

2nd INTERNATIONAL OPERA COMPETITION “LONATO DEL GARDA ALL’OPERA” 2026

Dedicated to musicians Filippo and Paolo Chimeri

The Association *La Bottega della Lirica* was founded in 2011 with the aim of creating a centre of advanced training for young musicians. This is achieved not only by offering young artists the opportunity to take part in masterclasses led by teachers with proven artistic careers and teaching experience, but also by organizing public events through which they can gain professional experience, such as concerts, performances, and events in Italy and abroad. Over the years, the Association has collaborated with Roberto Scandiuzzi, Luciana Serra, Alessandro Corbelli, and Lucio Gallo.

In 2025, the first Opera Competition was launched, dedicated to the artists from Lonato Filippo (Crema, September 3, 1817 – Brescia, February 24, 1892) and Paolo Chimeri (Lonato, 1852 – Brescia, 1934). Filippo was a répétiteur, chapel master, and composer of sacred and secular music; he moved from Cremona to Lonato, where he served as organist at the Cathedral. In 1866 he moved to Brescia, where he remained until his death as répétiteur at the Teatro Grande. In addition to sacred music, he composed theatrical works that remain in manuscript form. Paolo began studying piano with his father at a very young age and quickly proved to be a prodigy. He was appointed chorus master at the Teatro Grande in Brescia in 1866 and conductor in 1868. He was among the founders of the Concert Society. He soon left the theatre to devote himself exclusively to composition and teaching (among his students was Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli). He dominated the musical scene in Brescia; the style of his compositions reflects the influence of the most prominent Italian opera composers of the time, while his piano works display an impressionistic character.

GENERAL REGULATIONS

Art. 1

The second edition of the International Opera Competition “Lonato del Garda all’Opera” is organized to identify new emerging voices who may take part in events organized by the Association, as well as to select suitable singers to be admitted to the workshop for the production of *Rigoletto* by Giuseppe Verdi, to be held in July at the Rocca Viscontea in Lonato del Garda, and to the performance of *Le nozze di Figaro*, to be held in Corropoli (TE) for the Association “Abruzzo all’Opera”. In addition, cash prizes and prizes offered by partner associations will be awarded to the winners.

The competition is open to participants of all nationalities who, as of January 1, 2025, have not yet reached the age of 45.

The Competition is structured in three phases:

- **Selections** will take place in person on February 11 and 12, 2026, according to the schedule published on www.labottegadellalirica.com;
- singers who pass the first phase will take part in the **Semi-final**, to be held on February 13, 2026;
- the **Final** will take place on February 14, with the candidates admitted from the semi-final, from which the prize winners will be selected.

The Competition venue is **Teatro Italia**, located at Via Antiche Mura 2, Lonato del Garda (Brescia, Italy). The selections and the semi-final will be held in the adjacent hall, and a rehearsal room will be reserved for singers to rehearse with the accompanists.

The organization will provide piano accompanists; however, if a candidate wishes to use their own accompanist, this must be indicated at the time of registration, and the related expenses will be borne by the candidate.

Art. 2 - Competition Procedures

During the Selections on **February 11 and 12**, 2026, candidates will perform one or two pieces from the five submitted, one of their own choice and the second chosen by the jury. All candidates will receive the selection schedule and time by email. Auditions will follow the chronological order of registration.

Candidates admitted to the semi-final and final must present themselves on **February 13 and 14**, 2026, according to the order communicated by email. The jury's decisions will be communicated to the candidates at the end of the selections and will also be published on www.labottegadellalirica.com.

At any stage of the competition, candidates may be asked by the jury to perform one or more pieces from their submitted program. Candidates admitted to the semi-final will have an interview with the jury at the end of their performance. Finalists must appear in concert attire for the public final round.

The jury may, by agreement with the candidate, assign a different role from the one originally applied for in the productions of *Rigoletto* and *Le nozze di Figaro*.

The jury's decision is final and not subject to appeal.

Art. 3 - Registration

Applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on February 4, 2026, by email to labottegadellalirica@gmail.com, with the subject line: "Opera Competition 2026: [First Name Last Name]", and must include the following documents:

1. copy of a valid ID or passport (PDF);
2. musical program as indicated in Art. 5;
3. detailed artistic résumé (PDF);
4. any certificates of merit from previous competitions;
5. proof of payment of the €60 registration fee;
6. phone contact details.

The registration fee must be paid at the time of application, indicating in the payment description: "Registration Lonato del Garda all'Opera Competition 2026 – [First Name Last Name]".

Payment may be made by bank transfer to IBAN **IT17E050345757000000002801**, payable to *LA BOTTEGA DELLA LIRICA* – Branch of Castiglione delle Stiviere, or via PayPal to labottegadellalirica@gmail.com.

The registration fee entitles the candidate to participate from the Selection phase, provided the requirements of Art. 1 are met, and is non-refundable under any circumstances. Applications lacking the required documentation or received after the deadline will not be considered. The Association reserves the right to verify the authenticity of submitted documents and declarations.

Art. 4 - Jury and Accompanists

The jury will be composed of prominent figures from the international music scene:

President of the Jury

Roberto Scandiuzzi

Jury Members

Florin Estefan – General Manager, Cluj-Napoca National Theatre

Federico Pupo – Artistic Director, Teatro di Genova

Anna Brandolini – Artistic Director of La Bottega della Lirica; Professor at the “B. Marcello” Conservatory, Venice

Silvia Dalla Benetta – Professor at the Accademia Verdiana of Teatro Regio di Parma and at the “B. Marcello” Conservatory, Venice

Francesco Izzo – Scientific Director of the Verdi Festival and the Academy of Teatro Regio di Parma

Piano Accompanists

Roberta Ferrari – Collaborated with major Italian opera houses including Arena di Verona and Teatro Carlo Felice; since 1998 at Teatro La Fenice in Venice as répétiteur, stage and rehearsal pianist, fortepianist and harpsichordist.

Alberto Mattia Bellio – Graduate in Composition and Collaborative Piano; has worked with several Italian opera institutions and is currently piano accompanist at the “B. Marcello” Conservatory in Venice.

Art. 5 - Program

All candidates must perform their entire program from memory and in the original language.

Candidates must present **five arias by at least three different composers**. Any changes to the submitted program must be communicated in writing by February 7, 2026.

Candidates must provide **two copies of the scores**: one for the accompanist and one for the jury.

Art. 6 – Prizes

The following prizes will be awarded:

- 1st Prize: €1,500
- 2nd Prize: €1,000
- 3rd Prize: €600
- Prize offered by *La Bottega della Lirica* for a role in *Rigoletto* by G. Verdi, including free participation in the workshop held in July 2026 with a performance at the Rocca Viscontea in Lonato del Garda;
- Prize for a role in *Le nozze di Figaro* by W. A. Mozart, including participation in the production organized by “Abruzzo all’Opera” in Corropoli (TE) in August/September 2026;
- “Verona Lirica” Prize and concert at Teatro Filarmonico di Verona;
- “Club dei 27 – Verdi Enthusiasts” Prize (Parma) for the best Verdi voice and concert at Teatro Regio di Parma;
- “La Corte delle Muse” Prize and concert in the summer festival in San Felice del Benaco;
- Critics’ Prize “Lukas Franceschini” offered by Opera Libera;
- “Emerging Voices” Prize.

Art. 7 – Winners and Eligible Candidates

Winners and eligible candidates may take part in the workshops and perform their respective roles in the productions of *Rigoletto* and *Le nozze di Figaro* scheduled for summer 2026, according to a calendar to be communicated later. The jury may award more than one winner for each prize or role.

The jury may grant eligibility status to candidates who demonstrate a good overall technical and interpretative level, even if not fully corresponding to the role in question. These candidates may be invited to advanced training courses and other activities of La Bottega della Lirica.

Non-EU winners must comply with Italian regulations regarding residence permits for non-EU citizens.

Art. 8 - Courses and Artistic Activities

La Bottega della Lirica will organize a workshop in Lonato del Garda for the production of *Rigoletto* by Giuseppe Verdi in June/July 2026. Participation in the workshop will be free for the role prize winner; for all others, the fee will be €500. Selected protagonists will receive a flat-rate reimbursement for expenses. Failure to perform assigned roles or absence from more than 25% of the course days will result in revocation of the winner's title and related commitments.

Art. 9

All participants in productions organized by La Bottega della Lirica will receive expense reimbursements subject to applicable tax and social security deductions.

Art. 10

La Bottega della Lirica reserves the right to film, record, and broadcast the Final round, courses, rehearsals, and performances without any compensation to the participants.

Art. 11

The Italian version of these regulations has legal validity. In the event of disputes, the Court of Brescia shall have jurisdiction. In accordance with Italian Law no. 675 of 31/12/1996, personal data provided by candidates will be collected by La Bottega della Lirica for the purposes of managing the Competition. Candidates retain the rights set forth in Art. 13 of the aforementioned law.