

**by Siemens and the Karajan Academy of  
the Berliner Philharmoniker**

Berlin, October 24, 2021

## Emerging conductors Christian Blex and Oscar Jockel win Siemens Conductors Scholarship

- **Two winners: Christian Blex and Oscar Jockel prevail among ten shortlisted candidates from pool of 189 applicants**
- **Siemens Conductors Scholarship for the Karajan Academy of the Berliner Philharmoniker involves two-year program of study and conducting their own portrait concert**
- **Scholarship also includes position as assistant to Berliner Philharmoniker's chief conductor, Kirill Petrenko**

Christian Blex (28) and Oscar Jockel (25), both from Germany, have won the Siemens Conductors Scholarship. At the three-day conducting competition held at the Berliner Philharmonie concert hall, the up-and-coming conductors came out on top among ten finalists from a pool of 189 applicants from 30 countries. Jockel and Blex, both impressed the jury chaired by Kirill Petrenko with, among other things, their conducting of Beethoven's Leonore Overture. As part of the Siemens Conductors Scholarship Blex and Jockel will receive a two-year training at the Karajan Academy of the Berliner Philharmoniker. The honors also include a position as assistant to the chief conductor of the Berliner Philharmoniker, Kirill Petrenko, and the opportunity to conduct their own portrait concert with the members of the Karajan Academy in the Chamber Music Hall at the Berliner Philharmonie.

## SIEMENS

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“For me, winning the Siemens Conductors Scholarship is a dream come true”, said Christian Blex. He is a fellow of both the German Conductors Forum as well as the Norwegian Conductors Forum. In 2020 Blex was selected as the assistant conductor of British Youth Opera for that season and has been working at the Norwegian Opera Academy as a conductor as well as an assistant to Gregor Bühl.

“It’s a great privilege to have the opportunity to assist Kirill Petrenko and work with the Karajan Academy”, stated Oscar Jockel. As a conducting assistant and conductor Oscar Jockel worked with orchestras such as the Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden, and the Klangforum Wien. In 2021 he won an Aspen Conducting Prize as Conducting Fellow of the American Conducting Academy.

This was the first year in which the Siemens Conductors Scholarship was awarded using such a shortlisting process. The competition started on Friday, October 22, 2021, and consisted of three selection rounds held over three days. A total of 189 up-and-coming conductors from 30 countries applied. Ten of these talented artists were invited to the three-day conducting competition at the Berliner Philharmonie concert hall. Three of them competed against each other in the final round on Sunday. Isabel Rubio from Spain joined Blex and Jockel in the final round. All three finalists played excerpts from works by Debussy, Tchaikovsky and Beethoven.

“I’m really looking forward to working with Christian Blex and Oscar Jockel – the new recipients of the Conductors Scholarship at the Karajan Academy”, said Peter Riegelbauer, manager of the Karajan Academy and double-bass player for the Berliner Philharmoniker. “Oscar Jockel and Christian Blex, both showed that they are highly talented emerging conductors and impressive artists. The level of performance during the three-day selection process was outstanding, and we had the opportunity to meet many exciting young conductors.”

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This was the second year in which the Siemens Conductors Scholarship was awarded. The first scholarship recipient was the Japanese conductor, Nodoka Okisawa, who has been at the Academy since September 2020.

“Talented young people need knowledgeable partners who believe in them”, said Stephan Frucht, artistic director of the Siemens Arts Program and member of the jury. “That’s why – as part of the Siemens Arts Program – we’re working with great care on new formats that build bridges between emerging talent and the international cultural institutions we’re partnering with. Our partnership with the Karajan Academy enables us to help young artists to further develop their skills on one of the best stages.”

In addition to Peter Riegelbauer and Stephan Frucht, the competition’s jury included jury chairman Kirill Petrenko (chief conductor of the Berliner Philharmoniker), Andrea Zietzschmann (general manager of the Berliner Philharmoniker Foundation), Annette Mangold (director of artistic planning of the Berliner Philharmoniker Foundation), Pamela Rosenberg (member of the Karajan Academy’s Board of Trustees) and Stanley Dodds (second violin of the Berliner Philharmoniker and media chairman).

The Siemens Arts Program is active in the fields of music, visual arts and cultural education and sees itself as a creative platform for Siemens’ own arts and cultural projects. One of the program’s important goals is fostering the development of outstanding emerging talent worldwide. This is done by initiating competitions for emerging talent and putting young artists in touch with established international cultural institutions (Bayerische Staatsoper, Carnegie Hall New York, Opéra National de Paris, Salzburg Festival, ARD International Music Competition).

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This press release and **press images** are available at

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More information on the Siemens Arts Program is available at

[www.siemens.com/artsprogram](http://www.siemens.com/artsprogram)

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In fiscal 2020, which ended on September 30, 2020, Siemens generated revenue of €57.1 billion and net income of €4.2 billion. As of September 30, 2020, the company had around 293,000 employees worldwide. Further information is available on the Internet at [www.siemens.com](http://www.siemens.com).

The **Karajan Academy of the Berliner Philharmoniker** was founded at the initiative of Herbert von Karajan. In the early 1970s, he had the idea of organizing the training of the Berliner Philharmoniker's emerging orchestral musicians in an academy. At the time, this form of institutionalized fostering of talent was an innovation. For the first

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time, an opportunity was created to enable outstanding young musicians – who complete a first-class education at the university level but usually in a form that leans heavily toward a soloistic repertoire – to perfect their skills as part of a community of musicians of the kind assembled in the Berliner Philharmoniker. Instructors who are members of the orchestra give the young musicians one-on-one instruction and support them in the area of chamber music. Integrating academy students into the orchestra's rehearsals and concerts enables them to gain indispensable experience for their careers and learn the professional discipline of a world-class orchestra while developing a concert routine in the best sense of the term.

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