

*Saanen, December 2024*

## **Gstaad Academy**

The transmission of knowledge and experience from one generation to the next has been a mission that has occupied the entire life of violinist and humanist Yehudi Menuhin, who founded our Festival in 1957.

In honour of his unparalleled commitment to talent development, we established the Gstaad Academy back in 2008, featuring a comprehensive academic programme:

It is with the idea of perpetuating its commitment to the next generation that we created the Gstaad Academy in 2008: a structure in its own right to support an increasingly rich academic offer.

At the Gstaad Academy, we run the complete range of master classes addressed to young professionals, as well as all the courses that are aimed at amateur orchestra musicians of all ages.

We offer tailored master classes and prominent performance opportunities to the professional course participants. Additionally, they have the platform of an internationally renowned music festival, which presents high-profile concerts alongside the master classes every summer.

Ambitious amateurs can count on an altogether joyful experience of practical music-making as well as experiencing spectacular concert performances.

The courses are directed by highly regarded musicians who have taken time off from their professional commitments for the sake of passing on their knowledge.

People's experiences at Gstaad Menuhin Festival & Academy are also unique in being coloured by the magical environment of Switzerland's Saanenland countryside, one of the most beautiful Alpine foothill regions to be found anywhere in the world.

For the audience, the public lectures of the Gstaad Academy are a perfect opportunity to follow the artistic activities of upcoming musicians and their mentors in live. The works elaborated are then performed in final concerts. It is thus possible to directly participate in the upcoming talents' development within a short period. The following applies to all public events of the Gstaad Academy: free admission with collection; reservation required.

On our platform "Gstaad Digital Festival", we make selected lessons, video clips with educational content as well as concerts of the Gstaad Academy available to a constantly growing digital community. By doing so, we expand the circle of "participants" to an international audience.

By the founding and ongoing development of the Gstaad Academy, Gstaad Menuhin Festival is pursuing the overall aim of maintaining the spirit created by the founder of the Festival, Lord Yehudi Menuhin, who for 40 years invited not only established artist friends such as Benjamin Britten, Peter Pears and Maurice Gendron to Gstaad, but also students and young musicians particularly worthy of support, to work and make music with them.

# GSTAAD MENUHIN FESTIVAL

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## Gstaad Conducting Academy

The Gstaad Conducting Academy 2024 celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Visionaries such as Neeme Järvi, Manfred Honeck, Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla and exceptional soloists like Patricia Kopatchinskaja and Anastasia Kobekina have significantly shaped the academy. Thanks to the extensive expertise of professors Jaap van Zweden and Johannes Schlaefli, the academy has grown into a globally recognized masterclass for emerging conductors. In the latest application round, submissions poured in from over 51 countries!

The Gstaad Conducting Academy provides young and promising conductors with a unique opportunity in Europe to collaborate with professional orchestras and globally recognized conductors for several weeks.

Jaap van Zweden, currently Music Director of the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra and Music Director-Designate of the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, has significantly influenced the Gstaad Conducting Academy since his first appointment in 2017 and is directing it for the seventh time in the 2025 edition.

The Gstaad Academy is proud to have engaged for the second time conductor Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, Music Director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. She will not only give lectures during the first week of the Gstaad Conducting Academy, but also perform a concert with the Gstaad Festival Orchestra herself.

Professor Johannes Schlaefli, who led an exceptionally successful conducting class at the Zurich University of the Arts, as “Head of Teaching”, monitors and steers the development of the participants throughout the entire duration of the Academy.

The Gstaad Festival Orchestra (GFO), as the centrepiece of the Academy, is assuming the role of the “instrument” – at the highest level. Through active participation in the pedagogical process, the orchestra is a defining part of the Academy.

The long duration of the Conducting Academy enables the students to engage with a broad and versatile repertoire, ranging from pieces of the classical era to newly written compositions. The daily lessons are open to the public, and each week wraps up with an academy concert where participants take the baton for a piece or a movement. Additionally, chosen conductors get the chance to lead the Gstaad Festival Orchestra in an official concert as part of the Festival line-up. Video analyses, one-on-one sessions and talks round out the extensive offerings.

## Schedule

Part I: August 3 – August 10, 2025

Gstaad Festival Orchestra

Professor: Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla & Johannes Schlaefli

Part II: August 11 – August 16, 2025

Gstaad Festival Orchestra

Professor: Jaap van Zweden & Johannes Schlaefli

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All rehearsals (of the lessons) are recorded on video for the students. The film recordings are analysed together with the professors and used for detailed feedback. The video material is made available to the participants, so that they can watch themselves critically.

This year, the Neeme Järvi Prize will be awarded to one or more participants of the Gstaad Conducting Academy for the tenth time. The winner(s) of the award are invited to take on conducting various Swiss professional orchestras during the 2026/27 season, including the Basel Chamber Orchestra, the Basel Symphony Orchestra and the Sinfonie Orchester Biel Solothurn.

## **Gstaad String Academy**

The Gstaad String Academy will be held for the twelfth time from August 4 to August 13. Around seven violin students, five viola students and five cello students will fine-tune their technique and interpretation under the direction of Professors Rainer Schmidt (violin), Ettore Causa (viola) und Ivan Monighetti (violoncello). The aim of the String Academy is to improve the abilities of the students on their own instruments, as well as to foster an exchange with other musicians, especially with regard to chamber music. The chamber music concert by the Gstaad String Academy, in which the students perform together with their professors, will in this year take place on August 13 at the Temple de Château-d'Œx (7.30 PM). Furthermore, students of the Gstaad String Academy get the opportunity to exercise their skills in one of the concerts on August 11 and 12 at the Hotel Landhaus Saanen.

## **Gstaad Piano Academy**

The 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the Gstaad Piano Academy will once again be led by the renowned pianist Sir Andrés Schiff. Since 2012, he has been actively involved in shaping the Gstaad Piano Academy, establishing himself as a permanent figure at the Gstaad Academy alongside his performances at Gstaad Menuhin Festival & Academy. Not only does his instruction resonate well with the participants, but it also captivates our audience. The masterclass is open to the public and will take place from August 3 to August 6 2025, each day from 3.00 PM to 7.00 PM at the Kirchgemeindehaus Gstaad.

## **Gstaad Vocal Academy**

The 14<sup>th</sup> installment of the Gstaad Vocal Academy takes place under the guidance of Ludovic Tézier. The globally acclaimed baritone will conduct the masterclass with 7 to 10 participants. The lessons, accompanied by a pianist, are open to the public for the most part, with only a few exceptions. In 2015, the Vocal Academy collaborated with the Gstaad Conducting Academy, offering selected participants the extraordinary chance to perform at the final concert with the Gstaad Festival Orchestra.

## **Gstaad Baroque Academy**

During the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the Gstaad Baroque Academy, which will be held from August 31 – September 6 at the Wellness- & Spa-Hotel Ermitage, young musicians will receive all-round support from the recorder player and conductor Maurice Steger – whether it is technical advice, conveying expert knowledge about the music and the historical period, guiding and trying out musical ideas, or the social strengthening of the group. The students benefit from individual and chamber music lessons. Professor Maurice Steger is supported by a team consisting of specialists in Early Music. At the end of the Academy, a final concert (Saturday, September 6 at 5.30 PM in the Rougemont Church) will present the results.

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## Academy concerts

### L'Heure Bleue – *Concert for all*

The Gstaad Academy concerts are held as part of the cycle L'Heure Bleue – *Concert for all*. The concerts always start at 5.30 PM: one hour of music without an intermission. L'Heure Bleue, the hour between work and the evening programme, gives students of the Academy the opportunity to present themselves and what has been learnt at the Academy and to perform with major stars as part of a renowned Festival. For the public, L'Heure Bleue is an opportunity to experience the talent of young musicians live. The term Concert for all already implies that the concerts in this series are intended for listeners of all kinds – whether experienced concertgoers, newcomers to classical music, young or old. And the format is also ideally suited for families because they can also come and go during the concert. For all concerts in the series L'Heure Bleue – *Concert for all*, the following applies: free admission with collection; reservation required.

## Gstaad Festival Amateur Orchestra

The Gstaad Festival Amateur Orchestra (GFAO) – as a sibling of the Gstaad Festival Orchestra (GFO) – has evolved into a solid and highly popular institution of the Festival. This is true for participants from all over Switzerland as well as for the audience. Under the direction of conductor Kevin Griffiths, the 16<sup>th</sup> edition of the Amateur Orchestra Week takes place from July 28 to August 2. Amateur musicians from across Switzerland come together to study exciting and challenging works under the guidance of professional section leaders. This year, the magnificent *first Symphonie* by Gustav Mahler is on the programme. The focus is on the joy of making music together, culminating in the final concert at the Festival Tent Gstaad as the conclusion of the week on Sunday, August 3, at 11.30 AM. Free admission with collection; reservation required.

## Gstaad Festival Youth Orchestra

The Gstaad Festival Youth Orchestra (GFYO) – as a little sibling of the Gstaad Festival Orchestra (GFO) – has become a permanent and very popular institution of the Festival – this is true both for the participants as well as for the audience. The Youth Orchestra of Gstaad Menuhin Festival has grown into a fully-fledged symphony orchestra over the past few years. From August 4 – 9, young people from all over Switzerland will spend time together in Zweisimmen. The works are rehearsed in tutti for up to eight hours per day with the conductor Matthias Kuhn, or in individual parts under the direction of professional concert masters. Apart from the rehearsals and the final concert in the Gstaad Festival Tent on Sunday, August 10 at 11.30 AM (free entry with collection; Reservation required). The programme also includes a trip to Simmental, a visit to a rehearsal of the Gstaad Conducting Academy and a concert. This year, with works by Verdi, Brahms, Weinberg and Gershwin, a stirring and at the same time highly demanding programme is being rehearsed with the young talents.

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Publisher:

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