

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 (public) – 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 Round (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 25-minute memorized programme;
- 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 Round (public) – 6 candidates**

16 October 2026

Opéra de Lausanne

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

- the candidate proposes three arias, two of which are selected by the jury;
- at least one aria must be selected from the list of required arias;
- the proposed arias must comply with the constraints of the orchestral forces provided for the final (3 flutes, 3 oboes, 3 clarinets, 4 bassoons — 4 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, 1 tuba — timpani + 3 percussion — 2 harps — strings: 8 first violins, 8 second violins, 6 violas, 5 cellos, 3 double basses) and must not require instrumentation exceeding the forces available;
- arias performed in previous rounds may be repeated.

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.

COMPETITION PROCEDURE

Submission of musical materials

Candidates are required to submit high-quality PDF scans of the scores for the first round and the semi-final no later than June 15, 2026. After this deadline, no further changes may be made unless requested by the Competition management.

Selection and official invitation

During the month of June, each candidate will be personally informed by email of their admission to the first round of the Competition and will subsequently receive an official invitation indicating the date, venue, and time of their performance, as well as the name of the accompanist assigned to them.

Order of appearance

A general draw will be conducted in the presence of a bailiff to determine the order of appearance of the candidates for the entire duration of the Competition. This order will be communicated in August and may not be modified, except in exceptional cases at the sole discretion of the Competition management. However, for the final round, the jury reserves the right to alter the order if deemed necessary for artistic coherence.

Schedule

As a general rule, the Competition undertakes to respect the schedule assigned to each candidate following the draw. Likewise, once their order of appearance and schedule have been communicated, each candidate is required to present themselves within the specified time limits before each round.

Order of performance of the works

- At the candidate's discretion for the first round and the semi-final.
- Determined by the jury for the final.

Announcement of results

Results are announced at the end of each round.

Prize-giving ceremony

Prizes are awarded at the end of the final on the stage of the Opéra de Lausanne.