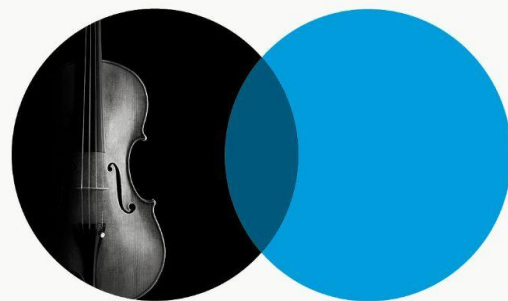

79^e CONCOURS DE GENÈVE

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC COMPETITION

31 OCT – 12 NOV 2025

Viola & Conducting #1



Sarah Strohms & Brian Isaacs win First Prize at the 79th Concours de Genève Viola Competition

Press release: 12 November 2025

- **The First Prize of the 79th Concours de Genève, which took place on 12 November at the Victoria Hall in Geneva, has been awarded to Sarah Strohms & Brian Isaacs.** The Second prize has been attributed to Ayaka Taniguchi.
- Further Special Prizes awarded to Sarah Strohms were: Audience Prize, Young Audience Prize, Students' Prize, Arts Society Prize, OSR Musician's Prize and the Concerts de Jussy Prize. As for Brian Isaacs, he was also awarded the Rose-Marie Huguenin Prize alongside Sarah Strohms and Brian Isaacs.
- Ayaka Taniguchi was also awarded the Fondation Etilard Prize, Hindemith Prize and Odysée Frank Martin Prize.
- The Viola Final took place at Victoria Hall, Geneva on 12 November with the finalists performing the following repertoire with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, conducted by Cornelius Meister:

PROGRAMME OF THE FINAL ROUND

PART 1 - COMPULSORY WORK

Sarah Strohms, 20 years old

Léo Albisetti: Nouvel Élan for viola and chamber orchestra

Ayaka Taniguchi, 23 years old

Léo Albisetti: Nouvel Élan for viola and chamber orchestra

Brian Isaacs, 25 years old

Léo Albisetti: Nouvel Élan for viola and chamber orchestra

PART 2 - CONCERTO OF CHOICE

Sarah Strohms, 20 years old

Béla Bartók : Viola Concerto (Bartok/Dellamaggiore)

Ayaka Taniguchi, 23 years old

Béla Bartók : Viola Concerto (Bartok/Dellamaggiore)

Brian Isaacs, 25 years old

Paul Hindemith : Viola Concerto « Der Schwanendreher »

- The three finalists were selected from eight semi-finalists who were invited to Geneva from 4-9 November for the Semi-Finals, during which they performed a solo recital and a chamber music recital.
- As part of the Semi-Finals, candidates were also invited to submit a Personal Artistic Project that highlights their artistic personality. This project could take a variety of forms, including a purely musical proposal, a tour concept, or even a collaboration with other art forms such as literature, the visual arts, or dance.
- The Final Round of the Competition was live streamed on Concours de Genève's website and social media channels, as well as on medici.tv, amadeus.tv, theviolinchannel.com, and live broadcast on the Swiss national radio RTS-Espace 2. It will also be broadcast on Mezzo and TV Léman Bleu.
- The complete list of Prizes can be found below with biographies of the Laureates.

Video and photo links

[Viola Prizewinners © Anne-Laure Lechat](#)

Official Prizes

The official prizes are generously funded by the Fondation Francis & Marie-France Minkoff

FIRST PRIZE EX AEQUO: CHF 20,000.-

[Sarah Stroh](#)m, 20 years old

[Brian Isaacs](#), 25 years old

SECOND PRIZE: CHF 12,000.-

[Ayaka Taniguchi](#), 23 years old

In addition to the official prizes, laureates benefit from two years of services from the concert agency Sartory Artists, partner agency of the Concours de Genève. This includes career management, personal coaching and multiple concerts, enabling them to take their first steps on the Swiss and international music scenes. Laureates also received a special gift from our partner Pirastro Strings.

Special Prizes

AUDIENCE PRIZE: CHF 1,500.-

[Sarah Stroh](#)m, 20 years old

The Audience Prize is awarded by the spectators of the Final Rounds. The finalist who receives the most ballots is the winner of this prize.

YOUNG AUDIENCE PRIZE: CHF 1,000.-

[Sarah Stroh](#)m, 20 years old

The Young Audience Prize is awarded by a group of students from public and private schools in Geneva, having formerly received a specific training. They evaluate the Final Round.

STUDENTS' PRIZE: CHF 1,000.-

[Sarah Stroh](#)m, 20 years old

The Students' Prize is awarded by a group of students from the Faculty of Music and the Department of Musicology of the University of Geneva, who evaluate the Final. It is integrated in their official curriculum. The Students' Prize is offered by Ms. & Mr. Hervieu-Causse.

ROSE-MARIE HUGUENIN PRIZE: CHF 10,000.-

[Ayaka Taniguchi](#), 23 years old

[Sarah Stroh](#)m, 20 years old

[Brian Isaacs](#), 25 years old

This prize is awarded to all the winners of the Viola Competition and gives them the opportunity to benefit from a personal grant to help them carry out their artistic projects. The grant is administered by the Competition.

ARTS SOCIETY PRIZE: CHF 3,000.-

[Sarah Stroh](#)m, 20 years old

The Société des Arts Prize is awarded by the Jury to one of the three finalists in the Viola Competition and consists of a chamber music concert organised by the Société des Arts as part of its mentoring programme. The winner will perform in 2026 with an experienced professional musician chosen by agreement between the Competition and the Société des Arts.

OSR MUSICIANS' PRIZE

[Sarah Stroh](#)m, 20 years old

This prize is awarded by the musicians of the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande to a finalist of the Viola Competition. It consists of a concert engagement during the two seasons following the award.

CONCERTS DE JUSSY PRIZE: CHF 3'000.-

[Sarah Stroh](#)m, 20 years old

The «Concerts de Jussy» Special Prize is awarded to the winner of the Viola Competition and consists of a concert on 14 November at the Temple de Jussy.

FONDATION ETRILLARD PRIZE: CHF 5000.-

[Ayaka Taniguchi](#), 23 years old

The Fondation Etrillard Special Prize is awarded by the Jury to the finalist of the Viola Competition who presents the most outstanding personal artistic project during the Semi-Final. The Foundation also commits to supporting the realization of the prizewinner's artistic project in the years following the competition.

HINDEMITH PRIZE: CHF 3'000.-

[Ayaka Taniguchi](#), 23 years old

For the best performance of a work by Hindemith during the semi-final and final rounds.

CHAMBER MUSIC PRIZE: CHF 2000.-

[Alessandra Yang](#), 21 years old

The Chamber Music Special Prize is awarded by the Jury and recognizes the best performance in the chamber music round.

ODYSSÉE FRANK MARTIN PRIZE

[Ayaka Taniguchi](#), 23 years old

Awarded to one of the three Viola laureates, this prize offers the opportunity to perform Frank Martin's Ballade for Viola and Orchestra on 14 June 2026 in Victoria Hall with the Orchestre de Chambre de Genève conducted by Thierry Fischer.

Biographies of the Finalists



Sarah Strohm

Born in Geneva, Sarah studied with Noémie Bialobroda at the Conservatory of Music. Since 2024, she has continued her studies at the Paris Conservatory (Conservatoire Supérieur de Musique de Paris) with Jean Sulem. Despite her young age, Sarah has already participated in numerous competitions in Switzerland and abroad (Swiss Youth Competition, Nebdal Competition in the Czech Republic, Tertis Competition in Great Britain), notably winning 2nd Prize at the Johannes Brahms Competition in Austria in 2021 and 1st Prize at the Valiant Forum Competition of the Murten Classics this year. Sarah

performs in recitals and chamber music at numerous festivals throughout Switzerland and participates in many academies, such as the Seiji Ozawa Academy, the Verbier Festival Soloists, the Prussia Cove Seminar, and the Hindemith Academy in Blonay.



Ayaka Taniguchi

Trained at the Tokyo University of the Arts by Kazunori Kawasaki, Ayaka Taniguchi has been pursuing her studies at the Frankfurt University of Music under Tabea Zimmermann since 2023. She has participated in numerous competitions in Japan and Europe (TIAA Concerts, Tokyo Competition, ARD International Music Competition in Munich, Oskar Nebdal Competition in the Czech Republic, where she won 4th Prize) and recently distinguished herself by winning 1st Prize at the Hindemith Competition in Munich. She has performed as a soloist in Japan and

Europe and participates in many prestigious festivals, such as the Rheingau Festival in Germany, the Casals Festival, and the Ravel Festival in France.



Brian Isaacs

Trained at Yale University in the United States, Brian Isaacs has been studying at the Frankfurt University of Music with Tabea Zimmermann for the past two years. He has already participated in numerous international competitions, notably winning a 2nd Prize at the Max Rostal Competition (Berlin) as well as two special prizes, a 1st Prize at the Grunewald Competition in Berlin and a 3rd Prize at the Oldar Nedbal Competition in the Czech Republic.



Viola
Competition



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Conducting
Competition

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Viola Competition 2025

ELIGIBILITY

The 2025 Viola Competition is open to all candidates born after 12 November 1995.

SCHEDULE

- 10 April: Registration deadline
- 1-3 May: Geneva: Video preselections
- 7 May: Announcement of selected candidates
- 4 July: Deadline for submitting videos for the online recital, deadline for submitting programme changes
- 8-14 September: Online recital broadcast
- 16 September: Semi-finalists announced
- 6 Oct: Start of artistic project workshop (online)
- 4 November, Geneva: Welcome ceremony
- 6-9 November, Salle Franz Liszt, Conservatoire de Genève: Semi-final in three parts (Solo Recital, Chamber Music, Artistic Project)
- 12 November, Victoria Hall, Geneva: Final with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande

OFFICIAL PRIZES

- 1st Prize: CHF 20,000
- 2nd Prize: CHF 12,000
- 3rd Prize: CHF 8,000

The official prizes are generously funded by the Fondation Francis & Marie-France Minkoff

SPECIAL PRIZES

- AUDIENCE PRIZE: CHF 1'500.-
- YOUNG AUDIENCE PRIZE: CHF 1'000.-
- STUDENTS' PRIZE: CHF 1'000.-
- ROSE-MARIE HUGUENIN PRIZE: CHF 10 000.-
- ARTS SOCIETY PRIZE: CHF 3000.-
- OSR MUSICIANS PRIZE
- CONCERTS DE JUSSY PRIZE: CHF 3'000.-
- FONDATION ETRILLARD PRIZE: CHF 5'000.-
- HINDEMITH PRIZE: CHF 3'000.-
- CHAMBER MUSIC PRIZE: CHF 2000.-
- ODYSSEE FRANK MARTIN PRIZE

PRESELECTION JURY

Tabea Zimmermann, Chair
Tomoko Akasaka, member of the official jury
Noémie Bialbroda
Harold Hirtz
Frédéric Kirch

OFFICIAL JURY

Tabea Zimmermann, Chair
Tomoko Akasaka
Ettore Causa
Cynthia Phelps
Pauline Sachse
Jean Sulem
German Tcakulov

Conducting Competition 2025/2026

ELIGIBILITY

Candidates born after 13 November 1991 had until 7 May to register for the two-year competition.

SCHEDULE

PART 1 - 2025

- 7 May 2025: Application deadline
- Spring 2025: Video pre-selection
- 31 Oct. - 1 Nov. 2025: First round with the Geneva University of Music Orchestra, Auditorium Ansermet
- 2-3 Nov. 2025: Second round with the Geneva Chamber Orchestra, Auditorium Ansermet

PART 2 - 2026

- 7 Nov. 2026: Semi-Final 1 with the Orchestre de Chambre de Genève, Victoria Hall
- 8 Nov. 2026: Semi-Final 2 with the Ensemble Contrechamps
- 9 Nov. 2026: Semi-Final 3 with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Victoria Hall
- 10-11 Nov. 2026: Final 1 with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Victoria Hall
- 12-13 Nov. 2026: Final 2 with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Victoria Hall

OFFICIAL PRIZES

- 1st Prize: CHF 20,000
- 2nd Prize: CHF 12,000

- 3rd Prize: CHF 8,000

SPECIAL PRIZES

- SEMI-FINALIST PRIZE: CHF 3'000.-
- AUDIENCE PRIZE: CHF 1'500.-
- YOUNG AUDIENCE PRIZE: CHF 1'000.-
- STUDENTS' PRIZE : CHF 1'000.-

OFFICIAL JURY

Bertrand de Billy, Chair
Sonia Ben-Santamaria
Baldur Brönnimann
Martin Campbell-White
Unuk Chin
Marzena Diakun
Rémi Durupt
Laurent Gay
Claire Levacher
Sarah Nemtanu
Eva Ollikainen
Peter Oundjian
Natalia Ponomarchuk
Frauke Roth
Mark Stringer
Arturo Tamayo
Wingsie Yip

Subject to possible changes