



Press information

Katowice, 4.08.2026

Worlds and Talent Shining Through The 3rd Karol Szymanowski International Music Competition Is Coming

Soon, the concert halls of Katowice will once again become a meeting place where young musicians from around the world engage with the legacy of Karol Szymanowski. Entering into a dialogue with his music, they will seek their own artistic voice and identity. We are delighted to announce the 3rd Karol Szymanowski International Music Competition, to be held from 1 to 19 September 2027.

Despite its relatively short history, the Competition has already established itself as a prestigious event and earned recognition within the international music community. It bears the name of Karol Szymanowski, a composer whose music only began to gain broad international recognition in the 1990s, when it finally started to assume its rightful place in the world's concert repertoire.

Karol Szymanowski (1882–1937) was a composer in constant motion—between a newly independent Poland and the rest of Europe. His inspirations ranged from places as distant as the Podhale region and medieval Sicily, while his music embraced an extraordinary diversity of styles, from late Romanticism, through echoes of Expressionism and Impressionism, to folk-inspired idioms. For young musicians, the Karol Szymanowski International Music Competition is therefore an invitation to discover the less obvious: what shines through — and between — different eras, cultures and individual sensibilities. It is also an opportunity to embark on a truly international career.

As Adam Balas, Director of the Competition and General and Artistic Director of Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, explains: “Among the most important events in classical music today are competitions that not only identify prize-winners but also shape the future of music. Their role in discovering and supporting young artists can hardly be overstated – especially at a time when career paths are far from straightforward. That is why it is so important that initiatives of this kind continue to thrive, opening up tangible opportunities for a new generation of musicians. The Karol Szymanowski International Music Competition is a place where potential begins to translate into a real foothold in the international music world”.

Adam Balas also emphasises that the organisers' ambition is for the Competition to bring together young artists and the wider music community while at the same time remaining in close dialogue with audiences. The Competition will therefore be accompanied by a wide-ranging programme of events, bringing together these overlapping worlds as they shine through one another.

Five Paths to the Top

The Competition comprises four performance categories—piano, violin, string quartet and voice—as well as a composition category. Participants will be evaluated by five separate juries, one for each category.

The total prize fund exceeds EUR 300,000. Yet the true prize lies in the momentum that success in the Competition can give to the international careers of young artists. Prize-winners can also look forward to recording opportunities and concert engagements. For every participant, winning a prize may prove to be a life-changing milestone.

Katowice – the Heart of the Szymanowski Competition

The Competition takes place in the halls of the Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice and at the iconic home of the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, opening to participants both its Chamber Hall and its Concert Hall, regarded as one of the finest in Europe. It is here, in Katowice—UNESCO City of Music—that music serves as a common language, a space for encounter and a resource on which the future is built.

The Szymanowski Competition also stands as a testament to the ambition and hard work of the people of the capital of Silesia, which, following the difficult years of the 1990s, has consistently reshaped its identity by bringing together its industrial heritage and an international music scene—and, more broadly, a vibrant cultural life.

Organisers and Partners

The 3rd Karol Szymanowski International Music Competition is organised by the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra based in Katowice, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the City of Katowice, and its partners: Polish Radio, the Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice, and the Karol Szymanowski Music Society in Zakopane.

Nearly 600 artists from 24 countries took part in the previous edition of the Competition. Even greater interest is expected in 2027.

Further information is available on the Competition's website:

<https://szymanowski-competition.com/>

The project „Preparation and Organisation of the 3rd Karol Szymanowski International Music Competition” is co-financed by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

Organiser

NOSPR

Co-organisers and co-financed by



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i Dziedzictwa Narodowego



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