

Media Release

2025 SUMMER FESTIVAL

12 August to 14 September

“Open End” is the theme of Michael Haefliger’s final Summer Festival as Executive and Artistic Director

The Lucerne Festival Ark Nova comes to Lucerne from 4 to 14 September.

The Lucerne Festival Orchestra will be conducted by Riccardo Chailly, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Andrés Orozco-Estrada, and, for the first time, Sir Simon Rattle.

The performance artist Winnie Huang and the violist Tabea Zimmermann will be featured as “artistes étoiles,” while Marco Stroppa is composer-in-residence.

The Berlin and Vienna Philharmonics, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, the Orchestre de Paris – Philharmonie, Les Arts Florissants, and many more leading international ensembles will make guest appearances in Lucerne.

“Open End” is the theme of Switzerland’s largest classical music festival this summer. Lucerne Festival kicks off on 12 August and runs until 14 September. This will be the last summer edition under the leadership of Executive and Artistic Director Michael Haefliger, who has shaped the Festival’s artistic strategy and programming for 26 years. Over the course of 34 days this summer, about 120 events will take place at the KKL Luzern and other venues. The program offerings include 27 symphony concerts featuring the world’s most renowned orchestras, along with solo recitals, chamber music, family concerts, and events throughout the city. More than 50 events will be offered free of charge. An additional highlight this summer is the Lucerne Festival Ark Nova: the first-ever mobile and inflatable concert hall. Initiated by Michael Haefliger, architect Arata Isozaki, concert agent Masahide Kajimoto, and British-Indian artist Sir Anish Kapoor, it was constructed and used as a venue on four different occasions in Japan between 2013 and 2017. In cooperation with the Swiss Museum of Transport, Lucerne Festival now brings the Ark Nova to Lucerne for a fifth edition. The Ark Nova represents one of the most internationally successful projects during Michael Haefliger’s tenure. Information on the programming that will be presented there and all additional details will be announced in May.

“Open End”: Open-Ended Works, a Tribute to Pierre Boulez, and a Passing of the Baton

This year’s “Open End” Festival theme will be explored from multiple perspectives. The programming features works with an open-ended character – compositions that are part of an ongoing cycle or that have remained unfinished, such as Gustav Mahler’s Symphony No. 10, which will be performed on Opening Night on 15 August. The “Open End” theme also resonates in the Festival’s focus on Pierre Boulez, founder of the Lucerne Festival Academy, whose 100th birthday is being celebrated with a series titled “Cosmos Boulez.” Throughout his life, Boulez viewed composition as a work-in-progress – an ongoing creative process without a definitive conclusion. In a broader sense, this final Summer Festival under the direction of Michael Haefliger serves to mark not an end but a transition. The Lucerne Festival story will continue under his successor, Sebastian Nordmann, beginning in 2026. Haefliger’s grand farewell celebration, “Les Adieux”, will take place on 14 September and will feature renowned musical companions as well as ensembles he founded – appropriately embracing the “Open End” concept.

Four Star Conductors to Lead the Lucerne Festival Orchestra

Following tradition, the Lucerne Festival Orchestra and Riccardo Chailly will open the Festival on 15 August. Elīna Garanča will sing the solo part in Gustav Mahler's *Rückert-Lieder*, while the evening begins with a performance by musician and performance artist Winnie Huang, this year's "artiste étoile." Additionally, the program includes Pierre Boulez's *Mémoriale* as a tribute to the founder of the Lucerne Festival Academy. On his second evening with the orchestra, Riccardo Chailly will continue his Rachmaninoff cycle, with pianist Beatrice Rana as the soloist in *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, Op. 43 – a work composed at Rachmaninoff's villa in Hertenstein on Lake Lucerne and performed by the composer himself at the Festival in 1939. This summer, the Lucerne Festival Orchestra also welcomes esteemed guest conductors. Andrés Orozco-Estrada and Yannick Nézet-Séguin return to the podium, while Sir Simon Rattle makes his debut with the orchestra conducting Shostakovich's Symphony No. 1 and Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*.

"Artistes étoiles": Winnie Huang and Tabea Zimmermann

Two "artistes étoiles," the German violist Tabea Zimmermann and the Chinese-Australian performance artist and composer Winnie Huang, will showcase the range of their artistry in a number of concerts and projects showcasing their respective works. Zimmermann will perform Dieter Ammann's new viola concerto with the Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra (LFCO) and will also appear with soloists from the Lucerne Festival Orchestra. With the Mahler Chamber Orchestra she will perform Bartók's Viola Concerto. In addition to her performances at the Opening and at "Les Adieux" on the last day of the Festival, Winnie Huang will perform both in solo pieces and with other soloists from the LFCO. The young musician and performer represents a new generation of artists who have emerged from the Academy's network in recent years and who are now shaping the international contemporary scene. Together with students, Huang is also creating "Sound and the City," a musical tour of Lucerne.

Marco Stroppa, the Lucerne Festival Academy, and 21 World Premieres

The Festival's contemporary music section will once again set important artistic milestones this summer, featuring 21 world premieres and key players from the scene. Italian composer Marco Stroppa will serve as composer-in-residence, establishing another link to Pierre Boulez's 100th birthday. A longtime collaborator of Boulez at IRCAM in Paris, Stroppa has since set new standards in electronic music. Five of his works will be performed at the Festival, including a new version of *Come Play with Me* – the first concerto with an entirely electronic solo part – to be performed with the Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra (LFCO). Additionally, *Spirali* and *La vita immobile* will be performed by the Arditti Quartet. As part of the "Pierre Boulez Workshop," the Festival will present a revival of Boulez's *Poésie pour pouvoir*, for which Stroppa – together with Carlo Laurenzi – has painstakingly reconstructed the electronic component. The performance will be conducted by David Robertson, a trusted colleague of Academy founder Pierre Boulez. Robertson will work with Academy participants and will conduct the LFCO in three concerts this year.

The approximately 100 Academy participants will not only work with David Robertson but also with conductors Vimbayi Kaziboni, Jonathan Nott, and Elena Schwarz. Schwarz, who took part in Bernard Haitink's masterclass at Lucerne Festival in 2016, received key artistic impulses from this experience. At the heart of the Academy, composers Dieter Ammann and Unsuk Chin will once again lead the Composer Seminar, for which eight participants were selected from nearly 300 applications. The Academy's program will include works by Dieter Ammann, Chaya Czernowin, Dai Fujikura, Olga Neuwirth, and the two "Roche Young Commissions" winners, Jakob Raab and Guillem Palomar, among many others. However, this year a special focus will be placed on "Cosmos Boulez," which will celebrate the Academy's founder with performances of some of his most significant works, including

Répons, *Notations* (both in the piano and orchestral versions), and *Figures – Doubles – Prismes*. The annual *raisonanz* – Donor Concert, presented in collaboration with the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation, will combine a new tribute to Boulez with vocal works by the composer. The Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, under the direction of Karina Canellakis, will perform *Le Soleil des eaux* and *Don* from *Pli selon Pli*, with soprano Liv Redpath as the soloist. Another highlight of the contemporary music programming will be the world premiere of Esa-Pekka Salonen's new orchestral work featuring the solo horn, written for Stefan Dohr. The composer himself will conduct the performance with the Orchestre de Paris – Philharmonie.

Line-up of Famous Soloists and Orchestras

Once again this summer, the world's most sought-after soloists will gather on the shores of Lake Lucerne for Switzerland's largest classical music festival. The Festival welcomes established stars of the industry, including pianists Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Martha Argerich, Bertrand Chamayou, Seong-Jin Cho, Lang Lang, Igor Levit, Beatrice Rana, Sir Andrés Schiff, and Mitsuko Uchida. The Festival also boasts a stellar lineup of violinists spanning multiple generations, including Lisa Batiashvili, Isabelle Faust, Augustin Hadelich, Janine Jansen, Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Daniel Lozakovich, and Anne-Sophie Mutter. Other major soloists featured in this summer's programming include horn players Stefan Dohr and Sarah Willis, soprano Elīna Garanča, mezzo-soprano Magdalena Kožená, cellists Sol Gabetta and Julia Hagen, organist Wayne Marshall, and oboist Albrecht Mayer.

The international orchestras performing at the Festival this summer include the Berliner Philharmoniker and Kirill Petrenko, the Vienna Philharmonic and Franz Welser-Möst, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and Klaus Mäkelä, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Vasily Petrenko, the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra and Daniel Barenboim, the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia and Daniel Harding, and the orchestra and choir of Teatro alla Scala and Riccardo Chailly. Three famous French orchestras are part of the program: the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France and Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, the Orchestre de Paris – Philharmonie and Esa-Pekka Salonen, and Les Arts Florissants and William Christie. The Lucerne Symphony Orchestra will be conducted by Michael Sanderling.

The internationally acclaimed project "The Wagner Cycles" with the Dresden Festival Orchestra and Concerto Köln under the direction of Kent Nagano continues with *Siegfried*. Les Musiciens du Prince – Monaco with Gianluca Capuano and Cecilia Bartoli will present a concert performance of Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* on the KKL stage. And for "Les Adieux," the Festival's final concert, which is also designed as a musical farewell party celebrating Michael Haefliger, numerous prominent artists and ensembles will gather in the KKL Luzern Concert Hall, including, of course, the Lucerne Festival Orchestra and an LFCO ensemble.

40min, 20th Anniversary of "In the Streets" and High-Profile Debuts

This summer, there is as usual plenty to explore behind the Festival's main programming. The free 40min series invites visitors to the KKL Luzern on eight evenings, offering a chance to experience Festival artists in a relaxed setting. One of this year's 40min sessions will showcase the Goll Organ in the Concert Hall, while three open-air events will take place on the Europaplatz as part of the 40min Open Air offering. The beloved world music festival "In the Streets" celebrates its 20th anniversary, with performances taking place as usual in public squares across Lucerne's Old Town. The live broadcast of the Opening Concert, "Lakeside Symphony," promises to be a sociable highlight, with Lucerne families and friends enjoying a picnic in Inseli Park, right next to the KKL Luzern, while watching the concert together.

Under the “Music for Future” banner, Lucerne Festival brings rising young stars to the stage and offers special programming tailored to young audiences and their families. The Debut series at the Lukaskirche, which presents young, up-and-coming instrumentalists and ensembles who are gaining international attention, has become a Festival mainstay. The Erinys Quartet, pianists Giorgi Gigashvili and Tamta Magradze, jazz saxophonist Jakob Manz, violinist David Nebel, oboist Gabriel Pidoux, and pianist and winner of this year’s “Prix UBS Jeunes Solistes” Vsevolod Zavidov are among this year’s lineup. The international “Music for Future” project “A Musical Silk Road” opens the Festival on 12 August with a performance by the Worlds Beyond Orchestra, which combines traditional Chinese, Arabic, and Persian music with arrangements and original compositions by saxophonist Daniel Schnyder. On the following day, Sarah Willis returns to Lucerne with the Havana Lyceum Orchestra for “Mozart y Mambo.”

Family Concerts and *Peter Grimes* in a Co-Production with the Luzerner Theater

The Family Concert program in 2025 features “BarkaBach,” a project with Eleonora Savini, Estelle Costanzo, and Téné Ouelgo, and the science fiction opera “Klangmission” (“Sound Mission”) by Taschenoper Lübeck. In addition, more than 20 exclusive school concerts will take place throughout the Lucerne region this year, including visits to schools in Lucerne by four Debut artists and various world music groups from the “In the Streets” festival. This year’s Festival co-production with the Luzerner Theater is Benjamin Britten’s *Peter Grimes*, which will be led by Jonathan Bloxham, with the premiere set for 6 September.

On 11 September, this year’s Swiss Music Prizes will be awarded by the Swiss Federal Office of Culture (BAK) in the presence of Federal Councillor Elisabeth Baume-Schneider. For the first time, the award ceremony will take place as part of Lucerne Festival.

This year’s summer programming has been made possible by the support of more than 50 Sponsors, Foundations, and Patrons and around 400 Friends of Lucerne Festival. We would like to express our deep thanks to all of our Partners and Supporters for their indispensable commitment. This summer, we warmly welcome the Family Schwöbel into the ranks of our Main Sponsors as generous patrons. Additionally, we are delighted about the Jörg G. Bucherer-Foundation’s new commitment as a Concert Sponsor for the Summer Festival.

Dates for online ticket sales: Online ticket sales for the Summer Festival will begin on 18 March 2025 at 12:00 noon (Swiss time). Details of the programming are now available on the Festival website.

Press photos may be downloaded at lucernefestival.ch/en/press/photos. Additional media releases about specific sections of the Festival can be found in the press section on the Festival’s website.

Summer Festival

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