

Media Release

Change of Conductor at the Spring Festival: Rafael Payare and Franz Welser-Möst Step in to Lead the Lucerne Festival Orchestra Concerts

Lucerne, 20 March 2025. For reasons of health, Chief Conductor Riccardo Chailly has had to withdraw from the Lucerne Festival Orchestra concerts at the 2025 Spring Festival. We are pleased that Rafael Payare and Franz Welser-Möst will jump in to conduct the two concerts on 11 and 13 April, respectively.

Rafael Payare will conduct the first concert on Friday, 11 April, and Franz Welser-Möst will lead the second concert on Sunday, 13 April. The all-Beethoven program for both concerts remains unchanged. Rafael Payare will conduct Beethoven's Symphony No. 6 (*Pastoral*) and his Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major, with Mao Fujita as the soloist, while Franz Welser-Möst will lead the Lucerne Festival Orchestra, MDR Radio Choir, and soloists Regula Mühlemann, Marie-Claude Chappuis, Benjamin Bruns, and Markus Werba in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

The Venezuelan Rafael Payare will be making his debut at Lucerne Festival as a conductor with the Lucerne Festival Orchestra. He received his classical music training as part of the El Sistema educational program and served as principal horn player with the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela from 2001 to 2012. In 2011, Payare took part in a conducting masterclass with Bernard Haitink at the Lucerne Festival. He has been music director of the San Diego Symphony since 2019 and, since 2022, of the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal as well. The Austrian Franz Welser-Möst has been music director of the Cleveland Orchestra since 2002. He made his Festival debut in 1999 with the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra and has been a regular guest ever since with the Cleveland Orchestra and the Vienna Philharmonic. He will additionally conduct two concerts with the Vienna Philharmonic during the upcoming Summer Festival. For his appearance on 13 April, Welser-Möst will likewise be leading the Lucerne Festival Orchestra for the first time.

We wish Maestro Chailly a swift recovery and are very grateful to Rafael Payare and Franz Welser-Möst for stepping in on short notice.

Tickets remain valid.

All program details for the Spring Festival as well as the biographies of Rafael Payare and Franz Welser-Möst are currently available on our website at lucernefestival.ch. Photos may be downloaded at lucernefestival.ch/en/press/photos.

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