

Masterclass in Composition for Organ and Film Music: From Händel to Hollywood. Composing for Organ (and Choir) 22–25 October 2026 and 2/3–4/5 November 2026

FROM HÄNDEL TO HOLLYWOOD

In the masterclass, participants develop their own compositions for the organ and engage in-depth with the distinctive musical language, dramaturgy and technical possibilities of this extraordinary instrument. The aim is not simply to imitate historical music. Rather, the focus is on the question:

How can we learn from Händel and use this to develop our own contemporary musical language?

The perspective of film music opens up a special approach. Dramaturgy, atmosphere, tension, musical characterization and sound design are combined with the possibilities of the organ.

As Händel's birthplace, Halle offers a unique starting point for exploring historical music and its significance for the present. The Masterclass therefore also includes an examination of Handel's life and work, for example by visiting the Handel House.

From Händel to Hollywood means understanding musical tradition not as a boundary, but as a starting point for new ideas.

YOUR COMPOSITION – FROM DRAFT TO PERFORMANCE

The masterclass begins even before the actual workshop. All participants develop an initial composition design for organ in advance. This can be a musical sketch, a concrete movement or already a largely developed piece.

WHAT TO EXPECT

The masterclass combines composition, film music, organ practice and performance. By the end of the Masterclass, you have not only acquired new knowledge about the organ. You have:

- developed and completed his own composition for organ
- your composition professionally registered
- created a score and performance material
- worked with professional organists
- experienced your work on a real concert organ
- gained experience with the practical implementation of a MIDI mock-up
- your composition is presented publicly in Halle Cathedral
- the opportunity to receive a recording or documentation of your work
- worked intensively with experienced composers and arrangers
- new contacts made within the film music and composition scene

TARGET GROUP AND APPLICATION

The masterclass is aimed at **film music composers** and **students** as well as **church music students** who already have or want to gain **composition experience**.

Arrangers and musicians with a compositional focus are also welcome.

Requirements:

- basic knowledge of music notation
- Basics in creating MIDI mockups
- basic compositional knowledge
- the ability to develop one's own musical design independently
- Knowledge of the organ is not required.

The application deadline is October 1, 2026.

The number of participants is limited to five. To apply, please submit the **filled-out application form** with a representative **orchestral score/organ score (pdf)** and a **recording or midi layout**.

SCHEDULE:

- Thursday, 1 October 2026: Application deadline
- Thursday, 22 October 2026: Start of the masterclass
- Friday, 23 October 2026: Composition
- Saturday, 24 October 2026: Composition
- Sunday, 25 October 2026: Composition/debriefing/end of the masterclass
- Monday/Tuesday, 02/03 November 2026: 1st day of rehearsals at Dom zu Halle (Cathedral)
- Tuesday/Wednesday, 03/04 November 2026: 2nd day of rehearsals at Dom zu Halle (Cathedral)
- Wednesday/Thursday, 04/05 November 2026: rehearsal and concert at Dom zu Halle (Cathedral) / recording of the compositions

TEACHERS

Prof. Benjamin Köthe works as a composer, orchestrator, arranger, pianist and keyboardist for studio, film and television productions as well as for concert projects with several orchestras. He specializes in symphonic rock crossover compositions. For many years he has been the main arranger of „Bridges to Classic“ at the legendary Handel Festival in Halle (Saale). Since 2006 he has been a professor for the popular music and classical music program at the Rostock University of Music and Theatre.

Fabian Kratzer has been enriching the media landscape as a composer and author since 2018 with numerous pieces of music for film and theater. By winning the Jerry Goldsmith Award in 2023 and receiving several nominations at the Hollywood Independent Music Awards and the Hollywood Music in Media Awards, he has already made a name for himself far beyond Germany's borders. He has also been able to reach a wide audience with his music, with over 85,000 streams, and his current successes impressively demonstrate that Fabian Kratzer's music touches, shakes up and makes you think.

Gerhard Noetzel has been cantor of the Evangelical Reformed Cathedral Congregation of

Halle since 2016 and shapes musical life there. The musician studied A-church music and composition at the Evangelical University of Church Music Halle from 2002 to 2008 and returned to Halle after stops in Wolmirstedt and Herzberg (Elster). In addition to his work as cathedral cantor, conducting various ensembles and caring for the historic Wäldner organ, he is a lecturer and deputy training director at the EKM Church Music Seminar, director of the PopChor Halle and, since 2023, director of the Youth Symphony Orchestra at the Halle Conservatory. Noetzel works as an organ expert in the regional church, is known as a composer and arranger and has made numerous music recordings (recording studio „horchmal!“).

PROGRAMM

PHASE 1: COMPOSING & DISCOVERING THE ORGAN

October 22 to 25, 2026

The first phase is all about composition and practical engagement with the instrument. Based on the prepared compositional designs, the works are further developed and adapted to the actual possibilities of the organ.

A special focus is on **registration**:

- Which registers produce which sound?
- How can musical characters and dramatic developments be shaped through registration?
- How does the sound in the room change?

Together with **cathedral cantor Gerhard Noetzel**, the participants get to know the cathedral organ and test their compositions directly on the instrument. In parallel, composition sessions and individual coaching with Fabian Kratzer and **Prof. Benjamin Köthe** will take place. The designs are further refined and prepared for later rehearsal.

PHASE 2: FROM SCORE TO SOUND

three-day phase: 2 rehearsal days + 1 performance day (04 or 05 November 2026)

The second phase – the practical phase – involves rehearsing the completed compositions together with organists in Halle.

→ Investigation of musical ideas:

- What sounds like what was planned in the mock-up?
- What works differently on the instrument?
- Where does the score need to be adjusted?
- How does a composer communicate with a professional organist?

The highlight of the masterclass is **the film music organ concert on November 4 or 5, 2026**, in Halle Cathedral. (The concert date will be decided soon.)

Depending on the organizational possibilities, the resulting works should be additionally documented or included.

PLACES

22–25 October 2026

Meeting rooms

2/3–4/5 November 2026

Dom zu Halle, Domstraße 3 06108 Halle (Saale)

PARTICIPATION FEES

300€

(including drinks and lunch)

ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS

We recommend:

- Jugendherberge Halle, Große Steinstraße 60, 06108 Halle (Saale)
<http://www.jugendherberge-halle.de/>

other accommodations:

- Hostel No.5 <http://www.hostel-no5.de>
- B&B Hotels www.hotelbb.de/de/halle-saale
- Ankerhof Hotel www.ankerhof.de/
- Holiday Inn <https://www.ihg.com/holiday-inn-the-niu/hotels/gb/en/halle/zhzrh/hoteldetail>

Please let us know your preferred accommodation for the reservation.

The participants themselves cover the costs of the accommodation.

APPLICATION until 1 October 2026

APPLICATION FORM for download: www.filmmusiktage.de/masterclass

CONTACT

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