

Polstjärnepriset Nordic Edition 2027 – Announcement and competition rules

Please note that the information below only applies to the current edition of the competition.

Polstjärnepriset – background

Polstjärnepriset was founded in 2007 by the Vänersborg municipality as an annual competition for the best young classical musicians in Sweden. Since autumn 2019, Polstjärnepriset is organised by the Swedish National Centre for Music Talents (NCM). Members and partners of NCM include eight of Sweden's top orchestras, all music colleges in Sweden, and Regional Music in Sweden with its 23 member organisations. A full list can be found at www.yomacenter.se/en/eng-ncm/members-and-board/. After two successful Nordic Editions in 2023 and 2025, young musicians from all Nordic countries are again eligible for the competition's third Nordic Edition in 2027.

“More than a competition” – about Polstjärnepriset's artistic vision

The purpose of the competition is to recognise talented young classical musicians and to help them in their further artistic development. In addition to the competition itself, Polstjärnepriset contributes in several other ways to the further development of young talents. The competition element is complemented by teaching and seminars, as well as orchestral and ensemble playing where all participants also get the chance to play and perform together. The Polstjärnepriset instructors give lessons, master classes and lead chamber music, sectional and orchestral rehearsals. Polstjärnepriset's own symphony orchestra performs together with the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra during the competition's final concert but also makes its own appearances in prestigious venues. All elements contribute to the participants' musical development and prepare them for performances at various public events. In this way, all competitors have the opportunity to present themselves to an audience. The musical work is complemented by lectures, workshops, and concert visits.

Polstjärnepriset takes place over two periods: part 1, 28 October-1 November 2026 and part 2, 1-6 January 2027. Participation requires full attendance all days.

Who can apply?

Eligible for the competition are musicians born 2008-2012, playing one of the standard classical orchestral instruments, including piano. Organ, guitar, accordion, and percussion are excluded from the competition.

The applicant should fulfil one of the following requirements:

- being a citizen of a Nordic country (confirmed with copy of passport or national ID card)
- having been a registered resident of a Nordic country for at least two years before the first day of the competition (confirmed with certificate of residency)
- having studied in one or more Nordic countries for at least two years before the first day of the competition (confirmed with certificate from school/schools)

The necessary certificates described above shall be submitted in connection with the application according to the instructions below.

Application

Applications to the competition are submitted through the form at www.yomacenter.se, no later than 15 June 2026.

Recordings for application and pre-selection:

The applicant shall submit two recordings of different character, either from different works or different movements from one work, with a total duration of approximately 10 minutes. The recordings may contain works offered for the competition repertoire. The recordings should be in MP3 or MP4 format, consist of continuous, unedited performances and be marked with the applicant's name. Links to the recordings (e.g. YouTube or Vimeo) must be provided in the application form.

Please make sure that the sound quality is good enough to give a fair impression of your playing – don't place the microphones too far away.

Scores:

Scores of the competition repertoire, including piano accompaniments, shall be submitted as an attached PDF file to polstjarnepriset@yomacenter.se, marked with the applicant's name.

Original scores of the piano accompaniments must be brought to Polstjärnepriset part 1 in October-November.

Recordings, scores and a copy of passport/national ID or certificate of residency or school enrolment shall be submitted to polstjarnepriset@yomacenter.se no later than 15 June 2026.

Pre-selection

The places in the competition are allocated according to the population of the countries: Sweden 7 competitors; Denmark, Finland and Norway 4 each; Iceland 1. The national pre-selection juries will judge the anonymised recordings, and the organising committee notifies the accepted participants on 10 August. Applicants not accepted to the competition may be offered a place in the Polstjärnepriset course. A separate application to the course is not necessary in this case.

Competition

The competition consists of three rounds in January. After the First Round, eight competitors advance to the Semifinal Round. Four competitors from the Semifinal Round advance to the Final Round. The Semifinal and Final Rounds are open to the public.

Please note that only competitors and staff are allowed access to the stage and backstage areas during the competition.

The competitors will be accompanied by a pianist provided by the organisers during the First and Semifinal Rounds.

The pianos used in the First and Semifinal Rounds, as well as the orchestra in the Final Round are tuned at $a_1 = 442$ Hz. It is recommended to tune the instrument before entering the stage for the competition performance and only make a quick check on stage.

Competition repertoire:

The competition repertoire should consist of three works/movements:

- a work for solo instrument and orchestra, maximum duration 12 min, for the Final Round with the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra
- a work of the competitor's choice, maximum duration 8 min, for the Semifinal Round
- a work of the competitor's choice for the First Round, recommended duration approximately 6 min (the jury has the right to stop a performance that exceeds the allotted time)

Competition round	Repertoire	Maximum duration
First Round	Excerpt from the work for solo and orchestra; the chosen work for the First Round	Time with the jury: 12 minutes
Semifinal Round	Chosen work for the Semifinal Round	8 minutes
Final Round	Work for solo and orchestra	12 minutes

Exceeding the maximum duration in the Semifinal and Final Rounds may influence the assessment of the competitor's performance negatively. This decision will be taken by the jury in consultation with the organizing committee.

Participants are encouraged to demonstrate a wide-ranging repertoire, featuring works from different eras and of varying character.

Any changes to the competition repertoire submitted at the time of application can only be made by email to jonas.olsson@yomacenter.se, no later than 15 October 2026. Please note that this applies to the repertoire for all competition rounds. After this date, no more changes can be made.

First Round:

In the First Round of the competition, the competitor has 12 minutes with the jury and performs an excerpt from the work for soloist and orchestra, ahead of a possible final round with the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra and a piece of their own choosing lasting approximately 6 minutes. The jury decides which section of the final piece is to be performed

Semifinal Round:

The Semifinal Round is a public concert in Vänersborg and the competitor will play one or more movements from the same work, alternatively one whole work, for a total maximum duration of 8 minutes.

Final Round:

The Final Round is a public concert in the Gothenburg Concert Hall and the competitor will play one or more movements from the same work, alternatively one whole work, for a total maximum duration of 12 minutes. Longer works/movements must be shortened, with the cuts clearly indicated at the time of application.

Repertoire for the Final Round:

The Polstjärnepriset finalists are accompanied by the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra (GSO). The chosen work for the Final Round must be a work for solo instrument with orchestra, with a maximum instrumentation of 2222/4331/1311/str.

A Concerto list of approved works with orchestra for all competition instruments can be found at www.yomacenter.se. Works from this list can be chosen freely.

It is of course possible to have more than one work for solo and orchestra; these will be accompanied by the competition's pianist during the first two rounds. Pianists may only have one work with orchestra.

Fees and costs

Participation in the Polstjärnepriset competition and course is free of charge. Costs for travels, meals and accommodation are paid by the participants. Participants who play one of our focus instruments (oboe, bassoon, French horn, viola or double bass) and who live more than 300 kilometres from Vänersborg, will receive a travel allowance of up to 800 SEK. The same applies to all competition participants from Finland and Iceland. Polstjärnepriset will book accommodation in multi-bed rooms, including breakfast, at a discounted price at Arena and Strand Hotel in Vänersborg. Meals (lunch and dinner) will also be booked at a discounted cost at the Vänerparken restaurant. Payment is due before arrival.

Organising committee

The organising committee consists of competition director Jonas Olsson, senior advisor Ulrich Kaatz and operating manager Gunilla Wretemark. The organising committee is responsible for the competition rules and appointing the jury.

Violations

Violations of the competition rules and deadlines may result in disqualification. This decision will be taken by the competition director in consultation with the chairperson of the jury.

Jury

The jury consists of outstanding musicians, pedagogues, and representatives of the music business. Polstjärnepriset aims at having each Nordic country represented among the jury members. Students of jury members may participate in the competition. Polstjärnepriset doesn't want to exclude these jury members or their students from the competition. Therefore, a strict procedure ensures that jury members will not take part in the assessment or discussion of their own students or competitors in any other way closely related to the jury member.

The assessment of the jury

Polstjärnepriset is a soloist competition. Musical expression and stage presence are important evaluation criteria, especially in the Semifinal and Final Rounds. Technical mastery of the instrument and difficulty of the chosen repertoire are thus not the only criteria. Sensitivity to the accompaniment will be taken into consideration. Playing by memory is no obligation, but reading the score should not be allowed to interfere with the musical performance, especially in the public rounds. The decision of the jury is final.

Prizes, awards and engagements

1st prize: 50 000 SEK

2nd prize: 10 000 SEK

3rd prize: 5 000 SEK

4th prize: 5 000 SEK

Taxes will be paid by the winners.

The 1st prize winner may be offered a soloist engagement, performing a short work with the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra or Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra at some time during the year following the competition. The 1st prize winner will also be invited to curate a concert (solo/chamber/small orchestra) in connection with the next edition of the competition, in November 2027. The other prize-winners may also be offered engagements at festivals or with orchestras.

Instructors

Our instructors are internationally active artists and pedagogues who give individual lessons and guidance for performances. They also coach chamber ensembles, lead orchestral rehearsals and give inspiration through master classes etc.

Media

The competitors will be photographed and should be prepared for audio and video recordings as well as interviews, during both parts of Polstjärnepriset, in November and January.

All finalists are expected to stay after the Final Round for photographs and meeting the media. The winner should also be available for media for a couple of days after the Final Round.

Photos

Portrait photos of the competitors (in concert dress, with instruments) will be taken during Polstjärnepriset part 1 in November. These pictures will be used by Polstjärnepriset for its website, social media, programme book etc.

Personal presentation

All applicants to the competition will write a personal presentation (approximately 100-120 words) as part of their application. This presentation will be published on the website, on social media and in the programme book.

Consent of publication

The partners of NCM and Polstjärnepriset want to present Polstjärnepriset and its competitors on web sites, in printed media and by publishing photos, audio and video recordings of the participants.

To fulfil the requirements of the data protection regulation GDPR, in connection with the application (and later admission to the competition), the applicant/parent gives the organizer (and its listed partners) permission to use personal data, photos, audio and video recordings from Polstjärnepriset for purposes of marketing and documentation.

Important dates

15 April 2026

The application opens. Information and link for applying www.yomacenter.se
Please read the information carefully and prepare the documents and recording before application day.

15 June 2026

Last day for applying to Polstjärnepriset, the competition. Please note that audio recordings, all scores and copy of ID document, identity card or certificate from your school must be attached to your application.

10 August 2026

An announcement will be sent, via e-mail, to the participants who are offered a place in the competition. Documentation and other requirements will be attached. Those who are not admitted to the competition may be offered a position at the course.

17 August 2026

Last day of confirmation of participation at the competition. The confirmation means that you agree to participate on both periods during Polstjärnepriset part 1 and part 2.

1 October 2026

Scores and parts for ensemble and orchestra are available on the login page.

15 October 2026

Last day notice if you want to change the competition repertoire.

Email to jonas.olsson@yomacenter.se. Please note that after this date you can't change the repertoire.

28 October – 1 November 2026

Polstjärnepriset part 1. Mandatory attendance every day. Lessons, chamber music, orchestra rehearsals, and festival concerts.

28 October 2026

Entry and registration at Vänerparken 14.45-16.45. Activities start at 17.00.

1 November 2026

Return journey no earlier than 16.10 from Vänersborg.

1-6 January 2027

Polstjärnepriset part 2. Mandatory attendance every day.

1 January 2027

Rehearsals with pianist from 14.00 according to an individual schedule.

2 January 2027

First round of the competition.

3 January 2027

Semifinal (a public concert) in Vänersborg at 18.00.

Competitors who don't reach the semifinal will have lessons, chamber music and/or orchestra.

4 January 2027

Finalists go to Gothenburg to rehearse with the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra.

Competitors who don't reach the final will have lessons, chamber music and festival concerts.

5 January 2027

All competitors and course participants travel to Gothenburg Concert Hall.

The final starts at 15.00

6 January 2027

Concert in another city.

Contact

Competition director

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Competition office

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Vänersborg, 15 April 2026

The organising committee, Polstjärnepriset – Jonas Olsson, Ulrich Kaatz and Gunilla Wretemark