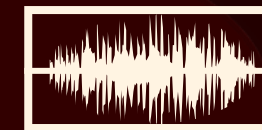




**ORCHESTRA SIMFONICĂ
BUCUREȘTI**



BUCHAREST
CONDUCTING ACADEMY



Edition VII / MMXXV

July 13-18, 2025 - Bucharest Romania

13.07 The Masterclass Welcoming Ceremony

**13-15.07 "Brahms Beloved", a Masterclass with John Axelrod & Bucharest
Symphony Orchestra - Seminars, video analysis and more.**

**16.07 The "Bucharest" International Conducting Competition Welcoming
Ceremony**

**16-17.07 The "Bucharest" International Conducting Competition with
Bucharest Symphony Orchestra**

**18.07 Dress rehearsal and Winners Awards Gala Concert at the Romanian
Athenaeum**



Do you love Brahms? It is not only the name of a popular book and movie from the 1960's, but it is also an important question for all conductors, from student to professional.

It was Robert Schumann, the composer, conductor and music critic, who dedicated words to Brahms as the "true successor of Beethoven." For many, the music of Johannes Brahms remains on par with that of Bach and Beethoven, placing Brahms among the 3 B's: that highest echelon of composers, first named by Peter Cornelius in 1854, including Berlioz. It was the legendary conductor, Hans von Bülow, who, in around 1880, replaced Berlioz with Brahms on that winner's podium. He even said: "I believe in Bach, the Father, Beethoven, the Son, and Brahms, the Holy Ghost of music." It took a great conductor to know. Here is your chance to understand why.

The Bucharest Conducting Academy finally proposes an extraordinary opportunity to conduct what I believe is the Mt. Everest of symphonic literature, Brahms' 4th Symphony. Though all his Symphonies are epic masterpieces, and the 3rd with its 3rd movement perhaps the more popular, thanks to the aforementioned movie soundtrack, it is the 4th, his last crowning achievement, proving von Bülow's declaration of Brahms' genius. It is said to be inspired by the tragedies of Sophocles, works that summed up the force of this musical giant.

For nearly 30 years, I have conducted the 4th the most, and in 2013, I recorded the 4th Symphony first with the Orchestra Sinfonica di Milan a decade ago as the motivation for my Brahms Beloved cycle. 12 years later I am still uncovering truths and treasures.

What makes this Symphony more than a mere academic exercise? Though we do add the Academic Festival Overture as the accompanying work on the Academy masterclass and competition repertoire.

It is the summation of a lifetime of musical thought that can be compared to the very philosophical works that inspired his composition. Layer upon layer, theme developed upon theme, motives and melodies in juxtaposition, retrograde, expansion and subdivision, the agony of what true understanding brings pounded out by the timpani, a colonnade of a quasi funeral march and the sadness of unfulfilled love, a 32 passicaglia variations finale, including a reference to Bach's Cantata no. 150 "Lord, I Long to be Near You," exploding in furious energy to be contrasted only by a solo flute recitation that echoes the loneliness of a man who declared himself free but happy, all of which is contained on one canvas of black dots and lines. This is his greatest masterpiece and you will conduct it.

There is one other element that is hidden beneath the notes: Love. Without forgetting his lifelong devotion to Clara Schumann, more platonic than passionate, Brahms remained the happy but free bachelor all his life. His last symphonic statement could therefore be heard as a brutal condemnation of the choices he made and the love he never had. He composed the work in 1885. He was diagnosed with pancreatic and liver cancer in 1896. Clara Schumann died in 1896. Brahms attended a performance of his Fourth Symphony at the Musikverein a month before his own death in 1897.

Similarly, Sergei Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No. 2 is widely considered to be about rebirth and love, particularly due to its intensely emotional and romantic nature, often interpreted as depicting a passionate, sometimes unfulfilled love story; many associate it with feelings of longing, nostalgia, and deep sentimentality. It may have been used (and abused) by Eric Carmen in the song "All By Myself," but the title is prescient, capturing the spirit of the music, while at the same time linking itself to the 4th Symphony and the life of Johannes Brahms.

These beloved masterpieces must be in the repertoire of any conductor. To have the opportunity to study, conduct, live and breathe this music will help you understand more about Brahms and Rachmaninov, but they also will accompany you on your lifelong journey to master these works. The Bucharest Symphony Orchestra and myself will guide you along the way. With this music, and the camaraderie of your colleagues, you are never alone.

Yours, John

John Axelrod



John Axelrod

Music Director, Swiss National Orchestra
 Principal Conductor, Bucharest Symphony Orchestra, Romania

"John Axelrod is a highly imaginative and dynamic musician, whose rich musicological background and historical insights combine with intellectual drive and charismatic enthusiasm for people and for life, to get probing, rigorous and richly characterized interpretations." Remy Franck, Pizzicato

With over a quarter century of experience conducting nearly 200 orchestras worldwide, John Axelrod has established a visible profile as one of today's leading international conductors. His extraordinarily diverse repertoire, from core classics, both orchestral and operatic, to contemporary to crossover, his innovative programming themes, musical depth and charismatic performance style have been widely praised and recognised by both audiences and critics. In 2020, Maestro Axelrod received the Special Achievement Award from the International Classical Music Awards for his outstanding contributions and interpretations.

Season 2023-2024 begins with two important events in his career trajectory: As a newly naturalised citizen of Switzerland, Maestro Axelrod has been named in August 2023 the Music Director of the Swiss National Orchestra, with a government sanctioned mission statement committed to promoting the excellence of Swiss musicians and composers with tours, recordings and special projects. And in September 2023 comes an exceptionally special recording with the Bucharest Symphony Orchestra, released on Orchid Classics and distributed by Naxos, featuring the two versions of Robert Schumann's Symphony 4, op. 120. Entitled Schumann 41/51: Florestan and Eusebius, Maestro Axelrod explores how Robert Schumann's bi-polar disorder influenced the original and revised versions of this beloved work which provides a compelling reason for the first time in recorded discography that both are released on the same recording.

Maestro Axelrod continues his over a decade long love story with Japan, returning this October and November to both the Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony, the Orchestra Ensemble Kanazawa and the Hyogo Performing Arts Center Orchestra, and making his debut with the Sendai Philharmonic to perform "The Samurai of Seville," a double concerto for flamenco guitar, Japanese koto and narrator in both Japanese and Spanish, composed by José Maria Gallardo del Rey and based on the novel by John J. Healey, about the 1615 historical voyage of 12 Samurai from Sendai to Seville. Maestro Axelrod commissioned the work in 2019 and premiered it in 2021 with the City of Kyoto Symphony Orchestra, with whom he was Principal Guest Conductor. Mr. Axelrod will also teach a conducting masterclass at the Tokyo Conservatory, continuing his absolute commitment to educating and developing the next generation of conductors and young musicians.

In 2020, during the pandemic, Maestro Axelrod created CMO: Conductors Masterclass Online, and will be presenting from September through December 2023 a Great Maestros Masterclass Online Series, featuring such great maestros as Leonard Slatkin and Frédéric Chaslin, with more confirmed for 2024. In July, 2024, Maestro Axelrod will again serve for the 3rd time as President of the Jury of the Bucharest Music Institute International Masterclass and Competition for Conductors.

Maestro Axelrod also returns twice to open the 23-24 season of the Romanian Radio Orchestra with an all Rachmaninov program and again in February with Brahms, and continues his long relationship with the Belgrade Philharmonic, also returning twice this season with Bartok and Korngold. Other upcoming season highlights include his annual returns to the Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano in January 2024, of which he was Principal Guest Conductor, with the full ballet of The Firebird by Stravinsky, and as the conductor of the RAI Pops with the Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI in Torino in June. Other important engagements include his debut with the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra in an October 2023 tour to Hanoi and in Israel in January 2024 and the Wallonian Chamber Orchestra in February, and returns to the orchestras of South Netherlands, Cagliari and Palermo, among others.

Among his many other titles, Maestro Axelrod was unanimously elected in 2022 as the Principal Conductor of the Bucharest Symphony Orchestra, with a unique open-ended contract. From 2018-2023, Maestro Axelrod became the Principal Guest Conductor of the City of Kyoto Symphony Orchestra. From 2014-2020, Maestro Axelrod was the Artistic and Musical Director of the Real Orquesta Sinfónica de Sevilla. Other titled positions included Principal Guest Conductor of Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano from 2011-2018, Principal Conductor of the Pacific Music Festival from 2016-2018, Music Director of the NHK Jazz at the Metropolitan Theater from 2014-2016, Music Director of the l'Orchestre National des Pays de la Loire from 2009-2013, Music Director of "Hollywood in Vienna" with the ORF Vienna Radio Orchestra from 2009-2011, Music Director and Chief Conductor of the Lucerne Symphony Orchestra and Theater from 2004-2009, as First Conductor of Sinfonietta Cracovia from 2001-2009 and as Founder and Artistic Director of his hometown Houston's OrchestraX from 1997-2003.

Among his many other relationships, invitations and recordings with orchestras include Berlin's Radio Symphony Orchestra, NDR Symphony Hamburg (ElbePhilharmonie), Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchester, Filarmonica della Scala,, Teatro La Fenice Orchestra in Venice, Orchestre de Paris, NHK Symphony Orchestra, Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, Camerata Salzburg and the Mozarteum Orchester Salzburg, among others. In the USA, Mr. Axelrod has conducted the Chicago Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Philadelphia Orchestra among others. Maestro Axelrod debuted in 2018 to great acclaim with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and returned with the Philharmonia Orchestra UK in Teatro alla Scala for the MITO Festival 2022. Other important regular festival engagements include the Enescu, Salzburg, Lucerne, Montreux Jazz, and the Schleswig Holstein.

John Axelrod's important opera activity includes Bernstein's Candide at Théâtre du Châtelet, Teatro alla Scala and Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Eugene Onegin at Teatro San Carlo in Naples, and Kurt Weill's Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny at the Rome Opera, and Martinu's Mirandolina at Teatro la Fenice. For the Lucerne Festival, he conducted: Rigoletto, The Rake's Progress, Don Giovanni, the Three Penny Opera, Falstaff and Idomeneo. Maestro Axelrod conducted Gianni Schicchi to open the 2020 Puccini Festival and returned in 2021 to conduct a new production of Turandot, directed by Daniele Abbado.

Mr. Axelrod has recorded core and contemporary repertoire for Sony Classical, Warner Classics, Ondine, Universal, Naïve and Nimbus, and released a cycle of Brahms Symphonies with the Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi, entitled Brahms Beloved on Telarc, produced by Grammy winner Michael Fine.

Actively committed to working with young professional musicians for over two decades, Mr. Axelrod has toured with the Schleswig Holstein Festival Orchestra to the Salzburg Festival, the Santander Orchestra and the Sinfonia Iuventus in Poland, the Orchestra Giovanile Italiana in Italy, the Accademia della Scala to Muscat, the NordDeutsche Junge Philharmonie in Germany and the Vienna Jeunesse Orchester in Austria.

Mr. Axelrod graduated in 1988 from Harvard University. Trained personally by Leonard Bernstein in 1982, he also studied at the St. Petersburg Conservatory with Ilya Musin in 1996 and was mentored by Christoph Eschenbach from 1997 until 2000 when we made his professional debut as assistant conductor for Parisfal at the Bayreuth Festival.

The Masterclass

"Take the "Brahms Beloved" Masterclass with John Axelrod & Bucharest Symphony Orchestra, in Bucharest, Romania

Bucharest Conducting Academy (BCA) provides the best experience in Romania with the required resources that helps the aspiring masters of orchestral direction to achieve their goal, to learn how to conduct an orchestra. And much more.

Everything you need in order to start develop, enhance and master your career in conducting, available now, at the Bucharest Conducting Academy Masterclass.

July 13-15, 2025

Application deadline: June 10, 2025, 23:59, EET

Location

Sala Gloria - Strada Bucovina 6, București, Sector 3, Romania. The hall is located in near the Titan Park.

Masterclass Repertoire - Johannes Brahms

Academic Festival Overture, Op.80 - Editor Hans Gál (1890-1987) Publisher Info. Sämtliche Werke, Band 3: Overtüren und Variationen für Orchester Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1926-27. Plate J.B. 5.

Tragic Overture, Op.81 - Editor Hans Gál (1890-1987) Publisher Info. Sämtliche Werke, Band 3: Overtüren und Variationen für Orchester (pp.37-62) Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1926-27. Plate J.B. 6

Symphony No.4, Op.98 - Editor Hans Gál (1890-1987) Publisher Info. Sämtliche Werke, Band 4 Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1926-27. Plate J.B. 4. *All movements*

The participants must provide their own scores, available on IMSLP.

Audio/video recording on phones or other equipments are not allowed in the Masterclass. An official copy of your Masterclass performance can be provided for €50, payable in Bucharest.

Schedule

Welcome Ceremony, July 13, 09:30am @ Sala Gloria. The schedule is subject to modifications and/or future announcements. Daily schedule available on <https://conducting.academy/the-masterclass/>

Masterclass: seats limited to **20 active students**. Passive students are welcomed also. All ages, active, beginner, passive students are welcome.

Events registration

The application fee is €50. All applicants will undergo a selection process based on the video they submit, which will be evaluated by the Jury. The Jury's decision is final, and no appeals will be accepted. If you are participating in both the Masterclass and the Competition, only one application fee is required.

Registration and application process flow

- Application Phase
- Video Audition / Jury Selection
- Acceptance
- Proof of payment / Seat confirmation

The final number of participants will be made available via website and email upon the Jury decision. More details about the application process is available on <https://conducting.academy/live-application-status/>

Packages

<https://conducting.academy/packages>

Registration

<https://conducting.academy/application/>

The Competition

Bucharest International Competition with Bucharest Symphony Orchestra, Dress Rehearsal and Winners Awards Gala Concert at the Romanian Athenaeum

July 16-18, 2025

Application deadline: July 1, 2025, 23:59, EET

Competitor Admission

The final number of candidates admitted to the rounds may be adjusted—either increased or decreased—based on the number of invited applicants, as determined by the Jury.

Location

Sala Gloria - Strada Bucovina 6, București, Sector 3, Romania. The hall is located in near the Titan Park.

Award Gala Concert

The Competition features the dress rehearsal and the Awards Gala Concert for the winning conductors that will take place at the prestigious Romanian Athenaeum.

Welcome Ceremony and the draw of lots., July 16, 09:30am @ Sala Gloria.

Competitor timing per round and / or schedule are subject to modifications and future announcements.

Competition Repertoire

The Competition repertoire will be divided by rounds, accordingly:

1st round: All candidates

Brahms Overtures
Academic Festival Overture, Op.80 - Editor Hans Gál / Breitkopf & Härtel
Tragic Overture, Op.81 - Editor Hans Gál / Breitkopf & Härtel

2nd round Semi-final - up to 15 candidates

Accompaniment
Sergei Rachmaninov **Piano Concerto No.2**, soloist: Soloist Eva Garet Op.18 - Editor Pavel Lamm, Publisher Info. Moscow: Muzgiz

3rd round The Final - up to 6 candidates

Symphony
Brahms **Symphony No.4**, Op.98 - Editor Hans Gál Publisher Info. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel
All movements

The participants must provide their own scores.

Competition Schedule

July 16
11:00-15:00 - First session
17:00 - Second session
18:00 announcement

July 17
The Semi-final - *up to 15 candidates*
10:30-14:30 - Semi-final Round
15:00 announcement
18:00-21:00 *The Final - up to 6 candidates*
122:00 announcement

July 18
11:00-14:00 - Dress Rehearsal
19:30 - Winners Awards Gala Concert

Concert program

Johannes Brahms - Academic Festival Overture, Op.80
Awarded to 3rd prize

Sergei Rachmaninov - Piano Concerto No.2, Op.18
Soloist: Eva Garet
Awarded to 2nd prize

Pause

Johannes Brahms - Symphony No.4, Op.98
Awarded to 1st prize

Competition Awards

1st Award

The 1st prize winner will get one performance (full symphony) with the Bucharest Symphony Orchestra in Award Gala Concert plus three concerts with major Romanian orchestras within the 2026 season & European Union route covered flight return trip.

Other perks

€3000 & official certificate and recommendations to other orchestras.

Conductors Masterclass Online /Bucharest Conducting Academy Protégé Prize, sponsored by CMO, offering a selected conductor(s) 1 free personal private online masterclasses and ongoing career counseling. While music is what gives our lives meaning, it is mentorship that is meaningful for a conductor's career development.

2nd Award

The 2nd prize winner will get one performance (accompaniment) with the Bucharest Symphony Orchestra in Award Gala Concert plus two concerts with major Romanian orchestras within the 2026 season & European Union route covered flight return trip.

Other perks

€2000 & official certificate and recommendations to other orchestras.

3rd Award

The 3rd prize winner will get one performance (overture) with the Bucharest Symphony Orchestra in Award Gala Concert plus one concert with major Romanian orchestras within the 2026 season & European Unions route covered flight return trip.

Other perks

€1000 & official certificate and recommendations to other orchestras and music agents.

Mentions & four special awards

Finalist Special Mentions Awarded to 4th place, 5th place, 6th place

Bucharest Symphony Orchestra Award The prize is decided by the votes of the Bucharest Symphony Orchestra musicians.

Bucharest Conducting Academy Award The prize is decided by the Bucharest Conducting Academy.

Special Talent Award The prizes goes to the conductors that demonstrate special talent.

* Bucharest Conducting Academy reserves the right to change the prizes at any time, in any way.

Fees

Masterclass Active Student 1250 € + €50EUR application fee

Includes: 4 x seminars, 4 x 10 minutes conducting BSO, 2 x video analysis session
Video recording is not included (optional, payable in Bucharest).

Masterclass Passive Student 550 € + €50EUR application fee

Includes: 4 x seminars access, 4 x full day BSO sessions access, 2 x video analysis sessions, **eligible for active questioning**
Video recording is not included (optional, payable in Bucharest).

Competition 500 € + €50EUR application fee

Includes: competition participation once accepted, video recording is not included (optional, payable in Bucharest).

What to send on the application form

- artist CV in editable text format;
- three phrases bios in editable text format;
- one artist photo, landscape format;
- conducting video - a public or unlisted video link on YouTube.com or similar video platform.
- proof of payment, such as wire transfer copy in PDF or official bank transaction statement

Application process flow

- Application phase After submitting the application, participants receive an anonymous code and a link to access your application status.
- Video audition / Jury Selection The jury will then evaluate the video link sent and decides;
- Acceptance The final acceptance decisions will be communicated to applicants after the completion of the jury selection process.
- Selection status announcement on <https://osb.one/conducting.academy-livestatus>
- Seat confirmation After you receive our confirmation, we wait for your payment confirmation, then we proceed to confirm your seat in a 1-2 working days turnaround. Applicants with "awaiting application proof of payment" or "awaiting proof of payment" status will proceed to pay the desired package fee and send the proof of payment in PDF format via email to info@conducting.academy.



Established in 2007, the Bucharest Symphony Orchestra represents a first class Romanian ensemble.

It was founded by three ambitious musicians, and features the most valuable artists musicians in Romania. Wishing to offer music lovers the opportunity to come into contact with quality music, Bucharest Symphony Orchestra has developed original and innovative musical concepts, joined under the SalutCULTURA! season.

The reputation and recognition came along with the impressive series of concerts and events held both in traditional concert halls, outdoor and in less conventional places. Bucharest Symphony Orchestra tackles a wide range of repertoire, ranging from classical music to film music, pop / rock and crossover. The Bucharest Symphony Orchestra mission is to promote music excellence and to attract young people to the concert halls.

A truly official Romanian Cultural Ambassador, Bucharest Symphony Orchestra performed in 2013 and further, in 2017, as the first Romanian orchestra in seven of the most fabulous concert halls in South America, such as: Teatro Colón and Teatro Coliseo Palazzo Italia in Buenos Aires, Teatro El Circulo in Rosario/Argentina; Sala São Paulo in São Paulo/ Brazilia, Teatro El Occitane in Trancoso/Brazilia, Corpartes 660 in Santiago/Chile, Gran Teatro Nacional din Lima/ Peru and Teatro Solís in Montevideo, Uruguay and Opera House, Hanoi, Vietnam.

Since 2021, Asociatia Orchestra Simfonică București holds a public utility institution statute.

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