites the World Festival in Los Angeles, CA.

ELIGIBILITY AND TERMS:

- See next page or visit etmla.org/song26/
- **ETM-LA reserves the right to not select a winner.**
ENTRY DEADLINE: 8/15/2025 11:59 PM PT



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Rules and Regulations

1. The 2026 ETM-LA Songwriting Contest will hereafter be referred to as the ("Contest"). The winning piece will be performed at the ETM-LA Festival in March 2026, hereafter referred to as the ("Festival").
2. Contest fees are non-refundable and are payable online in USD only. Entry materials (scores, mp3s, information) are accepted via the online form only. ETM-LA does not give feedback or critiques to entrants and reserves the right not to award a grand prize.
3. Submissions must be original, unpublished works and shall not infringe any copyrights or any other rights of third parties. Songs may have multiple co-writers, but only one name should be designated as the Entrant on the entry form. All songwriters must be listed on the entry form in the field requesting the names of the songwriters.
4. Contest is open to songwriters at all levels. If an entrant is under 18 years old, the signature of a parent or guardian is required on the online application.
5. The grand prize of \$2,000.00 USD will be awarded to the first name as it appears on the entry form, and division of prizes among co-authors is the responsibility of winners. W9s will be required before the prize is disbursed. In the event that the winner is a minor under the age of 18, the check will be made out to parents/guardians.
6. The grand prize will be presented at the Festival and given to the winner(s). In the event that a non-local composer wins, ETM-LA is not responsible for any room, board, or other travel expenses associated with attending the Music Unites the World Festival.
7. Entrant retains all ownership rights to the submitted song. ETM-LA will not have any ownership rights to any song submitted.
8. Submissions will be reviewed by a screening committee who will select the finalists. Finalists will be reviewed by judges who will select the winners. The judging committee will consist of music industry professionals including record label executives, producers, songwriters, and artists. Songs are judged equally on melody, composition, originality, lyrics, alignment with the theme "Music Unites the World," and appropriateness for mixed voice, beginner-elementary ensembles (4-8th Grade). Production quality will not be a determining factor.
9. Contest winner(s) will be announced in January 2026. ETM-LA will notify entrants of the contest results by email. Entrant is responsible for providing up-to-date and correct email addresses to ETM-LA. ETM-LA is not responsible for entrant's non-receipt of ETM-LA emails for any reason.
10. Winner(s) may be required to sign an affidavit confirming that the winner's song is original and they hold rights to the song. Failure to sign and return the form within the required time period or provision of false information may result in disqualification and an alternate winner may be selected. Affidavits are subject to verification by ETM-LA and its agents.
11. Entry constitutes permission to use the winner's name, likeness, and voice for future advertising and publicity purposes without additional compensation. Additionally, the winning composer grants use for the winning piece to be performed at the Music Unites the World Festival, March 2026; the venue will be in Los Angeles County.
12. By entering the Contest, entrants and/or their parents or legal guardian (if entrant is a minor) agree to accept and be bound by the decisions of ETM-LA and its judges which are final and binding in all matters. Entrant agrees to be bound by all terms of these official ETM-LA Rules And Regulations as established herein.