

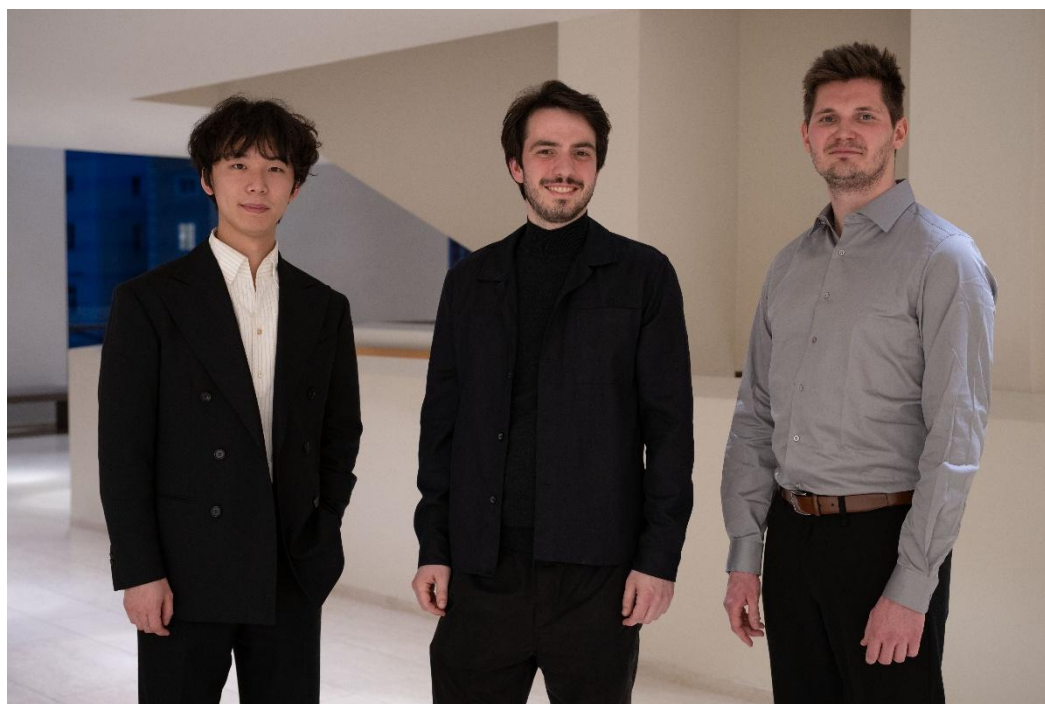
Press Release of the Salzburg Festival

Herbert von Karajan Young Conductors Award 2025 – The three Finalists have been chosen

(SF, 7 April 2025) The Herbert von Karajan Young Conductors Award is an initiative of the Salzburg Festival in cooperation with the Elette and Herbert von Karajan Institute. Since 2010, this competition has had one female and ten male winners. For its twelfth edition, the jury chaired by Manfred Honeck selected eight semi-finalists from a total of 291 applications from 55 countries.

These eight young conductors rehearsed over the weekend at the Felsenreitschule with the oenm. østerreichisches ensemble fuer neue musik and the Mozarteum Orchestra, working on pieces by Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Franz Schubert, Ludwig van Beethoven and Anton Webern.

At the end of the Rehearsal Day, the jury decided after extensive deliberation to invite Christian Blex, Jakub Przybycieñ and Jong-Jie Yin as finalists to the Award Concert Weekend.



The three finalists have been chosen (left to right):
Jong-Jie Yin (China), Christian Blex (Deutschland) und Jakub Przybycieñ (Polen)
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Christian Blex, Jakub Przybycieñ und Jong-Jie Yin – the three finalists will conduct to compete for the Herbert von Karajan Young Conductors Award during the Award Concert Weekend (1 to 3 August 2025).

YCA Award Concert Weekend

The three finalists will conduct one concert each in early August at the Main Auditorium of the Mozarteum Foundation; the orchestra is the Camerata Salzburg, joined by participants of the Young Singers Project as soloists. The concert programmes will be chosen together with the candidates, with a special focus on contemporary compositions.

After the last concert, the jury will select the winner of the 2025 Herbert von Karajan Young Conductors Award.

Concert 1: Jakub Przybycień – 1 August, 3 pm

Concert 2: Jong-Jie Yin – 2 August, 3 pm

Concert 3: Christian Blex – 3 August, 3 pm

YCA Award Winner's Concert

In addition to the cash award of 15,000 Euro, the winner will have the opportunity to conduct a concert with the ORF Radio Symphony Orchestra Vienna and a rising young soloist as part of the 2026 Salzburg Festival. This award winner's concert will be recorded and released on CD as part of the Salzburg Festival Documents edition.

Former winners of the Young Conductors Award have used this opportunity as the launchpad for international careers, which have frequently brought them back to the Salzburg Festival: among other appearances, Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla conducted M. Weinberg's *The Idiot* in 2024, a new production that the Oper! Awards declared "Production of the Year".

In 2023, Maxime Pascal conducted B. Martinů's *Greek Passion*, another "Production of the Year" distinguished by the Oper! Awards. In the summer of 2025, he returns to lead another a staged opera production, Peter Eötvös' *Tri sestri*.

Lorenzo Viotti conducts a concert of the Vienna Philharmonic this summer.

Statements, photos und biographies of the three finalists

Christian Blex



The German conductor Christian Blex is currently assistant conductor of the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester. A significant milestone in his career so far has been winning the Siemens Conductors Scholarship. He has assisted Kirill Petrenko and the Berlin Philharmonic, and was a conducting fellow at the renowned Karajan Akademie in Berlin. As well as assisting Kirill Petrenko, he has worked with leading conductors such as Daniel Barenboim,

Gustavo Dudamel, Daniel Harding, Jakub Hruša, Daniele Gatti, Alan Gilbert, Hannu Lintu, Ingo Metzmacher, Kent Nagano, Sakari Oramo, Tugan Sokhiev and Christian Thielemann, and with major orchestras such as the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, the Karajan Akademie of the Berlin Philharmonic, the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Bamberg Symphony and the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra. He is currently also studying with Ole Kristian Ruud at the Norwegian Academy of Music. He was an exchange student at the Zurich University of the Arts and at the University of Music Franz Liszt in Weimar, and has participated in masterclasses with Klaus Mäkelä, Vasily Petrenko, Hannu Lintu, Jorma Panula and James Gaffigan. He was a scholarship-holder of the German Conductors' Forum and is a member of the Nordic Conductors' Forum.

“Reaching the final of this extraordinary competition makes me exceedingly proud and humble. To conduct at the Salzburg Festival is a special honour. A good conductor places the music and the musicians in the focus of their own attention and the audience’s attention. That requires good preparation, taking the musicians seriously, as well as an absolute dedication to serving the musical work in question, and the process itself.”

Jakub Przybycień



The Polish conductor Jakub Przybycień has been assistant conductor at the Orquestra Simfònica de Barcelona i Nacional de Catalunya since the start of the 2023/24 season. Since 2023 he is also chief conductor of the Zürcher Orchester Sozietät. He has worked with renowned ensembles such as the London Symphony Orchestra, the Balthasar Neumann Orchestra, the Lucerne Symphony Orchestra, Musikkollegium Winterthur and

the Arthur Rubinstein Philharmonic in Łódź. Jakub Przybycień initially studied Violin at the University of the Arts in Bern, played in the European Union Youth Orchestra and worked with leading conductors such as Bernard Haitink and Manfred Honeck. He completed his Master’s degree in Zurich. He has also refined his technique in masterclasses with much-admired

conductors such as Marin Alsop, Peter Eötvös, Thomas Hengelbrock, Neeme and Paavo Järvi, Jorma Panula, Michael Sanderling and Jaap van Zweden. Jakub Przybycień is a finalist of the 2024/25 International Conducting Competition Rotterdam (ICCR) and in 2024 was a semi-finalist in the Malko Competition, in which he conducted the Danish National Symphony Orchestra. In 2021 he was awarded the Neeme Järvi Prize of the Gstaad Conducting Academy.

“Reaching the final of the Herbert von Karajan Young Conductors Award is an incredible honor and surely one of most amazing moments in my musical life. A great conductor is a blend of flawless technique, artistic inspiration, and true leadership - someone who values the ideas of other musicians and, together with each orchestra, creates something truly magical and unique. Every performance is a new journey, shaped by trust, energy, and a shared passion for music.”

Jong-Jie Yin



Twenty-four-year-old Jong-Jie Yin quickly made a name for himself internationally following his great success in the 11th Grzegorz Fitelberg International Competition for Conductors in 2023. A series of conducting debuts and immediate return invitations throughout Europe have followed. In his native China, Jong-Jie Yin appears regularly as a guest conductor with nearly all the country's orchestras. Since 2023 he has also been assistant conductor of the China National Symphony Orchestra.

In 2021 Jong-Jie Yin was awarded a 'special mention' at the 57th International Competition for Young Conductors in Besançon.

“Having reached the final means the realization of a dream for me, because standing on the stage of the Salzburg Festival has been my dream since I was a child. I think in order to be a good conductor, you must have unlimited passion and imagination for music, unremitting pursuit, your unique standards, the courage to explore new boundaries, and the responsibility to take good care of every musician.”

The Jury



The three finalists of the Herbert von Karajan Young Conductors Award 2025 with YCA jury members
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Chairman of the Jury:

Manfred Honeck, music director, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra

Jury Members

Gary Hanson – former managing director of the Cleveland Orchestra

Axel Hiller – designated director of concerts and media at the Salzburg Festival

Markus Hinterhäuser – artistic director of the Salzburg Festival

Alexander Meraviglia-Crivelli – artistic director of the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester

Tobias Niederschlag – director of the concert office, Gewandhaus Leipzig

Pamela Rosenberg – former artistic director of the Berlin Philharmonic

Florian Wiegand – director of concerts and media of the Salzburg Festival

You can find photos of the Rehearsal Day here:

<https://www.salzburgerfestspiele.at/en/photos/herbert-von-karajan-young-conductors-award-rehearsal-day-2025>

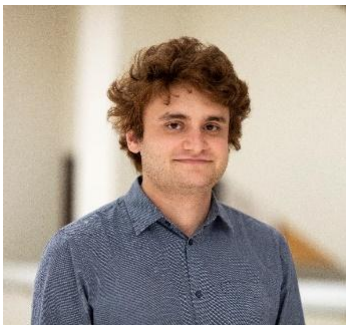
The biographies of the jury members can be found here:

<https://www.salzburgerfestspiele.at/en/yca>

Past Winners:



Hankyeol Yoon
WINNER 2023,
SOUTH KOREA



Joel Sandelson
WINNER 2021,
GREAT BRITAIN



Gábor Káli
WINNER 2018,
HUNGARY



Kerem Hasan
WINNER 2017,
GREAT BRITAIN



Aziz Shokhaimov
WINNER 2016,
UZBEKISTAN
MUSIC DIRECTOR OF THE ORCHESTRE
PHILHARMONIQUE DE STRASBOURG



Lorenzo Viotti
WINNER 2015,
SWITZERLAND
CHIEF CONDUCTOR OF THE DUTCH NATIONAL
OPERA



Maxime Pascal
WINNER 2014,
FRANCE
MUSIC DIRECTOR OF THE ORCHESTRA LE BALCON



Ben Gernon
WINNER 2013,
GREAT BRITAIN



Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla
WINNER 2012,
LITHUANIA
ASSOCIATE ARTIST OF THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA




Ainārs Rubiķis
WINNER 2011,
LATVIA
GENERAL MUSICDIRECTOR DESIGNATE OF THE
KASSEL STATE THEATRE



David Afkham
WINNER 2010,
GERMANY
CHIEF CONDUCTOR OF THE ORQUESTRA Y CORO
NACIONAL DE ESPAÑA

Further information on the Herbert von Karajan Young Conductors Award as well as biographies of past winners can be found here:

<https://www.salzburgerfestspiele.at/en/yca>

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