

Youth Guitar Competition

Paganini Guitar Festival 2026

REGULATIONS

Art. 1 Registration

The “Giovani Promesse” (Young Talents) Competition is open to both Italian and international musicians. It will take place from **May 29th to May 31st, 2026**, in Parma, at the “*Arturo Toscanini*” Music Production Center, *Parco 1° Maggio ex-Eridania*, Viale Barilla 27/A, for free parking Via Toscana 5/a, 43121 Parma (PR).

Art. 2 Sections and Categories

The auditions are open to the public and divided into the following sections and categories:

Section: Musical-Oriented Lower Secondary Schools (Guitar Soloists)

Sunday, May 31st

– **Cat. A:** Students currently enrolled in the 1st year (6th grade)

– **Cat. B:** Students currently enrolled in the 2nd year (7th grade)

Saturday, May 30th and/or Sunday, May 31st

– **Cat. C:** Students currently enrolled in the 3rd year (8th grade)

Section: Guitar Soloists

Saturday, May 30th

- **Cat. D:** Born in 2014 or later
- **Cat. E:** Born between 2010 and 2013

Friday, May 29th and/or Saturday, May 30th

- **Cat. F:** Born between 2006 and 2009

Section: Chamber Music / Ensembles

Sunday, May 31st

- **Cat G:** Chamber ensembles from 2 to 5 members, including at least one guitar (average age not exceeding 18 years)
- **Cat. H:** Guitar ensembles for students of Musical-Oriented Lower Secondary Schools (6 to 30 members)
- **Cat. I:** Guitar ensembles for students of Higher Secondary Schools (Music High Schools or other public/private schools), 6 to 30 members (maximum age of 20 years)

Soloists Section (Cat. D, E, F): Candidates may register for a category higher than their own; however, participation in more than one solo category is not permitted.

On the other hand, candidates are allowed to participate in both a solo category and a chamber music category.

In Categories H and I, a maximum of two non-guitar instruments are permitted for groups of 6 to 16 members, and up to four non-guitar instruments for groups of 17 to 30 members.

First Prize winners (Absolute Winners) of a category from previous editions may no longer compete in that same category or—for the Chamber Music section—with the same ensemble.

It is not permitted to register for both the “Giovani Promesse” Competition and the International Guitar Competition simultaneously.

Art. 3 – Registration Fees

- Musical-Oriented Lower Secondary School Section (Guitar Soloists) **Cat. A, B, C:** €25
- Guitar Soloists Section **Cat. D, E, F:** €50
- Chamber Music / Ensemble Section **Cat. G, H, I:** €25 per participant*

**The registration fee for categories G, H, and I is reduced by 50% for participants of the Paganini Youth Guitar Orchestra project (for further information, visit www.paganinifestival.com).*

Registration fees are non-refundable, except in the event that the competition is canceled.

Art. 4 – Jury

The juries will be composed of renowned musicians, professors from Music Conservatories, and faculty members from Musical-Oriented Secondary Schools.

Art. 5 – Audition Program

*Musical-Oriented Lower Secondary School Section (Guitar Soloists) – Single Round: **

- **Cat. A:** Free choice program (maximum 4 minutes).
- **Cat. B:** Free choice program (maximum 6 minutes).
- **Cat. C:** Free choice program (maximum 8 minutes).

*Guitar Soloists Section – Single Round: **

- **Cat. D:** Free choice program (maximum 6 minutes).
- **Cat. E:** Free choice program (maximum 8 minutes).
- **Cat. F:** One *Ghiribizzo* by Niccolò Paganini (from "*43 Ghiribizzi*" M.S. 43) and a free choice program (total maximum duration: 12 minutes).

*Chamber Music / Ensemble Section – Single Round: **

- **Cat. G-H-I:** Free choice program (maximum 10 minutes).

**Transcriptions are permitted within the free choice programs.*

Scores are awarded out of 100.

- *First Prize*: Score of 95/100 or higher.
- *Second Prize*: Score of 90/100 or higher.
- *Third Prize*: Score of 85/100 or higher.
- *Absolute Winner*: The candidate with the highest score among the First Prizes, provided it is at least 98/100.

The Jury's decision is final and binding. The Jury reserves the right not to award one or more prizes. While Absolute Prizes are indivisible, the Jury may award multiple First, Second, or Third Prizes based on the artistic level of the performances. Results will be announced at the end of each audition day and during the award ceremonies.

Art. 7 – Certificates, Diplomas, and Prizes

MUSICAL-ORIENTED LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL SECTION

- **Cat. A¹**

First Prize: Diploma, strings or accessories, sheet music.

Second Prize: Diploma, sheet music.

Third Prize: Diploma.

- **Cat. B¹**

First Prize: Diploma, strings or accessories, sheet music.

Second Prize: Diploma, sheet music.

Third Prize: Diploma.

- **Cat. C¹**

First Prize: Diploma, strings or accessories, sheet music.

Second Prize: Diploma, sheet music.

Third Prize: Diploma.

1. Strings and accessories provided by D'Addario Foundation, Aquila Corde Armoniche Srl, and Knobloch Strings. Musical editions provided by 'Curci Edizioni Musicali' and 'Ut Orpheus

SOLOIST SECTION

- **Cat. D¹:**

Absolute First Prize:

- Diploma,
- Accessories
- sets of strings offered by the D'Addario Foundation.

First Prize: Diploma, accessories, sets of strings and music-related prizes

Second Prize: Diploma and music-related prizes

Third Prize: Diploma and music-related prizes.

- **Cat. E¹:**

Absolute First Prize:

- Absolute First Prize Diploma;
- *Altamira N400* guitar (€900 value) offered by Altamira Guitars;
- strings or accessories.

First Prize: Diploma, accessories, sets of strings and music-related prizes

Second Prize: Diploma and music-related prizes

Third Prize: Diploma and music-related prizes .

- **Cat. F¹:**

Absolute First Prize:

- Absolute First Prize Diploma;
- “*Marta Storci*” Scholarship (€300);
- *Altamira N500* guitar (€1,200 value) offered by Altamira Guitars;
- strings or accessories.

CHAMBER MUSIC / ENSEMBLE SECTION

- **Cat. G-H-I¹**

First: Diploma, strings, accessories, and sheet music

Second: Diploma, strings, accessories, and sheet music

Third Prize: Diploma.

Special “Niccolò Paganini” Prize (Soloist Section, **Cat. D-E-F**) awarded for the best performance of a solo work by **N. Paganini**.

- All non-winning candidates will receive a Certificate of Participation.
- The Jury reserves the right not to award one or more prizes.
- Overall first prizes (absolute prizes) are indivisible; however, the Jury may award multiple first, second, or third prizes depending on the artistic level of the contestants.
- The award ceremony for categories D-E-F will take place on Saturday, May 30th.
- The award ceremony for categories A-B-C-G-H-I will take place on Sunday, May 31st.
- Attendance at the award ceremony is mandatory to confirm and receive the prize.

Art. 8 – Auditions

Prior to each audition, candidates must present a valid ID and a copy of their programmed scores to the examining board. The use of printed editions is strongly recommended.

The Artistic Direction reserves the right to modify the audition schedule due to *force majeure* (unforeseen circumstances); in such cases, participants will be notified promptly.

The audition schedule will be available online starting from **May 11th, 2026**. When scheduling performance times, the participation of candidates in the Paganini Youth Guitar Orchestra will be taken into consideration.

The jury reserves the right to interrupt any performance that exceeds the specified time limits.

Jury members must disclose any family ties or ongoing teacher-student relationships with candidates.

In such cases, the jury member will abstain from voting for that specific candidate.

In the event of any dispute, the official regulations available online at www.paganinifestival.com as of **May 4th, 2026**, shall be considered the definitive and legally binding version.

Art. 9 – Application Process

The application form must be completed in full via the online module and submitted **no later than 12:00 AM (midnight) on May 4th, 2026**, under penalty of disqualification from the competition.

Simultaneously with the application, a receipt of the registration fee payment must be sent—either via the same online module or by email to **concorso@paganinifestival.com**. Payment must be made by bank transfer to:

- **Account Name:** Società dei Concerti di Parma APS
- **Bank:** BPER BANCA
- **IBAN:** IT 81 V 05387 12702 0000 0330 2963
- **BIC/SWIFT:** BPMOIT22XXX
- **Payment Reference (Causale):** Iscrizione Concorso Giovani Promesse – [Full name of the participant or ensemble]

For further information: Società dei Concerti – Paganini Guitar Festival Email: concorso@paganinifestival.com Website: <https://www.paganinifestival.com/>