

Competitive Music festivals in Peterborough and the surrounding area (Oct 2025)

Competitive music festivals provide a very useful way for players to gauge what level they are playing at and how to progress as a performer (even if they only attend as an audience member). Any instrumentalist or singer who has an ambition to perform to the public, particularly if they hope to study at a conservatoire, should take part in these festivals from an early age. The adjudicators at these festivals are usually very experienced professional musicians with conservatoire level teaching experience who give individual written (and also sometimes verbal) feedback, to every player taking part – and this feedback is invaluable.

These festivals (such as the Oundle and Cambridge ones below) are primarily aimed at players of 'classical' music, but many competitive music festivals also additionally cover other genres of music such as Musical theatre, Jazz, and Pop music. Most the competition classes at these festivals are targeted at school age children but there are usually a few additional competing classes for adults (particularly vocal ensembles). There are also higher level competitive music festivals that are aimed at players hoping to study music at degree level, and even higher level competitions for post degree level students.

Players are usually introduced to these festivals via their music teacher but players can enter a festival themselves – if a player intends to do this I strongly advise they first attend at least one competitive music festival as an audience member to see what is involved.

These competitive music festivals are a vital (but often over-looked) part of the nation's musical culture and praise is due to the many volunteers who organize and run these local festivals.

Oundle festival of Music and Drama

This competitive festival is held at three venues in Oundle, Northants. There are a wide range of competitive classes for traditional (classical) instruments, pop music instruments, various vocal styles, various ensembles, as well as competitive classes for spoken word and drama. Most competitive classes are for school age children although there are many competitive classes for adult singers, in particular - varieties of choir and smaller vocal ensembles. The closing date for entries is in January with the competitive classes and a final concert taking place towards the end of March.

For more information visit <https://www.ofmd.org.uk>

Cambridge competitive music festival

This festival relaunched this year as the Cambridge Community Music Festival. There are a wide range of competitive classes focussing on various instruments and singing of various styles, with some duet and ensemble classes. Most competitive classes are for school age children with a special prize for the most outstanding young musician. The closing date for entries is in January with competitive classes taking place in early March and a final concert taking place in early April.

For more information visit <https://www.ccmf.uk>

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