



Media Release

LUCERNE FESTIVAL in Summer 2009

12 August – 19 September 2009

“Nature and Art, they go their separate ways / It seems; yet all at once they reunite.” Thus reads a famous and much-quoted sonnet by Goethe. Nature has been chosen as the theme and guiding principle of LUCERNE FESTIVAL in Summer 2009. In Lucerne, this is a theme that literally lies at our doorstep – a boat tour or mountain hike by day, *An Alpine Symphony* in the evening!

Landscapes, babbling brooks, birdsong, the seasons, and the vagaries of the weather continue as ever to be translated into music. Nature seems to be the model and yardstick, perhaps even the supreme teacher of Art: not only does it provide the raw material for music, it also embraces the laws of form and the miracle of transformation, the metaphor of transience and the enigma of rebirth. Since time immemorial composers have tried to capture nature in sound: the calls of the birds, the purling of the brooks, the rumbling thunderstorm, the sultriness of a hot summer day. Gustav Mahler paradigmatically summed up the importance of nature for music: “Nature is our example. Just as it caused the whole universe to develop from the primeval cell, so music should spring from one single motif to produce a larger sound mosaic, one single motif containing the seed of everything that will be.”

“Like a sound of Nature”: this is the note written at the beginning of Mahler’s First Symphony, the work that will open our summer festival. The manner in which music imitates, mirrors, or conjures up nature can be experienced in Debussy’s *La Mer*, Strauss’s *Alpine Symphony*, Janáček’s *Sinfonietta*, Webern’s *Im Sommerwind*, and Saariaho’s *Lichtbogen*. Further on, our theme also focuses on the idea of “naturalism”, which Schubert attempted to translate in his Fifth and Eighth Symphonies and Haydn in *The Seasons*. It also encompasses natural philosophy, evoked by Strauss’s *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and the phenomenon of human nature, echoed in the selected lieder by Schubert and Brahms, in the monologues of Martin’s *Everyman*, or in Varèse’s *Déserts*.

This year’s festival will be characterized by the presence of two exceptional young composers-in-residence: Kaija Saariaho and Jörg Widmann. Both have developed distinctive idioms and pursue their own paths beyond the schools and doctrines of contemporary music. In the focus of Kaija Saariaho’s programmes for the Festival are the Swiss première of *Laterna Magica* – a piece commissioned by the Berlin Philharmonic and LUCERNE FESTIVAL – and various compositions for live electronics, played by the LUCERNE FESTIVAL ACADEMY directed by Pierre Boulez. Jörg Widmann will display his huge creative range as a composer, clarinetist, and teacher at the LUCERNE FESTIVAL ACADEMY. His new oboe concerto, commissioned by the Festival, will be performed by Heinz Holliger, a musician of universal renown who has ever been

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closely related to the Festival. To celebrate his seventieth birthday, Holliger will be honoured with a concert in which he will appear as an oboist, conductor, and composer.

We are also proud to welcome two worldwide acclaimed artists as this year's *artistes étoiles*: mezzo-soprano Magdalena Kožená and pianist Yefim Bronfman. They will enrich our Summer Festival with their impressive versatility and present music of different eras.

Claudio Abbado and his LUCERNE FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA will open the Festival, presenting two programmes in five concerts. The first programme will feature Chinese pianist Yuja Wang (b. Beijing, 1987) who will perform Prokofiev's Third Piano Concerto, followed by Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 1. The second programme will be devoted entirely to Mahler: *artiste étoile* Magdalena Kožená will sing the *Rückert Lieder*, followed by the Fourth Symphony. This year the orchestra's foreign residency will take place in September in Beijing.

Between the symphony concerts, the soloists of the LUCERNE FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA will present three chamber music recitals. The first is entitled "Nature's Concord" and will feature brass players as well as alphorns. The core of the orchestra, the Mahler Chamber Orchestra (likewise founded by Claudio Abbado), will introduce itself with two symphony concerts under the batons of principal conductor Daniel Harding and George Benjamin. With Thomas Hengelbrock they will also give a concert performance of Carl Maria von Weber's romantic opera *Der Freischütz*.

Once again the city of Lucerne will welcome several celebrated orchestras either for residencies or for several concerts: the Vienna Philharmonic (with Zubin Mehta and Nikolaus Harnoncourt), the Berlin Philharmonic (with Simon Rattle), the Amsterdam Concertgebouw (with Mariss Jansons), the Chicago SO (with Bernard Haitink), the Pittsburgh SO (with Manfred Honeck), the Philharmonia Orchestra London (with Esa-Pekka Salonen), and the venerable Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra (with Riccardo Chailly). For the first time the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia from Rome will appear with its principal conductor Antonio Pappano. Another Lucerne début will be given by the young Latvian conductor Andris Nelsons with his City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Visitors can also look forward to the soloists Thomas Quasthoff, Lars Vogt, Martha Argerich, Lang Lang, Vesselina Kasarova, Mathias Goerne, Viktoria Mullova, Lisa Batiashvili, Christine Schäfer, and Yo-Yo Ma with his Silk Road Ensemble.

At LUCERNE FESTIVAL modern music plays a vital role in the concert programmes. The LUCERNE FESTIVAL ACADEMY and the "Moderne" concert series are devoted exclusively to music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This year's Summer Festival will feature eleven world premières, including nine compositions commissioned by the Festival itself.

This summer the LUCERNE FESTIVAL ACADEMY will focus on electronic music. Among other things, the musicians will rehearse and perform works by artistic director Pierre Boulez, including

his epoch-making *Répons*, *Dialogue de l'ombre double*, and *Anthèmes 2*, as well as works by composer-in-residence Kaija Saariaho. Also featured are compositions by Jörg Widmann. The orchestra's 130 musicians from all corners of the globe will be taught by members of the Ensemble Intercontemporain and teachers from IRCAM in Paris. Every event in the ACADEMY FORUM will give audiences an opportunity to watch the students at work with their teachers. The entrance is free.

A total of nine Début concerts will allow audiences to witness and discover up-and-coming young soloists. Once again Children's Corner will give the Festival's youngest visitors an opportunity to hear and make music. The popular Street Music Festival will present eight music groups in late August. The musicians will travel from every corner of the globe to play on Lucerne's loveliest town squares.

Georg Büchner's *Woyzeck* lies at the basis of two music theatre productions that LUCERNE FESTIVAL will stage in collaboration with Lucerne Theater. Manfred Gurlitt's *Wozzeck*, written in 1923-24, will be presented in the singspiel adaptation by Tom Waits, Kathleen Brennan, and Robert Wilson, which had its première in 2000.

This year's film series in collaboration with Lucerne's Stattkino will present an Ingmar Bergman cycle in deference to Kaija Saariaho, who has devoted her new work *Laterna Magica* to the great Swedish director. Lucerne Art Museum will display Kaija Saariaho and Jean-Baptiste Barrière's musical and visual installation *Nox Borealis*.

Ticket Sales for LUCERNE FESTIVAL in Summer 2009

Written orders by mail or internet starting on Monday, 6 April 2009

Telephone orders at +41 (0)41 226 4480 starting on Wednesday, 3 June 2009

Box office sales at Lucerne's KKL concert hall starting on Monday, 10 August 2009

For further information: www.lucernefestival.ch