

RULES FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CONDUCTORS CONTEST - WMC 2026

International Conductors Contest in general

Since 1970, the WMC has made the development of professional conducting talent a central priority, recognizing it as essential for advancing the sector.

The International Conductors Contest is designed to observe conductors in a wide range of musical settings. Participants will lead professional ensembles and bands across diverse repertoires, showcasing their versatility and artistry.

The contest will be held during WMC 2026. From all registrations, 16 candidates will be selected and admitted to the contest. Over the course of three rounds, each candidate will conduct a professional ensemble for 12 minutes per day, under the evaluation of an international adjudication panel.

At the end of the third day, Adjudication Team A will select six candidates to advance to the Semi-Finals, where they will conduct a professional wind band. From there, Adjudication Team B will determine the three finalists.

The contest concludes with the Final Concert in the Roda Hall, where the three finalists will each conduct a full performance of one of the final compositions. The winner will be awarded the prestigious Golden Baton.

Contest schedule

Selection round (16 candidates):

- Tuesday July 14, 2026
- Wednesday July 15, 2026
- Thursday July 16, 2026

Semi-finals (6 candidates):

- Monday July 20, 2026

Finals (3 candidates):

- Tuesday July 21, 2026 (rehearsal)
- Wednesday July 22, 2026 (concert)

The contest venue is the Aula Major – Rolduc, the Kerkrade Theater and the Roda Hall in the City of Kerkrade, The Netherlands.

Article 1: Participation

Participation in the International Conductors Contest of WMC 2026 is open to conductors of all nationalities under 35 years old on January 1, 2026. No exception will be made.

Participating conductors must register and submit a Curriculum Vitae online, via the My WMC portal. The registration must include a video recording with the following requirements:

- Duration: minimum 10 minutes
- Quality: 720 p. or higher
- Compositions: 2 compositions (or parts) of different characters
- Positioning: the camera should face the conductor (view from the orchestra side).
- Recording: a recording with wind band is preferred, but a recording with other ensembles (symphony orchestra, chamber orchestra, choir, two pianos) is also acceptable. The recording should be posted on a streaming service (e.g. YouTube, Vimeo).

Incomplete applications that do not meet the conditions will not be considered.

A maximum of 16 candidates may be selected. The selection will be based on the information submitted through the My WMC portal and made by the artistic management of WMC.

Article 2: Registration deadline and possible changes

The registration deadline is January 15, 2026. Candidates will be informed regarding admittance or non-admittance by February 15, 2026. Selection is binding and reasons do not have to be given for refusals.

WMC reserves the right to cancel the contest based on the number of registrations.

Article 3: Contest procedure

The contest consists of a selection round (three days), a semi-final round and the finals.

Selection round (16 candidates):

Each candidate will be adjudicated by Adjudication Team A during a 12-minute rehearsal of one composition a day with a professional wind ensemble.

Ensemble: Helicon Wind Ensemble (NL)

Semi-finals: (6 candidates):

Each candidate will be adjudicated by Adjudication Team B during a 30-minute rehearsal and a 10-minute presentation with a professional wind band. At the announcement of the results at the end of this round, a draw will decide on the order of performance and the compositions for the finals.

Band: The Royal Military Band 'Johan Willem Friso' (NL)

Finals: (3 candidates):

The finals consist of two parts. In the first part each candidate will be adjudicated by Adjudication Team B during a 1-hour rehearsal of one of the three final compositions known to the professional wind band. In the second part this composition will be performed and adjudicated as part of the Gala Concert.

Band: The Royal Military Band 'Johan Willem Friso' (NL)

The language during the contest will be English.

The rehearsals may be designed by the candidate at his/her own discretion.

Article 4: Adjudicators

The candidates will be adjudicated by an International Team of Adjudicators, consisting of 6 people, and divided in 2 teams.

- **Team A (Selection round):**
 - Mark Heron (UK)
 - Miguel Etchegoncelay (ARG)
 - Isabelle Ruf-Weber (CZ)

- **Team B (Semi-finals and Finals):**
 - Mark Heron (UK)
 - Enrico Delamboye (NL)
 - José Rafael Villaplana (ESP)

The International Team of Adjudicators will be supervised by Jan van den Eijnden (NL) as Independent Chairman of Adjudication.

Article 5: Scoring, adjudication parameters and distinctions

Each conductor will receive a score per round/day based on the following:

Adjudicator	Artistic and conceptual competences	Technical competences	Communicative competences	Total	Final Score
Adjudicator 1	100,00	100,00	100,00	300 : 3 = 100	300 : 3 = 100
Adjudicator 2	100,00	100,00	100,00	300 : 3 = 100	
Adjudicator 3	100,00	100,00	100,00	300 : 3 = 100	

1. Artistic and conceptual competences:
 - musical interpretation
 - general presentation and impression
 - knowledge of the composition
2. Technical competences:
 - conducting technique
 - posture
 - effectiveness in rehearsing
 - control of tempo, dynamics, rhythm and balance/intonation
3. Communicative competences:
 - general communication with the ensemble/band

After the final round each conductor will receive the scores (per round) that determine the ranking. Each participating conductor will receive the results, a short report of the individual adjudicator's comments and a Certificate of Participation.

Article 6: Repertoire

During the contest it is not allowed for conductors to use copies of scores of the repertoire. Scores can be obtained from the publishers mentioned below.

- Selection round:

Composition:	Composer:	Publisher:	Usage:
Serenade c-moll KV 388 (384a)	Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	Henle Verlag	Rehearsal
Octet for Wind Instruments	Igor Stravinsky	Boosey & Hawkes	Rehearsal
Concerto for Cello and Wind Instruments	Jacques Ibert	Heugel	Rehearsal

Candidates will be informed about the movements/parts of the compositions to be conducted during the Selection round, no later than 2 weeks prior to the contest.

- Semi-finals:

Composition:	Composer:	Publisher:	Usage:
Nitescence crépusculaire	Alexandre Kosmicki	HAFABRA Music	Rehearsal
Let My Love Be Heard	Jake Runestad	jakerunestad.com	Presentation

- Finals:

Composition:	Composer:	Publisher:	Usage:
Traveler	David Maslanka	Carl Fischer	Rehearsal/Concert
Transitions	Henk Badings	Shawnee Music Press (<i>permanently</i>)	Rehearsal/Concert

		<i>out of print, will be provided by WMC)</i>	
Danse Funambulesque	Jules Strens <i>(version Gert Buitenhuis)</i>	Mythen Hollanda	Rehearsal/Concert

Article 7: Titles and Prizes

Regarding Titles and Prizes, we refer to the separate document ‘Titles and Prizes WMC 2026’ on the WMC website.

Article 8: Results and appeal

Once publicly announced, results are definite and binding. After this only WMC Kerkrade has the authority to adjust results when deemed necessary.

No appeal is possible against results and WMC will not allow any appeal.

In case of unforeseen circumstances where these rules do not apply, WMC Kerkrade reserves the right to make decisions that are binding. No appeal is possible.

Article 9: Responsibilities

The Artistic Management of WMC is artistically responsible for the contest.

The Independent Chairman of Adjudication is responsible for the correct application of the adjudication system by all adjudicators and for the execution of the rules. The Independent Chairman of Adjudication reports to the Artistic Management.

World Music Contest, (WMC) Kerkrade, The Netherlands, October 2025.