

Dear Hermione So,

Congratulations! We are delighted to inform you that you are awarded **First Place with Special Honours** at the Star Cluster Strings Competition, Junior Category, 13 - 14 years old, for Lori Pappajohn, Girl in the Red Skirt.

Here are the comments from our judges:

Thank you for your performance of this piece. Your performance was very engaging and showed a strong connection with the Spanish/flamenco-inspired style. This style often depends on percussive clarity, and I want to emphasize that the pulse you kept throughout your performance was very stable, maintaining the rhythmic drive; even in the lyrical sections, the music still felt like it had "feet." Keep exploring a clear beat hierarchy and crisp starts to phrases to add even more sharpness and exaggeration to the flamenco-driven character. Keep an eye on the repeated notes and ostinatos so they stay rhythmically exact, and continue avoiding excess ringing in faster passages. However, in the solo/improvisatory phrases, I would encourage you to explore even more rubato with a stronger contrast to the more rhythmically structured sections of the piece. The diverse techniques, including the drumming/tapping, were well orchestrated. This focus on pulse gave a solid foundation for the final culmination of the form and added to the contrasts of the composition through a vivid dialog of diverse timbres. Overall, it was a very solid and engaging performance.

Please find your Certificate on the website. If you indicated that you have a teacher and/or an accompanist, their Certificates are also on the website. For your convenience all certificates are in PDF for printing and JPG for posting on social media. Please download the certificates within next two months.

We are thrilled to invite you to the Award Ceremony that will be held in Toronto, Canada in Summer, 2026.

We will send more details regarding the registration, the exact dates, and the venue later. Please, always check your spam/junk email folder to do not miss any important information.

Please register for the Award Ceremony at the following link by May 22, 2026: <https://www.pulsar-music.com/award-ceremony>

Payments after the deadline will not be accepted due to the high volume of participants. Please note that the recital registration fees are not refundable and can not be substituted.

Details: The Registration Fee includes admission to the hall, one set of a trophy, a certificate, and a teacher's diploma, four complimentary tickets for family members to enter the recital hall, and a set of digital photos taken by a professional photographer during the Award Ceremony on the stage. You will be invited to the stage to receive your trophy and certificates, and your name will be printed in the event brochure. Please note that you will not be playing on the stage.

In addition, Pulsar Music is happy to invite all Award Ceremony participants, their teachers, and family members to join us at other social events after the ceremony date, such as a trip to Niagara Falls and the Toronto Aquarium.

Sincerely,
Dr. Ekaterina Paniukova, CEO of Pulsar Music

Star Cluster Music Competition
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