



2nd International Vocal Festival & Competition

14-18 August 2023, Ciechocinek, Poland

RULES AND GUIDELINES

I. Event characteristics

- The Vistula Sounds Vocal Festival & Competition is an event organized by the Sar Sargsyan Cultural Entertainment agency (Warsaw).
- The Vistula Sounds is an annual music event with the participation of Polish and international contestants, judges, and guests from Poland and abroad.
- The Vistula Sounds offers entertainment and promotes tourism and cultural exchange, but also ensures education in terms of singing and stage performance.
- The official opening ceremony of the Vistula Sounds and the two competitions will be held in the historic Summer Theatre in Ciechocinek.
- The awards ceremony and the “Thank you, hosts” concert will take place on the banks of the Vistula River in Ciechocinek.
- The Grand Prix awards ceremony will take place during the Gala Concert in the historic Summer Stage in the Park Zdrojowy in Ciechocinek.
- Vocal masterclasses will be delivered by the judges to contestants during the event.
- Two panel discussions will be offered during the event: “Meeting of Cultures” and “Polish Culture”.
- Dedicated guided day trips will be offered to contestants in three languages (Polish, English, Russian): “Meet Kuyavia” (trips to Toruń and Bydgoszcz), and “The Brine Way” (Ciechocinek).

- The Vistula Sounds will close during the final “Farewell, Ciechocinek” dance night with cake.
- The Vistula Sounds is open to all contestants (soloists and ensembles) from any country in the world.
- The Vistula Sounds is not a commercial event – admission to all festival events is free of charge.

II. Objectives

- Present and popularize Polish culture, and especially Polish popular music among foreign contestants looking to participate in singing competitions, their vocal teachers, and other foreign guests.
- Present and popularize the respective cultures of the countries represented during the event among the Polish contestants and the general public.
- Ensure the highest quality of artistic and vocal performance and build respect for the performing arts. This can only be achieved through adequate repertoire choices and the high judging criteria during the initial auditions and the competitions. This objective will be further pursued during the singing masterclasses facilitated by outstanding Polish and foreign singing experts.
- Discover and promote talents and support them through the process of developing their creative personalities.
- Promote the city of Ciechocinek as a resort and popular tourist destination among the young generation of Polish and foreign contestants.
- Expand the rich cultural and entertainment offering of Ciechocinek with an event attracting wide groups of resort patients, tourists, and local residents; although annual in format, each year the event will take on a new shape.
- While being a platform for vocal performance, the festival is intended to shape pro-European attitudes among contestants and their openness to other cultures. It is intended to be a meeting place for different cultures, a pleasant and casual adventure in the company of interesting, friendly people in a beautiful and attractive location.

III. Competitions

1. Age groups

1.1. Soloists

- I. Children aged 8-10;
- II. Children aged 11-13;
- III. Youths aged 14-16;
- IV. Youths aged 17-21;
- V. Adults aged 22-38.

1.2. Duets, trios, ensembles

- I. Children aged 8-13;
- II. Youths aged 14-19;
- III. Adults aged 20-38;

* Categories which attract fewer than 5 contestants will be combined with a neighbouring category – subject to a decision by the judges.

* The ensemble category to be determined based on the age of the majority of ensemble members.

2. International Song Competition

- 2.1. Contestants are required to perform an international song (in any language but Polish).
- 2.2. Max. duration: 4 minutes.

3. Polish Song Competition

- 3.1. Contestants are required to perform a song by a Polish composer in the Polish language.
- 3.2. Max. duration: 4 minutes.

4. General terms and conditions for the two competitions

- 4.1. Soloists, duets, trios, and ensembles may participate in both competitions.
- 4.2. Contestants may perform any genre of the following: pop, rap, rock, jazz, blues, gospel, spiritual, reggae, soul, fancy, r&b, chanson, classical

crossover, pop-opera, pop-folk, as well as musical, cinematography, and rock opera pieces.

- 4.3. All performances must be made using musical backgrounds. Contestants may bring their own accompanist or ensemble, subject to a prior approval by the organizers.
- 4.4. Back vocals are allowed but should not dominate the performer's singing.
- 4.5. Playback and double vocal performances are not allowed.
- 4.6. All pieces must be performed in the original language.
- 4.7. Competition singing will be held in open doors.
- 4.8. Contestants may participate in both contests (optional).

5. Judges and evaluation criteria

- 5.1. The judges are nominated by the organizers.
- 5.2. The judges are professional singing experts, singers, conductors, composers, directors of singing festivals, as well as music agents from Poland and other countries.
- 5.3. Singing performances will be evaluated using a 10-point scale.
- 5.4. The ultimate scoring is based on evaluations issued by all judges.
- 5.5. Judges may:
 - award or not award the Grand Prix;
 - award or not award the 1st, 2nd, 3rd place;
 - award or not award special mentions, prizes, and individual recognitions.
- 5.6. In the event of disputes, the final decision rests with the head judge.
- 5.7. Judges shall evaluate the contestants based on the following criteria:
 - purity of intonation and sound quality;
 - mastery of performance;
 - nature and style of performance;
 - stage image and culture.
- 5.8. Judges may stop a performance should a contestant exceed the awarded time limit.
- 5.9. The competition reports shall include the final decisions and be signed by all judges.
- 5.10. The judges' decisions are final and may not be challenged.

6. Awards and prizes

- 6.1. Per the final report, contestants shall be awarded the following:
 - **Grand Prix** (in both competitions);
 - **1st, 2nd, 3rd places** (per age group, in both competitions);
 - **Diploma with distinction** (5 per competition).

- 6.2. Grand Prix winners shall be awarded festival trophies, certificates as well as cash prizes of EUR 1,000 and gifts from festival partners (the Polish Song Competition prize will be sponsored by the SAWP Association in Poland).
- 6.3. 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners shall be awarded festival trophies, certificates as well as gifts from festival partners.
- 6.4. The Grand Prix and the 1st, 2nd and 3rd places may not be divided.
- 6.5. Diploma with distinction winners shall be awarded special festival certificates and medals.
- 6.6. All other contestants shall be awarded festival certificates and medals.
- 6.7. Special Prizes:
 - **The Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivode Prize** (certificate and trophy);
 - **The Kuyavian-Pomeranian Marshall Prize** (EUR 1,000);
 - **The Mayor of Ciechocinek Prize** (certificate and trophy).
- 6.8. Teachers and managers of contestants shall be awarded certificates of appreciation.
- 6.9. In addition to the above awards contestants may be invited to international competitions and festivals.

7. Applications

- 7.1. Applications for participation in the Vistula Sounds competitions will be accepted between **February 1, 2023 – May 1, 2023**.
- 7.2. Applications are to be made online at www.ce.sarsargsyan.com (in the “Vistula Sounds” tab) and submitted with the following documents:
 - fully completed consent form for the processing of personal data (GDPR);
 - high-quality photograph of contestant(s);
 - music background;
 - confirmation of registration fee payment.
- 7.3. Separate application forms are to be completed for either competition.

8. Registration fees

- 8.1. The registration fees are as follows:
 - 50 € for soloists;
 - 70 € for duets;
 - 100 € for trios;
 - 150 € for ensembles (4+ contestants).
- 8.2. A 30% discount on the Polish Song Competition will be awarded to international contestants.

- 8.3. Registration fees are payable separately for each competition.
- 8.4. No refunds of the registration fees will be made to contestants after the payment has been made.
- 8.5. Bank details for registration fee payments:
- Bank:** PKO BANK POLSKI
- Account No:** 90 1020 1013 0000 0102 0437 6034
- IBAN:** PL 90 1020 1013 0000 0102 0437 6034
- BIC, SWIFT:** BPKO PLPW
- Recipient:** SAR SARGSYAN CULTURAL ENTERTAINMENT
- 8.6. Bank transfers must include the following references:
- Registration fee, international song, full name of contestant /ensemble;
 - Registration fee, Polish song, full name of contestant /ensemble.
- 8.7. Registration fees must be made along with the applications, between **February 1, 2023 – May 1, 2023.**

IV. Festival concerts

1. Opening concert

- 1.1. The opening concert will be attended by the previous year Grand Prix winners and special guests.

2. “Thank you, hosts” concert

- 2.1. All international contestants may participate in the concert, with participation optional.
- 2.2. Contestants must perform a song in their native language(s).
- 2.3. Max. duration: 4 minutes.
- 2.4. Contestants must register their performances at the following e-mail: vistulasounds.rejestracja@gmail.com.

3. Gala Concert

- 3.1. The Gala Concert will be attended by the Grand Prix and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners, as well as special guests.
- 3.2. The repertoire choices will be made by the judges and organizers.

4. General concert terms and conditions

- 4.1. Concerts may be attended by soloists, duets, trios, and ensembles.
- 4.2. Playback and double vocal performances are not allowed.
- 4.3. All performances must have musical backgrounds. Contestants may bring their own accompanist or ensemble, subject to a prior approval by the organizers.

V. Final provisions

1. Copyright to all video, audio and photo material produced during the event remains the exclusive property of the organizers: the Sar Sargsyan Cultural Entertainment agency.
2. The Sar Sargsyan Cultural Entertainment agency shall have the right to use and distribute these materials in various formats on social media, as well as on television and radio and other media, without any obligation to pay royalties to contestants.
3. Contestants must only use copyright-protected background music to accompany their performances.
4. Contestants are fully responsible for the observance of the copyright of the songs to be performed during the festival.
5. All personal information and background music files shall be stored in the official festival database and shall not be distributed to third parties.
6. Contestants applying for participation in the competitions consent for the public processing of their personal data.
7. Due to the exceptional character of the festival, its program and organization, all international contestants and guests are required to stay in the festival hotels (details to be found in the “Accommodation and organizational issues”).
8. The obligation set out above in item 7 does not apply to Polish contestants, but it is highly advisable for them to stay in Ciechocinek (details to be found in the “Accommodation and organizational issues”).
9. All contestants are required to participate in all festival events to ensure the accomplishment of the festival objectives.