

Second Competition for Young Orchestra Conductors

“Maestro Borislav Ivanov” – Varna

29 October 2025 – 01 November 2025

Terms and Conditions

State Opera Varna announces the second edition of the International Competition for Young Conductors in honour of Maestro Borislav Ivanov, who for many years served as the chief artistic director of State Opera Varna. The contest will take place between 29 October and 1 November 2025 in Varna, Bulgaria.

Young conductors of all nationalities born between 1990 and 2005 may take part in the competition and compete for a prize fund and concerts with the orchestra of State Opera Varna, the Symphony Orchestra of City of Pazardzhik and the Chamber orchestra of Dobrich.

Preselection

There is no limit to the number of applicants. During the preselection for the Contest, the applicants compete with audio-visual recordings of their performances. The jury selects and invites up to 24 participants to appear in Varna, Bulgaria, on 29 October.

First round: 29 October 2025, 11 am – 2:45 pm | up to 12 candidates | Closed to the public

Each candidate conducts two pieces determined by a draw from the repertoire announced beforehand. Rehearsal time – 15 minutes.

First round: 30 October 2025, 10 am – 1:45 pm | up to 12 candidates | Closed to the public

Each candidate conducts two pieces determined by a draw from the repertoire announced beforehand. Rehearsal time – 15 minutes.

After all candidates have performed, the jury shall determine up to 12 candidates who continue to the next round. The names of the selected candidates shall be announced on a special noticeboard in the foyer of State Opera Varna, and each candidate shall also receive the jury's decision by email on the email address indicated in the application documents.

Second Round: 31 October 2025, 10 am – 2:45 pm | up to 12 candidates | Closed to the public

Each candidate conducts two pieces, one compulsory piece and one piece determined by a draw from the repertoire announced beforehand. Rehearsal time – 20 minutes.

After all candidates perform, the jury shall determine up to 6 candidates who continue to the next round. The names of the selected candidates shall be announced on a special noticeboard in the foyer of State Opera Varna, and each candidate shall also receive the jury's decision by email on the email address indicated in the application documents.

Third Round: 1 November 2025, 10 am – 1:30 pm | up to 6 candidates | Open to the public

Each candidate conducts two pieces, one compulsory piece and one piece determined by a draw from the repertoire announced beforehand. Rehearsal time – 30 minutes.

After the completion of the third round, the jury shall select the prize winners of the contest and then shall determine by a draw, in the presence of the candidates, the exact form of the closing concert programme.

The results of the final ranking are definite and are announced in front of the audience at the closing concert.

Closing Concert: 1 November 2025, 7 pm, ticketed audience.

The contest prize winners shall perform pieces from the third round determined by a draw.

Application deadline – 1 August 2025

The applicants shall be notified by 15 August on an email address they have provided whether they have been selected to take part in the first round.

Fees

All applicants shall pay a fee of 50 Euros (50 Leva for Bulgarian citizens) when submitting their application. The applicants who shall be selected to participate in the first round pay a (supplementary) fee of 150 Euros (150 Leva for Bulgarian citizens). If a candidate cannot participate due to any reason different from force majeure circumstances, the fees shall not be reimbursed.

The fees should be paid by a bank transfer onto the following bank account:

DSK BANK – EAD Varna

IBAN BG96STSA93003106868301

BIC STSABGSF

Application Documents

All applicants should fill in the FORM section, attach the required documents, indicate links to two video recordings, and by clicking on the “I agree” button, accept the terms and conditions of the Contest.

Documents sent by mail or other materials (CDs, DVDs, press reviews etc) shall not be taken into account.

REPERTOIRE

1st Round Bulgarian Music

1. Pancho Vladigerov – Bulgarian Phapsody “Vardar”
2. Petko Staynov – “Ruchenitsa” from “Thracian Dances”
3. Marin Goleminov – “Fire Dance” from the ballet “Nestinarka” (“Fire Dancer”)
4. Lyubomir Pipkov – Ruchenitsa from the opera “Momchil”
5. Veselin Stoyanov – Grotesque Suite “Bay Ganyo”, 2nd movement

2nd Round – Classical and Romantic Repertoire

1. Mozart – overture to “The Magic Flute”
2. Beethoven – Symphony Nr 5, 1st movement (**compulsory piece**)
3. Rossini – overture to “La Cenerentola” (“Cinderella”)
4. Dvorak – Symphony Nr 7, 1st movement
5. Schumann – Symphony Nr 1, “The Spring Symphony”, 3rd movement
6. Tchaikovsky – Symphony Nr 6, 2nd movement

3rd Round – Opera

1. Verdi – “Trovatore”, Leonora’s aria from Act 4
2. Verdi – “Un Ballo in Maschera”, Renato’s aria
3. Cilea – “Adriana Lecouvreur”, Princess de Bouillon’s aria, “Acerba voluttà” from Act 2
4. Ponchielli – “La Gioconda”, Gioconda and Laura’s duet
5. Rossini – “Il Barbiere di Seviglia”, Quintet “Don Basilio! Cosa veggo!” from Act 2, Scene 4 (**compulsory piece**)
6. Puccini – “La Bohème”, Rodolfo and Marcello’s duet from Act 4
7. Puccini – “Turandot”, Liu’s aria from Act 1

8. Ponchielli – “La Gioconda”, Enzo’s romance from Act 2

PRIZES

First Prize – **1,500 Euros**, a Diploma and a concert with the Symphony Orchestra of State Opera Varna, courtesy of the family of Maestro Borislav Ivanov.

Second Prize – **1,000 Euros**, a Diploma and a concert with the Symphony Orchestra – Pazardzhik.

Third Prize – **600 Euros**, a Diploma and a concert with Chamber Orchestra – Dobrich.

All remaining finalists shall receive a Certificate of Participation.

PRESELECTION JURY:

Prof. Dr. Grigor Palikarov - Chief Conductor of State Opera - Plovdiv and permanent guest conductor of State Opera - Varna, Chairman

Svetoslav Borisov - Conductor of Magdeburg Opera (Germany) and permanent guest conductor of State Opera Varna

Krastin Nastev - Conductor of State Opera - Varna

JURY

Prof. Dr. Grigor Palikarov - chief conductor of the State Opera - Plovdiv and permanent guest conductor of the State Opera - Varna, Chairman

Giancarlo De Lorenzo - Music Director of the San Remo Symphony Orchestra (Italy)

Boyka Vasileva - Artistic Director of State Opera - Varna

Svetoslav Borisov - Conductor of the Magdeburg Opera (Germany) and permanent guest conductor of State Opera - Varna

Kristin Nastev - Conductor of State Opera - Varna

Additional Terms

- The contest shall comprise, for the pre-selected candidates, three rounds and a closing concert.
- Before each round, the members of the jury shall receive a ballot with the names of all the candidates taking part in the round.

- The voting shall be secret and independent, and the members of the jury may not discuss the performances before or during the actual voting. The score may not be publicised.
- If a member of the jury cannot take part in the contest, for example due to “force majeure” circumstances, the Management of the contest may immediately appoint a new member of the jury.
- The organisational secretary gathers all votes after each round and checks if the ballot has been duly signed.
- Counting the points and announcing the score to the assembled members of the jury shall be done by the organisational secretary and a neutral assistant.
- After each of the first three rounds, the chairperson announces in alphabetical order the names of the candidates who continue to the next round, without indicating the number of votes they have received.
- After the closing concert, the chairperson announces the prize winners without specifying the number of votes received.
- The decision of the jury is final and not subject to appeal.