

Menuhin Festival Academy

Nurturing the next generation of musicians was at the heart of Yehudi Menuhin's artistic and humanistic vision. The founder of the Menuhin Festival Gstaad believed that passing on knowledge and experience from one generation to the next was an essential part of his life's work.

To continue this legacy, the Festival established the Gstaad Academy in 2008, which has since evolved into today's Menuhin Festival Academy.

The Academy brings together all of the Festival's masterclasses for young professional musicians, as well as its orchestral programmes for dedicated amateur musicians and emerging young talent. Combining world-class artistic training with the inspiring atmosphere of an internationally renowned festival, it creates unique opportunities for the next generation to learn from and perform alongside internationally acclaimed artists.

Each Academy is led by distinguished musicians who share their expertise with exceptional personal commitment. Alongside intensive individual coaching, participants benefit from numerous opportunities to perform as part of the Festival programme.

The public, too, is invited to experience the artistic process at first hand. Open masterclasses and final concerts offer audiences the rare opportunity to follow the development of young musicians and witness their artistic growth. Admission to all public events of the Menuhin Festival Academy is free (donations welcome); advance reservation is required.

Through its Academy, the Menuhin Festival Gstaad continues one of Yehudi Menuhin's most enduring ideals: bringing established artists together with the next generation of musicians. During his years as Festival Director, he regularly invited promising young artists to Gstaad to rehearse, perform and learn alongside close colleagues such as Benjamin Britten, Peter Pears and Maurice Gendron.

Menuhin Festival String Academy

20–28 July 2026

Hotel Landhaus Saanen | John F. Kennedy School Saanen

Artistic Director: Daniel Hope

Academy Director: Daniel Geiss

The String Academy brings together exceptionally talented violinists, violists and cellists with internationally renowned soloists and teachers. While technical and musical development forms the foundation of the programme, its true focus lies in making music together.

In 2026, Pinchas Zukerman, Josephine Knight, Amanda Forsyth and Antonio Mosca join the Academy as Visiting Professors, while Tanja Sonc and Adrien La Marca serve as Resident Teachers.

Participants work intensively on interpretation, instrumental technique and chamber music before presenting the results of their work in a series of public concerts throughout the Festival.

Menuhin Festival Conducting Academy

29 July – 13 August 2026

Festival Tent Gstaad | Zwingli Church Biel

Public masterclasses with Jaap van Zweden, Alexander Shelley, Johannes Schlaefli and the Gstaad Festival Orchestra

Since its inception, the Conducting Academy has established itself as one of Europe's leading training programmes for emerging conductors. Applications from more than fifty countries reflect its outstanding international reputation.

What sets the Academy apart is the scope and intensity of its programme. Over the course of several weeks, participants work daily with a professional orchestra while receiving individual guidance from internationally acclaimed conductors.

Since 2017, Jaap van Zweden has played a defining role in shaping the Academy and returns in 2026 for his eighth season as Artistic Director. This year, Alexander Shelley joins the faculty as mentor for the first time, working alongside Johannes Schlaefli throughout the programme.

As Orchestra in Residence, the Gstaad Festival Orchestra forms the heart of the Academy. This close collaboration gives young conductors invaluable practical experience across a broad repertoire spanning the Classical period to contemporary music.

The programme includes public rehearsals, video analysis, individual coaching and Academy concerts, where participants present their work. Selected conductors are also invited to lead the Gstaad Festival Orchestra as part of the Festival's official concert programme.

In 2026, the Menuhin Conducting Prize will be awarded for the eleventh time. Prize winners are invited to guest conduct leading professional orchestras throughout Switzerland.

Menuhin Festival Piano Academy

1–4 August 2026

Gstaad Parish Hall

Public masterclasses with Sir Andrés Schiff

In 2026, Sir Andrés Schiff leads the Festival's Piano Academy for the ninth time, having become one of its defining artistic personalities.

His teaching combines the highest pianistic standards with exceptional clarity and insight, inspiring participants and audiences alike year after year.

Menuhin Festival Vocal Academy

22–26 August 2026

Gstaad Parish Hall

Public masterclasses with Thomas Hampson

Under the guidance of internationally acclaimed baritone Thomas Hampson, eight young singers receive intensive artistic coaching.

The masterclasses are largely open to the public and are supported by a professional accompanist. Two final concerts provide audiences with an opportunity to experience the results of the Academy's work.

Menuhin Festival Amateur Orchestra

27 July – 2 August 2026

The orchestral week is designed for ambitious amateur musicians from across Switzerland.

Since its launch in 2010, the Amateur Orchestra has become an established part of the Festival. In 2026, it will be conducted by Holly Hyun Choe, herself a graduate of the Conducting Academy. The week concludes with a public concert on 2 August.

Menuhin Festival Youth Orchestra

3–9 August 2026

Under the direction of Daniel Geiss, the Youth Orchestra brings together talented young musicians from across Switzerland.

Alongside intensive orchestral rehearsals, participants meet Festival artists, attend sessions of the Conducting Academy and share a rich programme of musical experiences.

Since its founding in 2010, the ensemble has grown into a full symphony orchestra. The final concert takes place on 9 August in the Festival Tent Gstaad.

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