

Canberra International Music Festival 2026

Information on Volunteer roles

Volunteers are the critical element in facilitating festivalgoers with a wonderful experience and allowing production and artists to shine. Our volunteers don't just fill a role, they establish the atmosphere of welcome and friendliness that turns a series of concerts into a festival where conversations and inclusivity are part of the package. There are varied roles for volunteers, depending on skills and interests. Some roles start well before the festival period and some are confined to the period immediately around the festival dates. But for all volunteers, preference is given to those that can commit to several sessions (half days) or more. In return, CIMF commits to provide training support where required within a supportive team. And you hear great music, either as a spin off from your volunteer work or via free tickets for drivers and others who are not directly involved in concerts.

There are various roles for volunteers:

Office and Media assistance

Beginning up to two months out from the festival, these volunteers sign up to respond to email call outs for assistance at our Braddon Office. It could be asking if you are willing to work a set couple of hours a week on ticketing, marketing or media. Or you may be willing to receive call outs for photocopying, careful proof-reading of an article, or such tasks as a single morning putting lanyards together. Each call out asks your availability for an upcoming date and lets you know what task is required.

Front of House

Known for their helpfulness, friendliness and flexibility, this role encompasses traditional ushering, assisting patrons with mobility needs, venue set up or tidying and flexible support of the production team or patrons. In addition they are our "eyes and ears", looking for all potential needs or hazards around the venue. Front of House volunteers generally arrive 60 minutes before a concert, and leave 30-60mins after a concert has concluded. We roster to give volunteers good access to the music but there are instances of sold out performances when this is not possible, or time when some volunteers are rostered to roles in the grounds, foyer or green room for part of the concert. We do expect that all volunteers share and are equitable in the concert/out of the concert roles.

Ticketing Desk

The ticketing team is rostered to any non-sellout concerts. We have a simple to use electronic payment system, but a willingness to take responsibility for a cash float is required. The team arrives at a venue up to one hour before a concert. There may be some setting up of the ticketing desk and portable signage. After the commencement of the concert, the ticketing team is free to pack up, leave or join the concert. A willingness to be trained on the ticketing and electronic payment systems is essential.

Parking Direction and Access Support

This is part of the Front of House volunteer team but focused on moving patrons into the venue. The role involves welcomes, directions and assistance to those with mobility support.

Bar

A Safe Service Certificate is required if working as part of the bar team. The bar team is responsible for the bar set up, selling drinks prior to concerts and during intervals, and tidying or packing up and securing the bar. Around these duties, the bar staff can listen to the concert (space permitting). Willingness to assist in taking home a load of glasses for dishwashing is much appreciated but not mandatory.

Artist Drivers

Drivers are a critical part of the festival, as their absolute dependability in getting performers to concerts and rehearsals is vital. Drivers use their own cars and are rostered for a morning, afternoon or evening to drive artists between any combination of the airport/bus station, accommodation, and rehearsal/performance venues. The artists allocated will depend on the size of your vehicle. It's a great way to meet performers and point out landmarks in our city. Drivers working 3 or more shifts are offered a pair of concert tickets and get first offer of any free tickets going for concerts where space is available.

Production Support

This includes media, lighting, sound, photography and staging. It's a great opportunity for those beginning or contemplating a career in music / live events, or those who love the "behind the scenes" of CIMF. Volunteers are generally linked to one of our production or office teams and work within that team to make the concerts happen. Some roles start now, especially marketing and media support roles with office staff. During the festival period, it may be venue set up, stage set up, artist care, working alongside the sound or lighting crew or media work. Dependability, stamina and flexibility are the characteristics required here. It's great experience for young adults, even if they are not into our music as many of our production staff work across all types of live events and can give good industry advice, so suggest this role to those not normally looking at volunteering for our festival.

Green Room Support

This is a great role for those interested in artists "behind the scenes". Volunteers are rostered to the green room at concert halls or rehearsals to keep the green room open and secure, maintain the tidiness, and provide catering supplies. They act as support for artists and share information with the venue manager and the location of the warm-up room, toilets, rehearsal schedules, performance information, and access to a needle and thread or Band-Aid. Good social skills are a requirement here, being able to "read" which performers like to chat, those who require quiet and no disturbing, or those fully engaged in conversation with other performers. A good book to read while on duty helps and we make sure that you get to watch half of any concert you're working (as long as it has an interval), or offers of free tickets to other concerts.

Rehearsal Venues

A great job for those wanting a "behind the scenes" look at concert production. Volunteers are rostered to a rehearsal venue and do anything necessary to maintain the venue or assist the artists, taking some of the load off the production staff. It may be tidying the venue between rehearsals, topping up the catering or welcoming artists and showing them the facilities, or simply keeping the venue secure as production staff zoom off to do pick-ups. Dependability, reliability and a good eye for identifying what is needed is required for this role.

Canberra City Hosts

Visiting artists will stay in paid accommodation, but we don't want to lose our reputation as the "Friendly Festival" – after all, we do live in one of the world's best cities! So we established the volunteer role "city host" for those willing to be assigned a visiting artist and offer those things that personalise their visit and make it unique. This may be a welcome at the airport and settling them into their accommodation; a city tour between rehearsals, or a visit to a venue of particular interest to them; sound advice on where to eat; or even transport to rehearsals (you can sit and listen if the venue manager is ok with that). As we don't know what any artist will want until we meet them, this requires a degree of flexibility as well as friendliness on the part of the host. This may be a great opportunity for early-career professionals or amateur musicians to meet international or interstate musicians.

Bump In

Always a race against time, a team is required to come in to assist in putting out chairs, labelling chairs, tidying and decorating at the various venues.

Hopefully, you will have seen a volunteer role/s that is just right for you.

For any further information please email:

volunteers@cimf.org.au