

FESTIVAL GUIDE



FESTIVAL OF SONGS
OLOMOUC

VOCAL ENSEMBLE

53rd International Choir Festival
Festival of Songs Olomouc

Thu 4 June – Sun 7 June 2026



www.svatkypisniolomouc.cz

Festival organiser:



Supported by:

Ministry of Culture Czech Republic



Olomouc Region



State Cultural Fund of the Czech Republic



Státní fond kultury ČR

City of Olomouc



Nadace Život umělce



ABOUT FESTIVAL

The International Festival of Songs Olomouc was founded in 1972 under the name of the "Children's Choirs Festival Olomouc" (the current name was adopted in 1977) and soon became a traditional annual project in the region. It is therefore one of the oldest choral festivals in Europe.

The festival was founded by choirmaster and music organiser Karel Klimeš together with his son Jiří Klimeš, who developed it further. From the beginning until 1989, the festival was organised by the "Park of Culture and Leisure" association. Subsequently, this activity was continued by the Svátky Písní association (until 1998) and then the Festa Musicale association, since 2015 under the leadership of Marek Klimeš. In 2022, the OLArt21 association took over as the festival organiser and in the middle of the same year Milan Motl became its artistic director.

At first, the festival served exclusively as a platform for encounters of children's choirs through shows and concerts. In 1987, the **International Choir Competition Iuventus Mundi Cantant** ("The Youth of the World Sings") was first opened. Later, in 2002, it was restructured and renamed the International Choir Competition Mundi Cantant. This opened the competition to all categories of choirs from all over the world.



In 2023, the festival celebrated its 50th anniversary. On this occasion, the **Almanac for the Half-Centenary of the Choral Festival in Olomouc** was published. For the first time, a non-competitive category for senior choirs was opened, making the festival a meeting place for all generations of singers, from the youngest to the oldest. At the same time, the **International Competition Vocalis Bellus** for vocal ensembles was established.



*MUNDI CANTANT Competition, choir: Kajetán (3 June 2023, Corpus Christi Chapel),
photo: Jakub Audrlický*

The festival has been focusing on amateur music since its foundation.
Its main mission is to:

- popularise – amateur and professional music art
- present – choral singing in any vocal composition
- promote – education, concert activity and musical creativity
- initiate – cooperation between artistic ensembles and institutions
- create – unique artistic projects and environment for encounters
- bring – together people from different countries and cultural backgrounds through music

The festival has hosted choirs from countries such as: Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, North Macedonia, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, the USA and the Czech Republic.

International Vocal Ensemble Competition VOCALIS BELLUS

COMPETITION CATEGORY



Open repertoire

- **Age limit:** There is no age limit in the open repertoire category.
- **Number of singers:** The number of singers is set from 2 to 8 people.
- **Time limit:** The time limit for vocal ensembles is 10 minutes. The time limit excludes time taken by entering/leaving the stage, the time between pieces or the time taken by applause. The total performance time should not exceed 15 minutes. If the time limit is exceeded, the competition performance may be terminated by the jury.

CHALLENGE 2026

The theme of the 53rd edition of the festival is **Nordic music**. The International Festival of Songs Olomouc announces in all categories of the competition a **challenge to include compositions by Nordic composers in the dramaturgy of the competition performances**, primarily Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish and Danish. Compositions by Baltic composers are also welcomed. Ensembles are free to **choose compositions at their own discretion** and according to the availability of sheet music.

At the same time, the challenge to include **Czech compositions** remains open. The best performance of a Czech composition across all categories will be announced as part of the final Absolute Winner Competition. The Festival's Artistic Board has carefully selected the **recommended compositions** that represent the beauty, diversity and value of Czech vocal music. This has resulted in a representative list of Czech choral compositions, including proven master composers as well as leading contemporary Czech composers. The list of these compositions is available to download on the website and will also be sent to all registered ensembles by e-mail.

GENERAL RULES

1. The International Vocal Ensemble Competition VOCALIS BELLUS is open only to amateur vocal ensembles.
2. It is assumed that vocal ensembles are not conducted by their artistic director or choirmaster during their competition performance, as it is the case with choirs.
3. **Technical support and instrumental accompaniment:** It is assumed singing without microphones, sound system and halfplayback recordings. An acoustic or electric piano will be available in the competition venue. Other accompanying instruments must be provided by the ensemble.
4. **Competition repertoire:** At least one piece must be performed a cappella.
5. **Sheet music and list of competition repertoire:** The list of competition repertoire containing full names of authors, full titles of compositions/cycles and duration of each piece must be provided no later than the deadline date for application. Competition repertoire sheet music must be sent in electronic form via e-mail no later than 30 March 2026. Compositions must be performed in the order indicated on the sent list of competition repertoire. Any changes to the repertoire will need to be communicated to the organisers as soon as possible. Transpositions, unauthorised alterations or other interventions in the competition pieces should be indicated in the submitted sheet music and reported in advance to the organiser.
6. **Acoustic rehearsal in the competition venue:** The maximum time of the acoustic rehearsal is 10 minutes including the arrival and the exit from the stage. If the time limit is exceeded, the rehearsal will be interrupted by the organiser. The rehearsal time is assigned by the organiser, it is binding and must be respected. If the given date or time is not respected, no alternative rehearsal time will be arranged and the participant's right to an acoustic rehearsal in the sense of these rules expires.
7. **Competition venue:** After arriving at the competition venue, the vocal ensemble will immediately announce itself to a member of the organising team. The ensemble will be assigned a dressing room and will be informed about the schedule of a rehearsal room. The maximum time for the use of the rehearsal room is 10 minutes. The minimum time for the use of the dressing room is 25 minutes, the maximum time is limited according to the current occupancy of the competition venue. All participants are required to respect the competition schedule and follow the organiser's instructions. Dressing rooms are not to be used for singing, but only for changing and storing belongings during the competition performance.

EVALUATION RULES

1. **Competition rules:** The competition is judged by an international jury headed by a chairman of the jury. The decision of the jury is final and irrevocable.

2. **Evaluation system:** Each juror has a maximum of 30 points at their disposal that are awarded on the basis of the evaluation criteria: intonation and rhythm, expression and style of interpretation, singing technique, dramaturgy of the competition programme and artistic impression. Jurors don't have to comment on all of these criteria in their verbal evaluation. The final score is determined by the average of the points awarded by individual jurors. Based on the final score, choirs and ensembles are placed in the relevant award level (bronze, silver and gold). Award levels are not limited by the number of placed choirs and ensembles.

Honourable mention (1.00–6.99 points)

Bronze medal (7.00–14.99 points)

Silver medal (15.00–22.99 points)

Gold medal (23.00–30.00 points)

3. **Special awards of the jury:** The jury may award a special award for exceptional performances, e.g. for an outstanding performance of a certain composition, vocal culture, dramaturgy and other qualities of the competition performance noted by the jury.

4. **Documentation of the evaluation:** After the announcement of the results, each artistic director or representative has the opportunity to participate in an analysis seminar with the competition jury to receive feedback. The evaluation sheets of each juror will be sent to the choir/ensemble in electronic form after the festival.

5. There may be financial and non-financial prizes for the winners of the VOCALIS BELLUS Competition. Any information about these prizes will be published on the festival organiser's website and will become an addition to these competition rules.

6. The best vocal ensemble, i.e. the winner of the VOCALIS BELLUS Competition, will have the opportunity to perform at the evening concert as part of the MUNDI CANTANT Absolute Winner Competition in the following year's edition of the festival as its special guest.

FESTIVAL PROGRAMME 2026

	THU 4/6	FRI 5/6	SAT 6/6	SUN 7/6
Check-ins, arrivals of choirs and ensembles	✓	✓	✓	
International Choir Competition MUNDI CANTANT (children's and youth choirs)		✓		
International Choir Competition MUNDI CANTANT (adult choirs and genre categories)			✓	
International Vocal Ensemble Competition VOCALIS BELLUS		✓		
International Choir Competition MUNDI CANTANT (non-competitive category A8)	✓			
Results announcement ceremony	✓	✓	✓	
Absolute Winner Competition of MUNDI CANTANT			✓	
Festival concerts (Opening concert, concerts in various districts of the city of Olomouc, Final open- air concert)	✓	✓	✓	
Meeting of choirmasters with the jury	✓	✓	✓	
Workshop		✓	✓	
Masterclass				✓

WORKSHOP 2026

This year, the Olomouc International Song Festival is offering a workshop focused on contemporary Nordic music, led by choirmaster, member of the Estonian Choral Association and special guest of the festival Kuldar Schüts. The programme will be adapted according to the number of registered participants and the type of choirs, so that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy this unique musical experience to the fullest. Make sure to secure your place in time! For further information, please contact us.

price: Free of charge for choirs registered in the VOCALIS BELLUS Competition; other groups or individuals 200 CZK/person.

MASTERCLASS 2026

Enjoy an exceptional masterclass with a renowned international guest. This great opportunity to enrich your skills under the guidance of an experienced professional. Each ensemble may take a one-hour long private lesson focusing on technique, performance and other aspects of choral singing. Please contact us for more information.

price: 6 000 CZK



*Absolute Winner Competition, vocal ensemble: Za5 (1 June 2024, Reduta MFO),
photo: Jaroslav Pavel*

APPLICATION FOR THE FESTIVAL

The application (i.e. the completed online form on the website / the form at the end of this guide) must be sent no later than: **2 March 2026**

1

After submitting your application, wait for the **confirmation** (automatic reply to the electronic form is only a proof that you have successfully submitted the application). A summary of your application will be sent to your contact e-mail. At this stage we ask you to check all details. If we do not confirm your application within 5 days, please contact us.

2

Based on the information provided, an **advance invoice** for the registration fee will be issued.

We also ask you to send us the remaining documents for participation in the competition. The list of **required documents** is given below. The deadline for sending these documents is: **30 March 2026**

3

Details of the festival's **accompanying events** will be shared gradually. Should you be interested in participating in any of them, please do not hesitate to inform us.

4

After the application period closes, a preliminary and later a final **itinerary** will be sent to you.

Required documents:

- High quality colour photo (at least 1000 pixels, 300 DPI).
- Brief profile of the ensemble / biography (approx. 500 characters) in Czech or English.
- A list of competition compositions containing the full name of the composer, the full title of the piece (cycle of pieces), indicated the possible use of accompanying instruments, the duration of each piece and order of performance.
- All competition compositions sent electronically by e-mail in PDF format.
- MP3 or URL link – a recording of at least one song performed by the choir, no more than 3 years old.
- Confirmation of payment of the registration fee against the advance invoice.

Registration fee

The registration fee for the festival is set according to the table below and includes:

- Participation in the International Vocal Ensemble Competition VOCALIS BELLUS.
- Participation in the announcement of the competition results.
- Participation of representatives of the ensemble in social meetings with the jury.
- (In)active participation in accompanying concerts and performances in Olomouc.
- Gift package for ensemble members.
- Use of the rehearsal room.
- Online presentation of the ensemble.
- Competition diploma and medals
- Verbal evaluation of the competition performance from each juror (in electronic form)
- Results sheet (in electronic form)
- Photographs and video recording of the competition performance

2026	RECOMMENDED FESTIVAL ACTIVITIES	PRICE / participation
1 DAY* Fri 5 June (+ Sat 6 June)	participation in the VOCALIS BELLUS Competition, at the announcement of the results, at the analysis seminar, possible participation at festival's workshop or concerts	1 800 CZK/ensemble

*Ensembles can participate in the whole festival. There is no fee for vocal ensemble for the festival days Thursday 4 June and Sunday 7 June.

Payment of the registration fee

Bank details:

Fio banka, a.s.

Account no.: 2702110297/2010

IBAN: CZ74 2010 0000 0027 0211 0297

SWIFT/BIC: FIOBCZPPXXX

- The registration fee must be paid by cashless payment against the advance invoice. Bank charges are paid by the sender.
- In case of cancellation of participation 6 weeks before the festival or later, the registration fee can't be refunded and will be credited to the festival in full (i.e. notification of cancellation must be sent no later than 22 April 2026). In the event of cancellation, the ensemble is expected to cooperate in finding a suitable replacement.

FINAL PROVISIONS

- The organiser reserves all the rights related to the taking of video and audio recordings of festival activities, including their further processing and use. By submitting the application form, the participants of the festival express their consent to the recording and publication of it including competition performances.
- By submitting the application form, festival participants confirm that they have been informed of the above conditions of competition and participation in the festival.
- Applications sent after the deadline will not be accepted (except for the extended application period, which may be additionally announced by the organiser). If the capacity of the competition is fulfilled (even within the regular application period), the organiser may refuse any further applications. Reservation of a place in the competition is not possible.
- The festival programme is subject to change.
- Any personal data provided will be used solely to ensure conformity with the competition rules and will not be disclosed to third parties. Once the festival is over and all administrative matters have been completed, this data will be deleted from the organisers database.



*MUNDI CANTANT Competition, choir: Cansona Neosoliensis (1 June 2024, Aula UP),
photo: Jaroslav Pavel*

APPLICATION FORM

FESTIVAL OF SONGS OLOMOUC 2026



Name of ensemble:

City:

Country:

Name of artistic director:

Number of participants*:

Name of contact person**:

Tel.:

E-mail:

Invoice address:

Chosen competition category: F

Ensemble will participate in the following festival days:

- ☐ Thursday 4 June 2026
- ☐ Friday 5 June 2026
- ☐ Saturday 6 June 2026
- ☐ Sunday 7 June 2026

By submitting the application I declare that I have read the general terms, conditions and the rules of the VOCALIS BELLUS Competition. I also confirm that I have been given permission to act for the members of the choir by themselves or their legal representatives.

Date:

Signature:

*any person who is part of the competition performance is considered a participant, i.e. including the accompanist, etc.

** contact person must be present at the festival

CONTACT

OLArt21, z. s.

Correspondence address:

Foerstrova 1047/49
779 00 Olomouc

IČO: 14136210

Bank details:

Fio banka, a.s.
Account no.: 2702110297/2010
IBAN: CZ74 2010 0000 0027 0211 0297
SWIFT/BIC: FIOBCZPPXXX

E-mail:

festival@svatkypisniolomouc.cz

Tel.:

Anna Mihulková
+420 721 446 616