

Media Release

2025 FRITZ GERBER AWARD

**The winners of this year's Fritz Gerber Award have been announced:
The award goes to Hortense Airault, Antonio Gaggiano, and Hedi Yang.**

Lucerne, 14 May 2025. Once again, the Fritz Gerber Foundation and Lucerne Festival honor three young musicians who have distinguished themselves by virtue of their exceptional artistic talent and high level of professionalism. The French cellist and composer Hortense Airault, the Italian percussionist Antonio Gaggiano, and the Chinese percussionist Hedi Yang will each receive a cash prize of CHF 10,000. In addition, the Foundation will cover the full costs for each of these musicians to participate in the 2025 Lucerne Festival Academy, valued at another CHF 10,000 per recipient.

Hortense Airault, who was born in Paris in 1999, is a cellist, composer, and performer whose work bridges classical music and contemporary practice, improvisation, and interdisciplinary collaboration. She completed her musical training with Thomas Duran in Paris and with Ophélie Gaillard in Geneva and is currently studying with Job Ter Haar in the Master's program in Music Composition at the Bern University of the Arts (HDK). Her performance credits include with the Ensemble Intercontemporain, the Ensemble Contrechamps, and the Duo Imminent. A founding member of Quatuor MOMO, Airault has received multiple chamber music awards and creates genre-crossing projects with her quartet.

Antonio Gaggiano, who was born in Italy in 1999, studied percussion and composition in Foggia, Ghent, and at Hochschule für Musik Basel, where he completed a Master's degree in Musical Performance under Christian Dierstein. He is currently pursuing an additional Master's degree in Music Education. Gaggiano's performance credits include the Basel Symphony Orchestra, the Teatro San Carlo in Naples, and the Collegium Musicum Basel, and he has also appeared at such festivals as the Chigiana International Festival and the Impuls Festival in Graz. His numerous accolades include prizes from the World Percussion Movement Vibraphone Competition and the «Città di Albenga» Composition Competition.

Hedi Yang was born in China in 2003. At the age of 16, she became the youngest student ever admitted to the Bachelor's program in percussion at the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK), where she studied with Klaus Schwärzler, Raphael Christen, and Benjamin Forster. She is a prizewinner of the 2024 Swiss Percussion Competition and the Italy Percussion Competitions and has garnered multiple awards across Asia. Yang has gained experience as an academy member of the Biel Solothurn Symphony Orchestra and is currently pursuing her Master's studies in Zurich.

The Fritz Gerber Award is open to artists up to the age of 28 who either hold Swiss citizenship or have been living in Switzerland for a minimum of three years. The jury for this year's awards comprised Michael Haefliger, Executive and Artistic Director of Lucerne Festival; Mark Sattler, Dramaturge of Lucerne Festival; and composer-conductor Heinz Holliger.

Since its founding in 1999, the Fritz Gerber Foundation for Gifted Young People has supported talent in the fields of culture, craftsmanship, and sports. Over the past 26 years, it has awarded more than CHF 35 million to some 2,830 young individuals. The Fritz Gerber Award has been presented in collaboration with Lucerne Festival since 2015.

The **Lucerne Festival Academy** was founded in 2004 by Pierre Boulez and Lucerne Festival Executive and Artistic Director Michael Haefliger as a master school for contemporary music. Wolfgang Rihm was Artistic Director of the Academy since the summer of 2016. The Academy is aimed at instrumentalists, conductors, and composers: every summer, more than 100 musicians from some

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30 nations gather for three weeks of intensive study and performance focused on the repertoire of the 20th and 21st centuries. In addition to its sessions during Lucerne Festival's summer season, the Academy annually presents guest performances abroad in collaboration with prestigious international partners.

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

Additional information is available at lucernefestival.ch/en/lucerne-festival-academy/fritz-gerber-award and fritz-gerber-stiftung.ch.

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