



SALZBURGER
FESTSPIELE

18. JULI - 31. AUGUST 2025

Press Release of the Salzburg Festival:
Herbert von Karajan Young Conductors Award
Christian Blex is the 2025 Winner



The winner Christian Blex with Jury Chairman Manfred Honeck
© SF/Marco Borrelli

(SF, 4 August 2025) Christian Blex convinced the international jury chaired by Manfred Honeck during the 2025 YCA Award Concert Weekend, taking the prize after leading a concert with the Camerata Salzburg at the Main Auditorium of the Mozarteum Foundation.

"Once again, almost 300 candidates from 55 countries applied for the Karajan Young Conductors Award. The three finalists had the chance to demonstrate their talent again this week, each of them leading three rehearsals and a concert. Therefore, the jury had the opportunity to gain a comprehensive picture of the candidates, who chose their respective programmes themselves. I am particularly grateful to Markus Hinterhäuser, Florian Wiegand and the entire organizational team, who offer tomorrow's stars a sky to shine in today. It is wonderful that the Salzburg Festival is also a place where young artists are fostered.

I would also like to extend my warmest thanks to the Camerata Salzburg, a fantastic orchestra which gives this competition a framework that is more than dignified. It should not be taken

for granted that these musicians dedicate themselves to this important task every year, with exemplary patience and passion. We did not reach our decision lightly. At this point, I would like to acknowledge the impressive work by all participants, especially the finalists, of course. It is encouraging to see that classical music continues to find enthusiastic performers,” says the Jury Chairman **Manfred Honeck** at the announcement of the 2025 winner.

“Having won the Herbert von Karajan Young Conductors Award is an incredible privilege and a great joy. Being able to conduct a concert at the Salzburg Festival is a great dream coming true. I thank the Camerata Salzburg and Christopher Humbert Jr. from the bottom of my heart for this wonderful collaboration,” says this year’s winner, Christian Blex.

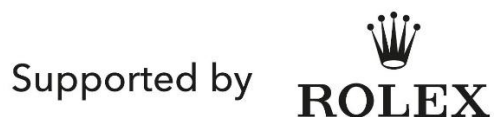
The Young Conductors Award was presented for the twelfth time this year. It carries a cash value of 15,000 € and takes place every two years. Furthermore, the prize entails conducting a Festival concert with the ORF Radio Symphony Orchestra Vienna. This concert is recorded and released on CD as part of the series Salzburg Festival Documents.



Christian Blex during the YCA Award Concert Weekend © SF/Marco Borrelli

The successful further careers enjoyed by past winners, Hankyeol Yoon (2023), Joel Sandelson (2021), Gábor Káli (2018), Kerem Hasan (2017), Aziz Shokhakov (2016), Lorenzo Viotti (2015), Maxime Pascal (2014), Ben Gernon (2013), Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla (2012), Ainārs Rubikis (2011) and David Afkham (2010), demonstrate the Award’s international relevance.

“With the Young Conductors Award, the Salzburg Festival offers young talents an essential opportunity to gather experiences that are decisive for their further career paths. This year, the field of participants was full of stellar talent,” as Artistic Director **Markus Hinterhäuser** emphasizes.



The Festival wishes to thank Rolex, one of the great enablers of the arts world. Thanks to Rolex, the Salzburg Festival is able to financially implement artistically important projects. Rolex is a main sponsor; Rolex supports the Salzburg Whitsun Festival and, since 2021, the Herbert von Karajan Young Conductors Award.

Biography of 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 Hrůša, 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.



Christian Blex © SF/Jan Friese

Photographs from the Herbert von Karajan Young Conductors Award are available here:
<https://www.salzburgerfestspiele.at/fotoservice/herbert-von-karajan-young-conductors-award-2025-2>

The Herbert von Karajan Young Conductors Award is an initiative of the Salzburg Festival in cooperation with the Eliette and Herbert von Karajan Institute.

The Jury of the Herbert von Karajan Young Conductors Award

Chairman: Manfred Honeck, Music Director of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra

Jury Members:

Gary Hanson – former managing director of the Cleveland Orchestra

Axel Hiller – director designate of concerts and media of 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 of Leipzig's Gewandhaus

Pamela Rosenberg – former artistic director of the Berlin Philharmonic

Florian Wiegand – director of concerts and media of the Salzburg Festival/Artistic Director
Munich Philharmonic