

Karaoke World Championships

Competition Rules & Judging Criteria 2024

These rules are meant to be followed to the letter. No changes will be made to these rules after they've been officially approved by KWC.

1. ELIGIBILITY

KWC is the largest and most prestigious international singing competition for unsigned talent. We have dropped the word “amateur” from our marketing texts and will refer to our contestants only as “unsigned talent”.

A singer is eligible for KWC if he/she does not have a management contract or a recording contract with a major label as a singer or any kind of contract that would restrict the use of the contestant's name, face, voice or audio and video recordings made during the KWC competitions.

A contestant with a previous major contract may enter 5 years after it has ended.

The main competition (Karaoke World Championships or KWC) is open to solo performers only. The duet competition (Karaoke World Championships Duets or KWC Duets) is open to duets only.

The contestant must

- a) have a citizenship (i.e. a national passport and social security number) of the country he or she is representing
- or b) have lived in the country for the past 3 years.

All entrants must be over 18 years of age by the end of national finals.

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The organizers reserve the right to make the final assessment regarding any entrant's eligibility over and above these conditions of entry. Entrants may be asked to sign a legal document and provide proof regarding their eligibility. All issues addressing eligibility of contestants must be addressed, clarified, and cleared 7 days prior to the National Finals. Proof of claim will be required.

KWC Country Partners and members of the Country Partner organization are not eligible to compete with one exception: a first-time country partner is eligible to join their contestant for the duets' competition.

2. TAKING PART IN KWC FINALS

Before taking part in the KWC World Finals Event, contestants must take part in their own country's KWC country trials aka KWC National competitions. These competitions are organized by national license holders, the KWC Country Partners. Countries without a Country Partner may be run by so called Regional Partners or singers can participate through the Global Video Challenge.

3. CATEGORIES

The main category is the solo category for singers over 18. In KWC there is only one solo category regardless of music style, gender, language etc.

The additional Duets category has been used at Worlds since 2016,

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excluding the online years.

In 2003-2017 men and women competed in their own categories but since 2018 there has been only one solo category.

in 2018 a special category, "KWC Champions" for previous contestants, was introduced but used only once.

A separate "KWC Junior" competition was tested in 2017 and a "KWC Senior" competition has also been planned but not yet executed.

4. RESTRICTIONS

All singers who have represented their country at World finals, are allowed to return, except for the World Champions. A singer can win the World Championship only once in each category.

5. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SONGS

The language used in singing may be chosen freely by the contestant and the use of own backing tracks is allowed. However, if the language used is not English, a translation of lyrics must be delivered at the time of registration if Singa Oy asks for it.

The lyrics of the competition songs may not include messages that conflict with the values of the competition. KWC is as unpolitical as possible but stands for equality, human rights, peace, the LGBTQ+ community and mutual appreciation. We compete between countries for fun and fun only.

6. SINGER'S PERFORMANCES AND BEHAVIOR DURING THE EVENT

6.1 Props on stage

A chair or barstool and a mic stand are ok. We have those ready for you. If you really feel you need a prop for your song, it should be something the singer can carry on stage. We like to concentrate in singing, so no tables, sofas, washing machines or other things that need to be carried back and forth by a moving company.

Instruments are allowed but they will not be plugged. You're free to play a harmonica, a flute or whatever through your singing mic. You can also have a guitar but of course it will only be a prop. If you can hold it in one hand, it's ok. (We're 99% sure you'd do better without it anyway!)

6.2 Performing at KWC

The singers are expected to sing the songs on the stage. Starting off stage may be possible depending on the stage and production.

Going off stage during the song may or may not be possible.

Everything out of the ordinary must be discussed with the production before the performance.

It is strictly forbidden to carry out any kind or extra performance (showing banners with slogans, proposing, surprising the audience with something unusual) if it has not been discussed and approved by the KWC production in advance. Failing to do this may lead to the singer being disqualified from the competition.

Also using props that may cause us to stop the production while the stage is being cleaned (foam, flowers, confetti etc.) must be

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discussed with production in advance or may lead to disqualification.

6.3. Soundchecks and rehearsals

All soundchecks and group rehearsals during the KWC week are mandatory to all singers. Should a contestant not be present at their group's soundcheck, they may be not allowed to perform in the competition.

6.4. Problems on stage

Should the contestant notice a problem while performing, such as wrong key, wrong version, wrong song or problems with monitoring, must they stop the song immediately and let the production know there was something wrong. If the contestant sings the whole song on stage, it is too late to complain about problems. Singing the whole song through means the competition round is done.

6.5. Improper behaviour and infringement

Should the contestant act in an improper way; for example, act disgracefully towards the competition or other contestants, the jury or the KWC Organization has the right to immediately disqualify the contestant. KWC Organization reserves a full right to disqualify a contestant if any of the rules are infringed.

6.6. Background videos & photos

Video backings & photos for the screens are not possible. We use uniform backings for all songs.

6.7. The stage name

We always prefer real names. A stage name is ok only if the singer

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always uses it when performing. We do not allow a special name invented just for KWC. Should a singer want to use something else than their real name, KWC requires proof of the stage name being used in as an artist name prior to entering the competition.

7. SINGER'S OBLIGATIONS AFTER THE COMPETITION

All contestants must be ready to commit themselves to being a Karaoke World Champion. The tasks, rewards or obligations might include performances, recordings, promotion events and such. The winner of the World Champion title is expected to perform at next year's finals event. If the contestant is not able to commit him/herself to these requirements, the title may be handed to the first runner-up.

8. KWC JURY CODE OF CONDUCT

The jury of the competition will consist of music, entertainment and media professionals and possible sponsor representatives. The Jury will consist of 5-10 members. Singa Oy will oversee the jury's work and approve its validity. Please see KWC Jury Code of Conduct, Scoring System and Judging Criteria.

All jury members in the Karaoke World Championships must follow these rules:

-NO BIAS: A jury member cannot have a direct personal involvement

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with the singer (child, parent, partner, close relative)

-AGE: Jury members need to be over 18 years old.

-LANGUAGE: Jury members must speak fluent English or have an interpreter present.

-PROFESSIONAL: Jury member needs to have a professional track record or a degree from the fields of music or entertainment business.

-SECRECY: Jury members are prohibited of discussing the judging procedure with anybody else than the other members of the jury or KWC Organization.

-NO PERSONAL OPINIONS: Jury members must judge the performances from the viewpoint of a music / entertainment professional, not according to what they personally think is good or bad music.

-NEUTRAL APPEARANCE: Jury members must show neutral conduct equally towards all performances. This includes for example remaining seated during the entire performance of each of the contestants and only leave the jury area during breaks.

-BEHAVIOUR: A jury member must behave in an exemplary manner during the competition.

9. KWC SCORING SYSTEM

All contestants in the Karaoke World Championships are to be judged according to the following criteria, free from any personal bias whatsoever.

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- 1) Voice & Technique
- 2) Artistry & Stage Presence

What we are looking for in each these Four Criteria

1) Voice & Technique

Quality and Mastery of Voice, natural richness of tone, depth, resonance, development of the voice through practice.

Use of range and dynamics, variance of colors throughout the performance.

Use of proper vocal technique suitable for the style chosen, breathing, timing, pitch, and clarity in pronunciation

2) Artistry & Stage Presence

Expressiveness, showing emotion and passion, as appropriate for song, conveyed through the voice, body, and facial expression.

Musicality, feeling the songs and taking liberties in a tasteful manner. Appropriate interpretation and delivery of the lyrics.

Confidence and strength of delivery with a self-assured performance where all pieces fit together: costume, appearance and a connection with the audience, cameras, and judges.

The special X factor in the performance, the ability to cause emotions, to "move the listener".

Each one of these 2 criteria will be scored on a 10-point basis to equal up to 20 points total. Zero is not a score. The individual judge is free to give weight to different parts of the performance, as long as it

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is consistent, ie. a vocal teacher may give more weight to singing technique and a professional entertainer may score more based-on artistry and stage presence. All members of the jury must still be able to judge all these categories.

For each song, each performer shall be scored from 2 to 20 points, with 2 being the lowest, and 20 being the highest. Please note: no half points, but full points only!

19-20 - Exceptional, outstanding

17-18 - Excellent, almost perfect

15-16 - Very good, but a few imperfections

13-14 - Very good, but several imperfections

11-12 - Good, but imperfections throughout

9-10 – Average

6-8 – Mediocre

2-5 – Disappointing

10. RANKING-BASED MODIFIED MEAN

In each round, the lowest-ranked score and the highest-ranked score for each singer shall be discarded.

11. WEIGHTED CUMULATIVE SCORING

KWC uses the weighted cumulative system in duets: 1st Round + 2nd Round + double 3rd Round. In solos the first two rounds are added together, and 3rd Round starts clean slate. The final order is a result of 3rd Round + double 4th Round.

13. WILD CARDS

Following the 2nd round, the jury may choose up to two (2) “Wild Card” contestants in each category, who will continue to the next round, regardless of scoring.

14. WIEVER’S CHOICE

Insead of Wild cards, following the 2nd round, the audience may choose a certain amount of “Viewer’s Choice” performers to proceed to the following round, regardless of scoring. The Viewer's Choice award will be presented to the contestant who received most public votes in total.

15. SCORES WILL BE PUBLISHED

All scores will be published after the competition. However, judges' names shall not be associated with those scores.