

ACADEMY OF SCORING ARTS × AUDIO MODELING

AUDIO MODELING COMPOSITION CONTEST

DEADLINE

SAT, OCT 10

RESULTS

SAT, OCT 17

Rules and entrant information · scoringarts.com

Write and produce a piece of music between two and three minutes long in which SWAM instruments carry the music. Not a bed, not a topping — the voices the listener actually follows.

Style is entirely open. Chamber, cinematic, jazz, folk, electronic, something with no name yet. The rubric rewards how well the instruments are written and played, not the genre they are written in.

A seed motif is released at the event alongside your license, and what you make of it is part of what the panel scores.

THE LENGTH CAP IS FIRM

It is the most important rule here. Anything under **2:00** or over **3:00** is disqualified before scoring.

THE SEED MOTIF



A bare motif without key, rhythm, meter, etc. Feel free to transpose, add rhythm, or state it plainly. What you make of it is scored under composition.

Download a zip with the PDF and a MIDI file of the motif:

scoringarts.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/ASA-SWAM-Competition-Theme.zip

INSTRUMENTATION

All melodic and harmonic content must come from SWAM instruments. Everything else is support.

ALLOWED ALONGSIDE SWAM

- + Drums and percussion, acoustic or electronic
- + Piano, keyboards, organ, harp
- + Guitar and bass, real or virtual
- + Synths and pads as a harmonic bed
- + Your own recorded vocals or acoustic playing
- + Field recordings, foley, sound design

NOT ALLOWED ANYWHERE

- Any other virtual strings, winds, brass or saxophones
- Sampled orchestral libraries of any kind
- Solo-instrument sample libraries doubling a SWAM part
- Loops or construction kits containing acoustic winds or strings

WHAT TO SUBMIT

Three things by the deadline, plus one more only if you reach the final ten. Everything goes through one Google Form:

docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSelsMRfhA9MNFztOnQaowejQPXncJKkAlt8VoNVqJzcWVSMg/viewform

1 AUDIO

WAV · 48 kHz · 24-bit · stereo. Mastering light or none — judges loudness-match.

Don't fight the limiter. Every entry is normalised to the same loudness before anyone hears it. A squashed master gains you nothing and costs you points under production.

2 NOTES

200 words max.

The 200 words should say which SWAM instruments you used and how you controlled them — breath controller, wind controller, expression pedal, CC2 / CC11 curves drawn by hand, whatever it was. The panel reads these before scoring expression.

3 ENTRY FORM

Name, country, DAW, controllers.

4 FINALISTS ONLY

Project file or stems, within 48 hours.

Finalists send a project file or stems plus a render with only the SWAM tracks audible. It takes five minutes and it keeps the result clean.

Optional, and worth doing: a 30–60 second screen or camera capture of you performing one of the lines. It informs the expression score and it is the material we most want to publish afterwards.

SCORING RUBRIC

Published in advance, applied to every finalist by every judge. One hundred points.

30

Expressive realism

Does it sound like people playing, rather than patches triggering? Phrasing and breath, bow direction and pressure, vibrato that arrives rather than switches on, legato and portamento that go somewhere.

25

Composition

The strength of the idea, the shape of the three minutes, and whether anything stays with the listener afterwards. Includes what you made of the seed motif.

20

Idiomatic writing

Is the part written for that instrument, or written in the abstract and assigned to it? Range, register, breath length, bow length, what a player would relish and what no player would ever be given.

15

Production and mix

Balance, depth, space and clarity. Whether the SWAM instruments sit convincingly in the room you have put them in.

10

Overall impact

The judge's single held-back score for the piece as a whole. Deliberately unaccountable to the categories above.

HOW JUDGING WORKS

Round one is blind. Entries are stripped of names and metadata and given a number. Three screeners score everything and cut the field to ten finalists.

Round two is the full panel. Every judge scores all ten finalists against the published rubric. Highest total wins.

Ties go to the head judge. One person decides, on the record. No averaging, no re-scoring rounds.

Every entrant gets their rubric scores back, plus a line of written comment from one judge.

Panelists consist of ASA Board members and AudioModeling team.

TIMELINE

Sat, Sept 26	Event. Licenses issued, brief and motif released.
Sat, Oct 10	Deadline at 23:59 PDT. No extensions.
Sun–Tue, Oct 11–13	Blind screening cuts the field to ten. Finalists notified and asked for additional materials.
Thu, Oct 15	Finalist materials due. Panel scoring begins.
Sat, Oct 17	Finalists and winner announced. Finalist playlist published.

PRIZES

Overall winner	A perpetual license to the full SWAM suite. Audio Modeling will feature the winning track as a demo on their site.
Best ensemble writing	A perpetual license to SWAM String Sections.

ELIGIBILITY AND RIGHTS

One entry per person. Solo entrants only — no duos, no teams. The judging is of one person's decisions.

Original and new. The piece must be written and produced inside the fourteen-day window and must not have been released anywhere before results are announced.

Generative AI. No AI-generated audio and no AI-composed musical material. Tools that assist with mixing, mastering, notation cleanup or MIDI editing are fine and should be named in your notes. Undisclosed use is disqualifying at any point, including after the announcement.

Samples and third-party material. Anything you did not make, you must have the right to use. Cleared loops and libraries are fine within the instrumentation rules above.

You keep your copyright. Entering grants Scoring Arts and Audio Modeling a non-exclusive, worldwide license to use the work, your name and your submitted materials for promotion of this competition. The winning entrant additionally grants Audio Modeling the right to feature the winning track as a product demonstration.

Judges' decisions are final, and the organizers may disqualify any entry that breaks these rules.