



Media Release

LUCERNE FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA and Claudio Abbado

Founded by Claudio Abbado and Michael Haefliger in 2003, the LUCERNE FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA is poised to open the Lucerne Summer Festival for the eighth year in a row on 12 August 2010. Ever since its first appearance this unique ensemble has given sterling performances that have excited audiences and critics alike in Lucerne and, since 2005, abroad.

In its eighth season the orchestra will strike out on new paths. For the first time the musicians will perform an opera under Maestro Abbado's baton. For this occasion they have chosen Beethoven's *Fidelio*, a celebration of conjugal love that not only suits the festival's theme but also is virtually tailor-made to reveal the full potential of this much-admired 'orchestra of soloists'. Elaborating the orchestral writing down to the finest nuance, Beethoven used almost every instrument in a solo capacity – be it the duet between Leonore and Marzelline (combined with a violin and cello), Leonore's great aria (accompanied by three obligato horns and bassoon), Florestan's lament (ravishingly caressed by the oboe) or the happy liberation (heralded by a trumpet fanfare).

Among the stellar performers who will play in Abbado's orchestra in summer 2010 are Kolja Blacher (violin), Wolfram Christ (viola), Natalia Gutman (cello), Alois Posch (double bass), the complete Leipzig String Quartet, Marie-Pierre Langlamet (harp), Jacques Zoon (flute), Sabine Meyer (clarinet) and her wind ensemble, Bruno Schneider (horn) and Reinhold Friedrich (trumpet). They will join other renowned musicians, above all the members of Mahler Chamber Orchestra, to create a top-calibre ensemble that takes the sound of chamber music as its ideal.

In the same spirit they will also perform Mahler's Ninth Symphony – a dolorous song of farewell, brought to life by the incomparable Mahler conductor Claudio Abbado. Rounding off the programme are two chamber music recitals and two exclusive symphony concerts with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra.

Following its celebrated residencies in Rome (2005), Tokyo (2006), New York (2007), Vienna (2008) and Beijing (2009), the LUCERNE FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA will again go on tour in September 2010, this time to Madrid and Paris.

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

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