

PRESS RELEASE

PREMIO PAGANINI, A 58TH EDITION FULL OF NEW FEATURES, FROM OCTOBER 14 TO 26

Mayor Salis: «The violin competition is not only a tribute to Paganini's genius, but also a powerful message of peace that only music, the universal language par excellence, can convey»

Genoa, October 14 – The 58th edition of the *Premio Paganini*, one of the most prestigious musical competitions in the world, officially opens today. From October 14 to 26, it will bring the excellence of the violin back to the birthplace of the great virtuoso.

Following the concert by Simon Zhu with the Cannone at the Guildhall in London, alongside the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Antonio Pappano, in the presence of King Charles III, and the widely acclaimed performances at the Louvre in Paris, the Prado in Madrid, and the Royal Opera House in Muscat, the *Premio Paganini* now welcomes to Genoa the 24 violinists selected during the preliminary auditions held in April and May in Berlin, Guangzhou, New York, Seoul, and Genoa.

«The bond between Paganini and our city is deep and full of emotion. The violin competition dedicated to him is not just a homage to his extraordinary artistry, but also a powerful message of peace, dialogue, and solidarity that only music, the universal language par excellence, can convey,» comments Mayor of Genoa Silvia Salis. «We are proud to preserve this legacy and promote Genoa as an international hub for musical culture, enhancing talent as well as the human and civil values that music inspires. To the contestants, jurors, guests, and audience, I extend a warm welcome, with the hope that this edition of the *Premio Paganini* will inspire feelings of peace and help young people pursue their dreams. Welcome to Genoa, and enjoy the music.»

«The *Premio Paganini* is a remarkable opportunity to be captivated by Genoa, a city deeply shaped by music and culture. This year, in addition to the competition's traditional excellence, major initiatives will take place, such as the publication of a volume dedicated to the "Libro mastro di Paganini", the International Study Day on the "Cannone", and the final charity concert at the Teatro Carlo Felice,» says Councillor for Culture Giacomo Montanari. «These events, directly linked to the *Premio*, are joined by others that Genoa offers during its "Paganini Month", as part of a top-tier artistic, cultural, and scientific program: the Rolli Days and activities dedicated to promoting the UNESCO Site of the Palazzi dei Rolli; the many events of "Genoa and the 1800s"; the Science Festival. A unique mix of initiatives that intertwine culture, art, music, architecture, theatre, dance, history, and research—expressing the city's commitment not only to economic and touristic development, but also to human growth, social inclusion, and civil progress.»

«The 58th edition marks another important milestone in the history of the Competition. We have aimed to best combine technique and creativity, research and innovation, institutional engagement and solidarity,» explains *Premio Paganini* President Giovanni Panebianco. «The awareness of the results of our work—culminating in international successes in Paris, Madrid, London, and Muscat—has supported and encouraged us. The *Premio* is increasingly projected toward new, exciting challenges. Thanks to everyone who made this prestigious edition possible, including on the international stage. A special thank you to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Embassies in Paris, Madrid, London, and Muscat, and the Italian Cultural Institutes in Seoul, New York, and Berlin.»

«This edition of the *Premio Paganini*, moved by a hypnotic oscillation between solid tradition and mercurial innovation, seeks to expand the horizon within which we discover the "Paganinian" talents,» says Artistic Director Nicola Bruzzo. «A new dimension has been

added: chamber music, seen not only as a test of knowledge and aesthetic taste but as a capacity for mutual listening—a skill as essential in music as it is in life. There is also another subtle, almost phantom thread woven through this edition: the relationship between Robert Schumann and the genius Genoese violinist, whom he mythologized and elevated to a superhuman figure.»

«**The Premio Paganini is not just a competition, but a true journey into the beauty of sound: a path born from the love for the violin and the deep dialogue between musician and audience,**» says Jury President Uto Ughi. «Each note, each musical phrase, carries passion, sacrifice, and enthusiasm. It's a commitment that goes beyond technicality and touches the responsibility of preserving and renewing the legacy of the Maestro from Genoa. To the contestants, the Jury—of which I am honored to be president—will offer not only its attention but above all its encouragement, because young musicians' performances are always sincere, direct, and capable of expressing inner worlds and authentic emotions. My wish is that every participant lives these days with the joy and responsibility of playing the violin as an instrument of freedom, peace, dialogue, and beauty.»

The average age of the contestants, coming from Europe, Asia, and North America—some already winners of international competitions or enrolled at prestigious music academies—is 22; the youngest competitor is just fifteen.

They will be evaluated by a jury chaired by Maestro **Uto Ughi**, an iconic figure and noble father of the Italian violin scene internationally, and composed of **Pavel Berman** (Italy), **Pamela Frank** (USA), **Mihaela Martin** (Romania), **Enzo Restagno** (Italy), **Sayaka Shoji** (Japan), **Ulf Wallin** (Sweden).

This year's edition, in addition to featuring a highly challenging musical program designed to highlight Paganini's work, also presents an innovative approach to 19th-century chamber repertoire.

Among the required pieces: Schubert's *Grand Duo Sonata* during the preliminary rounds; Schumann's *Sonata in D minor* in the second round; and his *Quintet op. 44* in the semifinal. Chamber music—introduced thanks to a partnership with "Le Dimore del Quartetto" and performers including the *Quartetto Indaco*, *Trio Kobalt*, and *Danusha Waskiewicz*—will help assess not only the violinistic mastery of the contestants, but also their listening skills, flexibility, and overall musical knowledge.

The final, with only three competitors advancing, will be held on October 25 starting at 3 PM. It includes the performance of a Niccolò Paganini concerto and a major concerto from the classical repertoire, accompanied by the Teatro Carlo Felice Orchestra conducted by **Philipp von Steinaecker**. The **awards ceremony** will follow around **8:45 PM**.

Admission to all competition stages is free.

All information at: www.premiopaganini.it

A major highlight of this 58th edition is the Gala Concert at Teatro Carlo Felice, held the day after the final and the October 25 awards ceremony.

The winner of the competition, alongside the prestigious orchestra conducted by **Maestro Philipp von Steinaecker**, will have the exceptional opportunity to perform on the **Cannone**, Paganini's legendary violin, which he donated to the city of Genoa.

Proceeds from the concert, as well as from the following charity event at the Diocesan Museum, will be donated to the **Gaslini Children's Hospital**, in collaboration with the **Gaslininsieme Foundation ETS**. Tickets can be purchased via the Teatro Carlo Felice website or at the theatre box office.

Further confirming the international scope of the *Premio Paganini*, this edition introduces two new elements:

- a **special award offered by the London-based company “Platoon”**,
- and the official **Guest of Honour Mention**, which this year goes to the **Royal Opera House of Muscat**, with which the project “*Paganini for everyone*” was realized—an ideal bridge between Genoa and Oman.

Alongside the competition, an agreement will be signed between the *Premio Paganini* and the **Axel Munthe Foundation – Villa San Michele**, aiming to promote the Competition also in Sweden. The 2025 program includes two major cultural and scientific initiatives at **Palazzo Tursi**:

- the presentation of a volume with the full, previously unpublished reproduction of Paganini’s *Libro mastro*, preserved at the Genoa Conservatory;
- and an **International Study Day on the Cannone and the preservation of historical violins**, organized in collaboration with the Italian Group of the International Institute of Conservation, based in London.

185 years after Paganini’s death, the *Premio Paganini* remains a global benchmark for young violinists, reaffirming its role in promoting classical music and enhancing the image of both Genoa and Italy. The lead-up to the 2025 edition reflects a significant organizational effort by the City of Genoa, involving the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation**, Italian Cultural Institutes abroad, **RAI**, and a qualified network of public and private institutions, sponsors, and international partners.

COMPETITION SCHEDULE

- October 14: check-in and welcome at Palazzo Tursi
 - October 15/16: First round (solo violin) – Palazzo Tursi
 - October 18/19: Second round (recital)
 - October 22: Semifinal (chamber music and solo violin)
 - October 25: Final and awards ceremony (with Orchestra of Teatro Carlo Felice)
- From October 18 onward, all phases will take place at Teatro Carlo Felice.

AWARDS

The first-place winner will receive, as outlined in the Regulations:

- a cash prize of €30,000
- the privilege of playing Paganini’s legendary *Cannone* violin, built by Guarneri del Gesù in 1743 and housed at Palazzo Tursi
- engagements with prestigious national and international concert organizations and festivals.

Additional special prizes, as per tradition, will be offered by local institutions and organizations connected to Paganini and the music world:

- The **"In memory of Dr. Enrico Costa" Prize**, offered by the Costa family, to the youngest finalist;
- The **"In memory of Renato and Mariangiola De Barbieri" Prize**, awarded by the namesake cultural and charitable association, to the Italian finalist with the best interpretation of Paganini’s Caprices (€1,000);
- The **"In memory of Maestro Mario Ruminelli" Prize**, offered by the Mario Ruminelli Cultural Association (Domodossola), to the finalist who receives the highest audience recognition. Voting will be open from 3:00 PM to 8:30 PM on October 25 at www.premiopaganini.it;

- The "**Associazione Amici di Paganini**" Prize for the best performance of the contemporary piece *In a trace of light, fading memories* by Daniela Terranova, commissioned by the Competition and published by Casa Ricordi;
- The "**Fondazione Pallavicino**" Prize for the best performance of a violin concerto by Niccolò Paganini;
- The "**Hotel Bristol Palace - Duetorrihotels Collection Special Prize**" for the best chamber music performance.

The 2025 edition will also include a special award from the company "**Platoon**", acquired by Apple in 2018, which opened a cutting-edge recording studio in London in 2024. The award will be presented by **Denzyl Feigelson**, co-founder and CEO of "Platoon".

All info at: www.premiopaganini.it

TICKETS AND STREAMING

All competition rounds are **free and open to the public**, subject to availability.

Free tickets for the final (October 25) can be collected at the Teatro Carlo Felice box office (Via Cardinale Siri 6) on October 18, 22, 23, 24 (from 11 AM to 6 PM), and on October 25 from 1 PM, while seats last.

Tickets for the **charity closing concert on October 26** can be purchased on the Teatro Carlo Felice website, at the box office, or via Vivaticket.

All phases will be streamed live on the official channels of *Premio Paganini* and the City of Genoa, as well as on **The Violin Channel** and **Amadeus TV**.

All info at: www.premiopaganini.it – operacarlofelicegenova.it

THE JURY

Chaired by **Maestro Uto Ughi**, a leading figure and noble father of Italian violin internationally, the jury of the 58th edition—entrusted with delivering a rigorous, fair, and highly artistic evaluation—includes soloists, chamber musicians, pedagogues, and musicologists:

- **Pavel Berman** (Italy)
- **Pamela Frank** (USA)
- **Mihaela Martin** (Romania)
- **Enzo Restagno** (Italy)
- **Sayaka Shoji** (Japan)
- **Ulf Wallin** (Sweden)

PRELIMINARY SELECTION COMMITTEES

Chaired by Artistic Director **Nicola Bruzzo**, the preliminary selection committees included:

- **Andrea Obiso** (Genoa, "N. Paganini" Conservatory of Music, April 3–4)
- **Bin Huang** (Guangzhou, Kayserburg Concert Hall – Pearl River Piano, April 12–13)
- **Min Kim** (Seoul, Seocho Cultural Foundation – Banpo Simsan Art Hall, April 16, in collaboration with the Italian Cultural Institute of Seoul)
- **Timothy Chooi** (New York, Italian Cultural Institute, April 29–30)
- **Natalia Prishopenko** (Berlin, Italian Cultural Institute, May 6–8)
- **Alexandra Conunova** (present at all auditions)

