

Dr. Sándor Balatoni (b.1983) has received his church music diploma from the Hungarian Church Music Institution in 2008 in Budapest, after his piano and composition studies in Pécs. He graduated as a conductor and as an organist at the University of Pécs in 2010 and 2011. He has finished his doctoral studies and research at the University of Pécs and at the Eastman School of Music. He has received his doctoral degree in 2018 and habilitated in 2023. He is an assistant professor and deputy director at the University of Pécs, Faculty of Arts, the conductor of the Mecsek Choir, the organist of the Pannon Philharmonic Orchestra and the accompanist of the Pannon Festival Choir. In addition to his Republican, Fulbright and Erasmus scholarships, he received the prestigious Junior Prima Award in 2012 from the Prima Primissima foundation. He was awarded with the Pro Cura Ingenii Award from the University of Pécs for his teaching activity, from 2023 he is a scholarship recipient of the Hungarian Academy of Arts. He held several masterclasses and presentations in Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Croatia, China and in the United States.

As an organist, he won the 1st Prize at the Zsámbék National Organ Competition in 2004, and Special Prize at the 7th and 8th National Organ Competition at Salgótarján in 2004 and 2007. He has participated in the organ masterclasses of Dalibor Miklavcic, David Briggs, Duncan Middleton, Gerard Brooks, Hannfried Lucke, Martin Herchenröder, Pierre Pincemaille, Ronny Krippner, Sophie Véronique Cauchefér Choplin, Stefan Engels, Zsigmond Szathmáry and Tomas Adam Nowak in Hungary, Germany, England and in the United States. He plays recitals throughout Europe and in the United States including prestigious festivals like the Bach week in Budapest, the series of the Filharmónia Hungary, the Romanian Klausen Musik festival but he played the closing concert of the East Texas Pipe Organ Festival in 2022.

As a conductor, he has won 1st Prize at the Croatia Cantat in 2016 with the Mecsek Choir, just as the Conductor's Special Prize. In the same year he won Laurea cum laude Prize with the Mecsek Choir at the Budapest International Chorus Festival at the Palace of Arts in Budapest. As the leader of the Mecsek Choir he has won Silver Medal at the Preveza International Choir Festival in 2018 in Greece and 2nd Prize at the Canakkale International Choir Competition in 2019 in Turkey, where he also deserved the Prize for Best Repertoire, and the Special Prize of Canakkale Municipality. In addition to numerous choirs, he has also conducted the Savaria Symphony Orchestra and the Szent István Jubilee Symphony Orchestra in Budapest.

As a composer he was awarded the Special Prize of the Hungarian Jesuit Society's choral composition competition and 3rd Prize at the Millennium Jubilee Composition Contest of the Diocese of Pécs in 2009. In 2014 he won the Special Prize of the Night of the Choruses festival's choral composition competition in Budapest. In 2016 he was awarded with the Csorba Prize for his composition. In 2017 he has won 1st Prize at the European Award for Choral Composers from the European Choral Association in Tallinn and the Certificate of Merit from the Ministry of Human Capacities in Budapest. In 2018 he won 2nd Prize at the chant composition contest of the International Eucharistic Congress, Budapest. In 2020 he won the Prize of the Palace of Arts Jubilee composition competition and the Prize of the Petőfi Literature Museum composition competition. In 2021 he has won 3rd Prize at the HangKELTŐ choral composition competition, Budapest and Special Prize at the International Choral Competition Ave Verum, Baden. In 2022 he was awarded with the composer's KÓTA Prize at the annual award ceremony of the Association of Hungarian Choirs, Orchestras and Folk Ensembles. In 2023 he won 1st Prize at the composition competition of the Veszprém Archdiocese and also a 1st Prize at the HangKELTŐ choral composition competition.