

The first International Kodály Competition to be held in Debrecen next year

In June 2022, strings players will compete, and in every even-numbered year thereafter, the best young musicians from different instrument groups will be in contest. The professional partner of the series of competitions organised by **Kodály Philharmonic Debrecen** is the world's largest youth music organisation, **Jeunesses Musicales**. Applications for the competition open on 1 June and are invited until 16 December, the birthday of Kodály, on the <https://kodalycompetition.com> website.

On the first competition, the nine-person international jury will be chaired by a true living legend, 85-year-old **György Pauk**, professor of the London Royal Academy of Music, who will be joined by teachers from the world's most prestigious institutions: **Kristóf Baráti** (violin, Budapest), **Anne Shih** (violin, Mainz), **Julian Steckel** (cello, Munich), **Wilfried Strehle** (viola, Berlin), **Máté Szűcs** (viola, Geneva), **István Várdai** (cello, Vienna), **Quirine Viersen** (cello, Amsterdam), and **Dániel Somogyi-Tóth**, Music Director of Kodály Philharmonic Debrecen. This list of names alone is an indication that the competition is aiming to be at the forefront of European music from the very beginning—it will be one of the leading events on the music competition calendar not only in the country, but also in the region.

“Debrecen is not only a cultural centre but an open-minded university town. Few people know that we have the highest number of foreign students in the region”, said **István Puskás**, deputy mayor for culture of the town. This competition not only brings the world's most talented young musicians to the city, but also puts in an international context the high quality of the city's music ensembles and events, including the Béla Bartók International Choir Competition, with which this new competition will be a perfect match.

“An important task and goal of Kodály Philharmonic Debrecen is to seek opportunities in which the city can excel not only regionally or nationally, but also internationally”, stated **Dániel Somogyi-Tóth**. “The idea of the competition was conceived in connection to an application for the European Capital of Culture, and I am very happy that Debrecen's cultural calendar can be extended with an event that any European city could be proud of.”

“There is a competition among competitions as well, and it takes not years but decades to achieve the prestige of the Chopin Piano Competition or of the Van Cliburn Competition”, said Vice President of JM International **Dávid Zsoldos**. “The main way to position a newly established competition at the forefront is through the composition of the jury: that is why I am particularly grateful to the sensational musicians from all over the world who accepted our invitation at a word and with whom we have been able to put together a competition notice that I believe will inspire young musicians all over the world.”

The three-round competition will take place from 17–26 June 2022, with violinists, violists, and cellists competing against each other rather than in separate categories. In the first round, the contestants perform solo, and in the second round they perform with piano

accompaniment or as a duo. The six best will qualify for the orchestral finals, performing one concerto each as soloists with the Kodály Philharmonic Orchestra of Debrecen.

All rounds will be open to the public, and the events will take place in several venues: the opening ceremony will take place in the impressive ceremonial hall of the University of Debrecen, while the first two rounds will be held in the concert hall of the Kodály School, which was completely renovated last year. The orchestral final will already be an exciting programme because of the venue itself, as it will be one of the first events at the new multifunctional venue of the Csokonai Theatre, which will be completed next May.