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PRESS RELEASE

2026 Athenaeum Summer Festival - The Festival That Sets the Soundtrack of This Summer

Featuring legendary scores from Star Wars, E.T., Schindler's List, and other cinematic masterpieces, along with ABBA hits and beloved works by great classical composers

The Athenaeum Summer Festival returns in 2026 with its fifth edition, from June 13 to 28. Music lovers are invited to six exceptional evenings: one open-air concert on the Esplanade of the Athenaeum, with free admission, and five concerts in the Grand Auditorium.

At the heart of this year's edition are two spectacular concerts that celebrate the United States Semiquincentennial, featuring iconic film scores by the unrivaled John Williams - the most-nominated living artist, with a staggering 54 Academy Award nominations (5 wins). The Festival evenings will also present Nordic soundscapes, ABBA hits in choral arrangements, and a tribute to Vivaldi, in a program that blends classical repertoire with contemporary reinterpretations performed by prestigious artists and ensembles.

The Opening Concert on June 13, at 8:00 PM, will take place on the Athenaeum's Esplanade, with free admission. Tickets for the Grand Auditorium concerts on June 17, 20, 23, and 27/28, at 7:00 PM, can be purchased online at www.oveit.com or directly via <https://oveit.com/hub/org/l7PDAr7y>.

The full calendar for the final month of the 2025–2026 Season is available here: <https://filarmonicaenescu.ro/ro/evenimente>.

June 13 | Athenaeum Brass Orchestra | Conductor Adrian Petrescu

Athenaeum Brass Orchestra opens ASF 2026 with an open-air concert on the Esplanade of the Romanian Athenaeum, offering a friendly musical evening in June. The program seamlessly combines film scores, waltzes, South American dances, and solemn Germanic rhythms - rendered with brilliance and vitality by the brass ensemble led by **Adrian Petrescu**, all seasoned musicians, both veteran and newer members of the George Enescu Philharmonic.



June 17 | Northern Lights | George Enescu Philharmonic Choir and Athenaeum String Quartet

George Enescu Philharmonic Choir, under the baton of its young conductor **Andrei Stănculescu**, together with guest artists, presents an original program with two contrasting yet equally captivating musical narratives. The first half features modern Nordic music with Celtic echoes and fluid chromatic textures reminiscent of the aurora borealis, followed by timeless **ABBA hits** in inventive choral arrangements, full of energy and charm.

June 20 | Beyond Classics | Janoska Ensemble and Romanian Youth Orchestra | Conductor Cristian Măcelaru

Renowned conductor **Cristian Măcelaru** brings together the **Romanian Youth Orchestra** and **the Janoska Ensemble** in a fusion concert where the rhythms of Bartók, the elegance of Strauss, and the virtuosity of Vivaldi meet the rebellious imagination, crossover style, and improvisational flair of the Slovak ensemble that has redefined the conventions of the classical stage.

June 23 | Vivaldissimo | Sempre Baroque Ensemble

As its title suggests, **Vivaldissimo** pays tribute to one of the most celebrated composers of the Italian Baroque. Much like Italian art and architecture, his music bursts with color, vitality, dynamic forms, and expressive intensity. The program is performed by the specialized **Sempre Baroque Ensemble**, alongside instrumental soloists and soprano **Renáta Gebe-Fügi**.

June 27/28 | America 250 – A Tribute to John Williams | George Enescu Philharmonic Orchestra | Conductor Stefan Geiger

The **Closing Concerts of ASF 2026** celebrate 250 years since the United States Declaration of Independence, with some of the most iconic music from across the Atlantic, composed by **John Williams**, often regarded as *America's composer*. Legendary film scores from Star Wars, Superman, Schindler's List, E.T., Harry Potter, and more will be performed on the Athenaeum stage under the baton of conductor **Stefan Geiger**, featuring violinist **Rafael Butaru**.

One of the most acclaimed and successful composers in American history, **John Williams** has received 5 Academy Awards from 54 nominations, over 20 Gold and Platinum Records, 2 Emmy Awards, 3 Golden Globes, 25 Grammy Awards, 7 BAFTA Awards, and 6 Saturn Awards. He remains a defining cultural figure and one of the most respected creators of film scores worldwide.



Stefan Geiger is a distinguished German conductor, renowned for his versatility across the symphonic repertoire, opera, and film scores. As of 2026, he serves as Principal Guest Conductor of the Orquestra Sinfônica Brasileira in Rio de Janeiro and the Banatul Philharmonic in Timișoara.

Rafael Butaru is the concertmaster of both the George Enescu Philharmonic and the Bucharest National Opera. He has received numerous awards at national and international competitions and has participated in prestigious masterclasses, including orchestral and violin courses led by Adam Fischer and members of the Vienna Philharmonic.

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