

ORPHEUS Swiss Chamber Music Competition: Rules for 2025

The ORPHEUS competition is held annually at one of the Swiss music academies. The competition will take place on **22 / 23 November 2025** at the **Zurich University of the Arts**. All prize-winners will perform at the **Swiss Chamber Music Festival Adelboden** and the ensembles ranking in the top-three positions will receive funding for a commissioned composition and cash prizes. In addition, some ensembles might be selected to perform at the **Festival Musikdorf Ernen**, the **Zunftkonzerte Zurich**, at the **Piano Trio Fest Berne**, at the **Zimmermannhaus Brugg series** and the **Gesellschaft für Musik und Literatur Kreuzlingen**.

Application

Ensembles that meet the following conditions are eligible to participate:

- Ensembles of 3 to 9 members.
- Duets on request only and in case of insufficient number of applications.
- The majority of the ensemble members must be Swiss or live in Switzerland and have a clear connection to Switzerland or to a Swiss music academy.
- Participation is open to musicians born in 1997 or later. The average age of ensemble members must not exceed 26 years (reference date: 30 November 1998).
- Ensembles that have won a first, second or third prize may not apply again.
- Participants are not allowed to participate in more than one ensemble.

Audition

- The ensembles present and introduce a well-curated artistic program lasting 20 to 25 minutes. The program must include at least three works (or individual movements thereof) from different historical periods relevant to the ensemble's instrumentation. At least one work must have been composed after 1975 (i.e. not older than 50 years). The presentation may be held in French, German, Italian, or English.
- The competition is open to the public, the participating ensembles are invited to listen.

Jury

- The jury consists of 5 members. It is composed as follows:
Reto Bieri (President), Benjamin Engeli (Artistic Director), Mischa Greull (ZHdK), Lisa Schatzman (Lucerne Symphony Orchestra), Denis Severin (HEM/ HKB).
A two-member jury committee decides on the admission to the audition.

Decisions

- The jury decides on the awarding of prizes. The decisions are final and cannot be appealed.

Prizes

Concerts: The prize-winners will give a concert at the Swiss Chamber Music Festival in Adelboden from **11 - 20 September 2026**. Selected ensembles will give a concert at the Festival Musikdorf Ernen on **11 - 13 September 2026**. On a case-by-case basis, the ensembles may receive further performances at the Zurich Guild Concerts, at the Piano Trio Fest Berne as well as at the Zimmermannhaus Brugg series and the Gesellschaft für Musik und Literatur Kreuzlingen.

Commissioned composition: The three first prize-winners will be given the opportunity, financed by Nicati-de Luce Foundation, to commission a work from an up-and-coming Swiss composer and to premiere it at their concert in Adelboden. The jury will decide on the awarding of the commissions following the competition.

Cash prizes: The first three prize-winning ensembles will receive:
CHF 5000 (1st prize), CHF 3000 (2nd prize), CHF 2000 (3rd prize).

Special Prize: Participation in the Rheinau Masterclasses in summer 2026.

Ranking Ceremony / Feedback

On **Sunday afternoon 23 November 2025**, a physical ranking ceremony with feedback from the jury will take place at the **Zurich University of the Arts**. All ensembles admitted to the competition are cordially invited to attend. Further information will follow with the confirmation of participation.

Registration

- Registration via www.muvac.com (- "more" - "ensemble").
- The following documents must be uploaded with the application:
 1. short text about the ensemble
 2. short texts about the ensemble members (CV)
 3. competition programme with composer, work and movement details
 4. two elaborated programme proposals for festival concerts, at least one including a Swiss composition after 1960.
 5. The names of three Swiss composers for the awarding of commissions as set out in section. They must have completed their musical studies and be aged 35 or under. Among them must be composers of different genders.
 6. A video of the ensemble performing a work of free choice. Minimum duration 5 minutes.
- The application fee is CHF 150 and must be paid **before the closing date** to PostFinance AG, IBAN: CH47 0900 0000 8003 4242 0.

Further information

- No expenses will be reimbursed for participation at the competition.
- For participation at the Swiss Chamber Music Festival in Adelboden and the Festival Musikdorf Ernen CHF 800 will be paid per ensemble member and travel expenses within Switzerland (SBB ½-Tax) will be reimbursed. The organizers will provide overnight accommodation.

Dates

Registration deadline	12 October 2025
Admission decision	20 October 2025
Audition days	22/23 November 2025