



Media Release

LUCERNE FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA and Claudio Abbado

Founded by Claudio Abbado and Michael Haefliger, the LUCERNE FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA is due to open the Lucerne Summer Festival for the seventh year in a row. Ever since its first appearance this unique ensemble has given first-class performances that have excited audiences and critics in Lucerne and abroad.

This success story is destined to continue, for principal conductor Claudio Abbado has recently renewed his contract until 2014. Once again a select company of distinguished soloists will gather under his baton in August 2009, among others Kolja Blacher and Sebastian Breuninger (violin), Wolfram Christ and Diemut Poppen (viola), Nathalia Gutman, Jens Peter Maintz, and Clemens Hagen (cello), Alois Posch (double bass), the complete Leipzig String Quartet, Jacques Zoon (flute), Bruno Schneider (horn), and Reinhold Friedrich (trumpet). The core of the orchestra is composed by the highly qualified young musicians of the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, likewise founded by Claudio Abbado.

The idea of giving the Festival its own orchestra dates back to 1938, the year the festival was called into life. For the legendary gala performance given in front of Richard Wagner's villa in Tribtschen, Arturo Toscanini assembled an orchestra composed of élite musicians. This ensemble evolved into the Swiss Festival Orchestra, which played at the Lucerne Festival until 1993. The tradition was revived with the creation of the LUCERNE FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA in 2003.

It is obvious from the performances that the musicians of this orchestra are playing for the sheer pleasure of it, in an atmosphere of mutual trust among friends. This summer Claudio Abbado will add three new elements to his highly acclaimed Mahler cycle: the First and Fourth Symphonies and the *Rückert Lieder*, sung by *artiste étoile* Magdalena Kožená. The young pianist Yuja Wang (b. Beijing, 1987) will give her Lucerne début playing Prokofiev's Third Piano Concerto.

The Mahler Chamber Orchestra will present three concerts, including two key works on the subject of Nature: Schumann's secular oratorio *Das Paradies und die Peri* and Weber's opera *Der Freischütz*. Moreover, the Brass Ensemble, the woodwinds, a string octet, and selected soloists will introduce themselves in three chamber recitals.

Following its acclaimed residencies in Rome (2005), Tokyo (2006), New York (2007), and Vienna (2008), the LUCERNE FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA will again go on tour in September 2009, this time to Beijing.

Contact

B. Higgs, Head of Public Relations | +41 (0)41 226 44 43 | b.higgs@lucernefestival.ch

P. Deslarzes, Public Relations | +41 (0)41 226 44 59 | p.deslarzes@lucernefestival.ch

Hirschmattstrasse 13 | Postfach | 6002 Luzern | Schweiz | www.lucernefestival.ch