

# CASCAIS OPERA

**2026** International Vocal Competition

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## Regulation

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# 1 | General Conditions

- 1.1. The *Associação CIVOC – Concurso Internacional Ópera Cascais* (“CIVOC”), an association based in Portugal at Passeio do Báltico, no 43-2E, 1990-036 Lisboa, legal person no. 517761637, within the scope of its statutes, promotes and organizes (“Organization”) the Cascais Opera - International Vocal Competition 2026, in accordance with the following regulations.
- 1.2. The 3rd edition of Cascais Opera - International Vocal Competition (“Competition”) will take place in Cascais and Lisbon, Portugal, between 29 May and 7 June 2026.
- 1.3. This edition of the Competition has one category: Opera.
- 1.4. The personal pronouns used in all communications by the competition refer equally to people of any genders.
- 1.5. **Calendar**

1 Nov. 2025 - 15 Jan. 2026	Applications open
15 Jan. 2026 (23:59 Portuguese time)	Applications close
16 Jan. 2026 - 28 Feb. 2026	Selection of Contestants
1 Mar. 2026 – 6 Mar. 2026	Invitation of selected Contestants for Live Phase and information of Contestants in Waiting List.
31 Mar. 2026	Deadline for confirmation of participation in Live Phase for the Selected Contestants and to send all requested details.
1 April 2026	If places are available, deadline for the invitation of Singers on Waiting List to participate in Live Phase.
14 April 2026	Deadline for confirmation of participation by Singers first on Waiting List, subsequently invited to Live Phase and to send all requested details. No changes to the repertoire allowed after this date.
15 April 2026	Official announcement of the Selected Contestants participating in the Live Phase.
29 May - 7 June 2026	Live Phase of the Competition in Cascais and Lisbon, Portugal.

<b>Competition (Live Phase)</b>	
29 May	Check in Opening Ceremony Group Masterclass for Contestants Rehearsals for 1st Round
30 May	First Round (1st day) Continuation of rehearsals for 1st Round.
31 May	First Round (2nd day) Announcement of Semifinalists Feedback to singers who did not proceed to the Semifinals
1 June	Masterclasses for singers who did not proceed to Semifinals Rehearsals for Semifinalists
2 June	Semifinal Announcement of Finalists Feedback for singers who did not proceed to the Final  [If necessary: Semifinal only, to be continued the next day.] *
3 June	Masterclasses for singers who did not proceed to the Final Masterclasses and Rehearsals for Finalists Rehearsals for Semifinalists singing in Semifinalists' Concert.  [If necessary: Semifinal (continuation); Announcement of Finalists; Feedback for Singers who did not proceed to the Final; Masterclasses; Rehearsals for Semifinalists singing in Semifinalists' Concert.] *
4 June	Masterclasses for singers who did not proceed to the Final Rehearsals for Finalists with conductor Semifinalists' Concert
5 June	Rehearsal with orchestra and Finalists
6 June	General Rehearsal in Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon.
7 June	Final in Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation
8 Junho	Feedback for Finalists

\* Will be confirmed closer to date.

- 1.6. The official languages during the Competition are English and Portuguese.
- 1.7. The live performances of the Cascais Opera – International Vocal Competition are open to the public: free entrance for First Round and Semi-Finals, the Final will be ticketed.
- 1.8. Rehearsals for the Final are closed to the public. Other related events of the Competition may be ticketed.
- 1.9. All videos and photos given by the organization to the Contestants, during or after the Competition, when and if used by the Contestants must always mention Cascais Opera, and whenever possible the homepage ([cascaisopera.com](http://cascaisopera.com)) and social media identification (@cascaisopera).
- 1.10. The Contestants should mention Cascais Opera in any and all communications (on social media, interviews and similar) about contracts and work opportunities received directly or indirectly due to their participation in the Competition.
- 1.11. The performance order in the Live Round will be determined by the order of application.
- 1.12. Changes may be made at the sole discretion of the Organization.

## 2 | Applications

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- 2.1. The Competition is open to opera singers of all nationalities who:
  - a. are not younger than 18 years on the date of the beginning of the competition (29 May 2026);
  - b. are 32 years old, or younger on the day of the final — born on 8 June 1993 or later;
  - c. have completed or are in the final year of their professional education and aim for a professional career or have an equivalent level of training.
- 2.2. Not authorised to participate in the 3rd edition of the Competition are singers, who in the previous edition of the Competition (2nd edition, 2025) were awarded the 'Grand-Prix Égide', the First Prize 'Teresa Berganza' for female voice or the First Prize 'Maurício Bensaude' for male voice. All other former Contestants are allowed to apply for the 2026 edition.
- 2.3. Applications can only be made via the online portal on the competition's website [cascaisopera.com](http://cascaisopera.com), through Muvac.
- 2.4. The application is only definitive after the Contestants have paid the application fee and submitted all required information and documentation correctly.

## 2.5. Application Fee

- a. As mentioned in 2.4, acceptance of the application is only guaranteed after payment of the Application Fee has been received, which must be paid by every Candidate applying for the competition.
- b. Payment, inscription details and deadlines are announced on the Cascais Opera website and on the application platform Muvac.
- c. The application fee of 70 euros is payable via Muvac at the time of application submission.
- d. Accepted payment methods: Visa, Mastercard, American Express.
- e. The application fee is non refundable.

## 2.6. Application: Information and Necessary Documentation

- a. Filled in application form.
- b. CV (maximum 1 page) either as a pdf or as Muvac CV format.
- c. Headshot in colour and high resolution.
- d. Links to two (2) videos on Youtube (or equivalent platform) with two (2) arias, that fulfill the following conditions:
  - d.1) One of the arias must be composed either by W.A. Mozart, G.F. Händel or J.S. Bach and may be either from an opera, oratorio, cantata, mass or be a concert aria.
  - d.2) The other aria must be from an opera.
  - d.3) The two arias must be sung in the original languages and in the original keys.
  - d.4) The two arias must be in different languages.
  - d.5) The two arias must have been composed by different composers.
  - d.6) The videos submitted must not be older than 1 year at the start of this application, meaning they should have been recorded after 1st November 2024.
  - d.7) The videos must be recorded in one single take, without video or sound edit.
  - d.8) The videos must show the Applicant's face while singing.
  - d.9) The videos do not have to be professionally recorded (but good quality is recommended).
  - d.10) The videos must indicate the repertoire that is sung: Composer, Work and Aria Title. This can either be embedded in the video or added to the description.

## 3 | Repertoire for Live Phase

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### 3.1. Repertoire for the 1st Round

- a. Two (2) arias, with a total maximum duration of 10 minutes.
- b. One of the arias must have been composed by W. A. Mozart, G. F. Händel or J. S. Bach. It may be from an opera, oratorio, cantata or a concert aria.
- c. The other aria must be from an opera.
- d. Both arias must be in different languages.
- e. Both arias must have been composed by different composers.
- f. It is allowed to repeat the arias sent as a video link for the Application.

### 3.2. Repertoire for Semifinal

- a. Three (3) arias with a total duration of 15 minutes.
- b. All three arias must be different from the ones selected for the First Round.
- c. It is allowed to repeat one or more arias sent as a video for the Application if they have not been sung in the First Round.
- d. All three arias must be from operas.
- e. Each of the three arias must be in a different language.
- f. All three arias must have been composed by different composers.

### 3.3. General Information for 1st Round and Semifinal

- a. All arias must be sung in their original languages and original keys.
- b. All arias must be sung from memory and in the sequence specified by the Contestant beforehand (see Calendar).
- c. If the contestant is performing a piece that is still under copyright (of the music, lyrics or edition), it is their responsibility to provide a legally purchased copy of the piece for the competition pianist.

### 3.4. Repertoire for the Final

- a. The Contestant will only need to indicate the repertoire chosen for the Final if selected to participate in the Live Phase. There is no need to do so at the time of application.
  - b. The Contestant must choose four (4) opera arias from the Repertoire List made available by the Competition, when the Selection for Live Phase is announced.
  - c. The four (4) arias proposed by the Contestants may have been sung in previous phases (Selection Round (online), First Round or Semifinal), as long as they are part of the Repertoire List made available by the Competition.
  - d. The proposed arias must be in at least two different languages.
  - e. The Jury will choose the two (2) arias, of the four (4) proposed by the Contestant, to be sung in the Final, which will be accompanied by orchestra.
  - f. Finalists will be informed of the repertoire selected for them at the announcement of the Finalists.
- 3.5. The contestant must confirm their programme for the Final when confirming their participation.
- 3.6. All arias must be sung from memory.

## 4 | Selection for Live Phase and Confirmation of Participation

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- 4.1. Contestants will be selected to the Live Phase based on their applications by a jury chosen specifically for this effect.
- 4.2. Contestants selected for the Live Phase of the competition will be informed between the 1st of March and 6th of March 2026.
- 4.3. The Selected Candidates, invited to participate in the Live Phase of the Competition, have until 31st March 2026 (23:59 Portuguese time) to confirm their attendance and submit all requested information. If the Candidate does not confirm their participation, it will be assumed that they are unable to attend, and their spot will be offered to a Candidate on the Waiting List.



#### 4.4. **Waiting List**

- a. Some Contestants may be put on a Waiting List, subject to the decision of the Jury. These Contestants will be informed that they are on the Waiting List between the 1st of March and 6th of March 2026.
- b. Contestants on the Waiting list may be invited to the Live Phase until the 1st of April 2026, which is subject to the decision of the Jury and dependent on availability.
- c. Contestants on the Waiting List who are invited to the Live Phase must confirm their participation within three weeks of their selection or by 14th April 2026, whichever comes first.
- d. If a contestant does not confirm their participation, it will be assumed that they are unable to attend, and their spot will be offered to the next person on the Waiting List.
- e. The inclusion in the waiting list is always subject to the discretion of the Jury.

#### 4.5. **Participation Fee**

- a. Participation in the competition is subject to the payment of the Participation Fee, which must be paid by all Candidates invited for the Live Phase and by Candidates in the Waiting List subsequently invited to the Live Phase, when confirming their participation.
- b. Payment and inscription details and deadlines are announced on the Cascais Opera website and on Muvac.
- c. Participation Fee of 50 Euros is payable at the time of confirmation of participation via the website or by bank transfer.
- d. The Participation Fee is non-refundable.
- e. Accepted payment methods: Bank transfer and others, to be specified.

4.6. Accepted payment methods: Bank transfer and others, to be specified.

## 5 | The Jury

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5.1. The members of the Jury of the 2026 Competition are:

- a. Sergei Leiferkus - President of the Jury
- b. Antonio Pirolli - Principal Conductor of Orquestra Sinfónica Portuguesa
- c. Catarina Sereno - Mezzosoprano

- d. Christina Scheppelmann - General and Artistic Director of La Monnaie, Brussels, Belgium
  - e. Eline de Kat - Artistic Coordinator at Opera de Monte Carlo
  - f. Erik Malmquist - Head of Casting in Bayerische Staatsoper
  - g. Ferruccio Furlanetto - Bass
  - h. Fredrik Andersson - Director of the Music Department of Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation
  - i. Ivan van Kalmthout - Senior Opera Executive
  - j. Juliane Banse - Soprano and Artistic Director at International Music Festival Marvão (FIMM)
  - k. Karen Stone - Executive Director of Opera Europa
- 5.2. Active Contestants shall not communicate with Jury members during the Competition, nor shall any other person communicate with the Jury members on behalf of any Contestant. Failure to abide by this rule may result in disqualification, decided by the Organization.
- 5.3. Each Contestant not selected to go through to the subsequent round, may have a consultation with one or multiple members of the Jury to receive feedback directly after the announcement of who passed on to the next rounds. The Finalists will have the opportunity of receiving feedback from members of the jury on 8th of June 2026 (day after the Final). More details regarding feedback sessions will be announced.
- 5.4. The Jury has the right not to grant any prize or award.
- 5.5. All decisions of the Jury shall be final, and no correspondence will be entered into regarding its decisions.

## 6 | Prizes, Awards and Contracts

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- 6.1. The Competition will award the following prizes:
- a. Grand-Prix Égide - 12,000 Euros
  - b. First Prize 'Tereza Berganza' for female voice - 8,500 Euros
  - c. First Prize 'Maurício Bensaude' for male voice - 8,500 Euros
  - d. Second Prize - 5,000 Euros
  - e. Third Prize - 3,500 Euros
  - f. 'Carlos Gomes' Prize - Performance contract in Festival Amazonas de Opera (Brazil - OLA) and up to 3,000 Euros in travel support.

- g. 'Best Singer under 25' Award – 2,500 Euros
  - h. RTP Audience Prize - 1,500 Euros
  - i. Finalist Award - 1,500 Euros. This award will be granted to each finalist who has not received any monetary prizes.
  - j. Performance contract with Mafra Music Festival (Festival de Música de Mafra "Filipe de Sousa") in 2027 for two singers, in addition to 1,000 Euros per singer.
  - k. Performance contract with Marvão International Music Festival (FIMM) in 2027, in addition to 1,000 Euros.
  - l. Performance contract with Algarve International Piano Festival (FIPA) in 2027, in addition to 1,000 Euros.
  - m. Performance contract with Istanbul State Opera and Ballet, in addition to 1,000 Euros.
  - n. Performance contract with 'Opera in the Academy and the City' (Ópera na Academia e na Cidade - OAC, Porto), in addition to 1,000 Euros.
  - o. Performance contract with Orchestra Alma Mater (Orquestra Alma Mater, Torres Novas), in addition to 1,000 Euros.
  - p. Performance contract with the Chamber Orchestra of Cascais and Oeiras (OCCO), in addition to 1,000 Euros.
- 6.2. The 'Best Singer Under 25' Award, the 'RTP Audience Prize', the 'Carlos Gomes' Prize, and all contracts may be combined with each other and with the other prizes. However, no prize may be combined with the Finalist Award.
- 6.3. The Contracts, as well as the 'Best Singer under 25' Award and the 'Carlos Gomes' Prize may be awarded to singers from the Semifinal that were not selected for the Final.
- 6.4. Additional prizes, awards, or contracts may be added to the Competition, with prior notice given to all interested Contestants.

## 7 | Compensation and Facilities

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- 7.1. The Competition will supply the following:
- a. Flights for Finalists: Reimbursement up to 300 Euros (based upon the receipt of travel expenses) for international travel expenses for those Contestants who are admitted to the Final.

- b. Hotel for Finalists: Guaranteed accommodation in Lisbon for Finalists from 5th June to 8th June 2026, for 3 nights.
  - c. Semifinalist Concert Bursary: Semifinalists that participate in the Semifinalists' Concert will receive 250 Euros.
- 7.2. The Competition will provide pianists to accompany all the Contestants selected for the Live Phase. If the Contestants wish, they can bring their own pianists at their own expense.
- 7.3. Rehearsal and Warm-up rooms: all rehearsal time will be divided equally amongst participants.
- a. Rehearsal rooms for solo rehearsal will be made available for limited periods of time.
  - b. Every Contestant will have an equal amount of time to rehearse with the pianists.
  - c. An individual warm-up room will be made available for 10–15 minutes (for the 1st Round) and for 15–20 minutes (for the Semifinal) before the performances in the competition. More time will be given for the Finalists before the Final.
- 7.4. Each Finalist is entitled to receive two tickets for the Final. All other Contestants are entitled to receive one ticket each.
- 7.5. The Competition will host Masterclasses held by members of the Jury and by invited professionals from the music and opera world. **All Contestants are allowed to actively participate free of charge in all the Masterclasses.** Terms and conditions for the participation in Masterclasses apply and will be made available closer to the start of the competition.

## 8 | Liability

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- 8.1. The obtaining of appropriate travel documents, visas and insurance is the sole responsibility of each Contestant.
- 8.2. "CIVOC" accepts no liability of any kind whatsoever for any personal illness or injury sustained by the Contestant, nor for loss or damage to a Contestant's belongings during transit or while at the Competition.
- 8.3. Medical costs, of whatever nature, will not be reimbursed by "CIVOC". Doctors will be on call for the duration of the Competition in case of any medical emergency.

## 9 | Judicial

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- 9.1. By submitting the application form, applicants state their agreement:
- a. with all articles and rules in the present regulation
  - b. with all ensuing engagements as part of any prize
  - c. that any performances, recitals, concerts, or recordings resulting directly from the Competition, as well as any prizes or parts of prizes awarded, shall not be subject to any payments or commissions of any kind to the current or future agents of the Contestants.
  - d. that the Competition is authorized to record, film, broadcast live or delayed, audio only, image only, or both audio and image simultaneously, photograph all events and rounds, and publish the photos, without payment of any fee or additional compensation.
- 9.2. All rights arising from point 9.1-d. shall be the perpetual property of CIVOC.
- 9.3. Photographs or video recordings cannot be made by any other parties without prior written permission of CIVOC.
- 9.4. All rights reserved.

## 10 | Privacy and Data Protection

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- 10.1. In the context of the Competition, “CIVOC” (“Organization”) may collect personal data from participants as necessary for the proper administration and conduct of the competition.
- 10.2. The types of personal data collected may include, but are not limited to: name, address, phone number, email address, identification information, musical background, image, video and audio recordings, and other information relevant to participation in the competition.
- 10.3. The collection and processing of personal data is primarily for the administration of the Competition, evaluation of entries, communication with participants, notification of winners, and distribution of prizes, if applicable. It may also be used for advertising and marketing of the Competition to the general public.

- 10.4. By entering the competition, participants agree to the collection and processing of their personal data for the purposes referred above, under the terms of the Competition's Privacy Policy.
- 10.5. The Organization is committed to protecting the personal data collected against unauthorized access, misuse, or unauthorized disclosure of participants' personal data and will take the necessary technical and organizational measures to ensure its security and confidentiality.
- 10.6. The Organization will not share participants' personal data with third parties, except when required by law or when necessary for the administration of the competition.
- 10.7. Participants have the right of access, rectification, erasure, restriction of processing, data portability, objection, the right not to be subject to a decision based solely on automated processing, as well as the right to withdraw their consent and the right to file complaints related to data protection with the relevant authorities.
- 10.8. Complete information about the types of data collected, its recipients, what it is used for, on what grounds, and what rights participants have over it, is available in the Competition's Privacy Policy, at <https://cascaisopera.com/privacy-policy/>.