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A large, stylized heart graphic composed of many concentric, overlapping lines. The lines are colored in a gradient from light blue on the left to bright red on the right, with purple and pink tones in between. The heart is positioned in the center of the page, with its top pointing towards the top left and its bottom pointing towards the bottom right.

# EURO ISION SONG CONTEST

VIENNA 2026

## This is what the new Stage Design for the ESC Stage 2026 looks like!

The Eurovision Song Contest is the world's largest live music event – it has maintained and expanded its impact over seven decades not least through continuous development. In 2026, ORF in Vienna is using a concept by Florian Wieder that preserves the familiar while boldly opening up something new.

Vienna, Europe's cultural centre for centuries, provides the ideal venue for the Eurovision concept to really resonate. The city stands for the dynamic dialogue between tradition and modernity, lightness and rigor – and thus offers the perfect stage to combine familiar ESC elements with innovative impulses. At the heart of the stage is a generous LED surface in the shape of a curved leaf that forms the centrepiece of the production. A sweeping, materialized resonance arc and an elaborate stage structure complete the spectacular design.

At the centre of this concept is the creative spirit of the Viennese Secession. Like the artists' group around Gustav Klimt once did, the show wants to deliberately break conventions and allow new forms. It's not about historical quotes, but about the contemporary translation of an attitude: courage for renewal, openness to radical creativity and a new freedom of design.

Three design leitmotifs convey this idea:

- The Leaf – symbol of origin and potential. As blank white, it stands for new beginnings and shared design. Europe writes its melody of diversity on it.
- The Curved Line – expression of resonance, development and musical movement. It embodies connection, emotion and unmistakable Viennese charm.
- The Construct – a golden, sketch-like structure that connects art and functionality. It creates order, gives visions support and forms a deliberate contrast to the organic curved line.

In the connection of these elements, a stage design emerges that both preserves the DNA of the Eurovision Song Contest and breaks new creative ground. Vienna thus presents itself as the heart of Europe – open, bold and ready to make ESC 2026 an extraordinary experience. The Green Room will be directly connected to the stage via a walkway – which among other things enables a Winners Walk through the audience.

The stage design for the Eurovision Song Contest is thus not only an expression of Austrian identity, but also a conceptual masterpiece that enables spectacular stagings.

## **Florian Wieder is the Stage Designer of the Major ESC Stage**

The German designer and producer based in Munich and Los Angeles has been responsible for Song Contest stage design eight times since 2011, including for Vienna 2015. Florian Wieder has been working for 30 years with international superstars such as Beyoncé, Robbie Williams, U2 and Ed Sheeran. He most recently also developed the concept for the pop-up arena for British pop star Adele's concert series in Munich.

The designer also continuously works alongside the Song Contest for other international TV productions such as the MTV Video Music Awards (VMAs) and the MTV Europe Music Awards (EMAs).

## More Details on the Shows: Direction, Lighting and Music in Focus

A major show like the Eurovision Song Contest thrives not only on visually stunning stage design but also on important factors such as direction, lighting, and music. For the world's biggest TV entertainment event, ORF presents experienced and renowned professionals with Michael Kögler and Robin Hofwander (directors), Dorothee Freiberger and Martin Geller (music), and Tim Routledge (lighting). Mischa Zickler is responsible for the conception and implementation of the shows.

### Direction Inspiration is a Hollywood Look for the Eurovision Song Contest

Michael Kögler and Swedish star director Robin Hofwander, who already directed in Basel in 2025, are responsible for the direction at the 70th Eurovision Song Contest in Vienna. The long-time ORF chief director has been shaping the TV productions of major sporting events for decades, including the Olympic Games, numerous championships such as the Hahnenkamm race in Kitzbühel, as well as international motorsport series such as Formula 1 and the ADAC DTM. In addition, he produces various award shows and was already involved in the Eurovision Song Contest in 2015 as co-director. Michael Kögler is a two-time Emmy Award winner.

The direction team under Michael Kögler's leadership will be inspired by Hollywood in realizing the shows. For the first time in Song Contest history, so-called Arri cameras will be used, which will present the show in a cinematographic look. This look corresponds to the zeitgeist and is also applied to concerts by artists like Coldplay, Taylor Swift or Billy Joel.

In addition to the worldwide presentation of Austria, the city of Vienna as host, the usual perfect implementation of the show acts and the impressive light show, particular attention will be paid at the Song Contest 2026 to capturing the emotional moments of the competition. Supported by Florian Wieder's stage design, the visual language will focus on what unites us, on the familial and the connective. The direction's goal is to produce an unforgettable show for the whole family under the motto "United by Music – in the heart of Europe".

## **The Music for the Show: Orchestral Splendour Meets Modern Musical Structures**

Dorothee Freiberger and Martin Gellner are using a reinterpretation of selected themes from Mozart's "The Magic Flute" for the Eurovision Song Contest 2026 and their music theme. Orchestral splendour meets modern structures and creates a powerful connection between classical symbolism and current musical language – interpreted by the ORF Radio Symphony Orchestra Vienna. In the interplay of these three elements, a captivating, cross-genre dynamic unfolds that makes the musical heartbeat of Vienna palpable.

Dorothee Freiberger is a music producer, sound engineer and composer. She was part of the successful production team behind Conchita Wurst's winning title 'Rise Like a Phoenix' and is the musical director of numerous ORF formats. Her creative range extends from pop and crossover productions to international film and TV music. Already in 2015, she was musical director of ESC and composer of the signation theme "Building Bridges". In 2026, she is again taking on musical direction and composing the musical theme for ESC together with Martin Gellner.

Martin Gellner works as a composer, arranger, conductor and music producer for international major productions, including several Hans Zimmer tours as well as the currently running shows "Hans Zimmer Live – The Next Level" and "Morgan Freeman's Symphonic Blues Experience".

He founded the Big Island Orchestra, directed numerous concert and gala formats and composes for film and stage productions, including Golden Globe-awarded and Oscar shortlist-nominated titles.

## **Turn on the Lights – Tim Routledge is Responsible for Lighting Design**

A stage for the Eurovision Song Contest must shine in a thousand lights, and renowned lighting designer Tim Routledge is on board to make this happen. Routledge, whose work encompasses concerts, broadcasting and large-scale global events, is known for his creative innovations and installations in lighting design.

Routledge's designs have illuminated some of the world's most spectacular stages and television moments, for which he has also received multiple awards. In 2024, he received a BAFTA Award for his work on the Eurovision Song Contest, recognizing his visionary artistry and contribution to live broadcast lighting. This award joins his many Royal Television Society Awards, multiple Emmy and BAFTA nominations, and four TPI Lighting Designer of the Year titles (2024, 2020, 2019, 2015). Routledge's portfolio includes two editions of the Eurovision Song Contest (2023 UK & 2025 Switzerland), New Year's Eve celebrations in London and iconic

tours for Beyoncé, Sam Smith, Spice Girls, Jennifer Lopez, Helene Fischer and many more. On television, his work has shaped major formats for BBC, ITV, Netflix and CBS, including What's In The Box, The X Factor, I Can See Your Voice and The Greatest Dancer.

Tim Routledge himself is pleased about his renewed engagement at the Eurovision Song Contest: "I'm thrilled to return as Lighting Designer for the Eurovision Song Contest 2026 – it's my third time crafting the show's visual energy, and an honour every single time. Bringing the contest to life in Vienna, a city with such a rich artistic legacy, alongside Florian's stunning show architecture is really motivating me to create a whole new dynamic for the lighting."

## **"United by Music – in the heart of Europe" – this is the vision and artwork of the 70th Eurovision Song Contest in Vienna**

When the world looks to Vienna in May 2026, Europe's heart will beat to the rhythm of music: the 70th Eurovision Song Contest stands under the vision "(In) the heart of Europe".

The heart is a powerful, pulsating symbol – the origin of everything. It stands for Austrian warmth, for emotion and connection, especially in times of tension. Originally launched as a peace project after the war, it continues to pump tirelessly 70 years after the Song Contest's founding, uniting artists, fans and nations through the universal language of music.

In addition, Austria lies geographically in the heart of Europe. This central location makes Vienna the perfect hub and stage for this anniversary year. Here cultures have been meeting for decades, European diversity and cultural past are celebrated and new things are created. Vienna stands for tradition and modernity – the perfect backdrop for Europe's greatest music festival.

Everything that ORF develops for the 70th Eurovision Song Contest – from design to communication measures – emerges consistently from this leitmotif (In) the heart of Europe. In the latest redesign of ORF graphics, the heart becomes the "chameleon heart" as a transformable key visual. It continues to replace the letter "V" in the "EUROVISION SONG CONTEST" logo. Will be reflected in 70 layers, 70 years of music festival.

In the design, the currents of the Viennese Secession will also be found, which – like the Song Contest – was an international movement that united artists from the entire Habsburg monarchy. The golden ornaments flow and transform, react to light and movement, are mutable and ultimately become again the golden Viennese heart that beats for all and connects Europe through the power of music.

## Updates on Ticketing and Volunteers

The 70th Eurovision Song Contest is in the starting blocks, as registration for tickets for the mega-event is running at full speed. Registration is still possible until 18. December, 11:59 PM. Everyone who wants to be live at the Eurovision Song Contest in Vienna and purchase a ticket must have completed this registration. Without it, a purchase in the first sales wave on 13 January and subsequent ones will no longer be possible. In any case, volunteers will be involved in some form at ESC. The application phase for the selection process started at the beginning of December.

### More than 250,000 Registrations for Song Contest Tickets

The demand for tickets for the nine shows in May 2026 is enormous, making it all more important to complete the first step of registration on the official EBU website, [eurovision.com](https://eurovision.com). Only if the registration for the so called Eurofan-account, which is open to all interested buyers until 18. December (11:59 PM), has been successfully completed, can tickets be purchased during one of the sales waves. The first sales wave starts on January 13, the day after the Semi-Final Allocation Draw - which means it will then be clear which countries will perform in which Semi-Final to qualify. Based on the "first-come, first-served" principle, a maximum of four tickets may be purchased per registered person.

Tickets are available for both Semi-Finals 1 & 2 and the Final for one "Evening Preview Show", one "Afternoon Preview Show" and one "Live Show" each – a total of nine Eurovision Song Contest shows at the Wiener Stadthalle. With the "Afternoon Preview Shows" the ORF is particularly committed to creating cost-effective opportunities for all ESC enthusiasts to visit and also to enabling families with their children to participate in the event. The ticket revenues are in any case an integral part of the Song Contest budget and contribute to presenting a spectacular live show from the Wiener Stadthalle to all TV viewers. Even though the final is a high-priced event, care was taken to also offer tickets in the low price segment – starting at around 15 euros for the afternoon shows. The most expensive ticket (on the final evening in the Golden Circle directly in front of the stage) costs 360 euros.

## **Application Phase for Volunteers Already Running – ORF seeks 800 Volunteers**

ORF started the search for around 800 volunteer helpers, the volunteers, at the beginning of December. More than 1,800 people have already pre-registered, 300 applications have been received via video application. Interested parties can still apply at [songcontest.ORF.at](https://songcontest.ORF.at) to be part of the Eurovision Song Contest with their volunteer commitment.

For the 70th Eurovision Song Contest, motivated, environmentally conscious, enthusiastic, friendly and empathetic people are sought. To volunteer at the Eurovision Song Contest, the following requirements apply:

- Legal age at the time of application
- Good German and English skills, additional languages are an advantage
- Participation in at least one casting
- Availability between 27 April and 17 May 2026 in Vienna

Interested parties can apply since 1 December with video and CV for the selection process for one of the 800 coveted positions. This is made possible by a cooperation between ORF and the young startup nurdu, which wants to offer new opportunities with a video tool. The online form is open until 28 January 2026, 11:59 PM, and can be found on the official ESC homepage at [songcontest.ORF.at](https://songcontest.ORF.at). Frequently asked questions (FAQs) about volunteers are also answered there.

Whether creative, organizational or communicative – you can register for multiple areas, for example for Guest & Delegation Services, Audience & Public Interaction or Sustainability & Support. There is definitely a wide range of opportunities for volunteers to be part of one of the world's largest music shows.

In addition to official outfit, volunteers receive catering and are covered by accident insurance during their presence. The Eurovision Song Contest offers the special opportunity to meet people from many countries and make new friendships. With their voluntary commitment and positive spirit, volunteers are traditionally an essential component at ESC and contribute to the success of this mega-event with their cross-border hospitality.

## Green Event and Green Producing

The Eurovision Song Contest is the world's largest live music event – and for ORF an event with clear responsibility. ORF already set standards in 2015 and received the environmental label "Green Event" for the first time. With the Eurovision Song Contest 2026, these ambitions are being consistently expanded – with the goal of dual certification according to the criteria "Green Event" and "Green Producing in Film and Television".

The focus is on four central areas: energy, mobility, waste and sustainable procurement. Preparations are running at full speed. When selecting suppliers and service providers, attention is paid to the requirements of environmental guidelines. The power supply concept is being developed and will be adjusted exactly to the actual required capacity to avoid unnecessary oversizing. Together with the Wiener Stadthalle, the ORF is focusing on energy-efficient solutions. A mobility concept for arrival by public transport is being developed. Vienna is showing again in 2026 that world-class entertainment and climate protection go hand in hand.

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