

80° CONCOURS DE GENÈVE
INTERNATIONAL MUSIC COMPETITION
6 - 13 NOVEMBER 2026
Composition & Conducting



Concours de Genève International Music Competition celebrates 80th edition with bold combination of Conducting and Composition Competitions



(c) Cédric Widmer

- **Composition finalists' work to be performed by Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, under the baton of the finalists of Conducting Competition**
- **Conducting semi-finalists are Alejandro Cantalapiedra (Spain), Jacobus de Jager (South Africa), Michal Oren (Israel), Gabriel Pernet (Switzerland), Mats Thiersch (Germany) and Leonard Weiss (Australia)**
- **Composition finalists include Sing-Yat Chen (Hong Kong), Hanurij Lee (South Korea) and Rafael Marino Arcaro (Brazil)**
 - **Award-winning composer Unsuk Chin chairs Composition jury, with Conducting jury chaired by Bertrand de Billy**
 - **Competition to reach global audiences via broadcasts on medici.tv, amadeus.tv, Mezzo TV, RTS – Espace 2 and Competition's website and social media channels**

6 – 13 November, Geneva

concoursgeneve.ch

15 September 2026

The **Concours de Genève - International Music Competition**, one of the oldest and most prestigious music competitions in the world, celebrates its 80th edition this November. In its mission to discover, support and promote exceptional young artists from around the world, the Competition continues to innovate and excite, and this latest edition unites its Conducting and Composition Competitions to place contemporary creation firmly at its centre.

Didier Schnorhk, Secretary General of the Concours de Genève, said: *"We're immensely proud that the Concours de Genève International Music Competition continues to be bold, even in its 80th edition. Bringing together composition and conducting within a single competition is an absolute innovation and we hope that audiences in Geneva and watching across the world enjoy being able to hear these wonderful young musicians in action. I wish our competitors the best of luck ahead of the final rounds in November, and look forward to welcoming them all to Geneva for what is sure to be a wonderful week of music."*

The multidisciplinary approach of Concours de Genève has always been a distinctive feature – since its creation in 1939, close to 30 disciplines have been presented – and the 80th edition amplifies this further as the Conducting and Composition Competitions are brought together for the first time. The finals of both disciplines will combine in a bold new form, with the finalists of the Conducting Competition leading the **Orchestre de la Suisse Romande** through the works of the finalists of the Composition Competition, **Sing-Yat Chen** (26, Hong Kong), **Hanurij Lee** (21, South Korea) and **Rafael Marino Arcaro** (37, Brazil). The composers will collaborate with the conducting competitors as part of the preparation and development process leading up into the final on 11 November. The three finalists will be competing for a first prize of CHF 15,000, a second prize of CHF 10,000 and a third prize of CHF 5,000. This year saw the highest ever number of applications for the Composition Competition, with the finalists chosen from a shortlist of 188 composers representing 46 countries.

The Conducting Competition returns to the Concours de Genève for the first time since 1994, when Alan Gilbert won the top prize. Semi-finalists for the Conducting Competition are **Alejandro Cantalapiedra** (33, Spain), **Jacobus de Jager** (30, South Africa), **Michal Oren** (30, Israel), **Gabriel Pernet** (28, Switzerland), **Mats Thiersch** (24, Germany) and **Leonard Weiss** (35, Australia). They will conduct three ensembles over the course of the semi-finals – the **Orchestre de Chambre de Genève**, **Ensemble Contrechamps** and the **Orchestre de la Suisse Romande** – with three conductors then chosen to progress to the finals. In addition to the works of the Composition Competition finalists on 11 November, the three conductors will also conduct works by Bartók, Debussy, Mahler, Prokofiev, Strauss or Stravinsky at Geneva's Victoria Hall on 13 November. First prize will be awarded CHF 20,000, with a second prize of CHF 12,000 and a third prize of CHF 8,000; the three semi-finalists who are not selected for the Final Round will be awarded CHF 3,000. Other prizes for the Conducting Competition include the Audience Prize (CHF 1,500), voted for by the audience in the Final Round, the Young Audience Prize (CHF 1,000) awarded by young students of partner schools of the Competition, and the Students' Prize (CHF 1,000), chosen by students from the Faculty of Music and Department of Musicology of the University of Geneva.

World-renowned composer **Unsuk Chin** chairs the Composition Competition jury, joined by fellow composers **Toshio Hosokawa**, **Magnus Lindberg**, **Augusta Reed Thomas** and **Katharina Rosenberger**. Unsuk Chin also joins the jury of the Conducting Competition for the final rounds, chaired by conductor **Bertrand de Billy** and including **Mark Stringer** (Vice-Chair), **Baldur Brönnimann**, **Martin Campbell-White**, **Laurent Gay**, **Sarah Nemtanu**, **Eva Ollikainen**, **Peter Oundjian**, **Natalia Ponomarchuk**, **Arturo Tamayo** and **Wingsie Yip**.

The prize packages of the Concours de Genève are one of the most comprehensive of any music competition. In addition to cash prizes, laureates are offered an ambitious career development programme to help launch international careers – this includes two years of services from concert agency Sartory Artists, Paris, management representation, international concert tours, personal coaching and commissions, and one winner given the opportunity to record an album with orchestra on the La Dolce Volta label.

Previous laureates of the Competition include some of the world's greatest musicians, including Martha Argerich, Alan Gilbert, Nelson Goerner, Georg Solti, José Van Dam, Tabea Zimmermann and many more.

The Competition has a truly global reach, and audiences around the world will be able to watch the Finals on the Concours de Genève website and social media channels, medici.tv, amadeus.tv and Mezzo TV, and listeners in Switzerland will be able to tune into the Finals via RTS – Espace 2.

Applications for the 2027 Competitions – [Piano](#) and for the first time ever, [Baroque Violin](#) – will open this Autumn. More information can be found on the [Concours de Genève website](#).

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-ENDS-

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Notes to Editors

Please find a press kit for the Concours de Genève [here](#).

Please find press images for the Concours de Genève [here](#).

The Concours de Genève

Founded in 1939, the Concours de Genève is one of the world's leading international music competitions. Its mission is to discover, promote and support young talented artists, providing them with the necessary tools to launch an international career.

Within the world of international music competitions, a multi-disciplinary approach is rare and represents one of the Concours de Genève's most distinctive assets. Since its creation in 1939, 26 disciplines have been presented: instrumental, vocal, ensemble music or conducting.

Today, the Competition alternates between eight main disciplines: piano, flute, clarinet, cello, viola, string quartet, voice and percussion. Every second year, it offers the Composition Competition.

The list of Concours de Genève prize-winners is a rollcall of many of the greatest musicians including Martha Argerich, Arturo Benedetti-Michelangeli, Victoria De Los Angeles, Alan Gilbert, Nelson Goerner, Friedrich Gulda, Heinz Holliger, Nobuko Imai, Quatuor Melos, Emmanuel

Pahud, Maurizio Pollini, Georg Solti, José Van Dam, Christian Zacharias, Tabea Zimmermann – and many more.

Concours de Genève laureates are offered an ambitious career development programme, providing precious support and advice to help boost their careers. This includes management representation, two years of international concert tours with one winner given the opportunity to record an album, with orchestra, on the La Dolce Volta label.

The Concours de Genève - Competition Timeline

6 November 2026 – Opening Concert

This year, the Concours celebrates its 80th edition! To mark this anniversary, a special opening concert brings together two recent prizewinners who are already enjoying brilliant careers: pianist Kevin Chen (1st Prize 2022) and cellist Michiaki Ueno (1st Prize 2021).

7:30 PM, Salle Franz Liszt, Conservatoire de Genève

7 November 2026 - Semi-Final 1- Conducting Competition 2025-26

Candidates will conduct excerpts of works by Bizet, L. Farrenc and F. Mendelssohn.

With the Orchestre de Chambre de Genève

Concorde Espace Culture, Geneva - sessions at 2:30 PM and 7:30 PM

8 November 2026 - Semi-final 2 – Conducting Competition 2025-26

Candidates will conduct excerpts from Ligeti's *Kammerkonzert* and either U. Chin's *Gougalon* or R. Saunder's *Scar*.

With the Ensemble Contrechamps

Concorde Espace Culture, Geneva - sessions at 2:30 PM and 7:30 PM

9 November 2026 - Semi-Final 3 – Conducting Competition 2025-26

Candidates will conduct a movement from Debussy's *La Mer* and the first movement from either R. Schumann's Piano Concerto in A minor Op. 54 or R. Schumann's Cello Concerto in A minor Op. 129.

With the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande

Victoria Hall, Geneva – sessions at 2:30 PM and 7:30 PM

10-11 November 2026 - Final Round 1 – Conducting Competition 2025-26/ Final Round - Composition Competition 2026

This round serves as both the Final of the Composition Competition and the first of two Final Rounds of the Conducting Competition. Each of the three Conducting finalists will rehearse and conduct one of the three finalist compositions, assigned by draw.

With the Orchestre de le Suisse Romande

7:00 PM, Victoria Hall, Geneva

Followed by the Composition Competition Awards Ceremony

12-13 November 2026 - Final Round 2 – Conducting Competition 2025-26

Finalists will conduct works by Bartók, Debussy, Mahler, Prokofiev, Strauss or Stravinsky.

With the Orchestra de la Suisse Romande

7:00 PM, Victoria Hall, Geneva

Followed by the Conducting Competition Awards Ceremony

14 – 15 November 2026 – Prizewinners' Concerts

With Brian Isaacs (1st Prize ex aequo Viola 2025) and Quatuor El mire (2nd Prize 2023)

14 Nov, 5:30 PM, Temple de Jussy / 15 Nov, 5 PM, Théâtre Les Salons