

I Rules of the XIII International Jean Sibelius Violin Competition

To whom?

The Sibelius Society and the Sibelius Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki will organize the XIII International Jean Sibelius Violin Competition in Helsinki on 18-29 May 2025. The competition is open to all violinists born in 1995 or later.

The Sibelius Violin Competition strongly condemns Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

The competition organisation expects all registered competitors to share this view with us.

[The ethical guidelines of the University of the Arts](#) are followed in the competition, during it and at its venues.

By registering for the violin competition, the competitor undertakes to comply with these rules.

If there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a competitor is not complying with the rules, the competition committee may exclude the competitor from the competition.

II Competition registration

Registration and preliminary audition

The 13th International Jean Sibelius Violin Competition will be held in Helsinki **from 18 to 29 May 2025**, organized by the Sibelius Society and the Sibelius Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki. The competition is open to all violinists born in or after 1995.

A registration link will be available on **17 December 2024**. The closing date for applications is **29 January 2025**.

A jury appointed by the Competition Committee will pre-select applicants based on their application documents and video recordings. Those accepted for the competition will be notified by **4 March 2025**.

III Competition schedule

Opening ceremony 17 May 2025 and the order of performances

The order of performances will be decided by a draw at the competition's opening ceremony on **17 May 2025**, taking place at **Ainola**, the home of Jean Sibelius. All contestants must be present in person or represented by a proxy. The order of performances will remain the same for all three rounds.

First round, 19-21 May 2025

Approximately 40 participants will be accepted to the first round.

Second round, 23-25 May 2025

18 participants will be accepted to the second round.

Final round, 27-29 May 2025

Six participants will be accepted to the final round.

IV Competition repertoire

General information about the repertoire

The Competition Committee encourages contestants to create a recital programme that reflects their personalities as violinists in the best possible way and the diversity of music and its makers.

The competition consists of three rounds that are open to the public. The entire repertoire, with the exception of the commissioned work performed in the 2nd round, a possible chamber music piece and the freely chosen concerto in the final round, must be played from memory. In the 1st and 2nd rounds, the order of the programme is free. The duration of each programme shall be monitored by the Competition Committee in advance.

Preliminary audition round

The repertoire for the preliminary round must consist of the following works from the contestant's competition programme.

- I. Bach: one movement from a Solo Sonata or Partita
- II. Paganini: one Caprice or Ernst: 'Letzte Rose' variations or Ernst: 'Erlkönig' (Schubert)
- III. Sibelius: 1st movement of Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 47

First round, 19-21 May 2025

- I. 2-3 movements of Bach's Solo Sonata/Partita or Ciaccona
(In Bach's Partita in B minor, Double belongs to the previous movement.)
- II. Choose one of the four options: 2a, 2b, 2c or 2d
2a) Two caprices by Paganini
2b) Paganini: one Caprice and Salvatore Sciarrino: one Caprice (Caprices 2-6)
2c) Paganini: one Caprice and Jörg Widmann: one Etude
2d) Ernst: 'Letzte Rose' variations or Ernst: 'Erlkönig' (Schubert)
- III. Sibelius: Two Humoresques, freely chosen from Op. 87 and Op. 89

Duration: each participant is allowed a maximum of 30 minutes on stage.

2nd round, 23-25 May 2025

The programme may include works for solo violin or for violin and piano, but not violin concertos or parts of them with piano accompaniment.

Compositions from the 1st round cannot be played again in the 2nd round.

Duration: each participant is allowed a maximum of 70 minutes on stage.

- I. Sibelius: at least 2 freely chosen pieces for violin and piano
- II. Outi Tarkiainen: commissioned piece for violin and piano
- III. Recital programme of the contestant's own choosing

Final, 27-29 May 2025

- I. Sibelius: Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 47

- II. One of the following concertos:
Unsuik Chin 1 (2001)
Oliver Knussen (2002)
Magnus Lindberg 2 (2015)
Kaija Saariaho: Graal Theatre (1994)

V Pianists

Pianists & rehearsal time before the 1st and 2nd rounds

Contestants may play with pianists provided by the competition.

Each contestant is allowed one hour of rehearsal time with a pianist before the 1st round and two hours of rehearsal time before the 2nd round.

Contestants can also bring their own pianist at their own expense.

VI Accommodation & Travel expenses

Accommodation

Contestants will be provided hotel accommodation in Helsinki free of charge for the duration of their own competition.

Travel expenses

Contestants and pianists will pay their own travel expenses to and from Helsinki. At its discretion, the Competition Committee can award travel allowances to contestants travelling to Helsinki from outside of Europe.

Contestants and pianists who will need a visa to enter Finland will need to acquire one at their nearest Finnish mission.

VII Jury

The international jury consists of a Finnish chair and one Finnish and seven international members.

[Jury members](#)

VIII Prizes

The competition will award the following prizes:

Final round

First prize €30,000

Second prize €20,000

Third prize €15,000

The three other finalists will be awarded a special recognition award of €3,000.

The jury reserves the right to change the prize scheme.

Second round

The Sibelius family will donate a special prize of €1,000 to all contestants accepted to the second round.

Best performance of the commissioned work

The Finnish Composers will donate a special prize of €2,000 for the best performance of the commissioned work (Outi Tarkiainen, commissioned work for the XIII International Jean Sibelius Violin Competition, 2025).

Instrument loan

Instrument loan of a fine violin by [J & A Beare](#) and the [Beare's International Violin Society](#) for The International Jean Sibelius Violin Competition. The loan is for one year initially with the possibility of an extension.

Mentoring

The Sibelius Violin Competition wishes to support the artistic development and careers of well performing contestants. The winner of the competition will receive personal mentoring from **Pekka Kuusisto** and **John Storgårds**. The mentoring will be carried out through four remote consultation sessions.

Awarded participants in the competition are offered performance opportunities.

The finalist selected by the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra (RSO) commits to performing as a soloist with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra during the 2026/2027 season on a date to be agreed upon without a separate performance fee. If two concerts are held, a performance fee will be paid for the second concert. Accommodation and travel expenses for the soloist will be reimbursed.

The finalist selected by the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra (HKO) commits to performing as a soloist with the orchestra during the 2026/2027 season on a date to be agreed upon without a separate performance fee. If two concerts are held, a performance fee will be paid for the second concert. Accommodation and travel expenses for the soloist will be reimbursed.

Award Ceremony

The prizes will be presented after the final round at the Award Ceremony on 29 May 2025.

Additional prizes are possible.

IX Results & Prize giving

Award Ceremony

The prizes will be presented after the final round at the Award Ceremony on 29 May 2025.

X Performance rights

The competition organizer holds the unrestricted right to broadcast the competition performances, as well as, the soloist performances with the RSO and HKO in the season 26/27 mentioned in the prizes, on radio and TV, make audio and video recordings and to stream and share parts of the competition performances on the Internet and in other data networks without paying any remuneration to the contestants or their pianists.

XI Rules & disputes

The original language of these rules is Finnish. Any disputes will be settled based on the rules written in Finnish.

Any issues caused by a force majeure will be settled by the Competition Committee.