

Media Release

Summer Festival | 13 August to 15 September 2024

Lucerne Festival achieves encouraging final figures for the Summer Festival

The major symphony concerts achieved very high attendance rates of 90% capacity; 13 of the 65 paid-admission events were sold out

Lucerne, 13 September 2024. At the end of this year's Summer Festival in Lucerne, which has been devoted to the theme of "Curiosity," Lucerne Festival reports excellent final results with 90% capacity for the 26 major symphony concerts and an overall figure of 84% seats filled. Some 81,000 concertgoers attended the total of 158 events presented over a period of 34 days at Switzerland's largest festival of classical music. The venues included the KKL Luzern, Lukaskirche, Luzerner Theatre, and Hochschule Luzern – Musik, as well as public places across the city. A total of 13 of the 65 paid-admission events were sold out, including the concerts of the Lucerne Festival Orchestra with Klaus Mäkelä, the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra with Daniel Barenboim, and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra with Sir Simon Rattle. In total, 18,600 concertgoers took advantage of the extensive offering of free events featuring a wide variety of formats intended to expand access to music, including a series of short concerts. The 20th anniversary of the Lucerne Festival Academy was celebrated with programs that presented a total of 15 world premieres. Wolfgang Rihm, the Artistic Director of the Lucerne Festival Academy who passed away on 27 July, was honored during the Opening Concert as well as in a special memorial concert.

"These figures show that we have succeeded in arousing the curiosity of our visitors," observes Executive and Artistic Director Michael Haefliger. "What makes our Festival internationally renowned proved once again to be thrilling this summer: each day a different performance featuring international conductors, soloists, and orchestras, with one highlight following the next. This anniversary edition of the Lucerne Festival Academy will be remembered for the works it showcased by our two composers-in-residence, Lisa Streich and Beat Furrer, among other programs. And Riccardo Chailly, Klaus Mäkelä, and Yannick Nézet-Séguin, three highly distinctive world-class conductors, inspired us with their respective concerts at the helm of the Lucerne Festival Orchestra."

Monumental Closing Concert This Sunday

The Festival ends this Sunday evening, 15 September, with the monumental *Gurre-Lieder* by Arnold Schoenberg. Alan Gilbert will conduct a total of more than 270 performers, including the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra, the NDR Vokalensemble, the MDR Rundfunkchor, the Rundfunkchor Berlin, and six soloists. The Munich Philharmonic Orchestra with Lahav Shani performs tonight, on Friday evening, and will be followed tomorrow by two concerts featuring the Budapest Festival Orchestra with Iván Fischer: a family concert in the morning and, in the evening, a symphony concert with violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja as the soloist.

Free Events Piqued the Curiosity of 18,600 Visitors

A total of 71 free-admission events and concerts held during the Festival allowed visitors to enjoy music at the KKL Luzern as well as at a variety of public venues in Lucerne and also to discover more about the artists, orchestras, and works performed. In addition to a new series of post-concert talks moderated by Susanne Stähr, Mark Sattler, and Malte Lohmann as well as "pre-concerts" featuring Academy members, the 40min series in Lucerne Hall and the 40min Open Air marathon on the Europaplatz were additionally very well attended, attracting a total of 5,500 visitors. Some 900 people came to Lucerne's Inseli Park with a picnic and a glass of champagne on 16 August to watch

“Lakeside Symphony,” the free broadcast of the Opening Concert, while 5,000 guests gathered in the squares of Lucerne’s Old City, drawn by curiosity to watch performances by the eight world music groups who comprised the “In the Streets” festival.

The Summer Festival kicked off on 13 August with the Youth Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine under the direction of Oksana Lyniv. Music Director Riccardo Chailly officially opened the Festival three days later with a concert by the Lucerne Festival Orchestra, for which he chose Gustav Mahler’s Seventh Symphony as well as an excerpt from Wolfgang Rihm’s *Ernster Gesang* (“Serious Song”) as a tribute to the late composer. The world premiere of *Reigen* by Lisa Streich featuring soloists from the Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra (LFCO) conducted by Johanna Malangré completed the Opening Concert program and musically announced this year’s Festival theme of “Curiosity.”

The Lucerne Festival Academy at 20, Memorial to Wolfgang Rihm

Over the days and weeks that followed, the theme of “Curiosity” was reflected in the world premieres of no fewer than 20 new works; 15 of these were presented as part of the Lucerne Festival Academy, including works performed by the LFCO, the Festival’s in-house orchestra devoted to new music. The Academy focused on the works of the two composers-in-residence, Lisa Streich and Beat Furrer, with the LFCO performing in various formations. Seven concertgoers who participated in a lottery won an exclusive at-home concert performed in their own garden or living room by Academy members. In addition to the Composer Seminar focused on eight ensemble works, which was held in collaboration with the International Ensemble Modern Academy (IEMA), a second Composer Seminar featuring four orchestral works performed by the LFCO took place this summer. Dieter Ammann co-directed the seminars with the Korean composer Unsuk Chin. Ruth Reinhardt conducted the LFCO in works by Schoenberg, Streich, Rihm, and Boulez. Beat Furrer himself conducted the world premiere of *Lichtung*, a work commissioned as the latest edition of the “Roche Commissions” series, which was followed by Lisa Streich’s *Meduse* and Morton Feldman’s *Coptic Light*. Sir George Benjamin conducted Luciano Berio’s Trombone Concerto, among other works, with Jörgen van Rijen as soloist.

Three Conductors Leading the Lucerne Festival Orchestra

The Lucerne Festival Orchestra performed twice on the KKL Concert Hall stage under the baton of its Music Director Riccardo Chailly, once with Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducting, and for the first time with the Finn Klaus Mäkelä on the podium. Concertmasters Gregory Ahss and Raphael Christ conducted two concerts themselves: following Antonio Vivaldi’s *Four Seasons* on 25 August, they surprised the audience with a pop-up concert on the Europaplatz. An initiative known as “Play for the Birds,” the latter attracted 1,600 visitors to the front of the KKL and resulted in a donation of CHF 15,000 by Lucerne Festival to its cooperation partner BirdLife Lucerne.

International Stars, Chamber and Symphony Orchestras

Young and established stars alike performed in almost daily rotation with the world’s most renowned orchestras – all this with a frequency that can be experienced only at Lucerne Festival. Playing a special role were the two “artistes étoiles”: violinist Lisa Batiashvili and cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason, who demonstrated their respective skills in a variety of concert formats and formations. Among the other soloists were Nicolas Altstaedt, Leif Ove Andsnes, Rudolf Buchbinder, Renaud Capuçon, Lea Desandre, Mao Fujita, “UBS Young Artist Award” winner Julia Hagen, Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Alexander Malofeev, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Víkingur Ólafsson, Anna Prohaska, Beatrice Rana, Daniil Trifonov, Anna Vinnitskaya, and many others. Seong-Jin Cho stood in for Sir Andrés Schiff at short notice. The Berliner Philharmoniker were led by Kirill Petrenko, the Vienna Philharmonic by Christian Thielemann, and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra by Myung-Whun Chung; additionally, the Mahler Chamber Orchestra appeared with Antonello Manacorda, the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra with Daniel Barenboim, the Budapest Festival Orchestra with Iván Fischer, the Chineke! Orchestra

with Leslie Sugaandarajah, the Cleveland Orchestra with Franz Welser-Möst, the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra with Andris Nelsons, the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra and the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra with Lahav Shani, the Orchestre de Paris-Philharmonie with Klaus Mäkelä, the Staatskapelle Berlin with Susanna Mälkki, the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra with Sir Simon Rattle, and the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra with Jakub Hrůša. Swiss orchestras were also represented: the Lucerne Symphony Orchestra with Michael Sanderling and the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich with Paavo Järvi. Other guest artists included the Stegreif and Helix Ensembles and the Jupiter Ensemble with Thomas Dunford and Lea Desandre. “The Wagner Cycles” project, which is presenting Richard Wagner’s *Ring* operas in historically informed performances by the Dresden Festival Orchestra and Concerto Köln under the direction of Kent Nagano, continued with *Die Walküre*.

Contemporary Highlights

A total of 29 contemporary composers were on the program, some of them personally present, at this year’s Summer Festival; 11 of these were women. There were other contemporary highlights in addition to the Academy’s program. Beat Furrer conducted Klangforum Wien in the Swiss premiere of his opera *Begehren*. At this year’s *räsonanz* - Donor Concert, a cooperation with the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation, Lahav Shani conducted the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra and violin soloist Renaud Capuçon in Henri Dutilleux’s violin concerto *L’arbre des songes*, along with several other contemporary works. As this year’s cooperation with Lucerne Festival, the Luzerner Theater presented the Swiss premiere of Lucia Ronchetti’s opera *Der Doppelgänger*, which will have additional performances until 23 January 2025.

Young Stars in the Debut Series and Classical Music for Kids and Families

Seven young, internationally acclaimed instrumentalists and ensembles introduced themselves this summer in the Lukaskirche as part of the Debut series: harpist Tjasha Gafner; pianists Isata Kanneh-Mason, Mélodie Zhao, and Martin James Bartlett; horn player Annemarie Federle; bassoonist Theo Plath; and the Adelphi Quartet.

The Family Concerts included a percussion show by the Berlin duo Schlagwerk Voermans and the music theater project *Krach mit Bach* by Jörg Schade and Franz-Georg Stähling; tomorrow morning, Iván Fischer will conduct the Budapest Festival Orchestra in a special Family Concert as well. In addition to these Family Concerts for the general public, exclusive performances for school students also completely packed, with 5,600 schoolchildren from the Lucerne region in attendance. A total of 22 events were offered, including another exclusive concert by the Berliner Philharmoniker and one by the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra in the KKL Luzern Concert Hall. In addition, 15 concerts were given at Lucerne schools by specific world music groups as part of the “In the Streets” festival.

Lucerne Festival on TV and Radio

SRF1 TV broadcast the Opening Concert with the Lucerne Festival Orchestra live, with a time delay; the live recording of Gustav Mahler’s Seventh Symphony will be available as video-on-demand on Arte Concert for another two months. The concert by the Lucerne Festival Orchestra and Riccardo Chailly given on 20 August, which featured works by Sergei Rachmaninoff, can also still be seen on Arte Concert and will also be shown on Arte on 29 September. Radio SRF 2 Kultur recorded a total of 11 Lucerne Festival concerts and broadcast three evenings live. Following these three concerts, the audience was able to attend the critics’ round table live in the KKL foyer. A list of all broadcast dates of concerts that can be heard or seen live or at a later date on radio and television can be found at lucernefestival.ch/en/magazine/concert-transmissions-2024/320.

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