



photos: Enrico Bassi (1st prize Bassoon), William Fielding (1st prize Organ), Viatores Quartet (1st prize String Quartet), Gabriel Michaud (1st prize percussion), audience semi-final organ, © Daniel Delang

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75th International ARD Music Competition

Audience interest has never been greater

Prizewinners in Bassoon, Organ, String Quartet and Percussion announced

Busy preliminary rounds, a concert hall that had to be opened up to provide extra places for the audience, and worldwide interest online: in its anniversary year, the In-ternational ARD Music Competition has shown how great the interest in classical mu-sic can be when it is there to be experienced live – on the spot in Munich, or digitally with 18 livestreams reaching an international audience from the USA to South Korea. Yesterday, on the evening of Sunday, September 13, the competition rounds ended with a level of excellence that amazed the professional jurors. Prizewinners in the categories Bassoon, Organ, String Quartet and Percussion have now been announced. From September 16 to 18, all prizewinners will perform in three final prizewinners' concerts, which will also be livestreamed on ARD Klassik's YouTube channel and broadcast live worldwide as the final event of the ARD Radio Festival.

In the first final, in the category **Organ**, William Fielding (Great Britain) took first prize. Sec-ond prize went to Alexis Grizard (France) and third prize to Julian Emanuel Becker (Germa-ny).

In the **Bassoon** category, Enrico Bassi (Italy) was the winner. Second prize went to Jappe Dendievel (Belgium). Laure Thomas (France) was awarded third prize.

The most valuable first prize, worth EUR 30,000, was in the **String Quartet** category and was won by the Viatores Quartet (Germany/Great Britain/Portugal/Turkey). Third prize went to the Quartet Fugue (Japan) and the Katarina String Quartet (Canada/USA). The jury decided not to award a second prize.

In the last of the three finals, in the category **Percussion**, the winner was Gabriel Michaud (Frankreich). Second prize was awarded to Yuan Xia (China).

This year's **ARD Klassik Media Prize** went to Gabriel Michaud (Frankreich). ARD Klassik will work with the prizewinner in 2027 to realize a high-quality media recording for the ARD Mediathek and the ARD Klassik YouTube channel. This year's competition also features the premiere of music clips made with last year's prizewinner, pianist Liya Wang. The clips are available online, [here](#) and [here](#).

Once all the many special prizes offered by partners and sponsors have been added in, this year's prize money amounts to a total of more than EUR 210,000.

Full concert halls, astonished juries and vivid livestreams

Over 180 musicians from 32 countries took to the podium at the ARD Music Competition in the course of the past two weeks. The artistic standard of the participants set the expert juries a challenging task. "To be able to play at this competition, you need to practice for about a year and a half. You commit yourself to it totally and then on the platform, you give it your all," says **Martin Grubinger**, chair of the jury for the Percussion category. "Even in the very first round, the candidates were achieving a sensationally high level. The 75th anniversary edition has offered the conclusive proof of Sir Simon Rattle's dictum: 'This is the Olympic Games of classical music'."

Competitors performed in Munich's city centre in a total of six venues, among them for the first time the Jesuit church of St. Michael, the Amerikahaus and the Literaturhaus. "2026 gave the ARD Music Competition a bigger presence in downtown Munich than ever before – from the Mass in St. Michael by way of a café to a flashmob in the pedestrian precinct," reports **Meret Forster**, Artistic Director. "That goes for the Organ category in particular. The organ community has been waiting for the return of the King of Instruments for the past fifteen years. Public interest was so great that for the final, we had to open the upper galleries of the Herkulesaal to accommodate the audience."

With 18 livestreams and joint projects involving the creative musical scene, as with organist Paul Fey and multi-percussionist Vivi Vassileva, the competition has been widening its digital platform. The transmissions on the YouTube channel @ARDKlassik reached music fans all over Germany and an international audience stretching from the USA to South Korea. The competition's social media channels, ARD Klassik's platforms and livestreams on YouTube proved that again this year, they could win over a mostly young, music-loving community for the competition.

The prizewinners in all four categories

Bassoon

- 1st prize: Enrico Bassi (Italy)
- 2nd prize: Jappe Dendievel (Belgium)
- 3rd prize: Laure Thomas (France)

Organ

- 1st prize: William Fielding (Great Britain)
- 2nd prize: Alexis Grizard (France)
- 3rd prize: Julian Emanuel Becker (Germany)

Percussion

- 1st prize: Gabriel Michaud (France)
- 2nd prize: Yuan Xia (China)

String Quartet

- 1st prize: Viatores Quartet (Germany/Great Britain/Portugal/Turkey):
Louisa Rose Staples (violin), Johannes Brzoska (violin), Miguel Erlich (viola) und Umut Sağlam (cello)
- 3rd prize: Katarina String Quartet (Canada/USA):
Jeanel Liang (violin), Jérôme Chiasson (violin), Celia Morin (viola), Maya Enstad (cello)
- 3rd prize: Quartet Fugue (Japan):
Mako Ochiai (violin), Kentaro Konishi (violin),
Soichiro Kawabe (viola), Soichiro Matsutani (cello)

Prizewinners' concerts in Munich and in livestream

On **September 16**, the prizewinners will be playing in a chamber concert in the Great Concert Hall of the University of Music and Theatre Munich (HMTM).

The second prizewinners' concert will take place in the Prinzregententheater on **September 17** together with the Munich Chamber Orchestra.

In a final prizewinners' concert on **September 18**, the prizewinners will be playing in the Herkulesaal of the Residence alongside the Symphony Orchestra of Bayerischer Rundfunk under the baton of Dennis Russell Davies.

All three prizewinners' concerts will be streamed live on YouTube, [HERE](#) and Germany-wide on the ARD radio arts frequencies from 20:03 (8.03 pm).

Press material

Further information on the competition can be found online at the website [HERE](#)

Photos and additional press material are available to download [HERE](#)

Press contact

PS Music Berlin

Peggy Schmidt, Simone Dollmann

mail: ard-wettbewerb@psmusicberlin.com

phone: +49 (0)171 689 01 12

BR Press Office

Wolfgang Zehentmeier

mail: Wolfgang.Zehentmeier@br.de

phone: + 49 (0)89 5900-10552

