

FERRUCCIO
BUSONI

INTERNATIONAL
PIANO COMPETITION



Città di Bolzano
Stadt Bozen



BOLZANO
BOZEN
CITY OF
MUSIC



*Music was born free;
and to win freedom
is its destiny* F. Busoni

66th International Piano Competition Ferruccio Busoni

Competition
rules
2026–2027



MEMBRE DE LA FÉDÉRATION
MONDIALE DES CONCOURS
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MUSIC COMPETITIONS



Alink Argerich Foundation

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Art first – then the competition!

The 66th Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition will begin with a veritable festival. Together with ten leading concert institutions from Asia, Europe and the USA, the 120 pianists selected will perform in ten music marathons before an expert and enthusiastic audience. In addition to the professional jury, which will follow the auditions remotely, the audience itself will choose their favourite pianists for the competition finals, which will be held in Bolzano in 2027. In this way, young talents will not only perform as established artists, but also benefit from two ways of reaching the finals: chosen by the audience or chosen by the jury.

The programme of the **Glocal Piano Festival** is entirely at the discretion of the pianists in order to give them maximum freedom to express their own artistic identity.



Another new feature of this edition is the launch of a partnership with the brand new **Cape Town International Piano Competition**. Within this partnership, all pianists registered for the Busoni Competition who wish to participate in the Cape Town competition will benefit from a discounted participation fee. The partnership also includes a series of prize concerts for the winner of the 66th Busoni Competition as a way to promote their international career.

1. Registration

Who: Pianists born between 1 January 1996 and 31 December 2010. Previous winners of the Busoni Prize may not take part.

Where: Online registration is at www.busoni-mahler.eu.

When: The registration deadline is 13 May 2026.

How: Candidates must complete all fields of the appropriate online form and submit the following documentation: personal data, copy of **valid** passport/identity card, recent photograph, biography, CV (including qualifications) and video recording [see section 2 (a)].

Registration and participation fee:

There are two types of fee:

A. A registration fee of € 40.00 per candidate to be paid when submitting the online application form.

Instructions for payment can be found directly on the online form.

B. Candidates admitted to the Glocal Piano Festival are required to pay a participation fee of € 130.00.

The Busoni-Mahler Foundation will send the terms of payment for the participation fee following selection of those candidates participating in the Glocal Piano Festival. Both the registration fee and the participation fee are non-refundable in the event of withdrawal by the candidate.

Candidates registering for the 66th edition of the Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition will be eligible for a reduction in the participation fee for the Cape Town International Piano Competition.

Registration for competition final rounds – WFIMC winners only:

Pianists who have won first or second prize in music competitions affiliated to the *World Federation of International Music Competitions* between 1 January 2023 and 30 October 2026 may apply **directly to enter the final rounds** of the competition.

The appropriate application form, available on the www.busoni-mahler.eu website as from 1 July 2026, must be completed and received no later than 31 October 2026. Up to three candidates can be selected out of all the correct applications received for the final rounds, to be selected by the Glocal Piano Festival Jury.

Please note: dual registration (i.e. for the **Glocal Piano Festival**, and **directly for the final rounds**) is **not** permitted. Candidates who have already registered for the Glocal Piano Festival who win a first or second prize in a WFIMC member competition in the period 13 May – 30 October 2026 may withdraw from the Glocal Piano Festival and opt to apply directly for the final rounds. The relevant documents must be submitted by 31 October 2026.

2. Competition rounds

a) Video selection

A total of 120 candidates whose applications are received within the specified deadline may participate in the competition. The date on which the 120 names will be announced depends upon the total number of applications and will in any case be no later than four months before the start of the Glocal Piano Festival.

Video recording criteria: videos must last between 12 minutes (min.) and 16 minutes (max.) – file size: up to 5 Gb; file format: MP4. Only one video may be uploaded; it may however feature more than one piece recorded at different times. Each piece must be recorded using one fixed camera. No editing or cutting of the recording is allowed. Video recordings must be less than two years (24 months) old.

Videos recorded during rehearsals or rounds of other competitions may be used provided that they are accompanied by a statement from the relevant competition certifying that the audio track has not been manipulated or modified. Statements must be uploaded in the appropriate space on the application form.

» For the music programme, see section 4.2.

b) Glocal Piano Festival – TOP 120 – solo piano: 26 October – 15 December 2026

The 66th Busoni Competition will transform the auditions into a global festival: together with ten leading concert institutions in Asia, Europe and the USA, the 120 selected pianists will perform in ten piano marathons in front of an expert and enthusiastic audience. The jury will follow the Glocal Piano Festival online and, at the end of this competition phase select 26 pianists who shall take part in the competition finals in Bolzano.

Thanks to an exclusive partnership with Steinway & Sons for the supply of instruments and the presence of professional videographers, the same technical conditions will be guaranteed in every venue. This will give access to a local audience on a global scale and, at the same time, provide an online appearance that will showcase the performances of all participants for a period of ten months.

In addition to the professional jury, which will follow the auditions remotely, the audience at each GPF venue will be invited to vote and select one pianist who will advance to the competition finals, which will be held in Bolzano in 2027. In this way, young talents will not only perform as established artists, but will also benefit from two ways of reaching the finals: chosen by the audience or chosen by the jury.

» For the music programme, see section 4.3.

c) Final rounds: 25 August – 5 September 2027

The final rounds will be played live in Bolzano, as follows:

TOP 39 – solo piano: 25 – 27 August 2027

TOP 12 – solo piano: 28 – 29 August 2027

TOP 6 – chamber music: 31 August – 2 September 2027

TOP 3 – Grand Finale: 5 September 2027

» For the music programme, see section 4.4.

3. Convocation, accommodation & travel arrangements for participants

a) Convocation

Following the selection of the 120 pianists who will perform at the Glocal Piano Festival, the Busoni Competition will determine the calendar for the various venues and invite candidates to perform in their assigned concert season.

Before every round of the competition, participants will be notified as to where and when they need to appear: each participant is required to carry a form of valid personal identification.

b) Accommodation

All **Glocal Piano Festival** candidates requiring accommodation will receive a one-off payment of up to € 250 after submitting an invoice issued by their hotel and made out in their name.

For participation in the **final rounds** in Bolzano, the Foundation will offer all candidates free board and lodging, from the day of their respective convocation and for as long as they remain in the competition. If a candidate decides not to make use of the accommodation offered, s/he must bear all relevant accommodation costs. A number of upright pianos are available for practising while participants are staying in Bolzano.

The six pianists selected for the chamber music finals will be required to stay in Bolzano (at the expense of the Busoni-Mahler Foundation) until the evening of the Grand Finale.

c) Travel arrangements

Each participant in the **finals** will be offered a lump sum of € 800 as reimbursement for travel expenses, payable by bank transfer during the course of the final rounds. All bank details entered on the application form must be full and accurate in order to permit the successful transfer of funds.

4. Music repertoire

4.1. General remarks concerning the music repertoire:

All pieces performed in the various rounds must have been published; the only exceptions are the improvisations required for the *TOP 12 – solo piano round*. Only complete works are acceptable: this includes single etudes, intermezzos, or pieces performed in concert outside of the composition cycle (e.g. *Scarbo* from *Gaspard de la nuit* by Maurice Ravel). Individual tempos from sonatas and suites are however not permitted.

The sequence of the music programme entered on the online application form may be compiled at the candidate's discretion. Candidates should indicate the length of each work as accurately as possible in order to fit into the total time allotted for the performance (intervals included). Apart from contemporary and chamber music pieces, the programme must be performed from memory. Music scores of the works to be performed (in the appropriate edition) must be submitted to the competition administration in electronic format, within the deadline indicated in the convocation, for use by the jury on the voting platform.

4.2. Repertoire for video selection:

Videos may last between 12 and 16 minutes (max.): the programme must include the following:

- one Etude by F. Chopin (op. 10 or op. 25) or one Etude by F. Liszt;
- one Etude by any of the following: C. Debussy, B. Bartók (op. 18), S. Rachmaninov, S. Prokofiev, I. Stravinsky, A. Scriabin or G. Ligeti;
- one or more works chosen by the candidate.

The repertoire may **not** be performed in subsequent rounds of the competition.

4.3. Music programme for the Glocal Piano Festival – TOP 120 – solo piano:

The 120 selected candidates shall perform a programme of 25 – 30 minutes consisting of works of their choice.

The music programme must be submitted to the administration by **1 August 2026** using the appropriate form available in the reserved area of the website.

4.4. Music programme for the final rounds 2027:

The music programme for the final rounds must be submitted to the administration by **31 March 2027** using the appropriate form available in the reserved area of the website.

The music programme for the final rounds must be entirely different from that performed in the Global Piano Festival: the same piece may not be performed more than once in the various rounds of the finals.

a) For the TOP 39 – solo piano

The 39 selected candidates shall perform a programme of 25 – 30 minutes (max.) that must include:

- one of the following compositions by F. Busoni:
 - one *Elegy* from BV 249
 - *Elegy no. 7 "Berceuse"* BV 252
 - *Sonatina no. 1* BV 257
 - *Sonatina Seconda* BV 259
 - *Sonatina "In diem nativitatís Christi MCMXVII"* BV 274
 - *Toccata (Preludio – Fantasia – Ciaccona)* BV 287
 - *Indianisches Tagebuch (I)*, either nos. 1, 2, 3 or 4 BV 267
 - *Preludes op. 37* BV 181: choice of 3 preludes
 - *Fantasia nach Johann Sebastian Bach* BV 253
 - *10 variations of a Chopin Präludium (Klavierübungen Teil 5)* BV 213a
- other published works selected by the candidate.

b) For the TOP 12 – solo piano

The 12 selected candidates shall perform a programme of 50 – 55 minutes that must include:

- a transcription by J.S. Bach/F. Busoni;
- a sonata by L. v. Beethoven, M. Clementi, J. Haydn or W.A. Mozart that must differ from those performed in previous rounds;
- one or more piano works from the late 20th-century repertoire selected in collaboration with *Milano Musica* and the *Concours international de piano d'Orléans*, which is linked to the awarding of the *Maurizio Pollini Prize*. The list will be made available to candidates as from 1 July 2026;
- other works of the candidate's choice that must differ from those performed in previous rounds;
- *ex tempore* improvisations by candidates (10 minutes max.) are also permitted.

c) For the TOP 6 – chamber music

The six selected candidates shall perform a programme that must include:

- Chamber music section – one of the following quintets:
 - R. Schumann:
Quintet for piano and strings op. 44
 - J. Brahms:
Quintet for piano and strings op. 34
 - C. Franck:
Quintet for piano and strings
 - A. Dvořák:
Quintet for piano and strings no. 2 op. 81
 - D. Shostakovich:
Quintet for piano and strings op. 57
- Solo section: A programme of works of the candidate's choice lasting 15 to 20 minutes.

d) For the TOP 3 – Grand Finale

The three selected candidates shall perform **two** of the following piano concertos. The final choice of concerto from the two indicated is to be performed in the competition round and will be agreed between the jury and the Artistic Director at the end of the chamber music final round (2 September 2027).

- W.A. Mozart:
concertos for piano and orchestra
K 466, K 456, K 467, K 491, K 595, K 488
- L.v. Beethoven:
concerto for piano and orchestra no. 3, no. 4, no. 5
- B. Bartók:
concerto for piano and orchestra no. 2
- F. Chopin:
concerto for piano and orchestra no. 1 and no. 2
- M. Ravel:
concerto for piano and orchestra in G Major
- S. Rachmaninov:
concerto for piano and orchestra no. 1 and no. 4
- S. Rachmaninov:
rhapsody on a theme of Paganini op. 43
- P.I. Tchaikovsky:
concerto for piano and orchestra no. 1
- S. Prokofiev:
concerto for piano and orchestra no. 3 and no. 5
- F. Liszt:
concerto for piano and orchestra no. 1 and no. 2
- C. Saint-Saëns:
concerto for piano and orchestra no. 2 and no. 5
- R. Schumann:
concerto for piano and orchestra in A minor op. 54
- A. Scriabin:
concerto for piano and orchestra op. 20

Any changes to the music programme for the final rounds must be made using the appropriate form and submitted to the administration by **13 June 2027**.

5. Jury

The jury will consist of music professionals of different nationalities. In the event of any tutorial or family relationship between a member of the jury and a candidate, the member concerned must abstain from voting. The composition of the jury will vary at each competition stage (i.e. video recording, Glocal Piano Festival and Final Rounds).

There are strict rules in place barring contenders from contacting members of the jury for the duration of the competition. The votes of each member of the jury for the final rounds (only) will be made public from 1 October 2027.

In addition to the professional jury, the Glocal Piano Festival stage provides for the active participation of the audience in attendance: by simple majority vote, the audience will select one pianist who will advance to the final stages.

6. Privacy rights

On registering for the competition, each candidate implicitly authorises the administration of the Busoni-Mahler Foundation to make use, at its discretion, of all personal data and photographic images provided as well as any audio-visual recording or online transmission of the rounds (see privacy form accompanying the application form).

The Busoni-Mahler Foundation assumes full ownership of all audio-visual recordings that it has produced; it furthermore claims all exclusive commercial and non-commercial rights thereto.

7. Additional contractual obligations of participants

Participants ranked **fourth**, **fifth** and **sixth** are required to remain until the awards ceremony, which will be held on the day of the Grand Finale. In the days leading up to the awards ceremony they will be offered a **workshop** to be held by one or more members of the jury. They may also be selected and nominated to hold their own seminar for students at music schools or at the Conservatory in Bolzano.

The winner of the Busoni Prize must comply with all of the contractual obligations entered into between the Foundation and music organisations (Italian or foreign) aimed at promoting the artist's career.

In the two weeks following the awarding of the prize (i.e. between 6 and 20 September 2027), the winning candidate must formally accept the initial concert engagements arranged by the internal management of the Busoni-Mahler Foundation; the winner of the Busoni Prize must furthermore give priority to all concert engagements arranged by the management of the Busoni-Mahler Foundation for the subsequent 24 months (i.e. September 2027 – August 2029).

8. Prizes

Busoni Prize: € 30,000.00

The Busoni Prize may not be shared.

2nd prize: € 15,000.00

3rd prize: € 10,000.00

4th prize: € 5,000.00

5th prize: € 5,000.00

6th prize: € 5,000.00

The winner of the Busoni Prize will also receive :

- A prize named in memory of **Arturo Benedetti Michelangioli**, worth €5,000.00, awarded on condition that the First Prize is awarded unanimously by the jury;
- Prizes awarded in conjunction with the **Cape Town International Piano Competition**, namely a concert with the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra, a concert with the KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic Orchestra and a solo recital;
- **Artistic management:** the Foundation will provide the winner with representation and artistic management for the two years following his/her success. Further prestigious concert engagements in Italy and abroad are currently being finalised;
- A **"Meet the Conductor"** mentoring project: a series of meetings and auditions with internationally renowned conductors. This project offers the winner the opportunity to receive valuable professional advice and, in some cases, concrete offers of engagement.

The **Maurizio Pollini Prize**, instituted by *Milano Musica* in conjunction with the Busoni-Mahler Foundation, will be awarded for the most innovative repertoire with particular reference to the late 20th century: it offers a monetary prize of € 5,000.00, a concert to be performed at the *Milano Musica Festival*, and an invitation to perform at the *Matinées du piano d'Orléans / Concours international de piano d'Orléans*.

Other special prizes (to be determined) will also be announced.

Awards will be taxed according to the provisions of Italian law. Participants who are not admitted to the chamber music final round may request a certificate of participation.

Information

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