

# Assisi revives medieval music for Saint Francis centenary

Posted on July 27, 2026 by Luca Moretti

ASSISI, Umbria — The Umbrian city of Assisi hosts the fourth edition of DeMusicAssisi from August 4 to 9, 2026, a free medieval music festival timed to the 800th anniversary of the death of Saint Francis, the city's patron and Italy's most famous friar.

Founded in 2023 and run by Assisi's city council with the Accademia d'Arti Antiche Resonars, a body specialising in early music, the festival draws musicians and researchers from across Europe. This year more than 30 events fill churches, palaces, and squares across the historic centre.

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Past performances (*Credits: DeMusicAssisi*)

The 2026 theme, “Gloriosus Franciscus,” examines how Francis, who died in 1226, shaped and was shaped by the music of his time. “It will be a gripping journey back in time, dedicated to the 800 years since the death of Saint Francis,” said Massimiliano Dragoni, the festival’s co-artistic director, “in a Middle Ages still alive in the stones, palaces, and churches of Assisi.”

The programme spans the 13th to the 15th centuries, moving from Latin liturgical chant to the *laude* (devotional songs in early Italian vernacular) sung in Assisi’s streets. It reaches from central Italy out to Northern Europe and the Middle East, and audiences are invited to sing along, part of the festival’s aim to treat early music as public property, not academic preserve.

“Medieval music is not a museum object,” co-artistic director Luca Piccioni said. “It is alive, capable of stirring powerful emotions in the contemporary era.”

Ensembles including Micrologus and Anonima Frottolisti perform on faithful reconstructions of period instruments, built from manuscripts and iconography. The line-up also features conferences by international musicologists, hands-on workshops, and a market exhibition of historical lutherie, the

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craft of building instruments by hand.



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Basilica bells, and past performances (*Credits: DeMusicAssisi*)

**New this year**

Two additions mark this edition. Musical lunches and dinners, staged with the Ente Calendimaggio di Assisi, the body behind Assisi's historic spring pageant, pair medieval repertoire with regional food. A roaming flash mob, mounted with the Cortile di Francesco cultural festival, carries song and instruments through the centre.

"This festival is the only one of its kind in Umbria," said Valter Stoppini and Fabrizio Leggio, Assisi's mayor and tourism councillor. In four years it has drawn growing audiences, many of them from abroad.

Every event is free, though booking is required. For a city defined for centuries by one man's voice, the festival offers a chance to hear the sounds that surrounded him.

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