



Solti

International
Conducting Competition

COMPETITION ANNOUNCEMENT

1–10 October 2026

Müpa Budapest • Kodály Centre Pécs • Liszt Academy Budapest

The international conducting competition named after world-famous Hungarian-born conductor Sir Georg Solti was founded and is being organised by Müpa Budapest Nonprofit Ltd. (hereinafter: Müpa Budapest or the Organizer). The competition takes place in collaboration with Hungary's public media and is named after Solti, a disciple of Hungarian musical giants Béla Bartók and Ernő Dohnányi, the legendary one-time music director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and still the best-known Hungarian conductor in Europe and America alike. The competition's patron is Ken-Ichiro Kobayashi, who won first prize in Hungarian Television's inaugural International Conducting Competition and is Hungary's Ambassador of Culture.

The purpose of the competition is to discover and promote the conducting talent of the future.

After a preliminary selection round, the selected competitors will be evaluated in three rounds before a prestigious international Jury in the three concert halls with the best acoustics in Hungary. The venues are the Concert Hall of the Kodály Centre in Pécs, the Grand Hall of the Liszt Academy, and the Müpa Budapest – Béla Bartók National Concert Hall. The competitors will work with three internationally renowned symphony orchestras: the Pannon Philharmonic from Pécs, the Hungarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, and the Hungarian National Philharmonic Orchestra.

1. APPLICATION CRITERIA

Applicants must be aged between 18 and 35, i.e. born between 11 October 1991 and 30 September 2008. There are no restrictions on nationality.

Employees of Müpa Budapest Nonprofit Ltd. and their close relatives, as well as close relatives of the Jury members, are not allowed to participate in the competition.

2. TIMELINE OF THE COMPETITION

Submission period for competition application materials: **1 December 2025, 0:00 CET – 20 March 2026, 23:59 CET**

Pre-selection: **21 March – 14 June 2026**

- The application materials will be checked by the Competition Office.
- There is a one-time opportunity to submit any missing materials by **10 April 2026, 23:59 CET**.
- A five-member preliminary jury will perform pre-selection of the submitted application materials.
- Following the decision of the preliminary jury, applicants will be notified of the results by e-mail.
- Deadline for notifying applicants by e-mail: **15 June 2026**
- Deadline for receipt of the participation fee, as well as other necessary data: **30 June 2026, 23:59 CET**

Public rounds (Pécs and Budapest): **1–10 October 2026**

Round	Venue	Orchestra	Date	No. of competitors
Preliminary rounds	Pécs, Kodály Centre – Concert Hall	Pannon Philharmonic	1-4 October	24
Semi-final	Budapest, Liszt Academy– Grand Hall	Hungarian Radio Symphony Orchestra	5–6 October	10
Final	Müpa Budapest – Béla Bartók National Concert Hall	Hungarian National Philharmonic Orchestra	9 October	4
Awards gala – as part of the Liszt Fest International Cultural Festival	Müpa Budapest – Béla Bartók National Concert Hall	Hungarian National Philharmonic Orchestra	10 October	4

3. ORGANISATION OF THE COMPETITION, WORKS TO BE CONDUCTED

As the Organizer of the competition, Müpa Budapest places great emphasis on the fairness and transparency of the competition, consequently the selection and judging processes are conducted according to a pre-established set of rules.

3.1 Pre-selection

Pre-selection is based on video recordings submitted by the applicants, with the aim of allowing the preliminary jury to select those candidates who meet the requirements necessary to participate in the public stages of the competition. During pre-selection, the preliminary jury will select 24 applicants and an additional 5 candidates on the waiting list for the first public round. If any of the 24 selected applicants drop out, their places will be taken up by applicants on the waiting list.

The pre-selection process will take place online, with at least three members of the five-member preliminary jury being drawn from the principal international Jury of the conducting competition itself.

3.2 Public rounds

The order in which the candidates will perform is determined by the drawing of lots at the start of each round. Late arrival is unacceptable and will result in exclusion from the competition.

3.2.1 Preliminary rounds

A total of 24 competitors will advance to the preliminary rounds.

Competition task: Two works, or excerpts from works, are to be conducted, with the programme to be determined by the drawing of lots prior to the competition performance.

Time available: 7 minutes rehearsal time, during which the competitor can rehearse parts of the two pieces in any order. After the 7-minute rehearsal period, competition pieces 1 and 2 must be conducted as in concert, without pause. There is no option to change the order.

1st competition task

An excerpt from one of the following:

Stravinsky: Concerto in E-flat (“Dumbarton Oaks”) – 1st movement [Schott]

Stravinsky: The Soldier’s Tale – 3. The Soldier’s March and 7. Ragtime [Chester]

Stravinsky: The Soldier’s Tale – 4. The Little Concert and 10. Triumphant March of The Devil [Chester]

2nd competition task

One work or a selected excerpt from the following:

Dohnányi: Rurallia Hungarica, Op. 32b – selected excerpt [EMB]

Kodály: Fölszállott a páva – variations on a Hungarian folk song – selected excerpt [Boosey & Hawkes]

Bartók: Hungarian Peasant Songs, Sz. 100, BB 107 – entire work [Universal]

3.2.2 Semi-final

Ten competitors will advance to the semi-final.

Competition task: Three works or excerpts of works are to be conducted in the following order: a Mozart aria, a Puccini aria and a contemporary piece. Here, too, the works to be conducted will be determined by the drawing of lots. There is no option to change the order of the works in the competition.

Time available:

Preliminary rehearsal: On the morning of the competition, a total of 30 minutes of piano rehearsal time is available for each competitor to practice the Mozart and Puccini arias with the soloists.

Competition performance: The 1st and 2nd arias will be performed as in concert, without rehearsal with the orchestra. There will be 20 minutes allowed to rehearse the 3rd work, a contemporary piece; once the 20 minutes have elapsed, the piece must be conducted as in concert, without pause.

1st competition task

Mozart: The Marriage of Figaro – La Contessa, Recitativo and Aria

"E Susanna non vien!" / "Dove sono i bei momenti"

[Bärenreiter Urtext] **AND**

Puccini: Tosca – Cavaradossi's aria "E lucevan le stelle" [Ricordi]

Mozart: The Marriage of Figaro – Il Conte, Recitativo and Aria "Hai già vinta la causa" / "Vedrò mentr'io sospiro" [Bärenreiter Urtext] **AND**

Puccini: Gianni Schicchi – Lauretta's aria "O mio babbino caro" [Ricordi]

Mozart: The Marriage of Figaro – Susanna, Recitativo and Aria "Giunse alfin il momento" / "Deh vieni, non tardar" [Bärenreiter Urtext] **AND**

Puccini: La Bohème – Rodolfo's Aria "Che gelida manina" [Ricordi]

Mozart: The Marriage of Figaro – Figaro, Recitativo and Aria "Tutto è disposto" / "Aprite un po' quegli occhi" [Bärenreiter Urtext] **AND**

Puccini: Madama Butterfly – Cio-Cio-San's Aria "Un bel dì vedremo" [Ricordi]

Mozart: Don Giovanni – Donna Anna, Recitativo and Aria: "Crudele? Ah no, mio ben" / "Non mi dir, bell'idol mio" [Bärenreiter Urtext] **AND**

Puccini: Tosca – Tosca's Aria "Vissi d'arte" [Ricordi]

2nd competition task

One of two contemporary symphonic works for orchestra, each written for this occasion and lasting 6-8 minutes, is to be conducted following the drawing of lots.

The scores of the two contemporary works will be sent by the Organizer to the 24 competitors who have reached the preliminary rounds by **31 August 2026**.

3.2.3 Final

Four competitors will advance to the final.

Competition task: Each competitor will conduct two works. The works assigned to each competitor will be determined by the drawing of lots.

Rehearsal: The orchestral rehearsal on the day before the final (8 October) will be 80 minute's long session and be attended by the competition Jury. The dress rehearsal will take place on the day of the final and each competitor will be allotted 20 minutes.

During the **final**, the task for the competitors will be to conduct the two pieces assigned to them in a concert-like manner, without further rehearsal. There is no option to change the order of the works in the competition.

The competition tasks:

J. Strauss: Die Fledermaus – overture [Breitkopf Urtext] and **Liszt: Les Préludes** [Breitkopf Urtext]
Verdi: La forza del destino – overture [Ricordi] and **Bartók: Dance Suite** [Universal]
Mussorgsky: Night on Bald Mountain [Eulenburg] and **Dohnányi: Symphonic Minutes** [Eulenburg]
Dukas: The Sorcerer's Apprentice [Breitkopf Urtext] and **Kodály: Dances of Galánta** [Universal]

4. PRIZES

As part of the Solti International Conducting Competition, the following prizes are to be awarded by the Jury:

First Prize: EUR 20 000*
Second Prize: EUR 12 000*
Third Prize: EUR 8 000*

The audience prize will be awarded from among the four finalists on the basis of votes cast by audience members.

Audience Prize: EUR 3 000*

*The precise sum received depends on the method of payment.

Other prizes: Invitations and opportunities to perform in concert from the heads of organisations and institutions, orchestra leaders, festival directors and managers invited to the competition

5. APPLICATION AND PARTICIPATION FEE

Applications are to be submitted online using the **application form**, which will be available on the competition's website starting 1 December 2025.

Materials to be uploaded:

- Copy of a valid passport or, in the case of EU citizens, identity card (in image or PDF format)
- Brief introduction, motivation letter in English (up to 800 characters including spaces)
- Professional CV in English (PDF format)
- Two high-quality portrait photos – one in portrait and one in landscape format – not older than one year, suitable for promotional purposes, copyright-free (i.e. not requiring further licensing), suitable for print use, with a resolution of at least 2000 × 3000 pixels and a size of 1 MB
- Two links to video recordings of a concert conducted by or master class participated in by the applicant, possibly not older than 12 months at the time of submission

Criteria for video recordings:

- We accept links not to downloadable files, but exclusively to streamable content (e.g. YouTube, Vimeo, etc.).
- One recording must include material performed with a symphony orchestra, and the other with a symphony orchestra or chamber orchestra, smaller ensemble (of at least 16 members).
- The works to be heard on the recordings must come from two different periods of music history, or from two different stylistic eras (Baroque, Viennese Classical, Romantic, 20th century, contemporary).
- The length of the recordings may be a minimum of 7 minutes and a maximum of 10 minutes each; excerpts from works or movements are also acceptable.
- The footage should be recorded at a concert or master class.
- The camera should show the applicant (conductor) – not necessarily, but preferably from the front – in such a way that part of the orchestra/ensemble and, if present, the soloist are also visible.
- For both recordings, the composer and the title of the piece should be provided (either in the title or within the video itself).

Technical requirements:

- The recordings must be at least Full HD (1080p or 1080i) quality.
- If possible, for optimal sound quality, it is recommended that the recording is made using a professional microphone (i.e. not the camera's built-in microphone), and the audio track is not compressed at all or to the smallest degree possible.

The applicant acknowledges and consents for the submitted images and videos to also be used by the Organizer for marketing purposes.

By submitting **their application form, the applicant** agrees that, in the event they reach the preliminary rounds, they will enter into a contract with Műpa Budapest using the contractual details provided and in accordance with the contents of the competition announcement. They acknowledge that if the data they provide does not correspond to reality (thus rendering them ineligible to participate in the competition), or if they do not undertake to conclude the contract, or if the contract does not enter into effect by the specified deadline due to their own fault (at the latest by the day before the preliminary rounds), this will result in the invalidity of their application and exclusion of the applicant from the competition.

The application will be rendered invalid if

- the applicant fails to meet the criteria listed in the competition announcement;
- the application does not include all materials and documents specified in the competition announcement;
- the application is submitted after the deadline.

Applicants may be unilaterally excluded from the competition if

- they in any way maliciously influence or attempt to influence the progress of the competition;
- it is later found that false data, information or content was provided during the application process, and that the person is not eligible to participate in the competition on this basis;
- in the event the entrant reaches the preliminary rounds, they do not agree to enter into a contract with the content specified in the competition announcement, or the contract does not enter into effect within the deadline due to an error on the applicant's part.

Participation fee

The participation fee is EUR 200, which **only those 24 competitors selected for the preliminary rounds** are required to pay. If the payment is not made by the indicated deadline, the competitor's place will be taken by the next competitor on the waiting list.

The participation fee is non-refundable, even if the competitor does not receive a prize, does not appear at the competition, or is disqualified from the competition for any reason.

6. ARTISTIC COMMITTEE AND JURY, JUDGING

Artistic Committee

Csaba Káel, CEO of Műpa Budapest

Tibor Bogányi, Permanent Guest Conductor of the Pannon Philharmonic

Domonkos Héja, General Music Director of the Hungarian Radio Art Groups

György Vashegyi, General Music Director of the Hungarian National Philharmonic

Jury

The nine-member competition Jury consists of internationally recognised experts, renowned conductors, instrumental artists and music professionals. The names of the Jury members will be published on the competition website.

Strict rules apply to the competition, which the Jury and the competitors are obliged to adhere to. Compliance with the rules is monitored by the Competition Office.

Extract from the judging regulations:

- Insofar as any Jury member is unable to participate in the competition for any reason, the Competition Office will decide on the naming of a new member of the Jury.
- After each round, the Jury members will provide feedback on the performance of the competitors who did not advance.
- Except for the above feedback, all interactions between the Jury and the competitors, as well as their relatives, should be avoided.
- The Jury is obliged to adhere to the principle of confidentiality.
- The Jury decides on the awarding of competition prizes, with the exception of the audience prize and the rewards offered by individual organisations.
- In certain justified cases – due to outstanding performance – the Jury may also award special prizes.
- The Jury evaluates the competitors solely based on the given expert criteria, regardless of gender, ethnic origin, political or religious affiliation.
- It is not mandatory for every prize to be awarded.

- It is also possible for equal (ex aequo) prizes to be awarded.
- The Jury's decision is final and not subject to appeal.

Judging

Pre-selection: The five-member preliminary Jury selects the 24 competitors who will advance to the public stage, as well as the 5 competitors who will be placed on the waiting list, based on the submitted video recordings.

Preliminary rounds, semi-final, final:

The nine-member international Jury evaluates competitors based on the following criteria:

- Interpretation, artistic realisation: knowledge of style, score interpretation
- Conducting technique: precision of gestures, expressiveness, tempo control
- Rehearsal readiness/ability: communication with the orchestra, identifying and correcting mistakes, formulating instructions, efficiency, "leading" the orchestra during the rehearsal
- Communication: the quality of the connection with the orchestra and soloist, the ability to express musical vision through verbal and non-verbal communication
- Overall impression: stage presence, charisma, ability to inspire the orchestra, potential for future development in the competitor

7. OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Travel, visas

The 24 competitors who qualify for the preliminary rounds must cover their own travel expenses. The Organizer will provide competitors with a letter of invitation to support their visa applications if necessary. The Organizer does not take responsibility for the timely application and issue of the competitor's visa.

Accommodation

For the preliminary rounds in Pécs (between 30 September and 5 October, for five nights), each competitor selected is responsible for arranging their own accommodation. The Organizer offers accommodation options in several categories.

The Organizer will provide and pay for accommodation in Budapest for the 10 competitors advancing to the semi-final and final until the end of the competition.

Catering

During the preliminary rounds in Pécs, competitors are responsible for their own food, while the Organizer will provide a cold buffet (sandwiches, refreshments) at the competition venue. For the Budapest semi-final and final, the Organizer will provide breakfast, one hot meal per day and a cold buffet (sandwiches, refreshments) for competitors at the competition venue.

Sheet music

In addition to the given repertoire, the Organizer states in the competition announcement the exact specifications regarding the publishers of the sheet music to be used. Each competitor expressly undertakes to use their own legitimate copy during both preparation and competition. Műpa Budapest expressly excludes its liability for any potential damages or claims arising from failure to comply with this requirement.

Insurance, liability insurance

It is the competitor's own responsibility to take out insurance against illness or any possible accident. The Organizer disclaims responsibility for any damages or expenses resulting from potential accident or illness. The competitor undertakes to familiarize themselves with and adhere to the rules regarding entry to and use of the building in force at the various competition venues, and to follow the instructions of designated responsible persons.

It is the competitor's responsibility to take out liability insurance that covers damage of any nature that may be caused to others during their participation in the competition.

The Organizer declares that it has valid liability insurance as an event organizer, which covers any potential damages caused to the competitors by its employees or service providers during the events of the competition.

Dress code

During the preliminary rounds and semi-final, as well as rehearsals for the final, everyday attire (business casual) is expected. For the final, the competitors, the orchestra and soloists are expected to wear concert attire in accordance with professional practice.

Disqualification

The Organizer reserves the right to disqualify any competitor whose behaviour is deemed incompatible with the values and ethics of the competition during the period from the announcement of the competitors to the awarding of the prizes.

Recording and broadcast rights

The Organizer and its cooperating partner may broadcast every round of the competition on the Müpa Budapest website or other online platforms, social media platforms, radio and television channels (live or recorded). Each applicant acknowledges that, considering the planned television and/or radio format of the competition, participation in the competition is conditional upon applicants providing prior consent to the Organizer and, through them, to the cooperating partners for broadcasts, other media appearances and promotional use.

In view of the above, the competitor agrees that, in the event they reach the preliminary rounds, they will enter into a contract with Müpa Budapest covering the usage methods included in this competition announcement. The competitor expressly accepts and acknowledges that if the contract regarding the following usage rights is not concluded between Müpa Budapest and the competitor within the deadline (at the latest the day before the preliminary rounds) due to the fault of the competitor, this will result in the competitor's exclusion from the competition.

The competitor acknowledges that their contract will only result in remuneration by Müpa Budapest if they receive a cash prize as determined by the decision of the Jury. By accepting the terms of this competition announcement, the competitor fully and irrevocably waives any compensation for the usage rights granted by them in the event that they do not receive a cash prize based on the Jury's decision. This waiver does not affect the artist's entitlement to royalties that may be due through collective rights management organisations in accordance with legislation.

The competitor grants permission to Müpa Budapest – and through it, its cooperating partners – to record their performance at the competition and the gala concert on audio or audio-visual media (hereinafter referred to as **"Recording"**) for the purpose of broadcasting or any other form of public transmission.

Müpa Budapest and the collaborating partners operating through it are entitled to:

- store the Recording for the purposes of archiving;
- project/play the Recording on publicly available platforms using any technical means;
- broadcast the competition to the public via audio and video recording either in real-time or subsequently from a recording (in live and/or relive format) on their own website or other online platforms (including their social media platforms);
- broadcast the Recording to the audience exclusively via terrestrial and satellite radio and/or television transmission or by other means (stream, simulcast), live or subsequently from a recording;
- use the Recording in other programmes, as well as programme previews/promotions, at any time;
- use the Recording for promotional purposes in publications, advertisements and other platforms that promote the competition and their own activities.

PR activities

The competitor agrees to be available during the competition for PR and protocol activities related to the competition (interviews, PR events, PR activities, etc.) organized by Müpa Budapest or its cooperating partner, based on prior agreement between the Parties, and without any additional remuneration. The competitor permits the use by Müpa Budapest and its cooperating partner of photos, video and/or audio recordings made during PR and protocol events in which they participate for the purposes of promoting the competition and their own activities.

Photography/video recordings

The competitor permits photographers and film crews pre-authorised (accredited) by Müpa Budapest and its cooperating partner to take photographs and make video and audio recordings of the competitor during the competition for the purposes of appearing in the press, as well as for use in publications, advertisements and other platforms promoting the competition, Müpa Budapest and the activities of its cooperating partner.

Changes to the competition rules

The Organizer reserves the right to change these rules unilaterally. If this should occur, it will inform the competitors of the changes in writing.

Cancellation

In the event that the competition is cancelled by the Organizer, it will refund the participation fees paid by the competitors. With regard to all other damages or costs incurred by the applicants in connection with the cancellation of the competition, Müpa Budapest expressly excludes any liability and does not undertake to reimburse any costs arising. Each applicant expressly waives any claim for compensation – beyond the participation fee – against the competition Organizer or its partners in connection with the cancellation of the competition.

Use of the competitor's name

The competitor consents to Müpa Budapest and its cooperating partners displaying the competitor's name on all printed and electronic materials and other platforms (such as posters, programme guides, brochures, websites, social media platforms, etc.) that advertise the competition and their activities, in accordance with industry practices (and Müpa Budapest's branding guidelines).

Data protection

Müpa Budapest, as the Organizer and data controller of the competition, handles the personal data provided by the applicants/competitors as follows:

During the application process, applicants provide personal data (identifying information, recordings containing their likeness) to Müpa Budapest, which Müpa Budapest uses to identify the entrants and maintain contact with the competitors. They also submit videos, on the basis of which the jury decides on the competitor's advancement to the preliminary rounds.

- Purpose of data management: identification of applicants, maintaining communication related to the competition, evaluation of the competitor's performance as a conductor
- Scope of processed data: name, title, e-mail address, phone number, introductory text, audio and video recordings, copy of passport/ID
- Legal basis for data processing: the data subject's consent (GDPR Article 6, paragraph (1) point (a))
- Data retention period: up to 6 months following the Jury's decision

Competitors who reach the preliminary rounds will enter into a contract with Müpa Budapest, according to which, in the event of their winning participation, the prize specified in the competition announcement will be paid to them.

- Purpose of data management: contract conclusion, fulfilment of obligations undertaken in the contract, exercise of usage rights acquired through the contract
- Scope of processed data: name, title, mother's maiden name, home address, mailing address, tax identification number, social security number, name of bank managing bank account, bank account number, passport number, copy of passport/ID, e-mail address, phone number
- Legal basis for data processing: data processing is necessary for the conclusion and performance of a contract (GDPR Article 6 paragraph (1) point (b))
- Data retention period: the period necessary to exercise the usage rights as specified in the contract

Conclusion of the contract

By applying for the competition, the applicant agrees in advance that if they reach the public stage of the competition, they will enter into a contract with Müpa Budapest, as the Organizer of the competition and payer of the prizes specified in the competition announcement, in accordance with the content specified in said announcement. The applicant undertakes to provide Müpa Budapest with all the necessary data during the application process to establish a valid civil law contract between the competitor and Müpa Budapest. The contract can be concluded with the competitor as a private individual, with a company authorized to represent the competitor, or with a Hungarian sole proprietor. The competitor guarantees that the contract details they provide are accurate and suitable for the contract to be validly concluded and binding with regard to the competitor.

The competitor acknowledges that if the contract data provided by them do not meet the above requirements, if they fail to provide the necessary data to Müpa Budapest or fail to do so within the deadline, and as a consequence the contract is not validly concluded by the day before the preliminary rounds, this will result in the competitor's exclusion from the competition.

In the event the competitor is awarded a prize, they undertake to provide Műpa Budapest with all the documents necessary for the payment of the prize to be made. If the documents required for the lawful payment of the prize are not made available to Műpa Budapest (e.g., for foreign nationals, an AI certificate, tax residency certificate, copy of passport, etc.; or for foreign economic entities, an invoice issued in accordance with legal regulations), then Műpa Budapest has no legal recourse to make the payment of the prize.

If a foreign competitor is awarded a prize and the contract is with a private individual, an average processing time of 30 days is required for payment following the receipt of the necessary documents. In view of this, we recommend that all competitors reaching the preliminary rounds who are not Hungarian citizens obtain the necessary documents for payment as soon as possible and provide them to Műpa Budapest by no later than 1 November 2026. Műpa Budapest holds the legal right to disburse prizes only until the end of 2026.

Official language

The competition announcement is available in both Hungarian and English; however, the application form and the language of the documents to be uploaded (CV, introduction, description of video excerpts) is English. The official language of the competition rounds is also **English**. During the preliminary rounds, semi-final and final, competitors may only communicate in English with the orchestra and soloist while performing the competition task in the presence of the Jury. The evaluation by the Jury will also take place in English.

8. ORGANIZER: MÜPA BUDAPEST NONPROFIT KFT.

Employees of Műpa Budapest Nonprofit Ltd. and their close relatives as defined in section 8:1, paragraph (1), point 1 of the Civil Code (Ptk.), as well as close relatives of the Jury members as defined in the Civil Code, are not permitted to participate in the competition. (Close relatives include: spouses, direct ascendants/descendants, adopted, step and foster children, adoptive, step and foster parents, and siblings.)

Only Hungarian law shall apply with respect to the interpretation and application of this competition announcement.