



Media Release

Modern Music at LUCERNE FESTIVAL in Summer 2009

At LUCERNE FESTIVAL modern music, rather than being relegated to a corner, forms vital part of the concerts in all their variety. The LUCERNE FESTIVAL ACADEMY and the Modern 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 programs will be guided by our annual theme (Nature), our two composers-in-residence (Kaija Saariaho and Jörg Widmann), live electronics, and a tribute to Heinz Holliger on his seventieth birthday.

The Events in our Modern Series: an overview

- Modern Concerts
- Chamber Orchestra Concert
- Late Night Concert
- Symphony Concert 24

Modern 1 (22 August) Ensemble Collegium Novum, Zurich, with Jörg Widmann and Olga Pasichnyk
Works by Jörg Widmann

This portrait concert of Jörg Widmann highlights the broad range of his work: *Fieberphantasie* ("Delirium") draws on the melodic writing of Robert Schumann, *Abgesänge auf eine tote Linde* ("Refrains on a Dead Lime Tree") is a requiem for a tree, and *Freie Stücke* ("Own Free Wills") pursues no fewer than ten timbral phenomena at once.

Modern 2 (23 August) Ensemble Intercontemporain with Susanna Mälkki
Works by Kaija Saariaho, Karlheinz Stockhausen and Luca Francesconi

The opening concert of the LUCERNE FESTIVAL ACADEMY features works with live electronics. Many of Kaija Saariaho's scores explore the timbral potential resulting from the use of electronics. The moderated introductory concert adds a fresh visual dimension. Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Gesang der Jünglinge* ("Song of the Youths") is a classic of electronic music in which the most natural of all instruments, the human voice, is transformed into a unique soundscape. Finally, Luca Francesconi's *Etymo* marks the cutting edge of live electronics today.

Modern 3 (29 August) Arditti Quartet
Works by Jörg Widmann, Harrison Birtwistle and Klaus Huber

Jörg Widmann himself has referred to his *Jagdquartett* ("Hunting Quartet") as a "grim scherzo." Once

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again his predilection for the music of Robert Schumann comes to the fore: the quartet opens with the final theme of *Papillons*, where the fictional butterflies are viciously hounded by the four musicians until the “prize” is run down and the thematic material reduced to a skeleton.

Widmann’s piece is contrasted by a work recently written for the Arditti Quartet by Harrison Birtwistle: *The Tree of Strings*, which evokes the vanished “primeval music” of a Scottish island on which no musical tradition has survived. Finally, there will be a world première of a new string quartet by the dean of Swiss composers, Klaus Huber, who will celebrate his eighty-fifth birthday in November.

Chamber Orchestra Concert (29 August) LUCERNE FESTIVAL ACADEMY Orchestra with Pierre Boulez, Lisa Batiashvili and Yefim Bronfman
Works by Leoš Janáček, Edgard Varèse and Alban Berg

“*Déserts*”, Edgard Varèse once said, “not only evokes physical sand deserts, sea, mountains and snow, outer space, deserted city streets, or those destructive aspects of nature which evoke sterility, remoteness, timelessness. *Déserts* also refers to this distant inner space which no telescope can reach, where man is alone in a world of mystery and essential solitude.” The première, in December 1954, was a scandal, but today it is accepted that Varèse composed a forward-looking masterpiece of great genius. The same seal of approval applies to Leoš Janáček’s *Sinfonietta*, a work inspired by the sound of the Czech language and the charm of the Moravian countryside. Alban Berg similarly entered unexplored territory when he composed his *Chamber Concerto*.

Late Night (29 August) hornroh
World première by Mischa Käser and Andreas Mellwig *et al.*

Selections from hornroh’s latest performance, *Hautmusik* (“Skin Music”), will be joined by two world premières specially commissioned for this concert: Mischa Käser will explore all the timbral and technical possibilities of the alphorn to produce his composition. In contrast, the composer and electronic engineer Andreas Mellwig manipulates and expands the alphorn’s timbres electronically, creating grand sound-sculptures of minimalist counterpoint.

Modern 4 (5 September) LUCERNE FESTIVAL ACADEMY Ensemble, with Pierre Boulez and Andrew Gerzso
Work by Pierre Boulez

Pierre Boulez has always questioned history in his music. One example is *Répons*, where he draws on the Gregorian Responsory, i.e. the antiphonal singing of a soloist and a chorus, which also represents movement of sound in space. He even conjures up a threefold dialogue – one between the six soloists and the ensemble, another among the soloists themselves, and a third between the sound produced by the musicians and that transformed by live electronics.

Modern 5 (8 September) Students of the LUCERNE FESTIVAL ACADEMY and teachers from IRCAM

This year the Academy's violinists, violists, clarinetists, and trombone players face a special challenge: they must study works for their personal instrument and live electronics in a master class. In each discipline there are various scores to choose from and to study together with the Parisian IRCAM production team. The students will be actively supported by teachers recruited among the ranks of the Ensemble Intercontemporain. But only four days before the final concert, after an internal competition selecting the "winners", will we learn which works will be performed and who will play them.

Modern 6 (9 September) LUCERNE FESTIVAL ACADEMY Ensemble with Jean Deroyer
Works by Tristan Murail, Kaija Saariaho and Bruno Mantovani

This concert of the LUCERNE FESTIVAL ACADEMY Ensemble, conducted by the young French conductor Jean Deroyer, will unite three musical reflections on nature and space. Tristan Murail, a Spectralist composer who studied with Messiaen, has chosen Sri Lanka as the scene of his vivid and colorful ensemble piece *Serendib* – to use the mystical name that the island received from Sindbad the Sailor. Kaija Saariaho, who was deeply influenced by Murail, was inspired by the changing hues of the water lily to write her string quartet *Nymphéa*, which she rearranged for string orchestra fourteen years later. An autumn poem by Arseny Tarkovsky, whispered into the microphone by the performers, adds another level of associations. Bruno Mantovani follows in the footsteps of religious pilgrims to Bologna in *The Seven Churches*, a magical incantation and musical meditation on an enigmatic architectural monument to the human spirit.

Symphony Concert 24 (10 September) LUCERNE FESTIVAL ACADEMY Orchestra with Pierre Boulez
Works by Claude Debussy, Pierre Boulez and Luciano Berio

Claude Debussy's *Jeux* take us to a tennis court where two girls and a young man search for a missing tennis ball – in vain. So they decide to play other games: they chase each other, get lost, quarrel, make up. The night is warm, kisses are exchanged ... Debussy has laid out his score like a tennis match – with melodic returns, thematic volleys, and crisp rhythmic rallies. Pierre Boulez combines this modern masterpiece with a work of his own: the orchestral version of five of his *Notations*, early piano pieces that he thought lost until they unexpectedly resurfaced in the late 1970s. And in Luciano Berio's *Sinfonia* he will present a stunning collage that unites Mahler and Stravinsky, Beethoven and Debussy, Ravel and political catchphrases of the Sixties.

Modern 7 (12 September) Ensemble Contrechamps, with Stefan Asbury and Isabelle Faust
Works by Michael Jarrell and Kaija Saariaho

Music about music: Michael Jarrell's ensemble piece *Music for a While* draws on the musical drama *Oedipus* by Henry Purcell. He refers to the "idea of transience" as its underlying thought: "I wanted to try to write music of the moment that constantly reinvents itself". Music about art: Kaija Saariaho drew

inspiration from Claude Monet's famous paintings of water lilies for her string quartet *Nymphéa*, adding further electronically manipulated sounds. The guiding idea behind her *Lichtbogen* ("Arc of Light") is a spellbinding natural wonder: the aurora borealis, which she translates into glistening, evanescent, gleaming timbres before fading into nothingness at the end.

Modern 8 (15 September) Southwest German Radio Vocal Ensemble, with Heinz Holliger, Esther Hoppe, Jörg Dähler and Daniel Haefliger
Works by Joseph Haydn, Clytus Gottwald, Gustav Mahler, Rudolf Kelterborn, Harrison Birtwistle and Heinz Holliger

This tribute to Heinz Holliger on his seventieth birthday will feature him in three artistic capacities at once: oboist, conductor, and composer. He will play the oboe in the world premières of two new oboe quartets by Rudolf Kelterborn and Harrison Birtwistle. His close association with the highly acclaimed Southwest German Radio Vocal Ensemble has inspired him over and over again to new compositions, two of which will be heard here. But the concert will open with arrangements of Haydn and Mahler by Clytus Gottwald: the two Mahler transcriptions, both dedicated to Holliger, will be performed for the first time.

Modern 9 (19 September) ensemble recherche
Works by Klaus Huber, Fabien Lévy, Christoph Delz, Tiziano Manca, Heinz Holliger and Ivan Fedele

Christoph Delz, a Swiss composer who died far before his time, drew inspiration from natural phenomena, works of literature and past musical styles. His music forms the main attraction of the ninth concert in our Modern series, together with his two elder colleagues and compatriots, Klaus Huber and Heinz Holliger. Before his untimely death, Delz arranged by will to set up the Christoph Delz Foundation, which holds an international composers competition every three years. Some 120 scores were submitted to the fourth competition. The 2009 winners are the French Fabien Lévy and the Italian Tiziano Manca. The ensemble recherché from Freiburg, one of the world's leading formations for contemporary music, will give these works their very first public hearings.

Eleven World Premières and One Swiss Première

13 August, Symphony Concert 1: Jörg Widmann's oboe concerto, commissioned by LUCERNE FESTIVAL (world première)

29 August, Modern 3: New string quartet by Klaus Huber, commissioned by WDR, LUCERNE FESTIVAL and Wien Modern with support from Pro Helvetia (world première)

29 August, Late Night: New work for alphorns by Mischa Käser, commissioned by LUCERNE FESTIVAL (world première)

29 August, Late Night: New work for alphorns and electronics by Andreas Mellwig, commissioned by LUCERNE FESTIVAL (world première)

2 September, Symphony Concert 15: "Laterna Magica" by Kaija Saariaho, commissioned by Berlin Philharmonic and LUCERNE FESTIVAL (Swiss première)

5 September, Chamber Music 4: "Rechant" for unaccompanied clarinet by Heinz Holliger (world première)

15 September, Modern 8: "Urlicht", "Im Abendrot", Adagietto from Symphony No. 5, arranged for a cappella chorus (world première)

15 September, Modern 8: New work for oboe and string trio by Rudolf Kelterborn, commissioned by LUCERNE FESTIVAL (world première)

15 September, Modern 8: New work for oboe quartet by Harrison Birtwistle, commissioned by LUCERNE FESTIVAL (world première)

15 September, Modern 8: "Rosa Loui" for a cappella chorus by Heinz Holliger (world première)

19 September, Modern 9: "à propos" for flute, clarinet, violin, cello and piano, commissioned by Christoph Delz Foundation (world première)

19 September, Modern 9: "Defining" for instrumental ensemble by Tiziano Manca, commissioned by Christoph Delz Foundation (world première)