

TRALKA 2026 - SOUND ART FESTIVAL “WHERE THERE’S SMOKE, THERE’S FIRE”
(LIT. “IF THE RIVER MAKES NOISE, IT’S BECAUSE IT BRINGS STONES”)

ONLINE RADIO OPEN CALL

Introduction

"Tralka" means “thunder” in Mapudungun. Its origin may be onomatopoeic, stemming from the relationship between the explosive sound of its first syllable and the crack of thunder itself. Inspired by this hypothesis, the festival aims at consolidating an experimental and critical exploration space around oral language and contemporary sound creation. The following question is used as a creative catalyst: Is language a threshold between culture and nature? Or is it the dynamic and complex result of how our biology expresses itself through culture, making it impossible to establish where the body ends and where the symbol begins?

The event will take place from December 7 to 12, 2026, in Valdivia, Chile. It will feature live online programming via an online radio station and in-person program consisting of a mini-residency, a collective installation, and a panel discussion held at the Philippi Museum, an important heritage space in the city. The on-site lineup also partnered with local institutions such as the Austral University of Chile —through the Art and Technology Laboratory (LATE) of the Institute of Acoustics— and Fluvial, a music festival with a 10-year history that will include Tralka in its lineup, expanding the initiative’s reach.

What are we looking for?

This year’s theme is “*Si el río suena, piedras trae*” (*If the river makes noise, it’s because it brings stones*— the Spanish equivalent to "*Where there's smoke, there's fire*"). This popular metaphor links the sound of a river flowing down toward the sea with the onset of suspicion: if a rumor is spreading, it hides a grain of truth. Beyond questioning or validating this belief, this poetic premise is taken as a creative prompt to delve, through sound art, into the connection between oral language —a living system of sound-based coding, transmission, and archiving— and water —the vital element upon which Earth’s biodiversity and human society are built—: matters of cohesion and disputes, creation and catastrophes.

Therefore, we are looking for sound pieces between 1 and 10 minutes long, regardless of their release year, that address the water/word connection from all its possible and infinite relationships. Selected works will be programmed into a podcast that will premiere in multiple episodes on December 7, 2026, via the website www.tralka.org.

Within the context of the festival, a sound piece is understood as any work that uses sound, silence, and listening as its creative material: Experimental music, sound documentaries, sound poetry, radio art, soundscapes, and linguistic experiments, among many other contemporary possibilities. However, considering that the festival's sound experimentation focus is oral language, singing and the intersection between music and poetry are also valid exploration formats.

Who can apply?

Anyone in the world, regardless of nationality, personal beliefs, or gender, who is the author of a sound piece meeting the aforementioned characteristics.

Selection Criteria

The piece must meet the required duration (between 1 and 10 minutes), be submitted for free download in WAV format (44.1 kHz), and approach the annual theme from a perspective that makes a significant contribution to the event's objectives, in the organization's view.

Application Deadlines

The submission deadline is November 29, 2026, at 23:59 (GMT-3). The list of selected pieces and their order within the on-line programming will be announced on December 2, 2026, via a poster shared across social media, the website, and the press.

Benefits for Selected Projects

- Become part of a festival whose programming partner is Fluvial, an international music event with a 10-year track record that boosts the Chilean music industry connecting it with programmers from around the world, providing a major showcase platform within South America's Southern Cone music and sound context.

- Continuous broadcast of the piece on a podcast with no expiration date.

Commitments of Selected Projects

Agree, via the application form, to the unrestricted, non-commercial, ongoing broadcast of the piece across the festival's various platforms (website, Bandcamp, Instagram, and partner platforms).

Application Format

Fill out this application form: LINK

Questions?

Send your questions to tralkafestival@gmail.com

Tralka, Sound Art Festival, is a concept by Pieza Ruido, developed with management support from Fundación Runrún, co-produced by Fenómeno Sonoro, and funded by the Support Program for Collaborating Cultural Organizations (Continuity 2026) of the Ministry of Cultures, Arts and Heritage of Chile.