

Media Release

Sebastian Nordmann named Executive and Artistic Director of Lucerne Festival starting in 2026

The Board of Trustees has appointed Michael Haefliger's successor

Lucerne, 25 May 2023. Sebastian Nordmann will be Lucerne Festival's next Executive and Artistic Director. On 1 January 2026, he will succeed Michael Haefliger, who, as previously announced, will conclude his directorship of the Festival at the end of 2025 – following 26 very successful years.

The 52-year-old Nordmann has been Director of the Konzerthaus and Konzerthaus Orchestra Berlin since 2009. Following a multi-stage application process, the Lucerne Festival Foundation Board unanimously elected the doctor of musicology as the new Executive and Artistic Director on the recommendation of the search committee.

Markus Hongler, Chairman of the Foundation Board and the Search Committee: "I am extremely pleased that we were able to win Sebastian Nordmann as successor to Michael Haefliger. He not only satisfies the highest artistic standards but also has the management skills essential for this very demanding position. He combines great experience with a boundless curiosity and is bubbling over with ideas for how to successfully continue developing the Festival. Following a thorough selection process, the Board of Trustees has unanimously decided in favor of Sebastian Nordmann. I am convinced that he will be a great asset to the Festival and to the Lucerne region."

Sebastian Nordmann: "Musicians from all around the world love this Festival and keep it permanently marked on their calendars. The beauty of the city, the fantastic KKL Luzern with its outstanding acoustics, the loyal and enthusiastic audience, and the personal signature of Michael Haefliger and his team make this Festival a beacon in the Festival landscape. I have always been fascinated by Lucerne Festival's continual desire for change and simultaneous cultivation of its great tradition. I am delighted to be able to help shape Lucerne Festival's identity as a host that is open to the world and to new ideas."

"Sebastian Nordmann is a visionary arts promoter with a broad international network who, in recent years, has advanced ways to open up the classical music industry – just as we have been doing in Lucerne – through new concert formats, innovative ideas, and exciting collaborations. I am very pleased to be able to hand the direction of the Festival on to him," comments Executive and Artistic Director Michael Haefliger.

"Sebastian Nordmann's enthusiasm for music and his vast experience in the concert arena impressed me," says Elisabeth Sobotka, Director of the Bregenz Festival and a member of the Search Committee. "Moreover, he possesses strong communication skills and has a charismatic spark. I am convinced that his deep knowledge and innovative ideas will make him an outstanding leader to guide Lucerne Festival into the future."

"Sebastian Nordmann's presentation to the search committee was inspiring and persuasive; he is an excellent choice as the future Executive and Artistic Director of Lucerne Festival," adds Stefan Dohr, principal horn of the Berlin Philharmonic and member of the Search Committee. "Mr. Nordmann's many years of experience as artistic director of a wide variety of institutions, which he has shaped very successfully, and his strong international network in the industry are both extremely valuable."

LUCERNE FESTIVAL

Sebastian Nordmann was born in Kiel in 1971 and studied musicology and modern history in Heidelberg and Berlin. He worked for two years as a management consultant at the Boston Consulting Group in Berlin; in 2002, he took over the artistic and executive directorship of the Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Nordmann was appointed Professor of Cultural Management at the Rostock University of Music and Theatre in 2008. Since 2009, he has been Director of the Konzerthaus and the Konzerthaus Orchestra Berlin am Gendarmenmarkt. Sebastian Nordmann is married and the father of three children. As a result of his new post, he will change his residence from Berlin to the Lucerne region in due course.

Contact for Press and Public Relations

Nina Steinhart, Head of Public Relations | n.steinhart@lucernefestival.ch | T +41 (0)41 226 44 43