

Toy Piano Sanctuary Composition Competition 2025

Human Rights Edition

- Composers from any nationality, age and background are invited to participate.

This competition is directed to social justice issues, and the **entrance fee** is a monetary donation to The Human Rights Campaign: <https://www.hrc.org/campaigns/celebrate-pride-with-us> (read the section on How to Participate before doing your donation).

- Theme-title: **The Pulse Suite**.

We will make a selection of **49 Microludes for Toy Piano**, from a mixture number of composers, as an homage to the 49 victims murdered at the 2016 mass shooting at Pulse Nightclub, in Orlando, Florida.

You will encounter videos telling the stories of the victims on the YouTube page of The Human Rights Campaign: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nq6xRZICSoM>

The composer we are highlighting is **György Kurtág**. Now at age 98, he is a visionary Hungarian composer that allows his imagination and strong sense of texture and performativity to guide large portions of his Avant-Garde keyboard writing. We do recommend knowing his music and history; especially researching his Microludes and his Games (Jatekok) as references for your writing to this competition.

The **Microlude** can be characterized as a short version of a prelude; a quick commentary on a theme; a strong statement that ends abruptly; a gesture; a short piece. Some of Kurtag's Microludes have only one long note with a crescendo-diminuendo; one cluster or one gesture only; therefore, Minimalism is definitely welcomed. That being said, we also welcome you to experiment doing the most with the time frame you have for each piece.

Rules:

- **Each Microlude should not exceed 35 seconds.**
- Each Microlude can be written for **one** or for **multiple** Toy Pianos (up to 10 instruments).
- Using toy pianos in unconventional ways is allowed.
- Theatrical, choreography, vocal-singing and verbal-text interactions are also allowed; as long as clearly explained on the score.
- Use of Grand-pianos, Extended Techniques and Electronics is also allowed, **as long as the piece contains a significant toy piano performance element.**

- Each composer is welcome to compete with as many Microludes as they desire to enter in the competition. As many pieces you send, as more chances you will have to be included in The Pulse Suite.
- Young composers and beginners are very welcome!
- The Microludes should be inspired by the lives of the 49 people lost on the mass shooting at the Pulse Nightclub in 2016; so please familiarize yourself with their stories.

How to Participate:

To enter the 2025 TPS Competition you must donate at least \$1 (one dollar) **per Microlude entered in the competition, DIRECTLY** to The Human Rights Campaign. So, for example, if you choose to compete sending us 11 Microludes, you must donate at least \$11 (eleven dollars) to The Human Rights Campaign. If you choose to compete sending 125 Microludes, you must donate at least \$125 (one hundred and twenty five dollars) to The Human Rights Campaign, and so forth.

- **Please send us via email ONLY the invoice that proves your payment to The Human Rights Campaign:** <https://www.hrc.org/campaigns/celebrate-pride-with-us>

Disclaimer: The Toy Piano Sanctuary does not take any money and accept any payment as entrance to this competition. The Toy Piano Sanctuary is not working directly with The Human Rights Campaign, we are only trying to help causes that are strong to our hearts and that speak to the moment we live in. Please make the donations directly to The Human Rights Campaign and only send us a picture of the invoice as proof of payment.

The deadline to send scores and enter the Competition is May 1st, 2025.

The scores must be sent as PDF files to thetoypianosanctuary@gmail.com with the email titled: Composition Competition and the name of the composer.

Include in the email a PDF attachment with the score of your compositions; a short Resume; and a copy of the invoice of the donation you made to The Human Rights Campaign.

Prizes:

- **All** pieces entered in the competition that correctly follow the Competition's guidelines will be entered in our **2025 Catalogue of Keyboard and Toy Piano Repertoire**, and will be distributed free of charge to the toy piano community, in PDF format.
- 49 of the pieces will be selected as winners and premiered on Pride Month as **The Pulse Suite**. They will be performed by pianist and interdisciplinary professor Daniel Inamorato; at pride events; at **University of William & Mary** in

Williamsburg (Virginia- USA); and also at **University of Pernambuco**, in Brazil. More performances might occur and other performers might be involved.

- 1st place: \$200 will be awarded to the winner that has the most Microludes selected as part of The Pulse Suite.
- 2nd place: \$150 will be awarded to the person with the second largest number of Microludes selected to The Pulse Suite.
- All participants and winners will receive certificates.
- All winners will be interviewed online and their resume, picture and websites will be displayed at The Toy Piano Sanctuary website.

The selection of winners, the order of the pieces in the Suite, and how they will be performed will be up to the judges and performers, who are generously doing this work for free to help the Human Rights Campaign, the LGBTQ+ community and The Toy Piano Sanctuary. All decisions are final. Any questions should be directed to:

thetoypianosanctuary@gmail.com

Toy Piano Composing Tips:

- A regular 37 keys Schoenhut goes from F3 to F6.
- Try to avoid going lower than C3, but you can go as high as C8 (Kawai Toy Pianos go that high).
- Most toy pianos have no more than 4 octaves, so if you use this entire range (C3-C8), you will probably be writing for more than one toy piano.
- Toy piano performers are used to adapting pieces to the instruments they have available, so it isn't a bad idea to leave it up to the performer to adapt the piece to the instruments they have in hand.
- If you need to write lower notes than C3, then you probably want to add a traditional Grand Piano to the piece.
- We have a large collection with more than 60 toy pianos, so most toy piano ranges will be fine.

Common toy piano labels include: Kawai; Jaymar; BC; Schoenhut; Michelsonne.