



SUBMISSION AND EVALUATION GUIDELINES OPUS KLASSIK 2026

Submissions in the individual categories of the OPUS KLASSIK are based on both digital and physical products by artists as well as projects, compositions, live formats or exceptional achievements in the classical music genre.

All classical music artists who are active in the music scene and the classical music market at the time of submission are eligible for the award, regardless of their nationality. In case of doubt, the categorisation in the Phononet database determines whether an album or concert can be assigned to the classical music genre.

The awarding of one or more prizes in the categories listed below is at the discretion of the jury based on the quality of the projects submitted. There is no obligation to award a prize.

With the submission, the award categories, the submission and evaluation principles and the procedure are recognised. Legal recourse is excluded.

Eligibility to submit

All labels and distributors whose albums are permanently sold on the German market and hold the corresponding distribution rights to the artists' recordings are entitled to submit. Any company can submit any number of albums or video formats. In addition, each submission can be suggested for any number of categories.

Concert promoters, publishers, labels and artists can nominate in all categories that are not pure album prizes (categories 4, 6, 7, 10, 19, 22, 23, 27, 29, special category).

Submission and evaluation periods

The **submission period** runs from **January 30th, 2026 to March 31st, 2026**. The postmark applies to physical submissions. The online submission procedure must be completed by the end of 31 March 2026 and, in case of doubt, must be documented with a confirmation email. Submissions received after 31 March 2026 or incomplete within the submission period cannot be considered. Late deadlines will not be approved.

The **evaluation period** for the OPUS KLASSIK 2025 is between **March 1st, 2025 and March 31st, 2026** for both published recordings and live formats and projects. The albums must contain recordings released for the first time during the evaluation period, which must account for at least 50% of the total playing time of the release. Products or projects submitted in the previous year may not be resubmitted. If no reviews for submissions of current releases are available by the submission deadline, these can be submitted at: info@opusklassik.de by April 30 2026.

Form of submission

All submission for the OPUS KLASSIK are made via an online submission system:

<https://www.opusklassik.de/submissions>

In principle, all sound recordings are submitted digitally. When submitting, the corresponding link must be entered under which the album is available on a streaming provider such as Apple Music. If there is no release on a streaming service, a download link must be entered in the corresponding field.

Reviews

Each submission consists of the completed online submission and **two outstanding reviews**, unless other requirements are defined in the respective category.

An outstanding review is an above-average review of the submitted publication in a digital medium (e.g. digital editions of magazines, daily newspapers or qualified web forums) or a print medium (e.g.



daily press, weekly press, magazines). Reviews on the radio or in a TV report must be documented with a link, a recording or a copy of a broadcast transcript. The publication must be rated in the review. Interviews or concert reviews in which the release is merely mentioned as well as reviews in social media, on YouTube/Vimeo/Amazon or similar platforms and in in-house publications are not accepted.

Reviews are only valid in German and English - if the review has been published in another language, the original review must be submitted with a translation in German or English.

Fees

A one-off processing fee of 60.00 euros (including VAT) will be charged for each submission (not applicable for categories 7, 27, 28, 29 and special category). If a sound carrier is proposed for several categories, no additional costs will be incurred. The fee must be credited to the account of the Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Klassischen Musik gGmbH no later than 14 days after receipt of the invoice. Submissions for which the fees have not been paid on time cannot be considered.

Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Klassischen Musik gGmbH
Mühlenstraße 25
10243 Berlin

AWARD CATEGORIES OPUS KLASSIK 2026

CATEGORY 1 | FEMALE SINGER OF THE YEAR

The outstanding female singer is honoured for one of the submitted publications.

CATEGORY 2 | MALE SINGER OF THE YEAR

The outstanding male singer is awarded for one of the submitted publications.

CATEGORY 3 | INSTRUMENTALIST OF THE YEAR

Up to three outstanding instrumentalists will be honoured for one of the submitted publications. One prize can be awarded per instrument category.

CATEGORY 4 | SOLO LIVE PERFORMANCE OF THE YEAR

The award honours the soloist of an exceptional live performance that has impressed with technical brilliance, emotional expressiveness and artistic innovation, as well as a far above-average audience and/or media response. The nomination must be justified in writing (max. 3,300 characters including spaces) and at least one outstanding concert review must be submitted.

CATEGORY 5 | CONDUCTOR OF THE YEAR

The outstanding conductor is honoured for one of the submitted publications.

CATEGORY 6 | COMPOSER OF THE YEAR

The award goes to the composer whose work has attracted particular attention during the submission period and has contributed to the enrichment of local classical music life.

A posthumous honour is excluded. The qualification must be justified in writing with the submission (max. 3,300 characters including spaces) and the performance of the work must be documented with a traceable recording: available (permanent) streaming / audio link or on image / sound carrier. One review must be submitted.



CATEGORY 7 | AWARD FOR LIFE WORK OF AN ARTIST

The recognition of the life's work of an artist honours the personality whose artistic oeuvre is particular significance to musical life. A posthumous honour is excluded. The proposal must be accompanied by a written justification (max. 3,300 characters including spaces). The proposal can be made by labels, artists, artist managers, publishers or concert organizers. No processing fees have to be paid and no records or reviews have to be submitted.

CATEGORY 8 | YOUNG TALENT OF THE YEAR

Up to four outstanding young artists in the fields of conducting, singing and instrument will be honoured. The underlying release must be the first time that the artist has achieved particular recognition in the German musical life and/ or recording market.

CATEGORY 9 | ENSEMBLE/ORCHESTRA OF THE YEAR

Either an outstanding ensemble or symphonic orchestra will be honored for one of the publications submitted.

CATEGORY 10 | ENSEMBLE/ORCHESTRA LIVE PERFORMANCE OF THE YEAR

The prize is awarded to an ensemble/orchestra for an exceptional live performance that has impressed with its technical brilliance, emotional expressiveness and artistic innovation, as well as a far above-average audience and/or media response. The nomination must be justified in writing (max. 3,300 characters including spaces) and at least one outstanding concert review must be submitted.

CATEGORY 11 | SOLO RECORDING SINGING OF THE YEAR

The prize is awarded to up to two singers for an outstanding interpretative performance in the fields of opera, oratorio, concerto or song for a submitted publication.

CATEGORY 12 | SOLO RECORDING INSTRUMENT OF THE YEAR

The prize is awarded to up to two artists for a recording with a solo instrument, either unaccompanied or with musical partners in all formations (orchestra, ensemble, duo, etc.).

CATEGORY 13 | CHAMBER MUSIC RECORDING OF THE YEAR

An outstanding recording in the field of chamber music is honoured.

CATEGORY 14 | SYMPHONIC RECORDING OF THE YEAR

Up to two outstanding recordings and interpretations of a symphonic work from different eras can be awarded. The conductor and the orchestra receive the award.

CATEGORY 15 | CHORAL RECORDING OF THE YEAR

The award is given for the outstanding recording of a choral work, a cappella music or choral/ensemble music with instrumental accompaniment. The prize goes to the choir/ ensemble and the respective leader/ conductor.

CATEGORY 16 | OPERA RECORDING OF THE YEAR

An outstanding opera production or recordings with vocal soloists (e.g. oratorios, operettas or musicals) is honoured. The award goes to the soloist, the conductor and the orchestra together. Audio productions as well as audiovisual productions can be submitted.

CATEGORY 17 | WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING OF THE YEAR

The prize is awarded to the world premiere recording of a composition (regardless of when it was composed) that makes a work using classical stylistic devices available on a sound recording. The first recording must account for more than 66% of the total playing time of the sound carrier and be labelled as a first recording. The performers and/or conductor and/or orchestra will be honoured together.



CATEGORY 18 | CLASSIC WITHOUT LIMITS

Music productions that build a bridge to or from classical music can be submitted. This bridge can be built both by the music and by the artists. On the one hand, classical compositions that are interpreted in a different musical genre or popular compositions that incorporate classical stylistic elements can be honoured. On the other hand, productions by classical artists who have recorded a different musical genre or popular artists who have presented classical productions can be honoured. Operettas and musicals can also be submitted. Up to two prizes can be awarded.

CATEGORY 19 | CLASSIC WITHOUT LIMITS LIVE

The prize is awarded to an artist who has built a bridge to or from classical music with a live production by successfully combining classical music with other musical genres or cultural forms of expression, thereby opening up new horizons, and/or has impressed with its broad public appeal and media coverage. The proposal must be substantiated in writing (max. 3,300 characters including spaces) and at least one outstanding concert review or video documentation must be submitted.

CATEGORY 20 | NEW CLASSIC/NEOCLASSIC

The award recognises an audio or audiovisual production of a new work or new works that combine stylistic devices from classical music with those from the musical subgenres like neoclassical, minimal music, contemporary music, ambient or electronic music. The innovative character is justified either by the nature of the composition or by the particularly innovative and extraordinary way in which sounds and production methods from the above-mentioned genres are combined with classical music.

CATEGORY 21 | FILM MUSIC/SCORE OF THE YEAR

The award recognises the audio production of an outstanding work composed specifically for a film, series, computer game or video game. New recordings of classical works for new original film soundtracks and new recordings of previously released soundtracks or film music are also eligible. Compilation soundtracks consisting mainly of pop music or compilation soundtracks of previously recorded pieces are not eligible.

CATEGORY 22 | INNOVATIVE CONCERT OF THE YEAR

The award recognises concerts that stand out for their creative and exceptional dramaturgical design, breaking new ground in the communication of classical music and appealing to and engaging the audience in a special way. On the other hand, concerts that stand out for their exceptional production features, such as the inclusion of visual and other innovative approaches in the performance, thereby setting new standards, may also be honoured. The proposal must be justified in writing (max. 3,300 characters including spaces) and at least one outstanding concert review or video documentation must be submitted. Up to two prizes may be awarded, one for the dramaturgy of the programme and one for the production of an innovative concert format. The award will be presented to the artist and/or organiser.

CATEGORY 23 | TOUR OF THE YEAR

The award honours artists or ensembles who have given an outstanding classical concert hall tour (more than five concerts) that impressed audiences with its musical quality, programme design and broad appeal, as well as its media resonance. The nomination must be justified in writing (max. 3,300 characters including spaces) and at least one outstanding concert review or video documentation must be submitted.

CATEGORY 24 | AUDIOVISUAL MUSIC PRODUCTION OF THE YEAR

The award is given to an outstanding long-form video in the field of classical music for music or documentary. The production must have been published on audiovisual media or in the field of home entertainment (on demand) during the submission period.



CATEGORY 25 | VIDEO CLIP OF THE YEAR

The award is given to a short-form video production that was published during the submission period and is characterized by special quality, exceptional aesthetics and/ or emotional power and media reach. No review needs to be submitted for this category.

The [OPUS KLASSIK School](#) will also be awarded in this category.

CATEGORY 26 | INNOVATIVE LISTENING EXPERIENCE OF THE YEAR

An audio production in the field of classical music that uses technological innovations to create a new kind of listening experience, especially one that has an intrinsic aesthetic value and/or acoustically reflects structural elements of the recorded music, can be honoured. The prize will be awarded to the sound engineer/master of the recording.

CATEGORY 27 | PRIZE FOR THE PROMOTION OF YOUNG TALENTS (child and youth work)

The prize is awarded to a project that has made an exceptional contribution to promoting the activities of children and young people in the field of classical music during the evaluation period or has familiarised children/young people with classical music in a special way. The prize is awarded to natural or legal persons or their representatives. Anyone who provides information about such a project is entitled to submit an entry. The qualification must be justified in writing with the submission (max. 3,300 characters including spaces) and must be supported by reviews/ press articles and/ or video and/ or audio links. There are no processing fees.

CATEGORY 28 | BEST SELLER OF THE YEAR

The award is given to the best-selling new album released during the evaluation period. The recipients of the award are the artists of this album. The decision criterion for the Bestseller of the Year is solely the sales of a full-price sound carrier in the assessment period, determined by GfK Entertainment (including all retail partners shown there). Crossover productions and recordings with Christmas music (e.g. Christmas carols) that are published for seasonal business and that would hardly be listened or purchased outside the Christmas period are not eligible. The exclusion does not include works with an overarching repertoire value such as Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, Handel's *Messiah*, Christmas cantatas, so-called Christmas Concerti grossi etc.

CATEGORY 29 | INNOVATION AWARD FOR SUSTAINABILITY

The innovation award for sustainability honours a relevant initiative, for example to protect the climate and the environment in the field of classical music. The special prize can be awarded to artists, ensembles or institutions that develop projects or products for sustainable classical music business and thus make a forward-looking contribution to the common good. The prize is awarded in partnership with the Orchester des Wandels Deutschland e. V. There are no processing fees.

SPECIAL CATEGORY | MUSIC TEACHER OF THE YEAR

This award honours a music teacher from a school, music school or independent field who has made a special contribution to the future viability of music education. The teacher designs learning processes that are individual, creative and sustainable, tries out new forms of artistic teaching and, as a source of inspiration, serves as a role model for a new generation of educators.

The special prize is open to teachers throughout Germany and is awarded to individuals. Anyone who can demonstrate that they work in the field of music, the music industry, music education or music pedagogy is eligible to apply. Qualifications must be justified in writing (max. 3,300 characters including spaces) and may be supported by video material (max. 3 minutes) or press material/reporting. The prize is awarded in cooperation with the Deutscher Musikrat. There are no processing fees.