INTERNATIONAL KANTELE COMPETITION 2027

RULES

The International Kantele Competition and the KanteleKimara Showcase are open to soloists and ensembles of all ages. The events will take place at Karjalatalo in Helsinki on 5–8 May 2027. The event will begin on Wednesday 5 May with an opening concert. The competition and showcase days are 6–8 May 2027. Detailed schedules for each day will be announced in February 2027.

The event is organised by the Kantele Association of Finland (Kanteleliitto ry) in cooperation with the Kantele Teachers' Association (Kanteleensoiton opettajat ry) and Käpylä Music Institute. The event is under the patronage of conductor and Professor of Orchestral Conducting Susanna Mälkki. The chair of the competition jury is kantele artist and Doctor of Music Ritva Koistinen-Armfelt.

COMPETITION CATEGORIES

The competition is divided into categories according to the performers' age and level of musical education and, in the ensemble competition, also according to ensemble size. Performances are not divided by musical genre or by the number of strings on the kantele. Depending on the number of performers or for other reasons, the organiser or jury may, at its discretion, change the category structure or hold a separate video pre-selection before the competition. Any such pre-selection will assess playing skills and musical expression, not the technical quality of the video or audio recording.

In all categories, competitors perform a programme submitted in advance. The programme must fit within the time limit set for the relevant category. There are no compulsory pieces.

The competition categories are:
Category 1: 12 years old and under. Maximum total performance time: 10 minutes.
Category 2: Ages 13–15. Maximum total performance time: 10 minutes.
Category 3: Ages 16 and over. Maximum total performance time: 15 minutes.
Category 4: Professionals. Maximum total performance time: 20 minutes.

Ensembles are divided according to the performers' ages and level of musical education, as well as the size of the ensemble, as follows:
Small ensembles: duos, trios and quartets.
Large ensembles: quintets and larger ensembles.

For Categories 1–3, the performer's age on 31 December 2026 determines the category.

In Category 4, a professional is defined as a kantele player who is studying at, or has graduated from, a higher-education music institution, or who otherwise works as a professional performing artist.

Soloists perform alone, without an accompanist.

Duos register in the category determined by the age of the older member of the duo. Duos that include a professional member belong in Category 4.

In trios and quartets, one member may be older than the upper age limit of the relevant competition category.

In large ensembles, up to two members may be older than the upper age limit. Players classified as professionals may participate as exceptions in Category 3 as follows: one professional member is permitted in trios and quartets, and two in large ensembles. There is no lower age limit exception; younger players may participate in all categories.

In Categories 1–3, teachers may play in a supporting role in the large ensembles they lead.

In all categories, participants may combine different types of kantele, musical styles, singing, other instruments, electronics or elements from other art forms in their performance. However, the programme must form a coherent whole in which playing the kantele and the artistic expression associated with it are at the centre. At least half of the ensemble members must be kantele players.

ASSESSMENT

The jury will focus on the command of the music performed, the versatility of musical expression and the performance as a whole. In the ensemble competition, in addition to the above, the jury will pay attention to factors such as the precision of ensemble playing and the ensemble's musical communication. Performances will not be assessed or ranked according to musical genre or the number of strings on the kantele.

JURY AND PRIZES

The competition will have several juries, made up of leading Finnish and international kantele artists and other artists. Every soloist and ensemble will receive written feedback on their performance. Competitors who place in the competition will receive cash prizes or special prizes.

KANTELEKIMARA SHOWCASE

The KanteleKimara Showcase for soloists and ensembles of all ages will be held alongside the competition. Its purpose is to offer performers a goal-oriented performance opportunity without a competitive setting.
In KanteleKimara, performances may combine different types of kantele and musical styles, as well as singing, other instruments, electronics or elements from other art forms, while keeping the kantele at the centre.

Ensembles may be of any size, and there are no age restrictions on their composition. A teacher may participate in the group in a supporting role.

Experts in the field will provide written feedback on every performance.

The maximum total performance time is 8 minutes.

REGISTRATION

Each player may register for a maximum of three performances as follows: one solo performance, either in the competition or in KanteleKimara, and participation in two ensembles. If a player takes part in the competition in two ensembles, the ensembles must compete in different categories.

Registration opens on 1 December 2026 and must be completed online using the form available on the Kantele Association's website at www.kantele.net. Registrations must be received by 23:59 on 31 January 2027. **Late registrations will not be accepted.**

The performance programme must be submitted online using the form available at the same website by 23:59 on 31 March 2027.

PARTICIPATION FEES

A participation fee is charged for both the competition and KanteleKimara. The fee depends on the type of participation and whether the participant is a member of the Kantele Association. The participation fee for an ensemble consists of
an ensemble fee plus an individual participation fee for each ensemble member. Although KanteleKimara has no
separate categories, the ensemble fee is determined by the size of the ensemble: small ensembles are duos, trios and
quartets; large ensembles are quintets and larger ensembles.

Type of participation	Ensemble fee	Kantele Association member	Non-member
Solo – Competition	–	€ 45	€ 77
Solo – KanteleKimara	–	€ 25	€ 43
Small ensemble – Competition	€ 40	€ 5	€ 15
Small ensemble – KanteleKimara	€ 20	€ 5	€ 15
Large ensemble – Competition	€ 70	€ 5	€ 15
Large ensemble – KanteleKimara	€ 50	€ 5	€ 15

You can join the Kantele Association at www.kantele.net/liity. The website also provides information about membership benefits.

The participation fee will be refunded if a player is unable to attend, provided that a medical certificate is presented.

Participation may be cancelled free of charge before the programme submission deadline of 31 March 2027. If the event has to be cancelled by the organiser due to force majeure, 50% of the fees already paid will be refunded.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND RECORDING PERMISSION

The performances, names and performance schedules of all participants are public. By registering, a player agrees that they may appear, for non-commercial purposes, in the organiser's media releases, on its website, in photographs and recordings, and on social media. This permission to photograph and record also applies to other media organisations (newspapers, radio, television and social media).

TRAVEL, ACCOMMODATION AND MEALS

Players are responsible for all their own travel, accommodation and meal expenses.

CLARIFICATIONS AND AMENDMENTS TO THE RULES

The original language of these rules is Finnish. In the event of any discrepancies, the Finnish-language rules shall prevail. Kanteleliitto ry reserves the right, either itself or through a committee authorised by it, to make changes or clarifications to these rules.

ENQUIRIES

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