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# INTERNATIONAL LUTHERIE COMPETITION CONCOURS DE LUTHERIE INTERNATIONALE

PHILHARMONIE DE PARIS  
TALENTS & VIOLON'CELLES

17 – 21 JANUARY 2024

The **International Lutherie Competition**, to be held during the Philharmonie de Paris String Quartet Biennial, continues Paris's historic tradition of great competitions in instrument-making. This second edition is dedicated to the violin. Celebrating the transmission of trade and passion, this event seeks to recompense both the talents of today and the up-and-coming talents of tomorrow—with a contest for each category: “Talents of Today” for confirmed luthiers, showcasing the excellence and expertise in the trade today; and “Talents of Tomorrow” for students of lutherie, shining the spotlight on emerging talents now learning the trade at various schools and training centres.

The instruments will be judged by a jury of 6 (six) members, half of whom will be confirmed professional musicians (the “musician jury”) while the other half will be luthiers, instrument makers or recognised experts (the “luthier jury”).

A seventh person will be appointed president of the jury, who will intervene in the event of a tie between the candidates. The list of jury members and its president are still to be defined; registered competitors will be kept informed as the event's organisation evolves, and the competition website will be updated.

The organisational committee is made up of members of the Philharmonie de Paris and Talents & Violon'celles. On the one hand, this committee receives, checks, and validates the registration of the candidates and, on the other hand, it validates instrument eligibility before examination by the jury.

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# 1. COMPETITOR ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

## "TALENTS OF TODAY" CATEGORY,

To be eligible for the competition, competitors must provide proof of their professional luthier status in the form of ad hoc documents in accordance with the administrative provisions of the country in which they do this work. Competitors may conduct their professional activity under any legal status.

Instruments that do not meet the eligibility criteria will be considered not eligible to compete.

## School/training centre and student eligibility for the "Talents of Tomorrow" category

To open the field of competition to the full range of schools and training centres, the "Talents of Tomorrow" category is open to students enrolled at any public or private institution offering a curriculum on the art of instrument making leading to a diploma or certificate attesting to their students' completion of the course.

To enter the competition, students must be able to show that they have competed at least two years of training. These two years may be at a single institution or at multiple institutions. A letter from the administration of the school/training centre specifying the duration of the training completed by the student shall be included with the registration.

Students shall compete under their own name, but on behalf of their educational institution.

Teachers at educational institutions (as specified above) can compete in the "Talents of Today" category if and only if they can show that they actively work as a professional luthier in addition to their teaching. To apply, they must provide the same documents as other "Talents of Today" competitors.

## Prevention of conflicts of interest

In order to avoid any risk of conflict of interest, members of the Philharmonie de Paris, Talents & Violon'celles and members of the jury, as well as their personnel and associates, are prohibited from entering the competition.

# 2. NUMBER OF MAKER(S) PER INSTRUMENT

## "Talents of Today" category

Instruments may have been made entirely by one person or by multiple people. If made by multiple people, each maker's name must be specified in the registration.

Competitors compete under their own name, regardless of the legal form of their company. Associate competitors are grouped together in the final competition ranking.

## "Talents of Tomorrow" category

Instruments may have been made by a single student or by multiple students.

If made by multiple students, each maker's name must be specified in the registration.

There is no limit to the number of competitors that can register from each educational institution.

There is no limit to the number of students who can be named as the makers of an instrument.

# 3. NUMBER OF INSTRUMENT(S)

## "Talents of Today" category

A maximum of 1 (one) instrument can be entered by competitors in the "Talents of Today" category.

## "Talents of Tomorrow" category

A maximum of 2 (two) instruments per school can be entered in the Competition.

If a student is affiliated with multiple schools, their participation will be counted as an entry for each school.

## 4. REGISTRATION

Registration opens on 7th November 2022 at 15pm, Paris time (CET).

Registration closes on 1st December 2023 at 12pm, Paris time (CET). The organisational committee's confirmation of receipt establishes the date and time of registration.

Once 100 instruments have been validated by the organisers, registration will close. This will be announced on the website: [philharmoniedeparis.fr/lutheriecompetition](http://philharmoniedeparis.fr/lutheriecompetition).

The organisational committee reserves the right to deny any registration that is incomplete or that does not comply with the registration documents provided.

Registration is to be submitted on-line at the following address: [philharmoniedeparis.fr/lutheriecompetition](http://philharmoniedeparis.fr/lutheriecompetition).

The form is available in French or English, which are the only two languages allowed.

The form must be completed on-line. The competitor will receive an email indicating the documents to be submitted and the bank details for payment of the registration fee via wire transfer. The registration will be confirmed after receipt of payment and validation of the required documents. Any incomplete registration will be denied.

A confirmation email will be sent, validating the registration.

## 5. REGISTRATION FEE

The registration fee is €200 (two hundred euros) for the category "Talents of today".

The registration fee is €200 (two hundred euros) for the first instrument and €100 (one hundred euros) for the second instrument, for the category "Talents of tomorrow".

If any student is affiliated with multiple schools, the price per entered instrument of €200 (two hundred euros) is paid to the organisers by one of the schools. The other schools shall be named in the registration form.

No fees will be refunded if entered instruments are removed from the competition.

Registration is final and non-refundable. There will be no refunds unless the competition is cancelled, in which case all sums received will be refunded.

Any information regarding registration can be requested at:

**[lutheriecompetition@philharmoniedeparis.fr](mailto:lutheriecompetition@philharmoniedeparis.fr)**

## 6. INSTRUMENT ELEGIBILITY

### 6.1 GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR ALL CATEGORIES OF COMPETITORS

#### **Precedence**

Instruments entered must not have received any awards at previous competitions.

Instruments entered must have been completed less than two years before the competition is held (i.e., date of manufacture after January 2022).

#### **Guarantee of anonymity**

The instrument must not bear any trademark or distinguishing sign allowing it to be attributed to a contemporary instrument maker or educational institution, failing which the instrument will be disqualified. Any signature, iron branding or identifying mark preventing anonymity are strictly prohibited and will disqualify the instrument.

#### **Presentation conditions**

All instruments must be presented with a modern setup, new strings and a chin rest, ready to be played.

### **Right of withdrawal**

The organisers reserve the right to withdraw from the competition any instrument whose design and manufacture do not reflect the state of the art and the principles and techniques broadly accepted in the field, or that show insufficient mastery of the practices and techniques of the trade. Instruments presenting any obvious health and safety risks or any signs of xylophagous insects shall be removed from the competition.

### **Insurance**

All instruments entered in the competition must be insured at their owner's expense.

## **6.2 REQUIREMENTS FOR INSTRUMENTS ENTERED IN THE "TALENTS OF TODAY" CATEGORY**

### **Model**

The instrument's pattern, shape and string length can be freely chosen by the makers.

Models copying or inspired by antique instruments, as well as new creations and innovations, are allowed as long as modern-day and classical violin repertoires can be played on the instrument in normal conditions.

### **Instrument materials**

The main parts of the instruments must be made of wood. Makers are free to choose the varieties of wood, subject to compliance with the official criteria for the use of wood in force in the territory of the European Union at the date of the Competition. The following are considered the main parts of the instrument: the top (table), the back, the ribs (sides), the neck and the scroll.

Makers are free to choose the materials making up all other parts.

### **Manufacturing techniques**

Competitors agree to pledge that all wooden parts of instruments entered in the competition have been finished by hand. The use of manual or digital machinery is tolerated solely for the initial stages of the production process.

Makers are free to choose the production techniques for all other materials.

### **Varnish**

All styles of varnish are allowed. Pigments, resins and stains can be natural or synthetic.

### **Presentation materials**

Participants must provide a set of spare strings and a good quality violin case.

## **6.3 REQUIREMENTS FOR INSTRUMENTS ENTERED IN THE "TALENTS OF TOMORROW" CATEGORY**

### **Model**

Instruments submitted and made by competitors in the "Talents of Tomorrow" category shall be scrupulously inspired by the E.1729 violin, the so-called "Sarasate violin, by Antonio Stradivari (Cremona, 1724, part of the collection of the Musée de la musique, Paris).

The original instrument—the subject of this competition—has undergone transformations since it was created. Although it retains its original neck including pegbox and scroll, reset, it is currently in a modern setup. The general aim is to reproduce the style and making technique of Antonio Stradivari for this instrument, with a modern setup. Candidates are not obliged to reproduce the modifications induced by the use, the restorations or the evolution of its materials and its structure during the time.

To ensure fairness, the so-called "Sarasate" violin — the imposed subject of the competition — will not be available for direct examination from the date registration opens until the date the competition begins.

All competitors will receive the same documentation on the instrument prepared by the Musée de la musique.

This documentation remains available at [philharmoniedeparis.fr/lutheriecompetition](http://philharmoniedeparis.fr/lutheriecompetition) and on demand until registration closes.

The technical documents provided are valid throughout the duration of the competition.

## Materials

The entire instrument, with the exception of the tailgut and the strings, must be made of wood. The wood varieties used for the main parts must correspond to those identified on the reference instrument, the so-called “Sarasate” violin. The wood pieces used for the top (soundboard), back, ribs and pegbox must visually resemble those in the original so-called “Sarasate” violin.

## Manufacturing techniques

Competitors agree to pledge that all parts of the instrument entered in the competition have been finished by hand, except the tailpiece, the tailgut, the pegs and the strings. The use of manual or digital tools is tolerated solely for the initial stages of production.

## Eligibility criteria

- Main dimensions, acceptable tolerances:
  - The outer shape, length, and width of the top (soundboard) and back must match the dimensions given within a tolerance of  $+ / - 1\%$ .
  - The F-hole design must follow a pattern from the model provided, and the F-hole position on the top (soundboard) must be as in the documents provided, within a tolerance of  $+ / - 2\%$ .
  - The ribs heights must correspond to the dimensions given, but may differ if necessary to obtain a plane surface.
  - The main dimensions of the scroll, the height, width and length of the peg box must comply with the dimensions in the technical documents provided, within a tolerance of  $+ / - 5\%$ .
  - The central height of the arches of the top (soundboard) and of the back must be within  $+ / - 3\%$  of the dimension provided; this dimension refers to the distance measured perpendicular to the gluing surface of the top (resp. the back), from this point to the furthest point in the top's ((resp. the back's) outer arch. The arching can eliminate the deformations due to wear and/or restorations present on the original the so-called violin “Sarasate”.
- Proportions and unspecified dimensions:

Generally speaking, the other dimensions of the instrument can be freely chosen by the maker(s), such as:

  - the thickness of the edge, the top-rib and back-rib gluing surfaces can be flat. The deformation of the gluing surface between the ribs and the back and the ribs and top can be neglected.
  - The thicknesses of the top, back and sides given in the documentation provided must be taken as a reference and can be modified in the event of adaptation and sound harmonization of the components.
  - The shape and position of the bass bar of the so-called «Sarasate» violin must be taken as references and can be modified.
  - Geometry of the setup.
- Varnish

The varnish must be made and applied with the materials and technical possibilities of the time of creation of the reference instrument.  
Variation in shades and artificial wear are allowed.

Candidates must provide brief manufacturing documentation, including top and back thicknesses, bass bar dimensions and position, and its preload. This will serve for a discussion about the various manufacturing techniques at a meeting between the participants and the organizers after the competition. The information provided in the documentation is not considered in the valuation of the instruments.

## 7. PERMISSION

Competitors authorise minor repairs to be done on the instruments during the Competition by a professional selected by the organisational committee.

For the entire duration of the Competition, competitors authorise the organisers to present their instruments within the permanent collection of the Musée de la musique and in the rooms of the Philharmonie de Paris, on public display.

The instruments will be played by the members of the jury and the musicians of the Orchestre de Paris.

## 8. RENUNCIATION

The jury's decisions are final. The integrity of the jury may not be called into question, and there will be no possible recourse following the announcement of the Competition winners.

## 9. PRIZES AND AWARDS

### “Talents of Today” category

The jury ranks the top three instruments after the final round.

The winners will receive a “Jury Award - Talents of Today” certificate proving their ranking in the competition.

Two jury's choice awards (“coups de coeur”) may also be attributed, one by the “luthier jury” and the other by the “musician jury”.

An “Orchestra de Paris' choice award” and «audience's choice award” may also be attributed.

### “Talents of Tomorrow” category

The jury ranks the top three instruments winning “First, Second and Third Prize” (respectively) of the “Jury Award – Talents of Tomorrow”. The winning students will receive a certificate proving their ranking in the competition.

One jury's choice award (“coup de coeur”) may be attributed to one of the top 3 (three) instruments in the “luthier jury” ranking.

The “First Prize” instrument will be purchased by the Musée de la musique and entered into its collection of facsimiles. The purchase price of this acquisition is fixed at €8,000 including all taxes (eight thousand euros). This sum will be paid to the school attended by the winning student(s).

If the student(s) are affiliated with multiple schools or training centres, the award amount will be shared between them on a pro rata basis, according to the number of winning students per school.

## 10. COMPETITION PROCEDURE

The procedures for depositing and retrieving the instruments will be specified in September 2023 at the latest.

### 10.1 RECEIPT OF THE INSTRUMENTS

#### 10.1.1 HAND DELIVERY

#### 10.1.2 RECEIPT BY CARRIER

#### 10.1.3 RETRIEVING INSTRUMENTS AFTER THE COMPETITION

## 10.2 ROUND ONE

A visual and metrological examination is conducted under the scientific direction of the jury. Instruments that do not meet the criteria specified in these rules will be removed from the competition.

## 10.3 ROUND TWO

### “Talents of Today” category

Each instrument is meticulously examined by each member of the “**luthier jury**”. Each jury member gives a score for each of the following criteria:

<b>Title</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Number of attributable points</b>
Setup, playability	Including the soundpost, the bridge, the tailpiece, the end pin, preparation of the fingerboard, neck ergonomics, etc.	10 points
Varnish, finish coat	Appearance, transparency, sheen, colour, patina, etc.	15 points
Model	Design of the model, F-holes, arching, proportions, scroll, etc.	15 points
Workmanship	Quality of the seam adjustments, the purfling, the finishing details	25 points
Artistic impression	Choice of materials, stylistic consistency, artistic impression	35 points
<b>Total</b>		<b>100 points</b>

A sound and musical test is performed on each instrument by each member of the “**musician jury**”. Each jury member gives a score for each of the following criteria:

<b>Title</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Number of attributable points</b>
Playability	Handling, ease of playing, quality of string setup	15 points
Balanced tessitura	Balance between low and high notes, evenness of timbre in lows and highs, etc.	25 points
Projection, perceived power	Sound dynamics (piano/forte), attacks, perceived intensity of sound, etc.	30 points
Artistic impression	Musical expressiveness, range of timbres, etc.	30 points
<b>Total</b>		<b>100 points</b>

After this second round, only **the 15 (fifteen) highest-scoring instruments** will advance to the next round. If there is a tie between two or more instruments, the tie will be broken by a jury vote excluding the chairperson of the jury.

**“Talents of Tomorrow” category**

Each instrument is meticulously examined by each member of the **“luthier jury”**. Each jury member gives a score for each of the following criteria:

<b>Title</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Number of attributable points</b>
Setup, playability	Including the soundpost, the bridge, the tailpiece, the end pin, preparation of the fingerboard, neck ergonomics, etc.	10 points
Varnish, finish coat	Appearance, transparency, sheen, colour, patina, etc.	15 points
Likeness to the original model	F-holes, arching, proportions, scroll, etc.	15 points
Workmanship	Quality of the seam adjustments, the purfling, the finishing details	25 points
Artistic impression	Choice of materials, stylistic consistency, artistic impression	35 points
<b>Total</b>		<b>100 points</b>

A sound and musical test is performed on each instrument by each member of the **“musician jury”**. Each jury member gives a score for each of the following criteria:

<b>Title</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Number of attributable points</b>
Playability	Handling, ease of playing, quality of string setup	15 points
Balanced tessitura	Balance between low and high notes, evenness of timbre in lows and highs, etc.	25 points
Projection, perceived power	Sound dynamics (piano/forte), attacks, perceived intensity of sound, etc.	30 points
Artistic impression	Musical expressiveness, range of timbres, etc.	30 points
<b>Total</b>		<b>100 points</b>

After this second round, only the **5 (five) highest-scoring instruments** will advance to the next round.

If there is a tie between two or more instruments, the tie will be broken by a jury vote excluding the chairperson of the jury.

## 10.4 ROUND THREE: PUBLIC SEMI-FINALS

### “Talents of Today” category

Each selected instrument will be played before the jury by 2 (two) musicians from outside the jury.

The entire jury will judge the instruments based on the following criteria:

<b>Title</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Number of attributable points</b>
Balanced tessitura	Balance between low and high notes, evenness of timbre in lows and highs, etc.	30 points
Projection, perceived power	Sound dynamics (piano/forte), attacks, perceived intensity of sound, etc.	30 points
Artistic impression	Musical expressiveness, range of timbres, etc.	40 points
<b>Total</b>		<b>100 points</b>

After this semi-final, only **the 8 (eight) highest-scoring instruments** will advance.

If there is a tie between two or more instruments, the tie will be broken by a jury vote excluding the chairperson of the jury.

### “Talents of Tomorrow” category

Each selected instrument will be played before the jury by 2 (two) musicians from outside the jury.

The entire jury will judge the instruments based on the following criteria:

<b>Title</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Number of attributable points</b>
Balanced tessitura	Balance between low and high notes, evenness of timbre in lows and highs, etc.	30 points
Projection, perceived power	Sound dynamics (piano/forte), attacks, perceived intensity of sound, etc.	30 points
Artistic impression	Musical expressiveness, range of timbres, etc.	40 points
<b>Total</b>		<b>100 points</b>

After this semi-final, only **the 3 (three) highest-scoring instruments** will advance.

If there is a tie between two or more instruments, the tie will be broken by a jury vote excluding the chairperson of the jury.

## 10.5 ROUND FOUR: PUBLIC FINALS

### “Talents of Today” category

Each selected instrument will be played before the jury by 2 (two) musicians from outside the jury.

The entire jury will judge the instruments based on the following criteria:

<b>Title</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Number of attributable points</b>
Balance, power, projection	Evenness of timbre, dynamics, projection	10 points
Artistic impression	Musical expressiveness, range of timbres, etc.	10 points
<b>Total</b>		<b>20 points</b>

If there is a tie between two or more instruments, the tie will be broken by a jury vote excluding the chairperson of the jury.

**The 3 (three) instruments receiving the highest scores will win first, second and third prize in the Competition.**

**The jury, after deliberation, reserves the right to attribute a “luthiers” jury’s choice award (“coup de coeur”) based on a vote by the “luthier jury”.**

**The jury, after deliberation, reserves the right to attribute a “musicians” jury’s choice award (“coup de coeur”) based on a vote by the “musician jury”.**

**An “Orchestra de Paris’ choice award” may be attributed.**

**An “audience’s choice award” may also be attributed.**

### “Talents of Tomorrow” category

Each selected instrument will be played before the jury by 2 (two) musicians, from outside the jury.

The entire jury will judge the instruments based on the following criteria:

<b>Title</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Number of attributable points</b>
Balance, power, projection	Evenness of timbre, dynamics, projection	10 points
Artistic impression	Musical expressiveness, range of timbres, etc.	10 points
<b>Total</b>		<b>20 points</b>

**The jury ranks the top three instruments, respectively winning “First, Second and Third Prize” of the “Jury Award – Talents of Tomorrow”.**

**A jury’s choice award (“coup de coeur”) may be attributed by the “luthier jury”.**

## **10. IMAGE RIGHTS**

Competitors authorise the organisers to take photographs of the works they enter in the Competition, for publication or archival purposes.

Competitors authorise the organisers to publish, by any means whatsoever, images of the instruments entered in the competition and any images of the competitors that may be taken during the competition.

Photographs and any other audio-visual document produced by the competition may then be submitted to the Musée de la musique for documentation purposes.

## **11. DISPUTES**

French law is the only law recognised by the organisers.

The English translation of these Rules is solely for the convenience of the competitors. In the event of controversial interpretation, only the French text will be considered valid.

