



PRESS RELEASE 25 August 2026

For publication

Dear members of the press,

The 10th JORMA PANULA INTERNATIONAL CONDUCTING COMPETITION 31 August–4 September 2027.

The Viljo and Maire Vuorio Foundation has begun preparations for the tenth Jorma Panula International Conducting Competition, to be held in Vaasa from 31 August to 4 September 2027. We hope for pleasant late-summer weather and encourage audiences to come to Vaasa Town Hall to see international conductors compete at a high level. Over the years, the competition has gained a strong international reputation and has consistently attracted many entrants from across Europe.

Professor **Jorma Panula** has selected the members of the international jury, whose task is to choose the winners from among the competitors. In addition to himself as chairman, the jury will comprise Professor **Sian Edwards** from the United Kingdom, Professor **Bjarte Engeset** from Norway, conductor **Anna-Maria Helsing** from Finland, and conductor **Pietro Rizzo** from Italy. The jury members have extensive experience of orchestral conducting, and some give masterclasses or are affiliated with various universities of music. Furthermore, two musicians from the competing orchestras will form part of the jury. The secretary to the jury is Music Director **Michael Claussen**. Since 2003, the **Vaasa City Orchestra** and **Jyväskylä Sinfonia** have been the competition orchestras, and this will also be the case in 2027.

The competition is open to conductors who are citizens of the European Union, Norway, Iceland, the United Kingdom and Switzerland. The upper age limit for participation is 40 years. The application period for the competition opens on 1 December 2026 and closes on 28 February 2027. Twenty competitors will be selected from among the applicants.

The repertoire consists of new and older orchestral music. On the first day of the competition, music by the Finnish composer *Magnus Lindberg* will be performed; on the second day, works by *Camille Saint-Saëns*, *Pablo Sarasate* and *Maurice Ravel*. In the final, the contestants will compete with music by *Maurice Ravel* and *Jean Sibelius*. As in previous years, the Vuorio Foundation is commissioning new music for the competition. This year, a new orchestral work by the acclaimed Finnish composer **Sebastian Hilli** will have its world premiere. This work will be performed by the competitors on the second day of the competition.

The soloists for the competition will be announced in early 2027. The works to be performed require violinist(s) and, in the final, a soprano for Ravel's beautiful songs in the work *Shéhérazade*.

JORMA PANULA MINIKAPU – competition for young conductors (1) 2–4 September 2027.

The Jorma Panula MINIKAPU conducting competition for young people is being held in Vaasa for the second time. The competition is aimed at Finnish and international students of conducting, studying in Finland. The competition will run concurrently with the international competition in Vaasa but is two days shorter. Maestro Panula states that he wishes to further promote interest in orchestral conducting amongst young music students as early as possible.

The minimum age limit for applicants is 12 years and the upper limit 18 years. The application period for this competition is 1 January – 28 February 2027. The competition jury consists of Professor and Conductor **Atso Almila**, Chair of the Jury, Conductor **Jukka Iisakkila** and **Ville Mankkinen**. The Secretary of the Jury is Festival Director **Milla Virta**. The competition is held in the Vaasa Town Hall.

Eight competitors will be accepted into the competition. The competition orchestra is **Wasa Sinfonietta**. The repertoire will include music by *W. A. Mozart, Jean Sibelius and Uuno Klami*. The competition was first held in 2024.

Jorma Panula's conducting course in Vaasa, 24–28 August 2026.

There is something particularly appealing about the profession of conducting, as so many conductors at the very top of their field continue their careers even decades after reaching retirement age. A legend in the world of conducting is **Jorma Panula**, who still has much to offer his younger colleagues as a teacher. At the heart of Panula's teaching lies a thorough knowledge of the works being performed, as well as an effective gestural language. *'My passion for music keeps me active and drives my desire to teach "vispaaminen"; says Jorma, aged 96. (Vispaaminen is Finnish and means "Waving" in Jorma's own peculiar language, actually is conducting)*

The week-long conducting masterclass culminates in a concert, where the audience can experience, through classical masterpieces, how the talented participants – who have travelled from all corners of the world – put these principles into practice.

Ten conductors are in Vaasa this week, 24–28 August, taking part in the conducting masterclass organised by the Panula Academy. (<http://panula-academy.com/>)

The international participants come from the Netherlands, France, Germany, Italy, the USA and Finland.

The course concert will take place on Friday 28 August at 6.00 pm in Vaasa Town Hall. The programme includes works by, amongst others, *W. A. Mozart, J. Haydn, G. Rossini, L. van Beethoven and J. Sibelius*. The soloists in Haydn's *Cello Concerto No. 1 in C major* are the finalists of the most recent Turku Cello Competition, **Alli Mankkinen, Alma Stupak and Pekka Smolander**.

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Welcome to follow us during the year 1.9.2026-4.9.2027 on the webpage and social media.

www.panulacompetition.fi