

“Roche Commissions” 2026

The commissioned work for 2024 by Beat Furrer will be premiered today, 31 August, by the Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra (LFCO) under the direction of the composer himself as part of the Summer Festival.

Australian Liza Lim receives the 13th “Roche Commissions”, her piece will be unveiled in Lucerne in 2026.

Lucerne, 31 August 2024. Two years after Beat Furrer first received the commission, the world premiere of his work *Lichtung*, the 12th in the ongoing series of “Roche Commissions,” will be performed this evening at Lucerne Festival. Beat Furrer will conduct the new work, which he has previously rehearsed with the musicians of the Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra (LFCO) – a highlight of this year’s Lucerne Festival Academy during its 20th-anniversary edition.

Beat Furrer refers to *Lichtung* as “a sonic energy,” to “gravitational forces, elementary states, forms of energetically charged particles,” drawing a comparison with the painting *Graue Schichten* (“Grey Layers”) by Max Weiler, an Austrian painter of the 20th century. “Though it seems abstract, it is not. It is full of allusions, full of history. You can associate all sorts of things with it. The shapes are so complex, and the depth of the colour combinations opens up an incredible imaginative space.”

The next commission in the “Roche Commissions” series has already been confirmed. The Australian composer Liza Lim, whose works have been presented at Lucerne Festival on several previous occasions, has been awarded the commission for the 13th edition of the “Roche Commissions,” which she is writing for the 2026 Summer Festival. She will likewise compose a work for large orchestra, the world premiere of which will be presented by the LFCO at the KKL Luzern Concert Hall.

Born in Perth, Australia, in 1966, Liza Lim is a composer, educator, and researcher. The relationships between different cultures have been a lifelong theme for Lim, who grew up in Australia as the daughter of Chinese parents and who has taught in Europe. Her music addresses ecological, spiritual, and transcultural themes of our time and encompasses solo, chamber, and orchestral works, as well as five operas. She has received commissions from some of the world’s leading orchestras and ensembles, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Ensemble intercontemporain, Ensemble Modern, Arditti Quartet, and Klangforum Wien. Lim most recently appeared at Lucerne Festival in November 2023, when her work *Multispecies Knots of Ethical Time* for 15 musicians and a gestural performer and video received its world premiere. In this work, a river represents the flow of time, both figuratively and sonically, as it moves between transience and continuity. Liza Lim is Professor of Composition and holds the first Sculthorpe Chair in Australian Music at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, where she also directs the Composing Women program.

About the Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra (LFCO)

The Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra (LFCO) was founded in 2021 as a counterpart to the Lucerne Festival Orchestra: an orchestra of excellence for the interpretation of contemporary music. It brings together former and current students of the Lucerne Festival Academy. The Academy’s international network, which has been established over the past 20 years, now includes more than 1,500 instrumentalists, conductors, and composers. The orchestra embodies Lucerne Festival’s long-standing commitment to new music. Its repertoire ranges from the beginnings of classic Modernism to contemporary works. In large and small formations alike, the LFCO performs concerts as part of the Academy during the Summer Festival and also gives guest performances beyond the Festival, for example at Musikfest Berlin and the Donaueschinger Musiktage in 2021, at the Elbphilharmonie in

Hamburg in 2023, and at the Mizmorim Festival in Basel in 2024. In Lucerne, it is also the resident orchestra of Lucerne Festival Forward, the festival for contemporary music, which has been held annually since November 2021.

About the Lucerne Festival Academy

The Lucerne Festival Academy was founded in 2004 by Pierre Boulez and Festival Executive and Artistic Director Michael Haefliger as a master school for contemporary music. Composer Wolfgang Rihm was Artistic Director since 2016. The Academy is aimed at instrumentalists, conductors, and composers. Every summer, more than 100 musicians from around 30 countries spend three weeks focusing on the repertoire of the 20th and 21st centuries. A total of 359 world premieres were presented at Lucerne Festival between 1999 and 2023, 135 of these within the framework of the Academy. In 2024, an additional 20 new works will have been performed at the Summer Festival, 15 of these as part of the Lucerne Festival Academy concert programming.

About “Roche Commissions”

“Roche Commissions” is a unique collaboration between Roche, Lucerne Festival and its Lucerne Festival Academy. Since 2003, Roche biannually commissions a new work from a renowned contemporary composer, on the recommendation of the Artistic Director of the Lucerne Festival Academy. Rather than commissioning works that will cater to mainstream fashions or focusing on current popular appeal, “Roche Commissions” aims to enable musical works which venture beyond the conventional and which provide a source of intellectual stimulation and challenge. The composer interacts with several leading Roche scientists and after two years the commissioned work is premiered at Lucerne Festival in summer. The roots of this ground-breaking initiative stem from a partnership between Roche, the Cleveland Orchestra and Carnegie Hall which is now continued by the unique collaboration between Roche, Lucerne Festival and Lucerne Festival Academy. Additionally, the “Roche Young Commissions” was established for the first time in 2013 to give two young composers under the age of 30 the opportunity to write orchestral works every other year alternating with “Roche Commissions”.

About Roche

Roche supports ground-breaking contemporary art, cultural projects and activities that explore the parallels between innovation in art and in science. The focus is on music, while also supporting the visual arts and architecture. The aim is to foster and cultivate intensive interactions with contemporary music and art as a means to express Roche’s commitment to innovation characterized by excellence, distinctiveness and passion.

Founded in 1896 in Basel, Switzerland, as one of the first industrial manufacturers of branded medicines, Roche has grown into the world’s largest biotechnology company and the global leader in in-vitro diagnostics. The company pursues scientific excellence to discover and develop medicines and diagnostics for improving and saving the lives of people around the world.

Photos can be downloaded at lucernefestival.ch/en/press/photos.

Roche - Main Sponsor and Partner Lucerne Festival Academy

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