



MESSINA MUSIC CONTEST – RULES AND REGULATIONS

FOURTH EDITION

The Messina Music Contest is a music competition aimed at bringing emerging young artists from the local area into the spotlight. It is conceived and organised by the association **Crescendo**. During the first phase, a selected jury will assign each contestant a score from 1 to 10, while the audience will be given the opportunity to vote for their favourite artist. The same procedure will apply during the final phase, which will be accessed by the top three contestants from the first round.

The association awards a **first prize** consisting of a **cash-equivalent amount to be invested in the winner's musical production and/or promotion**.

The event is conceived as a variety show: in addition to the contestants' performances, there will be sketches, musical interludes, special guests and more.

The contest will take place at the Auditorium of the Palacultura Antonello da Messina **on 20 March 2026, starting at 9:00 p.m.**

Applicants are strongly advised to read the present regulations carefully. Failure to comply with the application procedures and competition rules may result in disqualification at any stage of the contest.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. Application and Selection

- a) The competition is open to all individuals residing or domiciled in Sicily, aged between 13 and 35 years, belonging to the following categories: solo singers, vocal groups, solo instrumentalists, musical ensembles (up to a maximum of ten members), bands and choirs (school choirs limited to upper secondary schools only).
- b) In order to participate in the Messina Music Contest, applicants must strictly follow the steps outlined below.

1. Payment of the Application Fee (mandatory)

Participation in the contest is subject to the payment of an application fee of €20.00, to be made exclusively by bank transfer to the following IBAN:
IT63N0306909606100000192979

Payment reference: "Iscrizione Messina Music Contest 2026"

2. Submission of the Application by E-mail

Applications must be submitted **starting from 2 February 2026 and no later than 11:59 p.m. on 16 February 2026**, to the following e-mail address:
emanuele.collufio@crescendoincubatore.com

The e-mail must include:

- a telephone contact for the applicant (or group representative);
- a short description of the applicant or musical group (**maximum 750 characters**), including: their relationship with music, artistic ambitions and a brief reference to their artistic CV, if available.
- the link and the documents described below**

Video requirements:

The application e-mail must include a link (preferably Google Drive) containing an amateur video of one performance by the applicant, featuring a piece of their choice (not necessarily the piece to be performed during the contest).

- maximum duration: 1 minute and 20 seconds;
- only amateur videos are accepted; videos with professionally recorded vocals or music are not permitted.
- The link must be valid, functional, publicly accessible and viewable by external users. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the link works correctly. The organisation assumes no responsibility for non-functioning or inaccessible links.

Documents to be Attached

The application e-mail must include:

- a colour scan (front and back) of the identity card of the solo applicant, or of each member of the group in the case of a collective application;
- proof of payment of the application fee;
- two high-definition (HD) photographs suitable for the creation and promotion of the event.

- c) Should the number of applications exceed the maximum number of admissible participants, the Crescendo staff will carry out a preliminary selection. The selection criteria adopted by the Crescendo staff are final and not subject to appeal.
- d) Multiple applications or participation in more than one category are not permitted.
- e) The e-mail address from which the application is sent shall be considered the sole official means of communication between Crescendo and the applicant until the end of the application period. Once the selection process is completed, selected contestants will be contacted by telephone. Participants are responsible for promptly communicating any technical equipment required for themselves or their group.
- f) No later than 15 March 2026, each participant must communicate the titles of the two pieces to be performed on the day of the contest (Chapter 2, paragraph e) and their respective authors, together with their duration (Chapter 2, paragraph a). Failure to meet this deadline will result in disqualification.

2. Competition Rules

Each participant, whether solo or group, must perform one piece of their choice, original or cover, with a minimum duration of 2 minutes and a maximum of 5 minutes for vocal pieces, and no more than 6 minutes for instrumental pieces.

Mash-ups or medleys are permitted, provided that the total duration does not exceed 5 minutes for vocal performances and 6 minutes for instrumental performances.

Singers and choirs may perform a cappella pieces. The use of auto-tune during performances is permitted.

Solo contestants may accompany themselves with an instrument or be accompanied by one or more instrumentalists of their choice. In this case, the contestant will still be considered a solo act with accompaniment. An accompanying instrumentalist may not perform with more than one contestant.

Each contestant must prepare two pieces, in the event that they qualify for the final round.

Competition pieces may be cut to reduce their duration and transposed to change key. Classical repertoire pieces are excluded from this provision and must be performed in their original key.

Before the start of the event, subject to time availability, it will be possible to replace one or both of the selected pieces or change their performance order. The Crescendo staff reserves the right to deny this possibility.

Each piece must be performed entirely from memory, including by bands and accompanying instrumentalists. The use of lyrics or sheet music is not permitted, with the exception of instrumental pieces from the classical repertoire.

3. Soundcheck

Soundcheck rehearsals will take place at the Palacultura theatre **starting from 9:00 a.m. on 20 March 2026**, the date of the event. Rehearsal times for each participant will be communicated in advance. Unless prior notice is given or serious unforeseen circumstances occur, any contestant who fails to attend at the scheduled time will be excluded from the competition. Contestants who fail to attend rehearsals by 6:30 p.m. will in any case be considered disqualified.

Backing tracks, where used, must be provided to the staff on a **USB flash drive**. Audio files should be delivered in commonly readable formats, such as .mp3 or .wav. In order to ensure better audio quality during performances, participants are advised to purchase backing tracks from official online stores.

At 8:30 p.m. on 20 March, roll call will take place for all participants. Any contestant not present by this time will be considered disqualified. Any absences of group members must be communicated well in advance, except in cases of serious unforeseen circumstances. It shall be the sole decision of the group whether to perform with fewer members.

4. Voting Procedure and Awards

At the end of each performance, a selected jury will privately assign a score to each contestant, while the audience may vote for their preferred artist. In the first phase, the audience vote will account for 30% of the total score.

At the end of all performances, the top five rankings from the jury and from the audience will be displayed. The average of the scores will then be calculated, and the names of the three contestants advancing to the final round will be announced. In the event of a tie between two or more contestants eligible for the podium, all tied contestants will be admitted to the final. Nevertheless, the final podium will consist of only three contestants.

Finalists must perform again with a different piece from the one previously performed. The same competition rules as in the first phase shall apply

The jury will again express its evaluation of the performances. In this phase, the audience will also be able to vote for their preferred contestant; however, the audience vote will carry a weight of 40%.

PRIZES

The three finalists will be awarded trophies during the prize-giving ceremony.

The first-place winner will receive the Messina Music Contest trophy and the opportunity to invest an amount of **€1,500 in services for their artistic production and/or promotion**. The winner may choose how to use the prize, provided that the expenditure is clearly aimed at productive and/or promotional development. The Crescendo association will liaise with the service provider(s) and, upon receipt of an invoice, will pay the agreed amount. The total sum may be disbursed starting **from 20 April 2026 and no later than 60 days thereafter**, preferably in no more than three instalments. Any remaining amount after this deadline will no longer be available to the winner.

In addition, the three finalists will have the opportunity to give an interview on an episode of Radio Taormina.

All competing artists will also have the chance to win the **following awards**:

- Best Interpretation
- Best Technical Proficiency
- Radio Taormina Award for Best Original Song
- Crescendo Award for Best Artistic Creativity

Follow our Instagram page (**@crescendoincubatore**) to discover the exciting new prizes of this fourth edition.

INFORMATION NOTICE

Selected artists will be invited to take part in **the “Aspettando il MeMu” events**, an initiative promoting the Messina Music Contest and its participants through live performances.

These events will take place at the venue “I Parenti”, located at Via Lepanto 14 (Messina), starting from 26 February and on the following two Thursdays.

The Crescendo Team reserves the right to amend these regulations at any time, should it be deemed necessary.

IMAGE RELEASE AND DATA PROTECTION

By registering, all participants automatically accept the present Regulations and grant free authorisation for the use of their image rights in relation to their participation in the Messina Music Contest. This authorisation allows the Organisation to carry out photographic, television and/or audio recordings, including those produced by third parties authorised by the Organisation. Such recordings may be used, in full or in part, for television, radio, internet, audiovisual and other media, both in Italy and abroad.

Pursuant to Articles 13 and 14 of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR), each participant consents to the processing of their personal data, directly or through third parties.

The Organisation assumes no responsibility for any damage, injury, loss, theft or deterioration occurring before, during or after the competition, affecting participating artists, their accompanying persons, musical instruments, technical equipment, costumes or stage props.

Such events shall be considered entirely at the participants' own risk, even if caused by their own actions, those of other participants or third parties, except in cases of wilful misconduct or gross negligence attributable to the Organisation.

Each participant declares that they take part in the competition under their own responsibility and hereby waives any claim for compensation against the Organisation, its representatives, collaborators and partners, for matters falling within the cases described above.

Best of luck to all participants!

The Crescendo Team