

# RULES

## 5th International Singing Competition of Great African Opera Voices

2026, 5-7 march | Paris - France



**Africa Lyric's**  
**opera**  
Pour la musique classique et la diversité



March 05-07, 2026

Paris, France

athénée  
Théâtre Louis-Jouvet



The Athénée Théâtre hosts the 5th edition of the  
International Singing Competition

**"The Great African Opera Voices"**

organized by Africa Lyric's Opéra

- The competition, held annually and open to the public, aims to:
  - ✓ to promote diversity in opera and opera, to discover, promote, and accompany opera artists of origin and/or nationality and/or from the African and Afro-descendant diaspora, to detect talents and to support the African and Afro-descendant opera voices of today and tomorrow.
  - ✓ promote the training, employment and professional integration of opera artists.
  - ✓ to promote contemporary classical music composers and instrumentalists.
- The call for applications is launched on October 31, 2025 at 11:59 p.m. and ends on January 20, 2026 at 11:59 p.m.
- The final of the competition will take place on March 07, 2026 at the Athénée Théâtre Louis-Jouvet in Paris.

# I - CATEGORIES

- The Competition is dedicated in 2026 to the Opera for three categories
- Candidates can only apply in one category
- The pre-selection will take place from 21 up to 23 January 2026 (on application)
- The competition will take place from 05 up to 07 March 2026 (semi-final and final), in person, for the three categories
- The competition is open to all opera artists, without gender discrimination

The competition includes 3 categories for the Opera:

## 1 - Young Hope

This category aims to detect young opera hopefuls, to support them in their training and to encourage them to become professional afterwards. The approach is based on close collaboration with conservatories and opera houses. This category is aimed at young people in training or who wish to join a conservatory, and includes meetings with opera professionals as well as the discovery of opera performances. Young people will be able to follow lyrical workshops and courses with professional and experienced opera artists.

## 2 - Amateurs

Adult opera artist, with a few years of singing training, or who practices singing on his own, without having had the opportunity to receive conservatory or professional training. May have a very good practice of singing or singing out of passion, and wishes to progress through training in conservatory or training of trainers and work in music education for example.

## 3 - Semi-professional

Semi-professional opera artist, practices classical music as a main or secondary activity, and receives a financial reward in exchange for his work. He already has a good practice of the stage, knows the profession, wishes to develop his network, benefit from support for professional integration, find new opportunities, be in contact with theaters, participate in Africa Lyric's Opera projects and be accompanied by professionals from Opera and/or Africa Lyric's Opera to launch or boost his career.

## II - REGISTRATION CRITERIA

Any request for derogation may be examined individually by the organizing entity, which is sovereign in its decision

Be of African or Afro-descendant descent or from the African diaspora/diversity or have the nationality of an African country

Have submitted a complete registration form (including 1 video of an opera aria of your choice, for pre-selection)

No restrictions on where you live (Africa, Europe, World)

Be an opera singer and/or passionate about opera singing and/or self-taught and/or amateur and/or young talent and/or student and/or semi-professional

Present 1 cover letter, 1 detailed curriculum vitae of your musical experience whatsoever and/or your training and project

No language zone restrictions (French, English, Portuguese, etc.)

Have paid the registration fee:  
70€ = 75\$ = 46,000 FCFA (semi-professional category)  
50€ = 55\$ = 33,000 FCFA (amateur category)  
30€ = 35\$ = 20,000 FCFA (young hopeful category)

Respect the registration deadline set by the regulations, i.e. January 20, 2026

Age limit and age range to apply:  
Young Hope Category: 15-25 years old  
Amateur category: 26-50 years old  
Semi-professional category: 26-40 years old

Be available on the contest dates. The tests take place in person

Have a valid travel passport if necessary and comply with the rules of entry and stay on French territory

Respect the rules of Africa Lyric's Opéra, the instructions of the Athénée Théâtre and the health and safety rules, if applicable



## III-1 - TERMS OF PARTICIPATION AND PRE-SELECTION

- The pre-selection will be made exclusively on the basis of an application
- The candidate performs 1 opera aria of their choice (recording in a suitable place or quiet space. Instrumental playback prohibited)
- Maximum duration: 5 min
- ✓ Registration fees (mandatory and non-refundable):
  - ❖ 70€ = \$75 = 46,000 FCFA (semi-professional category)
  - ❖ 50€ = \$55 = 33,000 FCFA (amateur category)
  - ❖ 30€ = \$35 = 20,000 FCFA (young hopeful category)
- ✓ Paid in Euros or in foreign currencies (online, by bank transfer or mobile money), at the time of registration and an integral part of the application file.
- ✓ For applicants residing outside France, payments must include bank or transfer fees and commissions (registration fees received from the net amount indicated). The candidate must send proof of his payment.



## III-2 - TERMS OF PARTICIPATION AND PRE-SELECTION

- The complete **application (to be submitted online, no later than January 20, 2026 at 11:59 p.m., at the latest)** must consist of the following documents:
  - ✓ 1 registration form completed
  - ✓ 1 video recording of an opera aria of the candidate's choice, lasting a maximum of 5 minutes (not audio)
  - ✓ 1 artistic curriculum vitae (training, activities, project)
  - ✓ 1 cover letter
  - ✓ 1 passport photo
  - ✓ 1 standing photo
  - ✓ 1 copy of ID or passport
  - ✓ 1 proof of payment of the registration fee
- 4 opera arias will be performed in 3 different languages, by different composers, one of which must be in French
- For the validation of the registration, the file must include the registration form, the video recording and the registration fee
- Confirmation of registration will be sent to the candidate by email, upon receipt of the complete file.

## IV-1 - PROCEDURE, PLANNING AND PHASES OF THE COMPETITION

All events are public

- Candidates are pre-selected on the basis of their application and video between 1st and 04 February 2026. The selected candidates will be admitted to compete on 05 March, 2026 at **the Athénée Théâtre, 2-4 square de l'Opéra Louis-Jouvet – 75009 Paris, France.**

### 1 - The competition takes place in 7 phases:

- Phase 1, Official launch of the competition: October 31, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. (French time)
- Phase 2, Collection of applications: until January 20, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. (French time)
- Phase 3, Preselections: January 21-23, 2026

The pre-selections will be made by a pre-selection committee of opera professionals.

The entire jury will be present from the semi-final.

- Phase 4, Results of the preselections: January 24, 2026 (by email and publication)

## IV-2 - PROCEDURE, PLANNING AND PHASES OF THE COMPETITION

For the pre-selection rounds and the semi-final, proper attire is required

- Phase 5, Semi-final: Thursday, March 05, 2026 from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m., then results (time subject to change)
- ✓ For the semi-final, max. 20 candidates will be selected in the semi-professional category, max. 20 candidates in the amateur category and max. 10 candidates in the young hope category.
- ✓ The candidate selected for the semi-final will perform:
- ✓ 1 opera aria of his choice, among the 4 arias mentioned in his program
- ✓ Maximum duration: 5 minutes.
- ✓ Each candidate will provide his or her legible score in duplicate on the day of the semi-final, for the pianist of the competition and the President of the jury.
- ✓ A 2nd aria may be requested by the jury
- Obligation for the candidate to sing all the arias (compulsory aria too) without sheet music
- Phase 6, Rehearsals for the final: Friday, March 07, 2026 from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m., with Pianist and Orchestra (time subject to change)

## IV-3 - PROCEDURE, PLANNING AND PHASES OF THE COMPETITION

For the final, a gala outfit is  
required

- Phase 7, Final: Saturday, March 07, 2026 from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m., then results (time subject to change)
- ✓ For the final, 10 candidates will be selected in the semi-professional category, 10 candidates in the amateur category and 5 candidates in the young hope category
- ✓ The candidate will interpret:
  - 1 aria of his choice, not performed either in the pre-selection or in the semi-finals.
  - 1 aria of the jury's choice, not performed either in the pre-selection or in the semi-final.
  - 1 compulsory aria with orchestra:
    - written by a composer (semi-professional category)
    - written by a composer (Young Hopeful and Amateur categories)
- ✓ Maximum duration of the full program: 12 minutes.
- ✓ The score of the excerpt of the compulsory arias will be sent by Africa Lyric's Opéra to the selected candidate, in his or her tessitura.

The order of appearance will be in alphabetical order and will remain the same throughout the duration of the competition. Candidates must arrive at the requested time. Each candidate is responsible for his or her punctuality, time management, and respect for his or her order of appearance. The schedules and written indications posted by Africa Lyric's Opéra must be strictly respected.

A candidate who is late or absent at the time of his or her appearance loses the opportunity to compete in this event and will, therefore, be excluded from the competition. Only the jury can decide to reinstate him in the competition and choose to hear him at the time it wishes.

Obligation for the candidate to sing all the arias without sheet music

## IV-4 - PROCEDURE, PLANNING AND PHASES OF THE COMPETITION

The announcement of the results of the final and the presentation of the prizes will take place, at the end of the jury's deliberations

### 2 - Schedule of the competition for the 3 categories (indicative and subject to change)

- **THURSDAY, MARCH 05, 2026 (with public)**
  - 12 p.m.: Reception of the candidates
  - 1pm-5pm: Semi-final of the competition, conduct of the tests in front of the jury and the public
  - 5pm-6pm: Deliberation of the jury and results
  - 6:30 p.m.: Exit of the public
- **FRIDAY, MARCH 06, 2026 (rehearsals without public)**
  - 1 p.m.: Reception of the candidates
  - 2pm-5pm: Rehearsals with the pianist of Africa Lyric's Opéra (in alphabetical order) and rehearsal with the Orchestra for the compulsory arias
  - 5pm-5.30pm: Exit of the candidates
- **SATURDAY, MARCH 07, 2026 (with public)**
  - 12 p.m.: Reception of the candidates
  - 1pm-5pm: Final of the competition, conduct of the tests in front of the jury and the public
  - 5pm-6pm: Deliberation of the jury, results and award ceremony
  - 6pm-6.30pm: Exit of the public

## V-1 - SPECIFIC PROVISIONS

Official Pianist-Accompanists Africa Lyric's Opéra

Thomas Tacquet  
Francis Paraïso

Orchestra



The accompaniment of the candidates will be exclusively on the piano for the entire Competition, except for the final, during which they will be accompanied by a professional orchestra (Massy Opera Orchestra) for the compulsory aria

A cappella singing will not be accepted, except in the case where all or part of a piece has been written in this way by the composer.

Africa Lyric's Opéra offers, upon registration, rehearsals with the piano accompanist of the Competition, between the semi-final and the final of the competition, which will take place in the theatre Opéra (at no additional cost to the candidate).

Each candidate may, if he wishes, be accompanied by his own pianist (at his own expense) and must send the latter's contact details 48 hours beforehand.

For the pianist, candidates must provide the legible piano/vocal scores of the chosen works. French legislation prohibits the use of photocopies of scores or illegal printing.

## V-2- SPECIFIC PROVISIONS

Upon arrival, the candidates will have to introduce themselves to a member of the Africa Lyric's Opéra team. Only registered candidates whose application has been accepted (confirmation of registration sent by Africa Lyric's Opéra, as proof) will be able to take the competition.

No accompanying person, outside the Africa Lyric's Opéra team or authorized, will be allowed to enter the dressing rooms and areas dedicated to the competition.

The candidate's registration implies, on his part, the unreserved acceptance of these rules, any changes that may occur between the sending of their file and the date of the competition, as well as the participation agreement, sent by email and to be returned signed. No objection will be taken into account.

Proposals for opera recitals may be made to candidates, winners or not, to participate in events, opera concerts or major productions of Africa Lyric's Opera. The winners must undertake to participate in the tour of the winners (if concerned), in at least one free and solidarity performance to support organization projects. The members of the jury are likely to offer assignments to candidates or to help with their promotion or training, according to their possibilities.

Africa Lyric's Opéra has specific partnerships with organizations, institutions etc. of the Opera estate, which have an important musical network in the world. These partnerships do not commit the candidates in any way, who may not make any claim or be harmed in any way. These partners reserve the right to help promote candidates or offer them contracts.

## V-3 - SPECIFIC PROVISIONS

Africa Lyric's Opéra may provide candidates selected for the semi-final, who are residents outside France/Schengen Area, and who have to travel to France for the event, under conditions, and without any obligation, with support, within the limits of its possibilities, for their administrative procedures, provided that the commitment on the conditions of entry and stay in France within the strict framework of the competition, are scrupulously respected

Candidates who wish to benefit from possible administrative support must make a written request between 24 and 26 January 2026

All travel and subsistence expenses are the responsibility of the candidate

# VI - PRICES

The prizes represent a total value of €15,000.00 in prizes, packages and various entries for the finalists (subject to change).

The jury may decide whether or not to award the prizes, as well as a different distribution of the prizes. In the event of a tie, the value of the prize will be divided by the number of candidates and the prizes in kind, adapted to this hypothesis.

The title of the prizes and their amount can be changed at any time according to the wishes/constraints of the partners and on the decision of the jury.

In addition to the prizes mentioned, the first three in the semi-professional category will perform under contract, during the Africa Lyric's Opera 2026 tour, in several opera houses (Special Grand Prix Opera's) and festivals

## CATEGORIES SEMI-PROFESSIONNEL

- ✓ 1st Prize Africa Lyric's Opera-Grand Prix: 2000€
- ✓ 2nd Prize Opera-Partner Foundation: 1000€
- ✓ 3rd Prize Opera-Generation Opera: 1000€
- ✓ Special Prize Signature-Natalia Smalto Foundation: 1000€
- ✓ Special Prize Opera for Peace : 500€ + coaching
- ✓ Special Prize for Best Interpretation of the Afro Composer's aria: €250
- ✓ Audience Prize
- ✓ Other prices (subject to change)

## CATEGORY AMATEUR

- ✓ 1st Prize amateur Africa Lyric's Opera: 750€
- ✓ 2nd Amateur Prize Africa Lyric's Opera: 500€
- ✓ Special Prize for Best Interpretation of the Afro Composer's aria: €250
- ✓ Audience Prize
- ✓ Other prices (subject to change)

## YOUNG HOPE CATEGORY

- ✓ 1st Prize Young Hope Africa Lyric's Opera: President special prize
- ✓ Special Mady Mesplé prize: 500€
- ✓ Special Prize for Best Interpretation of the Afro Composer's aria: €250
- ✓ Special Prize of Opera National du Rhin: training
- ✓ Audience Prize with AMATEUR catégorie
- ✓ Other prices (subject to change)

## VII - JURY

5<sup>e</sup> Concours International  
des Grandes Voix d'Opéra  
d'Afrique

**Philippe  
JAROUSSKY**  
PRESIDENT DU JURY

● 5-7 mars 2026  
● Paris | France

athénée  
Théâtre Louis-Jouvet

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Africa Lyric's  
Opéra

f @ t y l i n

Appointed by the Board of Africa Lyric's Opera, the jury is composed of national and international personalities from the world of opera, theatre and music. Its decisions are sovereign.

- ✓ President of the 2026 Jury: Philippe JAROUSSKY, Concertist
- ✓ Theatre and opera directors
- ✓ Opera/Classical Press Directors
- ✓ International Opera Artists
- ✓ Conductors
- ✓ Music professionals
- ✓ Qualified personalities

The Jury reserves the right not to award all prizes and Africa Lyric's Opéra reserves the right to cancel or postpone the competition in the event of force majeure or for special reasons beyond its control.

## VIII – ASSIGN MENT OF RIGHTS

By their registrations and adherences to these rules, candidates expressly authorize:

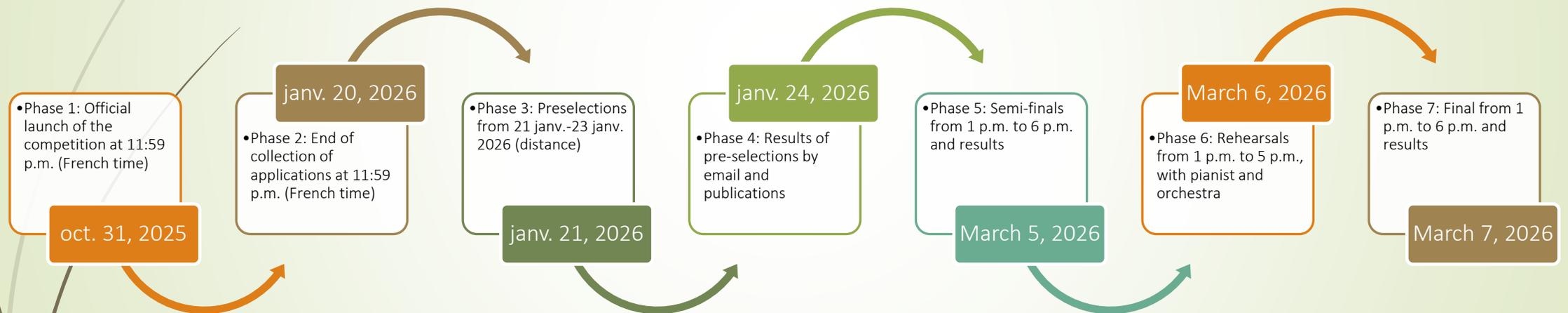
- The recording and broadcasting of their performance, live or not, on the internet, and any other existing or future medium, to participate in communication actions (interviews, media presence, etc.) and to accept their dissemination without restriction.
- The use of their name and quality on any existing or future medium and process,
- The distribution of photographs, recordings, visual recordings, for non-commercial purposes of communication, information, training, promotion, archiving, on any existing or future medium, including via the internet and by any process, for any edition of the competition or event.
- Undertake to participate in the tour and recitals of the winners (if concerned) and in at least one solidarity opera event organized by Africa Lyric's Opera.
- The partners, members of the jury, who have contributed to the organization and financing of this competition to have these media available in the same way for non-commercial purposes and to use them to promote the artists.
- Africa Lyric's Opéra or any other agent appointed by it reserves the right to photograph, film, reproduce on any existing or future medium, the candidates' performances throughout the duration of the competition. The candidates declare that they are giving up all rights to Africa Lyric's Opéra, without formalities
- GDPR: Africa Lyric's Opéra uses, within the framework of the regulations and the law on the protection of personal data, data collection software, which collects the data of candidates. This data may be transmitted to third parties (classical music professionals, operas, conservatories, programmers, etc.), who request it, in particular in the context of proposals for commitments or support actions in favor of artists.
- Registration for the competition implies adherence to these rules. Africa Lyric's Opéra is expressly authorized to store and use the data collected. In accordance with the law N°78-17 of 06/07/1978, relating to computing technology, files and freedoms, candidates have the right to access and rectify them with Africa Lyric's Opéra.



## IX – CHANGES AND CANCELLATION

- Africa Lyric's Opéra reserves the right to make changes or adjustments to these rules at any time if circumstances so require.
- For any point not provided for in these rules, any possible addition or modification of the rules and more broadly, any question raised during the course of the competition, Africa Lyric's Opéra is, in fine, sovereign and sole decision-maker. Its decisions are final.
- In the event of cancellation of the competition for any reason whatsoever (pandemic, illness, climate, lack of funding, conflict, lack of venue, force majeure, etc.), Africa Lyric's Opéra cannot be held liable to the candidates, the jury or the partners and may, if conditions allow, postpone the competition.

# SUMMARY OF THE COMPETITION PHASES



# PARTNERS

With the support



CONTACT

For any inquiry regarding

« **Great African Opera Voices** »



Contact our team



Phone. +337 6924 0646 (WhatsApp et sms)

Competition email: [concoursafricalyricsopera2026@gmail.com](mailto:concoursafricalyricsopera2026@gmail.com)

Competition website: [www.lesgrandesvoixdoperadafrique.com](http://www.lesgrandesvoixdoperadafrique.com)

Official website: [www.africalyricsopera.fr](http://www.africalyricsopera.fr)

