

LUCERNE FESTIVAL

Media Release

Summer Festival | 8 August to 10 September 2023

Highly successful overall figures for the “Summer of Paradise”: 13,800 more concertgoers than in the summer of 2022

Drawing a total of 84,000 visitors, Lucerne Festival achieved an overall figure of 84% capacity, with 11 of the concerts being sold out; some 15,300 concertgoers enjoyed the free-admission events presented in the open air and in the KKL Luzern.

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Lucerne, 8 September 2023. The 2023 Summer Festival, which has focused on the theme of “Paradise,” draws to a close this weekend with highly successful final results. This year, the Festival achieved an overall figure of 84% capacity – an increase of 12% over last year’s figure. The 29 symphony concerts alone achieved an overall figure of 86% capacity. Starting on 8 August, a total of 112 events were presented in venues including the KKL Luzern, the Lukaskirche, the Hochschule Luzern – Musik and various public places in Lucerne throughout the 34 days of the Festival. A total of 11 of the 68 paid-admission events were sold out, including the opening concert and the Lucerne Festival Orchestra’s second concert, as well as the second concerts during the Oslo Philharmonic and the Boston Symphony Orchestra’s respective visits. Switzerland’s largest classical music festival recorded a grand total of 84,000 visitors, among whom 15,300 also attended the Festival’s 44 free-admission events accompanied by summer temperatures. Included among the latter group were those who enjoyed the “Lakeside Symphony” (an outdoor live broadcast of the opening), the 40min series as well as the newly introduced 40min Open Air event, the world music groups from the “In the Streets” festival, “Cuban Dances in Inseli Park” (on the inaugural day of the Festival), an impromptu performance at the open-air Buvette, and a concert at the Lucerne Children’s Hospital. Three concerts featuring international youth symphony orchestras were additionally on the program.

Lucerne Festival also offered a total of 19 events exclusively for schools, including five concerts at the KKL Luzern, one of which featured the Berliner Philharmoniker Brass Ensemble in the Concert Hall. A total of about 6,300 school students from the Lucerne region were able to attend.

“An increase of 13,800 concertgoers and a 12% increase in total attendance compared to a year ago: this great response from the public shows us that we are offering the right mix of programming,” observes Michael Haefliger, Executive and Artistic Director of Lucerne Festival. “Young and old, residents of Lucerne and tourists, students and executives alike joyfully participated in our free events. We look forward to building on this success in the coming year!”

Three symphony concert highlights are among the events still to take place: later today, on Friday evening, Vladimir Jurowski will conduct the Bavarian State Orchestra, and Christian Thielemann will lead the Staatskapelle Dresden on Saturday morning; the closing concert comes on the evening of Sunday, 10 September, with Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla and the Munich Philharmonic in Gustav Mahler’s Second Symphony, also known as the “Resurrection” Symphony. In addition, the offerings on Saturday include a work of musical theater for families titled *Der Teufel mit den Goldenen Löckchen* (“The Devil with the Golden Locks”); a portrait concert at 11:00 a.m. showcasing this year’s composer-in-residence, Enno Poppe; and, at 9:00 p.m., the premiere of a new production of Henry Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas* at the Luzerner Theater. Tickets to all events are still available.

In an era of climate change and war in Ukraine, the Festival made a statement by focusing on the theme of “Paradise”. This thematic idea was reflected by much of the concert programming, including in four of Mahler’s symphonies, a semi-staged performance of Henry Purcell’s *The Fairy Queen*, a concert version of Richard Wagner’s *Das Rheingold*, Joseph Haydn’s *The Seasons*, Richard Strauss’s

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An Alpine Symphony, and the world premiere of the newly commissioned orchestral work *Schattenspiel* (“Shadow Play”), which Jessie Cox based on the theme of “Paradise.”

The Lucerne Festival Orchestra celebrated the 20th anniversary of its founding with a total of six concerts. Two of these – opening night and the concert on the following day – brought Paavo Järvi together with the Orchestra for the first time when he replaced ailing Music Director Riccardo Chailly at the last minute; Andrés Orozco-Estrada also replaced Chailly to lead their third symphony concert program. Yannick Nézet-Séguin appeared as the Lucerne Festival Orchestra’s third conductor this summer.

Daniil Trifonov, who was featured as the “artiste étoile,” performed three times at the Festival, appearing in a solo recital, a chamber music evening with soloists from the Lucerne Festival Orchestra, and a concert with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra.

Internationally acclaimed symphony orchestras once again made guest appearances during the Festival’s month of offerings: the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestras, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, the Lucerne Symphony Orchestra, the Dresden Festival Orchestra with Concerto Köln, the Oslo Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra, the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Il Giardino Armonico, Les Arts Florissants, Les Siècles, the Bavarian State Orchestra, the Orchestra di Padova e del Veneto, the Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden and the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra.

Among the young conducting stars who appeared at the podium were Maxim Emelyanychev, Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, Jakub Hrůša, Klaus Mäkelä, and Lahav Shani. Additionally, the roster of conductors included Giovanni Antonini, Daniel Barenboim, Herbert Blomstedt, William Christie, Wolfram Christ, Iván Fischer, Daniel Harding, Paavo Järvi, Vladimir Jurowski, Susanna Mälkki, Kent Nagano, Andris Nelsons, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Kirill Petrenko, François-Xavier Roth, Michael Sanderling, Christian Thielemann, Ilan Volkov, and Keri-Lynn Wilson. Performing in the symphony concerts as soloists were Cecilia Bartoli, Isabelle Faust, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Antoine Tamestit, and Christian Tetzlaff, along with the pianists Yefim Bronfman, Igor Levit, Maria João Pires, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, and Yuja Wang. Solo recitals were additionally given by Víkingur Ólafsson, Sir Andrés Schiff, and emerging star Mao Fujita.

As composer-in-residence, Enno Poppe presented works calling for a variety of formations, including *Augen*, *Prozession*, *Speicher I-VI*, *Fett*, *Öl*, and *Rundfunk*; as a conductor, he also led the Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra (LFCO) in Mathias Spahlinger’s monumental but rarely performed *passage/paysage*. Poppe’s new score *Blumen* was given its world premiere.

As part of the Lucerne Festival Academy, around 100 young instrumentalists, together with four conductors and eight composers, convened in Lucerne for a period of three weeks. New works by David Moliner and Hovik Sardaryan were premiered in conjunction with the “Roche Young Commissions” series. The Composer Seminar was led by Dieter Ammann, who was joined by Unsuk Chin. Ilan Volkov conducted the world premiere of *Schattenspiel* for orchestra by the Swiss composer Jessie Cox, *Spiral* by Peter Ruzicka, and *Minds in Flux* for orchestra and interactive electronics by George Lewis. Another Academy concert presented works by Tania León, Clara Iannotta, Lei Liang, and Jalalu-Kalvert Nelson. Susanna Mälkki conducted the Academy’s closing concert, which included Stravinsky’s *Le Sacre du printemps*.

Lucerne Festival presented a total of 17 world premieres this summer. In addition to the new scores by Enno Poppe and Jessie Cox, this figure includes compositions by Jörg Widmann, and Daniel Schnyder, the young composers from the Composer Seminar, the “Roche Young Commissions” and works commissioned by the I&I Foundation. A number of Swiss premieres were also given, including

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of the Second Violin Concerto by John Williams, with Anne-Sophie Mutter as the soloist and Andris Nelsons leading the Boston Symphony Orchestra. For the *räsonanz* – Donor Concert, François-Xavier Roth conducted his orchestra Les Siècles in works by György Ligeti and Enno Poppe.

The popular 40min series celebrated its 10th anniversary. The Festival presented 40min Open Air for the first time, which comprised three concerts performed on the Europaplatz. Sarah Willis was the host of that afternoon event; joined by members of the Havana Lyceum Orchestra, she also provided musical accompaniment for the last of these three concerts. As part of the “Music for Future” program, young soloists and ensembles made their debuts this summer at the Lukaskirche. The Isidore String Quartet, pianist Dmytro Choni, violist Timothy Ridout, baritone Áneas Humm, hornist Ben Goldscheider, and the Atenea Quartet, which won the “Prix Credit Suisse Jeunes Solistes” last December, were among those who performed.

Those who could not attend the concerts in Lucerne had the opportunity to enjoy them via television and radio broadcasts. The opening concert on 11 August was broadcast that evening on Radio SRF 2 Kultur and on TV SRF 1, and both the Lucerne Festival Orchestra concert featuring pianist Maria João Pires on 12 August and the Lucerne Festival Orchestra soloists’ chamber concert on 13 August were streamed live on Arte Concert and Play Suisse. In China, the video-on-demand broadcast of the concert of 12 August tallied around 25 million views. Radio SRF 2 Kultur recorded a total of ten concerts and broadcast two of them live.

Press photos may be downloaded at lucernefestival.ch/en/press/photos.

Summer Festival

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