

Second call for papers
ICMS 16
2–6 June 2026 • Helsinki, Finland

Music as a Meaningful Art

The 16th International Congress on Musical Signification will be held at the Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki, 2–6 June, 2026. Twenty-five years after ICMS 7 and forty years after the first edition in Imatra, the ICMS returns to Finland. Since 1986, the ICMS congress has been organised every 2–4 years to gather together scholars of musical signification, signs in music, and musical meaning – recent developments and future trends in musical semiotics and related fields of research.

Under the ICMS 16 title, **Music as a Meaningful Art**, the congress themes include:

- analytical and historical approaches to evolving and persisting meaning(s) in music
- topics, narratives and gestures as meaningful phenomena in music
- embodiment of and in musical meanings
- mechanisms and processes of music, mind, and meaning
- semiotic and philosophical approaches to the ontology of music and its meaning(s)
- synthesis of cognitive and cultural approaches to the study of meaning(s) in and of music
- locality and globality of music as a meaningful art
- relationship of musical meaning with learning and growth
- relationship of musical meaning with therapy and wellbeing
- music as a meaningful art in the era of technological explosion
- sustainability and music as a meaningful art
- relationship of societal phenomena, structures and policies with music as a meaningful art

We invite proposals for presentations on topics relating to the conference themes above along with those addressing broader notions of musical signification, meaning in music, and semiotics of music. In addition, we welcome proposals that approach these topics from interdisciplinary relations between semiotics and other disciplines. The duration of paper presentations will be 20 + 10 minutes.

We also invite proposals for roundtables, workshops, and lecture recitals. In your proposal abstract, please indicate the suggested duration and format of your proposal as well as key participants.

Please send the abstract of your proposal and a short biographical note by email to icms16helsinki@uniarts.fi on **Sunday, 15 February, 2026, at the latest**. Please note the deadline has been extended. The maximum length for the abstract is 400 words (not counting list of references). For the bio note, the maximum length is 150 words. Please use Microsoft Word file format (.docx or .doc) as attachment, with your last name as file name. In the email heading, please use "ICMS 16 proposal", and in your message, make sure to include your first name, last name, institutional affiliation, and the title of the proposal. The main language of the conference is English.

After the congress, articles based on presentations at ICMS 16 will be gathered and offered for publication by esteemed publishers, with options for peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed volumes. The publication process will be further discussed in conjunction of the congress.

The congress is one of the platforms of the Musical Signification Project, launched in Paris in 1984, and directed now for more than 40 years by prof. Eero Tarasti of the University of Helsinki. The International Musical Signification Project has also served as a pedagogical tool educating doctoral researchers in the field.

Keynote speakers:

Márta Grabócz
Joan Grimalt
Lina Navickaite

Mark Reybrouck
Ivanka Stoianova
Lauri Suurpää

Honorary committee:

Paulo C. Chagas
Jarmila Doubravová
Constantin Floros
Márta Grabócz
Robert S. Hatten

David Lidov
Teresa Malecka
Sokol Shupo
Ivanka Stoianova
Mário Vieira de Carvalho

Scientific committee:

Oana Andreica
Rimantas Astrauskas
Elżbieta Błotnicka-Mazur
Ricardo de Castro Monteiro
Dorian Çene
Ben Curry
Heloísa de Duarte Valente
Július Fújak
Małgorzata Gamrat
Rahilya Geybullayeva
Małgorzata Grajter
Anna Granat-Janki
Joan Grimalt
Xavier Hascher

Julian Hellaby
Jean-Marie Jacono
Małgorzata Janycka-Słysz
Rubén López-Cano
Costantino Maeder
Dario Martinelli
Lina Navickaite
Małgorzata Pawłowska
Mark Reybrouck
Paolo Rosato
Mathieu Schneider
Toomas Siitan
Paulo de Tarso Salles
Bernard Vecchione

Organizing committee:

Juha Ojala
Robert Fleitz
Paul Forsell
Aleksi Haukka

Anne Kauppala
Markus Mantere
Mikko Metsälampi
Laura Wahlfors

Director and founder of the project: Eero Tarasti, professor emeritus of musicology, University of Helsinki, Honorary President of the IASS (International Association for Semiotic Studies).

The congress venue is the traditional building of the [Sibelius Academy](#), located at the heart of the [city of Helsinki](#), at [Pohjoinen Rautatiekatu 9](#). The venue is situated in the vicinity of e.g. [Helsinki Music Centre](#), [Helsinki Central Library Oodi](#), and the [Helsinki Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma](#). The area is abundant in options for hotels and restaurants, and is readily accessible by [public transportation e.g. from the Helsinki-Vantaa airport](#).

The registration will open at the [ICMS 16 Helsinki congress website](#) on 15 Feb 2026 at the latest. The registration fees are 150 € (early bird until 15 March), 200 € (until 15 April), and 100 € (students).



The congress program is, as always, subject to changes. More information and updates will be posted at the congress website as they become available. Please visit the ICMS 16 Helsinki website at <https://www.uniarts.fi/tapahtumat/icms-16-music-as-a-meaningful-art/> . Contact email: icms16helsinki@uniarts.fi .

**Please note the extended deadline for the proposals is
Sunday, 15 February, 2026.**