

MÜNCHENER BIENNALE FESTIVAL FÜR NEUES MUSIKTHEATER

08/05 –
20/05/2026

Festivalbüro / Office:
Lothstraße 19, D-80797 München
Tel. +49 89 2805607

Künstlerische Leitung / Artistic Direction:
Katrin Beck
Manuela Kerer

Veranstalter / Organizer:
Landeshauptstadt München in
Zusammenarbeit mit SPIELMOTOR
MÜNCHEN e.V. – eine Initiative der
Stadt München und der BMW Group

Munich Biennale 2026 – Festival for New Music Theater OPEN CALL for a music theater production on the theme of “Martial Arts”

A Munich Biennale 2026 project co-produced by Styriarte Graz
and in co-operation with schwere reiter / scope Munich
Deadline for submissions: 15 November 2024

Description

Martial arts, the combat sport, exhibit a close connection to theatre because they are only partially about sporting competition and the actual usefulness of trained techniques: instead, the various martial arts systems combine health, philosophical and performative dimensions. And let's not forget the acoustic aspect, in which energetic and ritualized body movements are expressed audibly. When the boundaries between theatre space and dōjō – the place where martial arts are practiced – become blurred, all these characteristics can be played out in music theater: individual narratives and forms emerge that are not only inscribed directly onto the bodies of the (martial) artists on stage, but possibly also those of the audience. This Open Call kicks off a core theme that the Munich Biennale would like to continue in the 2028 and 2030 editions of the festival.



The Munich Biennale's OPEN CALL is open to submissions of new ideas for music theatre projects that have a thematic reference to martial arts. The project that is chosen will premiere as part of the Munich Biennale in May 2026 and the production will then be presented at Styriarte Graz in June/July 2026. This call for submissions is directed at professional groups or teams of artists (with a maximum of 5 members) who will be responsible for the interplay of all theatrical requirements (composition, text, direction, staging, dramaturgy, set design, conducting, video and more). The deadline for submitting a concept is 15 November 2024. A seven-member international jury will choose one project from the submissions. The winning project will be announced in March 2025.

The Munich Biennale / Styriarte Graz can offer the chosen project a budget in the region of € 23,000 (gross) for the production, premiere and ongoing performances. The Munich-based

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schwere reiter performance space will be provided free of charge and will include technical equipment (see appendix), a technical director for set-up and rehearsals, as well as a 7-piece vocal-instrumental ensemble. The same is true for the venue in Graz (still to be defined). On top of that, the team will be offered a mentor specializing in martial arts as well as someone to provide dramaturgical advice (details set out below). Envisaged are three performances for the Munich Biennale and three performances as part of Styriarte Graz. The project can also be supported by co-financing models from the team: these must be comprehensively presented in the application documents and the costing plan.

Criteria for Participation

- This international OPEN CALL is open to the public and is directed at professional teams of artists (max. 5 members) from all countries. Eligible to apply are teams of artists who are active in the fields of composition, text, direction, staging, dramaturgy, set design, conducting, video and beyond.
- The project must engage significantly with the subject of “combat sports/martial arts”. In particular, we welcome submissions that incorporate the physical, gestural and/or the ritual aspect of martial arts.
- The project must premiere at the Munich Biennale. Projects that have already been realized may not be submitted.
- The music theater piece should be 30–40 minutes long without an interval.
- Concepts that are aimed at an intergenerational audience, i.e. children and young people as well as adults, are welcome.
- It is hoped that the project team will engage with key players from the martial arts community in both Munich and Graz. This engagement could be reflected in the performance.
- The project team will receive dramaturgical support from one person who will be available during the development process and the final rehearsals.
- The project team will also receive mentoring support. The mentor will work alongside and advise the project by means of 3 consultation sessions (one of which will be in person) and will actively be on hand to advise.



- Orchestration: the Munich Biennale / Styriarte Graz will provide a 7-piece vocal-instrumental ensemble. Rare instruments are possible (max. 2). Ideally the line-up would include both vocal and instrumental components.
- The project must be suitable for the spatial and technical possibilities of the “schwere reiter” in Munich (please see the website for the technical rider). The organizers will provide the project team with a technical manager at the venue.
- Part of the development of the concept must include the production’s capacity to tour.
- Approx. 7 days are allocated for rehearsals in Munich, and approx. 2 days for the get-in or adaption rehearsals in Graz.
- It will not be possible to use the orchestra pit.
- As far as possible, the project team should be available to take part in any aspect of communication connected to the project.
- The project team undertakes to keep the Munich Biennale fully informed of the status of the project. Independent communication activities must be coordinated with the Munich Biennale.
- A detailed list of all estimated production costs is expected to be provided as part of the application.



The Munich Biennale, Styriarte Graz, schwere reiter / scope value diversity and therefore welcome all applications – independent of sex, nationality, ethnic or social background, religion/worldview, disability, age or sexual orientation or identity.

Documentation Required

All application documents have to be submitted in English. The application must include the following information:

- Exposé: a concept describing the music theatre project (max. 10,000 characters including spaces; optional: attachments with graphics or photos)
- Biographies of the members of the project team (each one max. 1,500 characters)
- The contact details for one contact person from the project team
- Details of the exact cast
- Timeline of the production schedule (starting with the announcement of the winning project in March 2025)
- Details about potential sponsors or partners

- Costing plan: a budget of the estimated production costs (as detailed as possible) is expected as part of the application. Adherence to the budget framework is a key assessment criterion for the competition. The following expenditure and income items must be included:
 - Remuneration for the project team
 - Additional costs for technical equipment over and above that provided in the technical rider
 - Rental costs for any rehearsal rooms during the development phase
 - Other production-specific costs
 - Any additional financing (not a prerequisite)

The deadline for submissions is 15th November 2024. Any applications received after this date cannot be taken into consideration. The documentation required can be submitted here.



The Munich Biennale, Styriarte Graz, schwere reiter / scope are committed to complying with minimum wage terms for the culture sector. Submissions whose calculations do not comply with the minimum wage cannot be considered. Income from ticket sales of the winning project's performances cannot be included in the calculation. Public relations, travel expenses of all the project's participants and licensing/insurance fees (e.g. KSK, GEMA) are to be borne by the organizers and are not required to be included in the costing plan.

The Munich Biennale reserves the right to contact the respective contact person from the project team to ask for in-depth clarification of technical and/or financial details and, if necessary, to request adjustments so that the implementation of the project can be formally guaranteed.

Dramaturgical Advice

A dramaturgical consultant will be available to the chosen project team during the development process as well as the final rehearsals (potentially in addition to a separate dramaturgical post within the production team).

Mentor

The chosen production will be accompanied by a mentor with expertise in the fields of martial arts and theater. This mentoring includes working alongside and advising the production and includes a minimum of 3 advisory meetings (at least 1 of which will be in person); they will also be actively on hand to advise.

Jury

This call for submissions is divided into two phases. After checking feasibility and compliance with the submission criteria the Munich Biennale, Styriarte Graz and schwere reiter / scope will make an initial selection. This will then be presented to the 7 members of the international jury, who will select the winning project. The jury will make their decision based on artistic quality, appropriate and realistic budget, feasibility and potential for innovation.



Carola Bauckholt, Composer / DE
Oscar Escudéro, Composer / ES
Vigdís Jakobsdóttir, Artistic Director &
CEO Reykjavík Arts Festival / IS
Martin Minarik, Sports Scientist,
University Georg-August-Universität Göttingen / DE
Kenny Savelson, Executive Director Bang on a Can NY / USA
Sarah Maria Sun, Soprano, Basel Academy of Music / DE + CH
NN (to be announced)

Timeline

(subject to possible program changes)

Summer 2024:	Publication of the Open Call
15 November 2024:	Submission deadline
November 2024:	Review of technical and financial feasibility Initial selection made by the Munich Biennale, Styriarte Graz, schwere reiter / scope
December 2024:	Selected projects are submitted to the Jury

January/February 2025:	Digital meeting of the jury Decision on the winning project
March 2025 – April 2026:	Development and implementation of the project
March 2025 – April 2026:	Ongoing communication regarding the status of the project's development to the Munich Biennale
May 2026:	Set up, rehearsals, world premiere, and two further performances
June/July 2026:	Set up, rehearsals and further three performances as part of Styriarte Graz



Legal Foundation / Basis / Structure

The jury's decision will be announced in March 2025. Jury meetings are not open to the public. Please understand that the jury cannot give reasons as to why projects were not selected.

The participants of the selected project undertake to hold the world premiere as well as probably two further performances of their production at the Munich Biennale, and to perform the first revival at the Styriarte Graz (maximum 3 performances), the cooperating partner.

The Munich Biennale reserves the right to demand changes that affect the feasibility of the budget in terms of implementing the project.

Rights and Obligations

Applicants shall ensure that there are no legal claims from third parties regarding music, text or performance rights. This also applies to translation rights. In this context, the applicants indemnify the Munich Biennale against all claims asserted against it by third parties. If required, copyright is to be settled through Gema. Furthermore, the applicants shall not assert any further royalty claims against the Munich Biennale, Styriarte Graz and schwere reiter / scope. This also applies to any collaboration on the overall concept or text material.

Media Exploitation Rights Munich Biennale / Styriarte Graz

The participants of the winning production agree to the following transfer of media exploitation rights:

- Transfer of the work, in whole or part thereof, as an integral part of the artistic production (e.g. live-sound-camera as performance tool) within the space of the personal performance.
- Sound recording of the performance using all possible technical methods as well as unlimited transmission of the performance, in terms of region, time scale and content, on radio for the benefit of a radio station and its potential partners.
- Audio-visual recording (photos, videos/TV) of the performance using all possible technical methods as well as indefinite exploitation for non-commercial documentation purposes (e.g. educational purposes, competitions, archive, etc.).
- In the case of future revivals, the following must be mentioned in publications: "Winning project of the Munich Biennale, Styriarte Graz, schwere reiter / scope 2026"
- Parts of the performance up to a total length of five minutes for purposes of news reporting and as advertising for the principal's own performance, broadcasting them to the public outside the premises where the performance takes place via screen, loudspeaker or similar technical equipment, particularly on TV, radio, in cinemas, video programs, printed media, on the internet and social media.
- An online or streaming version whose contents reflect the work, if the work cannot be performed live.



Data Privacy Statement

stadt.muenchen.de/dam/jcr:d1542058-61f3-4aad-97ae-0c2b87deb142/KULT_Informationen_Art13_alle.pdf

Contact for all questions regarding OPEN CALL

The Munich Biennale is happy to answer all and any questions
Katharina Böhler, call@muenchenerbiennale.de