

Media Release

LUCERNE FESTIVAL FORWARD 2023

Anti-racism, pro-diversity — works from the Forward Festival as strong political statements: Charles Uzor addresses the murder of George Floyd in two works.

A Gesamtkunstwerk of visual art, film, and music – The Saturday evening concert will combine films by the preeminent artist Gerhard Richter and Corinna Belz with compositions by Rebecca Saunders and Marcus Schmickler.

Lucerne, 28 June 2023. The Forward Festival for contemporary music returns for a third edition, from 17 to 19 November. Curated yet again by a group of former Lucerne Festival Academy participants, the “Contemporary Leaders,” and planned under the direction of Contemporary director Felix Heri and dramaturge Mark Sattler, Forward will offer a three-day-long creative artistic playground for connoisseurs and explorers, including four concerts and a family concert. It will encompass visual art, music, and film and also investigate spaces and concert formats for all the senses.

Forward launches on Friday evening at the Filmtheatre in the Swiss Museum of Transport with the powerful images and sounds of Fausto Romitelli’s opera *An Index of Metals*: an extravaganza of sound, video projection, and lighting that comprises new music, rock, and techno. The Swedish-Ethiopian soprano and vocal artist Sofia Jernberg will be the soloist in a work by the African American Minimalist composer and singer Julius Eastman, who performed with Pierre Boulez and the New York Philharmonic in the 1970s. His work, which addresses racism and homophobia, fell into oblivion following his early death in 1990; but his music has been rediscovered in recent years. Forward will devote a Late Night concert to Eastman on Saturday evening, starting at 10 p.m. The audience will be seated onstage alongside the musicians during *Feminine* to allow the repetitive stream of sound to trigger a kind of ritual trance.

Two films produced by the visual artist Gerhard Richter in collaboration with the director Corinna Belz will be screened in the KKL Luzern Concert Hall on Saturday evening, accompanied by the compositions *Richter’s Patterns* by Marcus Schmickler and *Moving Picture 946-3* by Rebecca Saunders. These compositions were created in parallel to the films and exist on an independently abstract level. For *Richter’s Patterns*, Gerhard Richter took photos of sections of a new series of works and entrusted them to Corinna Belz to continue with her own processing. From this material, Belz produced a film that was not shot with cameras but instead was created using single frames generated by computer algorithms. The result is a visual phenomenon that, in dialogue with the ensemble, makes it possible to experience a composition not as an accompanying film score but as an interpretation of the visual rhythm.

Sunday evening’s Forward finale concert will start by presenting two works by the Swiss-Nigerian composer Charles Uzor. *8’46’’* refers to the length of time over which the African American George Floyd died while in police custody, with only the sounds of breathing and the ensemble of all 17 artists taking part in this concert on the KKL Concert Hall stage. Sofia Jernberg will perform a solo transition to the ensuing ensemble work, *Katharsis Kalkül: George Floyd in memoriam*, the first world premiere of the evening for the Forward Festival musicians. The second work of the evening that is a new commission was written by the Australian composer Liza Lim and likewise combines film and music: *Multispecies Knots of Ethical Time* was composed for 15 musicians and a gestural performer. It addresses not only personal death but the end of ecosystems as well. A river figuratively and sonically represents the flow of time, standing between transience and continuity. The film will be

produced by the Swiss video artist Morena Barra in the summer of 2023 in Eigenthal near Lucerne.
The performer Winnie Huang will be the soloist.

15 minutes before all four concerts, a vocal sculpture will be presented in the Filmtheater foyer of the Swiss Museum of Transport and in the KKL Luzern foyer. It will be created by the Icelandic composer Ragnheiður Erla Björnsdóttir for and in collaboration with students from Lucerne's cantonal schools.

A family concert on Sunday afternoon completes the program offerings for the new generation of audiences — the generation of tomorrow. *Harpapier* is a musical performance work by Estelle Costanzo and Pascale Güdel created in cooperation with Kultissimo. *Gerhard Richter Painting*, Corinna Belz's documentary film about Gerhard Richter, will be screened on 19 November at 4 p.m. at the Lucerne stattkino.

Details about all of the concert programs can be found on the Lucerne Festival website.

Contemporary Leaders – Lucerne Festival Forward's curatorial team

Chloë Abbott trumpet (United Kingdom)

Jack Adler-McKean tuba (United Kingdom)

Cecilia Bercovich violin and viola (Spain)

Ettore Biagi clarinet (Italy)

Winnie Huang violin and viola, performance artist (China/Australia)

Helga Karen piano (Finland)

Edward Kass double bass (USA)

Marina Kifferstein violin, composer (USA)

Alex Lipowski percussion (USA)

Ben Roidl-Ward bassoon, improviser (USA)

Nathan Watts cello (USA)

Johnna Wu violin, performer, and improviser (USA)

Tickets to Lucerne Festival Forward go on presale starting 3 August 2023 at 12.00 pm (Swiss time) at lucernefestival.ch.

Founding Partner – Swiss Re

Partner – Carla Schwöbel-Braun | Gitti Hug | John and Patricia B. Ziel | Landis & Gyr Stiftung | Pro Helvetia, Arts Council of Switzerland | Walter B. Kielholz Foundation

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