

Herbert von Karajan Young Conductors Award 2021

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



The three finalists of the 2021 Herbert von Karajan Young Conductors Award: Luis Toro Araya, Jonas Ehrler and Joel Sandelson (left to right). Photo: SF/Erika Mayer

The three finalists have been chosen:

Luis Toro Araya, Jonas Ehrler and Joel Sandelson

Luis Toro Araya, Jonas Ehrler and Joel Sandelson – these three finalists will conduct during the Award Concert Weekend at the 2021 Salzburg Festival, competing for the newly reconceived Herbert von Karajan Young Conductors Award.

Two characteristics, Herbert von Karajan was convinced, could not be learned by a conductor, but had to be innate: “how strongly someone feels the music they embody” and “how powerful their personal transmittal is”.

With 350 concerts and opera performances conducted at the Salzburg Festival, Karajan is one of the most influential personalities in Festival history. On the occasion of its centenary, the Salzburg Festival honours its long-term artistic director, who took an active interest in supporting upcoming generations of conductors, with the newly reconceived Herbert von Karajan Young Conductors Award.



100 JAHRE

SALZBURGER FESTSPIELE
17. Juli – 31. August 2021

The path towards the finale

The jury chaired by Manfred Honeck, music director of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, already chose eight semi-finalists in the spring of 2020 from among 250 candidates for the tenth edition of the renowned competition, which will now take place every second year.

Conductors from all over the world can apply for the Herbert von Karajan Young Conductors Award, provided they are over 21 and under 35.

Due to the pandemic, the Rehearsal Day originally planned for May 2020 had to be postponed by a year, so the young conductors convened at Salzburg's Felsenreitschule in early May 2021 to demonstrate their abilities. Under the jury's eyes, they worked with the oem. oesterreichisches ensemble fuer neue musik and the Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg, rehearsing pieces by Arnold Schoenberg, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Ludwig van Beethoven.

At the end of the Rehearsal Day, the jury engaged in lengthy deliberations, ultimately deciding that Luis Toro Araya, Jonas Ehrler and Joel Sandelson would be the finalists invited to the Award Concert Weekend.

YCA Award Concert Weekend

The three finalists will conduct a concert of approximately one hour each during the 2021 Salzburg Festival at the Mozarteum Foundation's main auditorium. The concert programmes will be devised by the candidates together with the Salzburg Festival, with a special focus on contemporary compositions; participating singers of the Young Singers Project will perform one Mozart concert aria on each programme.

After the last concert, the jury will declare the victor in a public award ceremony, announcing the winner of the Herbert von Karajan Young Conductors Award.

Concert 1: Jonas Ehrler – 7 August, 3 pm

Concert 2: Luis Toro Araya – 8 August, 3 pm

Concert 3: Joel Sandelson – 9 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 an international orchestra and a rising young soloist as part of the 2022 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 of international careers which have frequently brought them back to the Salzburg Festival: the 2021 season, for example, features Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla and Maxime Pascal.



100 JAHRE

SALZBURGER FESTSPIELE
17. Juli – 31. August 2021

Finalists' Statements

Joel Sandelson

“The Young Conductors Award is a very special competition. Not only because it offer such a fantastic opportunity to become part of the Salzburg Festival. The entire rehearsal process is part of the competition, which enables us to work on a much more profound level. I began my musical path as a cellist. As a conductor, however, you have to find a much more structured approach to music. I enjoy that a lot. To me, conducting combines performance with reflection on music.”

Jonas Ehrler

“I enjoyed the music-making on the Rehearsal Day so much! Both ensembles were very open, welcoming and receptive. To me, conducting means enabling music to happen, but also listening and bringing people together. When I am conducting, I am usually very calm, trying to be warm-hearted and analytical at the same time. I try very hard to create a good atmosphere for our work. This competition is such a unique chance for young conductors. Just being a finalist means that there is so much we can learn. The prospect of leading one’s own concert with such a wonderful orchestra as the Camerata Salzburg is great.”

Luis Toro Araya

“I am very pleased with the Rehearsal Day, because I managed to ignore that this was a competition. I simply concentrated on the music and on working with these two wonderful ensembles. I was born in a country that is so far removed from these classical traditions and the history of classical music. Thus, it means such a lot to me to be part of the Salzburg Festival now. To me, conducting means sharing very special moments with the musicians and the audience.”

Finalists' Biographies

JONAS EHRLER



Jonas Ehrler was born in Wettingen in 1992. He completed his conducting studies with distinction at the Zurich University of the Arts with Johannes Schlaefli in 2018 and was immediately selected to become assistant conductor of the Orchestre National de Lille, the Orchestre de Picardie and the Orchestre National d'Île-de-France for the 2018/19 season. Debuts followed with the Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège, the Orchestre de Chambre de Genève and

Ensemble Modern, as well as being a semi-finalist in the inaugural Siemens Hallé International Conductors Competition in 2020. During the coronavirus crisis, Jonas Ehrler has turned to local culture and founded the New Kurkapelle Baden, reviving the traditional spa orchestra in his hometown in Switzerland.

Jonas Ehrler has previously conducted school concerts with the Bern Symphony Orchestra, the St Christophorus Chamber Orchestra in Vilnius and the Orchestre Quipasseparlà in Lausanne. In the operatic field, he has already conducted works such as *La traviata* and *Eugene Onegin*.

From 2017 to 2019 Jonas Ehrler held the Music Theatre of Today Academy scholarship from the Deutsche Bank Foundation, and he continues to be supported by the Willem Mengelberg Foundation. He has also received valuable inspiration from figures such as Bernard Haitink, Esa-Pekka Salonen and Peter Eötvös.

JOEL SANDELSON



British conductor Joel Sandelson was born in 1994 and graduated from Cambridge University in 2016 with a first before continuing his studies at the Royal Academy of Music with Sian Edwards. From 2018 to 2020 he held the Leverhulme Conducting Fellowship at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, during which time he was also assistant conductor with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra under Thomas Dausgaard. He is artistic director of the baroque orchestra

Wond'rous Machine and they recently made their debut at St John's Smith Square and

Southbank Centre. In 2020 he won third prize at the inaugural Siemens Hallé International Conductors Competition.

Joel Sandelson has conducted orchestras such as the Danish National Symphony Orchestra, the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the Cincinnati and Jacksonville Symphony Orchestras, the Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra and the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra, as well as all of Scotland's major orchestras. Other important inspirations have come from his time at Tanglewood and from working with conductors such as Roger Norrington, Thomas Søndergård, Martyn Brabbins, Jorma Panula and Mark Stringer. He has also assisted Mark Elder, Jac van Steen, Edward Gardner and Trevor Pinnock.

Joel Sandelson began his career as a cellist, giving recitals and performing chamber music at venues such as Wigmore Hall. He also gave solo concerts across Europe and successfully took part in several competitions, as well as performing as a Baroque cellist with Britain's leading early music groups.

LUIS TORO ARAYA



Luis Toro Araya was born in San Vicente de Tagua Tagua in Chile in 1995 and initially studied the violin at the arts faculty of the University of Chile and the Modern School of Music and Dance with Alberto Dourthé Castrillón. From 2014 to 2017 he played in the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Chile. In 2015 he began studying conducting with teachers such as Jorge Rotter, Leonid Grin, Garrett Keast and Helmuth Reichel Silva, whom he regularly assisted in Chile and Europe. He also studied

orchestral conducting at the Franz Liszt University of Music in Weimar with Nicolás Pasquet and at the Zurich University of the Arts with Johannes Schlaefli, as well as attending masterclasses given by conductors such as Bernard Haitink, James Lowe, Larry Rachleff and Zsolt Nagy.

In 2020 Luis Toro Araya took part in the Ninth Sir Georg Solti International Conductors Competition in Frankfurt and in 2021 was selected to be a candidate for the First International Conducting Competition Rotterdam.

During the 2018/19 season he made his debut in his homeland with the Orquesta Clásica Universidad de Santiago de Chile and with the Orquesta Sinfónica Universidad de La Serena. He has also worked with orchestras such as the Thessaloniki State Symphony Orchestra, the Bern Symphony Orchestra, the Olten Filarmoni Orkestrası in Izmir, the Staatskapelle Weimar and the Southwest German Philharmonic in Constance. Since 2019 he has been chief conductor of the Köniz Youth Orchestra in Bern.

Jury



The three finalists of the 2021 Herbert von Karajan Young Conductors Award with the jury members and Festival President Helga Rabl-Stadler. Photo: SF/ Erika Mayer

Jury Chairman:

Manfred Honeck, Music Director of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra

Jury Members:

Peter Alward – former director of the Salzburg Easter Festival

Gary Hanson – former managing director of the Cleveland Orchestra

Markus Hinterhäuser – Artistic Director of the Salzburg Festival

Brian McMaster – former director of the Edinburgh International Festival

Alexander Meraviglia-Crivelli – Secretary General of the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra

Pamela Rosenberg – former artistic director of the Berlin Philharmonic

Florian Wiegand – Director of Concerts at the Salzburg Festival

Biographies of the jury members are available here: <https://www.salzburgerfestspiele.at/yca>

Previous Award Winners



Gábor Káli
WINNER 2018,
HUNGARY



Kerem Hasan
WINNER 2017,
GREAT BRITAIN
CHIEF CONDUCTOR OF THE TYROLEAN
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA INNSBRUCK



Aziz Shokhaimov
WINNER 2016,
UZBEKISTAN
KAPELLMEISTER, DEUTSCHE OPER AM RHEIN



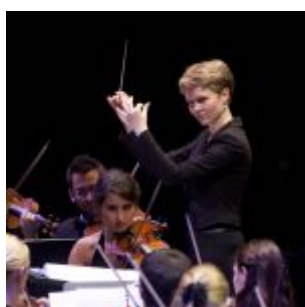
Lorenzo Viotti
WINNER 2015,
SWITZERLAND
CHIEF CONDUCTOR OF THE GULBENKIAN
ORCHESTRA LISBON



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



Ben Gernon
WINNER 2013,
GREAT BRITAIN



Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla
WINNER 2012,
LITHUANIA
MUSIC DIRECTOR OF THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



Ainars Rubikis
WINNER 2011,
LATVIA
MUSIC DIRECTOR OF THE KOMISCHE OPER BERLIN



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 previous winners are available at:
<https://www.salzburgerfestspiele.at/yca>