

Conditions of participation for the DEBUT Classical Singing Competition 2026

1. General information

The following terms and conditions apply to the DEBUT Classical Singing Competition 2026, which is being held for the 13th time by DEBUT Concerts GmbH (hereinafter referred to as the “Organizer”), Walter-Wittenstein-Str. 1, 97999 Igersheim, Germany.

The competition is open worldwide to opera singers who are currently studying as well as those who have already completed their professional training. Eligible to apply are singers who have not yet reached the age of 35 on 20 September 2026, i.e. who are still 34 years old on that date. This corresponds to being born in 1991 or later.

The competition is open to the following voice categories: soprano, mezzo-soprano/alto, tenor, countertenor, baritone, and bass.

2. Application procedure

All applications for the DEBUT Classical Singing Competition 2026 must be submitted online using the application forms provided on the DEBUT website at www.debut.de. You can upload your application, including all required documents, from April 1st until June 30th, 2026 inclusive. It becomes legally binding as soon as the registration fee indicated in section 3 has been paid. Only applicants submitting a full set of documents and providing correct information will be admitted to the competition. Incomplete or incorrect application documents will lead to disqualification.

3. Participation fees

A one-off registration fee of € 45 per applicant is payable to the Organizers on submission of your application and all required documents for the DEBUT Classical Singing Competition 2026. Each applicant invited by the Competition Office to take part in the qualifying rounds must confirm his or her participation by transferring a one-off participation fee of € 220 to the Organizers' bank account.

4. Payment

The registration fee of € 45 must be credited to the Organizers' account by the application deadline at the latest (max 1st July). The participation fee of € 220 must be credited to the Organizers' account by August 31st, 2026 at the latest. If payment is not made to the Organizers' bank account by the above-mentioned dates, the applicant concerned will be excluded from the DEBUT Classical Singing Competition 2026 (substitutes excepted). All payments must be made to the following bank account in the Organizers' name, stating the applicant's name and number:

Account holder:	DEBUT Concerts GmbH
Bank:	Sparkasse Tauberfranken
IBAN:	DE79 6735 2565 0000 0019 74
SWIFT code:	SOLADES1TBB
Reason for payment:	DEBUT 2026, name and applicant number

5. Shortlist

After all applications and supporting documents have been reviewed by the judging panel, the most promising singers will be shortlisted to take part in the qualifying rounds in Weikersheim (Main-Tauber district, Germany) on September 21/22th, 2026. The selection process will take place at the end of July 2026. The judging panel will draw up a shortlist of competitors based on the links (two opera arias or two lieder/romances). The aria and lieder recordings must have very good sound and picture quality (at least HD; each piece must have been recorded in a single take (edited or manipulated recordings will not be considered) and must be accompanied by piano or orchestra. The recordings submitted should be no more than one year old. Older recordings could affect your chance

es of being invited to participate in the competition. Each aria should be at least three minutes in length.

6. Participation

Each singer invited by the Competition Office to take part in the qualifying rounds must confirm his or her participation by transferring the entrance fee indicated in sections 3 and 4. Competitors who are not available to perform when called upon to audition by the judging panel will be disqualified. In this case, the participation fee will not be refunded. Travel expenses must be borne by competitors.

7. Selected pieces

Candidates admitted to the qualification rounds on 21–22 September 2026 will receive their invitation by mid-August 2026. At that time, they will also be asked to submit a repertoire list in accordance with the following requirements.

Note: The jury expressly welcomes the inclusion of lesser-known works. A repertoire selection beyond the standard canon may positively influence the application. Additional suggestions can be found in the repertoire list.

Repertoire Requirements

- Arias – 6 in total
 - 3 compulsory arias selected from the official aria repertoire list (see www.debut.de)
 - 3 arias of the candidate's choice
- Songs – 5 in total
 - 1 contemporary compulsory piece (a work commissioned by DEBUT; to be performed in the semifinal)

4 songs selected from works by the following Scandinavian composers:

- Agathe Backer-Grøndahl
- Adolf Fredrik Lindblad
- Wilhelm Peterson-Berger
- Gunnar de Frumerie
- Ture Rangström
- Wilhelm Stenhammar
- Hugo Alfvén
- Carl Nielsen
- Emil Sjögren (Op. 12 "Tannhäuser", text by Julius Wolf only)
- Helena Munktel
- Valborg Aulin
- Laura Netzel
- Lars-Erik Larsson
- Jean Sibelius
- Edvard Grieg (excluding Op. 48)

For the songs, at least three different composers must be represented.

Across the entire programme, at least three different languages and musical periods must be included. One operetta aria is permitted. Each opera work may appear only once in the programme.

All arias must be performed in the original language. For works that exist in more than one original version, the selected version, key, and any relevant details must be specified precisely. For the auditions, candidates must bring two copies of the piano scores of the submitted repertoire. These must be clearly legible and easy to turn pages (securely bound or taped).

8. Competition week schedule

- 20 September 2026
 - Arrival by 4:00 p.m.; repertoire/score check between 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.
- 21–22 September 2026
 - Qualification rounds and workshops, as well as the option of artist photos
- 23 September 2026
 - Semifinal, followed by the announcement of the finalists
- 24 September 2026
 - DEBUT Song Recital: Final round for the Lied prizes
- 25 September 2026
 - Orchestral rehearsal and dress rehearsal for the gala concert with the Philharmonisches Orchester Würzburg at the TauberPhilharmonie Weikersheim
- 26 September 2026
 - Gala Concert with final round and presentation of the Golden Viktoria at the TauberPhilharmonie Weikersheim; possible broadcast by SWR2 September

9. Compulsory musical pieces during the competition week

Two arias (selected on the day of your arrival from the list submitted by each competitor in consultation with the Artistic Director and an accompanist) and two lieder (one of your own choice and one selected in consultation with the Artistic Director) must be sung in the qualifying rounds. Two arias (both selected by the judging panel) and two lieder (one contemporary lieder and one selected by the judging panel) must be sung in the semi-final. Two arias (both selected by the judging panel) must be sung in the final. Two lieder (both selected by the judging panel) and the contemporary lieder must be sung at the lieder recital. The best interpretation of the contemporary lieder must be sung at the gala concert.

The following prizes will be awarded without exception:

Gold, Silver and Bronze Viktoria including cash prizes
Contemporary Lied
Song of Scandinavia
Youth Music Sponsorship Award
Sponsorship Award for Students Enrolled at a German University

All other prizes will be awarded at the discretion of the prize donors.

10. Withdrawals

In the unlikely event that a competitor is unable to take part in the DEBUT Classical Singing Competition 2026 after submitting his or her application along with all required documents, that application can be withdrawn in the secure area of the DEBUT website (www.debut.de), which is reserved for competitors. In this case, the € 45 registration fee paid to the Organizers will not be refunded; if the participation fee has already been transferred to the Organizers' bank account, it will be returned to the competitor on presentation of a medical certificate.

11. Substitutes

If a competitor who has already been admitted to the competition withdraws due to illness, a substitute may be nominated by the Organizers in his or her place. In this case, the singer concerned will be notified by email that they have been selected as a substitute.

12. Organizers' services

The Organizers are committed to providing the following services to competitors in the framework of the event:

a) Transfer and accommodation

All competitors are entitled to use the free (two-way) bus transfer between Würzburg central station and Weikersheim where appropriate. The Organizers will provide free board and lodging for all competitors in the Guest House at Weikersheim Castle Music Academy for as long as they remain in the competition. The costs for a minimum of three overnight stays, including full board (breakfast, lunch, supper), will be paid by the Organizers. The Organizers will not cover incidental expenses incurred during your stay at the Guest House.

b) Support services

All competitors taking part in the qualifying rounds will attend one or two free workshops. The Organizers will also provide all competitors with a piano accompanist free of charge. If you are eliminated from the competition early, you can optionally arrange an interview with the judging panel to discuss your performance. You are not allowed to bring your own piano accompanist in the interest of fairness and to ensure equal opportunities.

13. Recordings and exploitation rights

All exploitation rights to performances given by competitors are transferred to the Organizers; this applies to all audiovisual material, photographs and sound and / or film recordings transmitted and created during the competition. Competitors accordingly consent to their contact details being shared with interested persons in the opera world as well as opera houses / festivals, etc. for the purpose of furthering their artistic development by providing recommendations; they additionally give their consent to the use of audiovisual material for marketing purposes on the Internet (DEBUT website, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, etc.). The competitors' rights of personality will not be prejudiced as a result of using the recordings.

14. Liability

In relation to the competition, the Organizers are only liable for damages arising from willful misconduct or gross negligence on the part of the Organizers or the Organizers' legal representative or agent in performance or in case of injury to life, limb or health. The Organizers are also liable in case of breach of a material contractual obligation ("primary obligation"). In case of minor negligence, however, this liability is limited to typical damages which were foreseeable at the time of signing the contract. In all other cases, the Organizers' liability is explicitly excluded.

The competitors shall indemnify the Organizers against all third-party claims which may be asserted by third parties against the Organizer in connection with the use of exploitation rights arising from the competition; in particular, this applies with respect to asserted violations of rights of personality, copyrights or other intangible rights. In addition to damages, this indemnification shall also cover any costs incurred by the Organizers, including all reasonable costs for judicial and extrajudicial legal defense.

15. Privacy

The Organizers shall observe the provisions of current data protection law.

16. Final provisions



If any provisions of these conditions of participation are or become completely or partially invalid, ineffective or unworkable, this shall not affect the validity of the remaining provisions. Participation in this singing competition is subject to German law. The judging panel's decisions are final and beyond appeal. The Organizers may suspend or cancel the singing competition at any time for legitimate reasons. The Organizers can modify or add to these conditions of participation at any time if legitimate interests exist and according to the principles of good faith.