



58th International Violin Competition

"Premio Paganini"

Genoa, 14 - 26 October 2025

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Long live Paganini!



A letter from Nazzareno Carusi, Artistic Director of the 57th Premio Paganini competition

Faced with the task and the infinity of Paganini's genius and the International Competition named after him, I felt the need to go back to the roots of Tradition before turning any gaze to the future. This was – and still is - the challenge. And I felt my work should therefore focus first of all on the cornerstones of a music competition: the announcement, the jury, the prize and the concert awards.

Not easy to measure against such a legendary past and keep such a high level while introducing the innovation needed to move with the times...

I thought the key was to widen the horizons, starting from the heritage of Premio Paganini, humbly and diligently, to draw a lesson from its glorious past and its everlasting memories.

First, I proposed to appoint Salvatore Accardo as the president of the jury. No one like him, over the last sixty-five years, has been embodying Paganini's spirit, virtuosity and music, with a unique awareness that combines instrumental perfection with the clear structural, operatic and melodic inspiration of Paganini's immortal masterpieces.

Then I carefully went through the official call and its standards to develop some new and yet consistent ideas meant to innovate the original format without altering its essence. The Semifinal round, for instance, includes now two Sonatas - one dating back before 1781 and the other written in 20th century. Candidates could therefore potentially opt for two modern or contemporary pieces, offering the jury the possibility to understand something more about their own musical attitude. This year the Finals will consist of two rounds: the first with one of Mozart's concerts, to be performed without conduction and thus allow the jury to furtherly explore the musician's and not simply the violinist's personality.

Our work started in mid-June with the aim of publishing the Call in October: an intensive, challenging sort of 'marathon' to meet two important deadlines:

- October 27th, when the Premio was officially presented at the Genoa City Hall in Palazzo Tursi with the extraordinary opening of Paganini's Museum and
- November 3rd, on a special event held at the Italian Embassy in Paris, under the High Patronage of the President of the Republic Sergio Mattarella.

A distinguished Jury will support President Salvatore Accardo for this 57th edition of Premio Paganini: Ilya Grubert (The Netherlands), Michael Guttman (Belgium), Régis Pasquier (France), Christopher Reuning (USA), Maxim Vengerov (Russia - Israel) and Reiko Watanabe (Japan).

I personally chaired the five international committees previously appointed for the preliminary selection of candidates: Vera Weiling Tsu and Mengla Huang in Guangzhou; Jinjoo Cho and Benjamin Bowman in New York; Silvia Marcovici and Mariusz Patyra in Prague; Mauro Iurato and Machie Oguri in Tokyo; Massimo Quarta and Pavel Vernikov in Genoa.

As for the prize-concerts, it was my strong will to create around Premio Paganini the largest and most choral support by involving all the major musical institutions, obviously starting from Italy to stress the prestige of our competition within the national scene and all Italian stakeholders.

As a result, the winner of Premio Paganini 2023 will be awarded with a carnet of about 70 concerts offered by the major Italian theaters and festivals, including La Scala in Milano, one of most famous theatres in the world, which for the first time in its history will award a music competition winner hosting his/her performance.

Most of the major international music institutions will award Paganini's winner and more awards are still being offered (see the latest list at www.premiopaganini.it) to witness the enthusiastic support the Italian music system provides to our Premio thanks to the commitment of the very many bodies and institutions involved.

International awards are also confirmed for 2024, starting from two extraordinary concerts which shall be held at the Louvre in Paris, on January 23, as well as at the Guildhall in London, with the accompaniment of the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Antonio Pappano, on October 15.

On these premises, the 57th Premio Internazionale di Violino N. Paganini is set to be a record edition, with its highest number of registrations: 117 candidates from 31 countries, with 30 young violinists to perform in front of the Jury at Teatro "Carlo Felice".

Last but not least, the Paganini's First Prize will have the immense privilege of playing "il Cannone", Paganini's unrivaled and unique Guarneri del Gesù (1743), bequeathed to the City of Genova and carefully kept in the Sale Paganiniane of Palazzo Tursi. An invaluable heritage that can definitely be considered as the most precious music instrument in the world.

Starting from this year, the final round and the award ceremony shall take place on October 27, celebrating forever Paganini's birthday with an official tribute in his birthplace. The first round – Eliminatoria – will be held at Palazzo Tursi on October 17 - 18 October and include as an anteprima an original piece commissioned to Silvia Colasanti, an Italian composer of international fame. The second round – Semifinale – will be held at Teatro "Carlo Felice" on October 20 - 21 October. The 12 competitors admitted shall present a 75-minute programme. The last round – Finale – will be held at Teatro "Carlo Felice" on October 25 - 27 October and will offer the performance of the six finalists. Each of them shall play one of Mozart's concerts without conduction. Only three of them will then access the Grand Finale presenting one of Paganini's concerts along with another concerto accompanied by the Orchestra of Teatro "Carlo Felice" conducted by Michele Gamba.

In conclusion, I would like to express my warmest gratitude for the honor, the trust and the support I received from the whole City of Genoa.

A special thank goes to the Mayor Marco Bucci, the President of Premio Paganini Giovanni Panebianco, the Paganini Committee (Martine Bernheim Orsini, Elvira Bonfanti, Carlo Clavarino, Nicola Costa, Francesco Micheli, Claudio Orazi, Roberto Tagliamacco, Michele Trenti) and its Ambassadors, the Secretary General Gloria Piaggio, to Councilor Barbara Grosso, as well as to Teatro "Carlo Felice", Conservatorio "Niccolò Paganini", GOG - Giovine Orchestra Genovese, the "Amici di Paganini" Association, the members of the International Jury and the member of the international preliminary committees.

A heartfelt thank you to the pianists Maria Grazia Bellocchio, Monica Cattarossi and Valentina Messa who will accompany the Semifinals, the pianist Luna Costantini who accompanied the five preliminary rounds, maestro Michele Gamba who will conduct the Orchestra of Teatro "Carlo Felice", the Premio Paganini Secretariat in charge within the City Municipality and "my" staff always supporting the artistic direction in its activity and, last but not least, the former Secretary General Piera Castagnacci.

The very last thought with the highest expression of my affection and gratitude is for Maestro Salvatore Accardo and Dr. Francesco Micheli for their generous, invaluable support.

See you in Genoa, from October 16 - 27, 2023!

Long live Paganini, Long live Premio Paganini!

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