

6th INTERNATIONAL ORCHESTRA CONDUCTING ACADEMY

ESTORIL '25 – PORTUGAL

A Meeting of Artistry and the Refinement of French Orchestral Repertoire

The **Cascais and Oeiras Chamber Orchestra** is pleased to present the **6th International Conducting Academy – Estoril '25**, an elite training program for rising conductors who seek to refine their technique and interpretation under the guidance of world-class mentors while working with a professional orchestra.

From the 20th to the 26th of July, at the **Cascais Conservatory of Music**, participants will engage in an intensive week of masterclasses, rehearsals, and hands-on experience with a professional orchestra. The program culminates in the **International Conducting Competition**, where finalists will showcase their skills in a public concert. The winner will be invited to return as a guest conductor in the following season.

Liquid Sounds and Vivid Colors: The Art of French Orchestration

In celebration of **150 years since Maurice Ravel's birth** and the **120th anniversary of Debussy's *La Mer***, this edition of the academy is dedicated to the brilliance of **French orchestral music**—a repertoire renowned for its shimmering textures, refined sonorities, and intricate stylistic nuances.

Maurice Ravel – *Ma mère l'Oye* (Mother Goose Suite)

A poetic and delicate masterpiece, *Ma mère l'Oye* captures the essence of childhood imagination with refinement and elegance. The work's transparent and masterful orchestration offers conductors a unique opportunity to develop an essential skillset for **interpreting impressionist music** with precision and finesse.

Jacques Ibert – *Concertino da Câmara* for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra

A vibrant and effervescent work, Ibert's *Concertino* blends lyrical beauty with dazzling technical passages. This piece presents conductors with a **crucial challenge**: the art of **accompanying a soloist**. Conductors must develop a keen ear, ensure balance between the orchestra and soloist, and master a conducting style that is both flexible and sensitive to phrasing.

Claude Debussy (orchestrated by Iaian Farrington) – *La Mer*

One of Debussy's greatest orchestral masterpieces, *La Mer* will be presented in a **special orchestration by acclaimed composer and arranger Iaian Farrington**. This adaptation preserves the rich tonal palette of the original while offering fresh sonic perspectives.

La Mer is more than a musical depiction of the sea—it is an **immersive sensory experience**. The orchestra becomes a living, breathing entity, evoking the motion of waves, the vastness of the ocean, and the ethereal shimmer of light on water. For conductors, this work is among the most demanding in the French repertoire, requiring a **fluid, expressive, and highly nuanced** approach.

An Unparalleled Conducting Experience

The **International Conducting Academy – Estoril ‘25** is an intensive and transformative program designed for conductors seeking to **elevate their technique** and deepen their understanding of French symphonic music. Over the course of a week, participants will work hands-on with a **professional orchestra**, refine their **gestural clarity**, and explore the subtleties of orchestral color and texture.



Direct collaboration with a professional orchestra – All active participants will conduct the **Cascais and Oeiras Chamber Orchestra** in high-level rehearsal sessions.



Mastery of technique and expression – The program will focus on **essential conducting fundamentals**, including gesture, sound control, rehearsal planning, and stylistic interpretation, with a special emphasis on the finesse required for French orchestral music.



Over 30 hours of instruction – This includes **full orchestra rehearsals** and specialized training with a string ensemble to refine technical and stylistic conducting skills.



Extensive podium time – Each participant will receive between **2 and 3 hours of podium time** with the orchestra, depending on their progress during the Academy.



The art of accompaniment – Working with Ibert’s *Concertino*, conductors will gain **valuable experience in accompanying soloists**, honing their listening skills and adaptability.



Orchestration as a palette of colors – With *La Mer* and *Ma mère l’Oye*, participants will explore **orchestral transparency, texture, and fluidity**, refining their interpretative approach to impressionist music.



International Conducting Competition – The three finalists will conduct the **Cascais and Oeiras Chamber Orchestra** in a **public concert**, competing for the grand prize. The winner will be invited back as a guest conductor in the following season.



Certification and Professional Video Recording – All participants will receive an **official certificate**, and finalists will receive a **professionally recorded audio and video** of their performance in the final concert.



Estoril, Portugal – A Perfect Setting for Artistic Growth

Nestled along the Atlantic coast, **Estoril** combines the charm of European tradition with an

inspiring atmosphere for musical study. The **Cascais Conservatory of Music** offers **state-of-the-art facilities** for this prestigious international gathering of conductors.

Competition Prizes

 **First Prize** – €1,000 + invitation to conduct a concert as a guest conductor with the **Cascais and Oeiras Chamber Orchestra** in the following season.

 **Second Prize** – €900.

 **Third Prize** – €500

 **Special Award** – The jury may grant an additional **scholarship covering 50% of tuition fees**.

 **Professional Video Recording** – Finalists will receive a **high-quality recording** of their performance. Finalists may purchase recordings for **€80**.

Application Process & Fees

 **Limited Spots Available** – Only **10 active participants** will be accepted. Applications will be reviewed in the order they are received, based on **CV and/or video submission**.

 **Application Deadline: April 30, 2025**

 **Fees:**

 **Passive Participant** – €40

 **Active Participant** – €800

 **Special Discount** – Applicants who pay the full amount upon registration receive a **5% discount**. For others, a **50% non-refundable deposit** is required upon acceptance, with the remaining balance due at the start of the course.

Schedule (July 20–26, 2025)

 **July 20**

◆ **14:00** – Registration & Welcome Session

◆ **15:00 – 17:30** – **Lecture:** "Common Mistakes and Challenges in Conducting Practice"



July 21

- ◆ 10:00 – 13:00 – Score Study & Rehearsal Strategy
- ◆ 14:00 – 18:00 – Conducting Practice with String Quartet



July 22–24

- ◆ 09:30 – 12:50 – Orchestra Rehearsals (Introductory Sessions)
- ◆ 14:00 – 17:00 – In-depth Orchestra Rehearsals



July 25 – Competition Semi-finals

- ◆ 09:30 – 12:30 – Individual Conducting Sessions



July 26 – Competition Finals

- ◆ 21:00 – Final Concert Conducted by the Three Finalists 🎵 ✨ ✨
- ◆ Winner Announcement & Prize Ceremony 🏆

Apply Now and Take Your Conducting to the Next Level!

The **6th International Conducting Academy – Estoril ‘25** is more than a course—it is a gateway to international recognition for talented conductors.



More information & applications: www.occo.pt



Contact: geral@occo.pt



Faculty:



Nikolay Lalov – www.nikolaylalov.com



Ricardo Averbach – [Profile](#)



Join us in Portugal and immerse yourself in the elegance and artistry of French orchestral music