



What is it?

The Thanet Music & Drama Festival is an annual event for amateurs in the performing arts, which takes place at various venues around Thanet in February – March. The Festival is a not-for-profit educational charity, founded in 1921.

Which ‘performing arts’?

Currently we have five sections: Instrumental, Pianoforte, Vocal & Choral, Speech & Drama, and Dance. Performing arts which do not fit easily into any of these categories could still be accommodated, as the makeup of the festival has changed many times over its history.

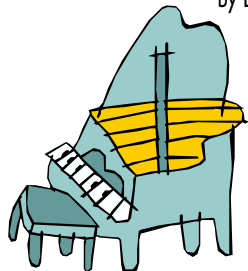
Is it for children or adults?

Both. Children of all ages make up the majority of participants in the festival, but adult amateurs are also welcome.

How does one enter?

Each year, a free Syllabus is issued in around September, containing lists of classes in each section. Entrants choose the classes they wish to enter, and send in their entries with payment by December 31. The entrants for each

class are then sorted, and a Programme with the precise times of each class is published in late January or early February.



Is it only for Thanet residents?

No, anyone is allowed to enter. We regularly have entrants from throughout Kent, as well as some from the Home Counties and even occasionally participants from as far afield as Hungary!

Who runs the Festival?

A group of dedicated volunteers. We are always looking for more helpers, even just for a couple of hours a year.

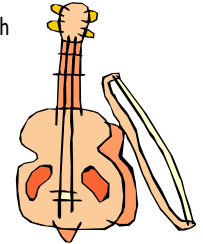
How can I support the Festival?

In addition to becoming an active helper, you could become a Friend of the Festival, for a minimum donation of £10 per year. Friends have free admittance to all Festival events. The Festival also welcomes commercial sponsorship and can offer advertising space in its Syllabus and Programme.

What happens on the day?

You (or your child) should arrive in plenty of time for whichever class(es) you have entered, and preferably by the beginning of each session. Within each class, the entrants will be called out in the order in the Programme, and should (where appropriate) announce what they are about to perform. After all the performances within the class have finished, the professional Adjudicator will summarize the important points in that particular class, and highlight particularly good performances as well as suggesting areas which could be improved. Every entrant will be awarded a combined certificate and marksheet, which contains more detailed comments on his or her performance. The top performances within certain

categories may be awarded trophies, which are presented at the **final concert** at Margate Winter Gardens (when some of the best performers may be requested to perform again).



Why should I enter my child?

To give them confidence. A Festival is quite different from grade exams and the like: there is no pass or fail. Conversely, one has to face a hall full of people. This is a skill mastered of course by professional performers, but also of use to anyone in today's society, regardless of what career they pursue. Some entrants are nervous at first, but the younger one starts, the less daunting the audience appears. It is often a good idea to enter two (or more) classes, in case nerves mar a good performance in the first one.

Why should I enter myself?

Many people who abandon music or other arts after school find a longing to take them up again in adulthood. Some welcome the challenge of taking up totally new arts. Whatever the case, performing arts are very limited if not shared with others; but adults can be quite shy about their own ‘hobbies’. Festivals provide an opportunity for adults to confront such fears and receive positive feedback, as well as to meet other like-minded people and ‘swap notes’.



Any other reasons?

– To obtain an independent, expert assessment of current strengths and areas for improvement. The Festival employs highly skilled Adjudicators, who combine years of practical experience in the arts with the specialist knack of motivating through constructive criticism, often nurtured through the British and International Federation of Festivals.

– Also to obtain an appreciation of the skills of others. There is a spirit of friendly competition in most classes of the festival, and



those who happen not to gain the top mark will often learn as much from their peers as from their own comments.

– Finally, festivals are fun! Most entrants come back year after year (we believe the record is approximately 60 years).

Are Festivals more important than grades?

A balance between both is best. Grades are very useful for ensuring that a student has mastered essential technical areas of their particular art, while festivals help them share their art with others for enjoyment.

My child's teacher doesn't like competitions...

We have encountered this attitude from some teachers, but think it is in general rather misguided. Children often thrive on healthy,

friendly competition, provided the emphasis is never on the placings. Adjudications at the Festival are always encouraging and stress the individual's capabilities, although it is of course important for this to be backed up at home. Participants in the Festival do **not** have to be entered by teachers: everyone is welcome to enter as an individual.

Who comes to listen / watch?

With events like this there is always a risk that participants perform only to themselves and their families, but we encourage everyone to attend as many events as possible as members of the audience. As "edutainment", it is often far more interesting than polished professional performances, especially if you watch certain individuals progress over the years. It's also much cheaper!

How can I find out more?

Thanet Music & Drama Festival's website www.thanetfestival.org.uk includes Syllabuses from previous years as well as some examples of press coverage etc. Specific questions regarding individual sections are best directed to the relevant section's Convenor (listed in the Syllabus, Programme, and on the website) while general enquiries should be directed to the Honorary Secretary:

Ben Jones, 11 Berkeley Road, BIRCHINGTON, CT7 9JN

Tel: 01843 847701

E-mail: festival@thanetfestival.org.uk

This information is available in different formats for the visually impaired: please call 01843 847701.

Thanet Music & Drama Festival



Annual Arts for Amateurs

of All Ages and Areas

www.thanetfestival.org.uk