

CONCOURS KATTENBURG 2026 COMPETITION'S RULES

Presentation

Established in 2017 in memory of Claire and Willy Kattenburg, the Kattenburg Competition is dedicated to operatic singing. Organized by HEMU – Haute École de Musique and the HEMU-CL Cultural Foundation, the competition aims to promote the talent of Master's students and recent alumni of Swiss Universities of Music.

Eligibility

The competition is open, without distinction of gender or nationality, to:

- students enrolled in a Master's degree in vocal performance at a Swiss University of Music;
- alumni holding a Master's degree in vocal performance obtained from a Swiss University of Music within the past three years (degree awarded between June 2023 and June 2026).

First Prize winners from previous editions are not eligible to apply again.

Competition Procedure

- **Preselections**

Candidates must submit two video recordings meeting the following criteria:

- one opera or oratorio aria;
- one Lied/Melodie;
- interpretation in two different languages;
- from two different periods among the following: Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Modern, or Contemporary.

- **First Round (Closed Audition) – up to 48 candidates**

19-21 September 2026

HEMU – Vaud, Lausanne, Grotte 2, Utopia 1 Hall

15 minutes per candidate (including stage entry and exit)

Three or four pieces of the candidate's choice meeting the following criteria:

- one opera or oratorio aria;
- one Lied/Mélodie;
- interpretation in at least two different languages, including French ;
- from two different periods among the following: Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Modern, or Contemporary.

- **Semi-final (Public) – 12 candidates**

2-3 October 2026

BCV Concert Hall, Lausanne

Semi-finalists will perform a voice-and-piano recital (without staging), including at minimum:

- a memorized programme of 25 minutes;
- performance in at least two languages, including French.

Candidates presenting at least 10 minutes of non-tonal contemporary music (works composed after 1950) will automatically be considered for the *Prize for Best Contemporary Performance*.

- **Final (Public) – 6 candidates**

16 October 2026

Opéra de Lausanne

Finalists will perform with the HEMU Orchestra a program of up to 15 minutes including two opera arias from different periods, under the following conditions:

- the candidate proposes three arias from the imposed aria list, two of which are selected by the jury;
- arias performed in previous rounds may be repeated;
- if none or an insufficient number of arias from the list correspond to the candidate's voice type, the candidate may exceptionally propose alternative repertoire. This proposal must comply with time constraints and orchestral requirements. The artistic direction of the competition will decide on such proposals, and its decision is final and not subject to appeal.

Prizes

- 1st Prize : CHF 25'000.–
- 2nd Prize : CHF 15'000.–
- 3rd Prize : CHF 10'000.–
- HEMU Prize – Best HEMU Student : CHF 5'000.– + one concert at Noda BCVS Hall (Sion)
- Finalist Prize : CHF 1'500. –

Special Prizes

- Audience Prize: CHF 2'000.–
- Young Audience Prize: CHF 1'500.–
- Prize for Best Contemporary Performance: CHF 1'000.–
- Prize for Best Swiss Candidate: CHF 1'000.–

Applications

- Application deadline: 1 May 2026, 23:00 (Swiss time).
- Method: online only, via the official competition website.
- Application fee: CHF 50 (HEMU), CHF 100 (non-HEMU), non-refundable.
- Required documents:
 - copy of a valid ID;
 - biography (400 characters);
 - program for each round, according to required format;
 - recent royalty-free color photograph;
 - links to videos.
 - copy of most recent diploma and/or Bachelor Year 3 certificate and/or Master Year 1 enrollment certificate.

Miscellaneous

- Travel, accommodation, and meal expenses are the responsibility of the candidates.
- Candidates assign their image and performance rights for radio, TV, and web broadcasting.
- All competition decisions are final and not subject to appeal.

Accompaniment and Rehearsals

The candidate is provided by the Competition with an accompanist for the first round and the semi-final. For preparation, the candidate is granted a rehearsal time of 30 minutes for the first round and 80 minutes for the semi-final. The candidate may, if he or she so wishes, perform with a pianist of his or her choice, at his or her own expense and provided that this is declared at the time of registration, with no possibility of subsequently revising this decision.

The finalists benefit from a 45-minute voice–piano rehearsal with the conductor, followed by a rehearsal session with the orchestra, according to the schedule that will be communicated to them.

Insurance

At the candidate's expense. The Competition cannot be held responsible for any illness or accident occurring during the candidate's stay in Lausanne.

Commitments

Prize winners undertake to fulfill the engagements offered within the framework of the Competition over a period of two years, particularly in connection with the HEMU Prize.

Appeals

Decisions of the Competition are final and irrevocable and cannot be appealed. In case of dispute, only communications written in French shall be deemed authoritative.