

Media Release

Lucerne Festival Ark Nova – Music Is Hope

From 4 to 14 September, the mobile concert hall will present 35 short concerts on the Lidowiese in Lucerne, ranging from classical and crossover to jazz, folk, and pop.

Lucerne, 20 May 2025. With Ark Nova, Lucerne Festival is presenting a globally unique socio-cultural project: the world's first-ever mobile and inflatable concert hall – and at the same time a walk-in artwork that creates powerful sensory experiences. “Music is hope,” said the Festival's Executive and Artistic Director Michael Haefliger, concert agent Masahide Kajimoto, star architect Arata Isozaki, and artist Sir Anish Kapoor, who created the Lucerne Festival Ark Nova following the catastrophic earthquake in Fukushima. In 2013, Ark Nova opened its doors in Japan, bringing hope and new perspective to those who had been affected by the tsunami.

This significant cultural project now continues: from 4 to 14 September, the “New Ark” will visit Lucerne for the first and only time, offering a diverse musical program to suit everyone. Visitors will have a unique opportunity to experience firsthand how Ark Nova unites art, music, and people, providing inspiration and hope. Lucerne Festival is responsible for the artistic programming, production of the 11-day schedule of musical events, and operation of Ark Nova. One of the world's leading classical music festivals, Lucerne Festival has been led by Executive and Artistic Director Michael Haefliger since 1999. The Swiss Museum of Transport is Ark Nova's logistical partner and is responsible for handling planning, setup, and dismantling of the concert hall, operations, catering, the Hans Erni Museum exhibition, and guided tours.

Ark Nova: How A Vision Became Reality

Created as an artistic response to the devastating earthquake and tsunami that occurred in 2011 in Japan, Ark Nova brought hope, confidence, and new perspective to the local population during the rebuilding process. Initiated by Michael Haefliger and Masahide Kajimoto, and designed by internationally renowned artist Sir Anish Kapoor and award-winning architect Arata Isozaki, Ark Nova became a globally recognized symbol of renewal. The Ark Nova was initially deployed in 2013 in the Tōhoku region, which had been severely affected by the disaster. This mobile structure, which takes just ten minutes to inflate, is an impressive design that combines art and architecture and accommodates 300 people in Lucerne. Visitors become immersed in the space, whose round, organic forms and aubergine-pink hues evoke a sense of comfort and warmth. At the same time a functional art object, Ark Nova embodies its creators' idealistic vision of delivering a spirit of hope and inspiration through culture and music. “I am immensely pleased that the Lucerne Festival Ark Nova, after its foundation in Japan in 2013, will now also be coming to the place of its conceptual origin,” says Michael Haefliger. “Under the roof of one of the most spectacular works of art in the world, Lucerne will experience a unique interplay of musical styles from classical to pop, the likes of which have never been seen before.”

Music Is Hope – A Diverse Musical and Cultural Program for All

The Ark Nova's musical programming offers a total of 35 concerts, each 45 minutes in length, across 11 days and covering a wide array of musical genres for all ages: from classical and crossover to folk, jazz, and pop. International stars will perform alongside local artists and emerging talents. Guided tours of the Ark Nova and of the accompanying exhibition at the Hans Erni Museum are also available.

The opening concert will be given by Sarah Willis and her rousing Sarahbanda, a Cuban salsa band featuring French horn. On the final day of the series, Lucerne will celebrate all facets of its reputation as a city of music, with a program ranging from a tribute to Sergei Rachmaninoff (who for a time was

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a resident of the Lucerne region) to film music by the 21st Century Salon Orchestra and performances by ensembles from the Chamber Music Society of Lucerne, the Heirassa Festival, the Luzerner Theater, and the “klang” concert series. The overall programming planned for Ark Nova casts a wide net to reach the broadest audience possible. Classical luminaries like pianists Igor Levit and Wayne Marshall, a septet of musicians from the Vienna Philharmonic, trumpeter Reinhold Friedrich, and piano duos Mari & Momo Kodama and Adrienne Soós & Ivo Haag will share the stage with rising stars from the Lucerne Festival Academy, students from the Lucerne School of Music, and members of the Central Switzerland Youth Symphony Orchestra (ZJSO). Pianist Giorgi Gigashvili will blend classical music with folk traditions from his native Georgia. Winnie Huang will perform Karlheinz Stockhausen’s prayer-ritual *Inori* and lead an interactive early-morning performance. And pianist Yuka Funabashi will commemorate the late Japanese composer Ryūichi Sakamoto, who contributed music to the very first edition of the Ark Nova in Matsushima.

Pop, folk, jazz, and world music will round out the offerings, each genre adding distinctive perspectives to complement the classical programming at Lucerne Festival, which will be simultaneously under way across Lake Lucerne at the KKL Luzern through 14 September. Among the performers will be Swiss singer-songwriters Mercee and Ursina; Geneva-based harpist Julie Campiche; Swiss pianist Sylvie Courvoisier, now living in Brooklyn; and violist Charlotte Hug and percussionist Lucas Niggli in a duo. All of these musicians will take the audience on journeys of genre-bending jazz experimentation. The ensembles Viertaktmotor, Vent Negru, and Vox Blenii will transport listeners to yet other sonic landscapes, presenting folk music from Switzerland and neighboring regions. The motto “Music Is Hope” will come vividly alive in concerts with the Surprise Street Choir; the Prostir Choir, which was founded in Lucerne by Ukrainian refugees to sing of home and hope; and the children and youth from Superar Suisse. A number of concerts will also be reserved for Lucerne school groups, including one featuring an ensemble from the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra. Souvenir de Rigi, a program previously performed at Ark Nova in Tokyo, will be reprised in Lucerne. The final day at Ark Nova also includes an ecumenical service on the Summer Festival’s theme “Open End.”

Low ticket prices starting at CHF 15 aim to make the cross-genre programming at Ark Nova accessible to as many people as possible. Additional special offers in and around Ark Nova include:

Family Days (6 and 7 September 2025): On 6 and 7 September, we are inviting families to an unforgettable day trip in Lucerne, including a boat trip to and from the Ark Nova, an inspiring concert suited for all ages, and a visit the Swiss Museum of Transport – all free of charge! Made possible by UBS and Zurich.

open4all (5, 12, and 14 September 2025): For two hours on each of these days, Ark Nova be open for visitors to explore at their leisure, as they absorb the unique atmosphere of this mobile concert hall and enjoy a special surprise performance on 12 September. Admission is free. Made possible with support from 20 Minuten.

Participatory Events: If you don’t want to just listen but prefer to get involved directly, you’ve come to the right place: sing along with the Surprise Street Choir (6 September), join a bachata workshop (7 September), or take part in Winnie Huang’s collective performance (11 September) – there’s something for everyone!

Accompanying Exhibition at the Hans Erni Museum: Running parallel to the cultural program at Ark Nova and continuing until 12 October 2025, a special exhibition at the Hans Erni Museum traces the history and development of this one-of-a-kind concert venue. Through models, documents, photographs, and films, it explores the conceptual and technical evolution of Ark Nova.

You can find an overview of the detailed Ark Nova program in the program flyer or by visiting arknova.ch.

From Japan to Lucerne via the Cape of Good Hope

At the end of May, the Ark Nova will be shipped from Japan, traveling by sea to Europe via the Cape of Good Hope, and then overland to Lucerne. The concert hall will be installed on the specially prepared Lidowiese site during August and inflated within hours towards the end of the month so the final technical outfitting can be installed. Sand, gravel, and protective matting will safeguard the lawn. All materials necessary to install and set up the Ark Nova will be used as sparingly as possible so as to conserve resources. The materials used to protect the ground and for construction (sand, gravel, steel plates) will all be recycled. The envelope and pavilion equipment have been deployed in Japan on four previous occasions. The envelope consists of a 0.6mm PVC-coated polyester fiber membrane that requires no other conventional support structure and can be recycled into other plastics at the end of its lifespan. The air-supported concert hall is inflated by having air blown into the envelope via three fans, with air locks to prevent the air from escaping. The fans are powered by sustainably sourced electricity. The experienced team from the Swiss Museum of Transport is responsible for overseeing all logistics of transport and organization on site in Lucerne.

About Lucerne Festival

Founded in 1938, Lucerne Festival is one of the world's leading festivals for classical music. Michael Haefliger has served as Executive and Artistic Director since 1999. The highlight of Lucerne's festival year is the Summer Festival, which lasts almost five weeks and offers a diverse program of more than 100 concerts and related events, including symphony and chamber concerts, recitals, and open-air performances. Each Summer Festival is shaped by a central theme that informs the programming like a leitmotif. In the summer of 2025, the theme is "Open End," and the Festival will run from 12 August to 15 September. Three short festivals held in spring and fall also comprise Lucerne Festival. On the weekend before Easter, the Lucerne Festival Orchestra focuses on a particular composer as part of its spring residency. In late May, the extraordinary pianist Igor Levit presents Piano Fest, a keyboard festival spanning classical music, jazz, and pop. And in November, at Lucerne Festival Forward, the young musicians of the Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra (LFCO) focus on the music of our time. The KKL Luzern, designed by Jean Nouvel, serves as Lucerne Festival's headquarters and features an outstanding concert hall that is renowned both for its phenomenal acoustics and for its exquisite architecture.

About the Swiss Museum of Transport

The Swiss Museum of Transport is a museum and theme park covering all forms of mobility. It promotes curiosity about and understanding of historical and technological developments and their impact on society, the economy, and the environment. The museum features the "House of Energy" exhibition and also houses a planetarium, a large-format cinema (the "Filmtheater"), and the "Swiss Chocolate Adventure." The Swiss Museum of Transport is operated by the Swiss Museum of Transport Association and ranks as the most frequently visited museum in Switzerland.

Partners and Supporters of Ark Nova

Planning and implementing a project of this scale within a few months would be impossible without the financial and logistical support of committed partners. As in 2013, when UBS and Nestlé supported Ark Nova as Founding Partners, 2025 likewise requires courageous and visionary partners who believe in an extraordinary idea and are willing to support it. We are deeply grateful to all those who are making this project a reality.

“With this project, which we helped initiate in 2013, we are making art and music accessible to a wide audience while supporting cultural diversity in Switzerland. We’re especially proud to support the Family Days to enable young and old to experience art and music together.”

Sabine Keller-Busse, President UBS Switzerland

“Ark Nova is a powerful expression of hope, resilience, and the human spirit – values that resonate deeply with Zurich’s purpose. We’re especially proud to support the Family Days, which open up this extraordinary experience to new audiences and bring people together to enjoy music in an informal, welcoming setting.”

Conny Kalcher, Group Chief Customer Officer at Zurich

Main Partners: Swiss Museum of Transport | UBS | Zurich

Partners: GC Holding AG | Nestlé S.A. | Schwöbel Family

Media Partner: 20 Minuten

Supporters: Auviso | Hans Erni Museum | Luzern Tourismus |
Lucerne: The City of Music | Lake Lucerne Navigation Company |
Switzerland Tourism | City of Luzern Schweiz Tourismus

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

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Media Release

Art Meets Architecture: The Ark Nova Comes to Lucerne for the First Time

Lucerne, 20 May 2025. The British artist Sir Anish Kapoor developed the Lucerne Festival Ark Nova, a mobile concert hall, in close collaboration with the internationally renowned Japanese architect Arata Isozaki. It was their only joint project. This significant inflatable art object will come to Europe for the first time from 4 to 14 September 2025, landing in Lucerne on the Lidowiese.

The project was initiated by Michael Haefliger, Executive and Artistic Director of Lucerne Festival, in the aftermath of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami. Together with Japanese concert agent Masahide Kajimoto, he conceived the idea of an artistic response to the catastrophic disaster. For the Ark Nova project, Sir Anish Kapoor and Arata Isozaki designed a sculptural work of art as a functional architectural space. In their first and only close collaboration, they developed a demountable concert hall that can be reassembled in varying locations. The distinctive design of this extraordinary construction bears the signature of Sir Anish Kapoor. The shape is reminiscent of Kapoor's 2011 work *Leviathan*. "Ark Nova is the result of my long-standing preoccupation with inward-facing forms and shifts in scale. We tried to create a structure that functions as a concert hall and is also easy to transport," said Kapoor during the hall's inaugural installation in 2013 in Matsushima, Japan. A recipient of some of the art world's most prestigious awards and high civic honors, the Indian-British artist Sir Anish Kapoor ranks among the most esteemed artists of our time. The architect Arata Isozaki (who died in 2022), awarded the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 2019, is considered a key figure in modern Japanese architecture.

The Tokyo-based Isozaki, Aoki & Associates office was responsible for overseeing implementation of the Ark Nova on site in Japan. A central aim in designing a mobile concert hall was to reach as many people affected by the disaster as possible through musical and cultural events. The mobile concert venue's flexible seating can accommodate a maximum of 500 people; in Lucerne, 300 seats will be available. Ark Nova has previously been installed in Matsushima (2013), Sendai (2014), Fukushima (2015), and most recently Tokyo (2017).

A Structure without Conventional Support

In theory, the mobile concert hall can be inflated in only ten minutes. However, to protect the delicate plastic envelope, air is introduced slowly over several hours during installation.

Sir Anish Kapoor developed the concept of a structure without an internal framework in collaboration with the British firm Aerotrope, which has worked on several projects with the artist. A 0.6mm-thin, PVC-coated polyester fiber fabric was used as the material for the envelope. It was cut and welded together in such a way that the walk-in sculpture remains stable without additional conventional support structures once inflated. The effect it makes on visitors is impressive: they enter an organic space whose rounded, soft forms and aubergine-pink hues evoke a sense of shelter and warmth. The structure is stabilized by an internal arm that turns the body outward from the inside, which aids in stabilization and increases the complexity of the hall's structure, both in terms of its external appearance and its internal spatial effect.

A Sensory Artwork with Sophisticated Engineering

Since an inflatable hall naturally has no load-bearing structure frame and insulation, a constant supply of air pressure maintains the shape of the structure. Thermal pre-conditioning of the incoming supply of air would be highly inefficient with regard to energy, so Ark Nova foregoes this entirely. Instead,

natural thermal dynamics are used for ventilation: the heat generated by sunlight and body warmth of the occupants is released at the highest point of the structure via an air vent. The amount of air expelled is equal to the volume of fresh air drawn in, which not only stabilizes the structure but also ensures proper ventilation.

The hall is designed to be as lightweight and flexible as possible, requiring a low-mass construction method. The result of the collaboration between Sir Anish Kapoor and Arata Isozaki is a fully functional art object that realizes the idealistic ambitions of the Ark Nova's initiators - Michael Haefliger, Executive and Artistic Director of Lucerne Festival, and Masahide Kajimoto, President of Kajimoto Music—as a structure that is immersive and appeals to the senses at the highest level. From 4 to 14 September 2025, it can be experienced for the first time in Lucerne.

Accompanying Exhibit at the Hans Erni Museum

Coinciding with the Ark Nova's residency, the Hans Erni Museum will present an exhibit focused on the creation, design, and use of this unique mobile concert hall. Through models, photographs, film footage, and documents, the exhibit brings to life the fusion of architecture, sculpture, and music. Curated by museum director Dr. Heinz Stahlhut in close collaboration with Michael Haefliger, the exhibit invites visitors to explore the artistic vision and cultural significance of Ark Nova in greater depth.

Sir Anish Kapoor

Sir Anish Kapoor (born in Mumbai, India, in 1954) is one of the most significant contemporary artists. He moved from India to London in the 1970s, studying at the Hornsey College of Art and later at the Chelsea School of Art and Design. Kapoor rose to international prominence in the 1980s with abstract sculptures that often combine intense colors and simple geometric forms. He frequently works with materials such as wax, stone, pigments, stainless steel, and mirrors. His oeuvre explores such themes as emptiness, spirituality, and perception. Among his most iconic creations is *Cloud Gate* (2006) — also known as *The Bean* — in Chicago's Millennium Park, a huge stainless steel structure that reflects the sky and its surroundings. Another widely acclaimed work is *ArcelorMittal Orbit* (2012), a looping steel tower in London's Olympic Park. Kapoor has received numerous accolades, including the Turner Prize (1991), and was knighted in 2013 for his services to the visual arts. He lives and works in London.

Arata Isozaki

Arata Isozaki (1931-2022) was an internationally renowned Japanese architect, urban planner, and theorist. Considered a seminal figure in modern Japanese architecture, his influence has shaped architecture worldwide for decades. His stylistically diverse works range from 1960s Brutalism to postmodern elements and ultra-modern, often futuristic-looking buildings.

Among his best-known projects are the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles (1986), Palau Sant Jordi for the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona and the Qatar National Convention Centre in Doha.

Isozaki also contributed significantly as a theoretician, helping shape architectural discourse worldwide through his writings. He advocated dialogue between East and West and between tradition and innovation. The numerous awards he received include the Royal Gold Medal from the Royal Institute of British Architects (1986) and the Pritzker Prize (2019), the highest accolade in architecture.

Ark Nova: Architecture Facts & Figures

Type of building: demountable and relocatable concert hall

Design and concept: Sir Anish Kapoor, Arata Isozaki

Specifications:

Site area: 4,249.22 m²

Floor area: 720.22 m²

Interior ground area: 680.00 m²

Interior height: 17.77 m

Dimensions: approx. 29 x 36 x 18 meters (L x W x H)

Structural height: 18.07 m

Volume: 9,117 m³

Surface area of the envelope: 2,117 m²

Weight: 1,700 kg

Maximum seating capacity: 500 people

Project timeline:

Design: June 2011 – August 2013

Inaugural installation: September 2013

Lucerne installation: August 2025

Structure:

Main framework: pneumatic membrane structure

Foundation: steel base plate with load-distributing ring

Building services (HVAC):

Heating: none

Ventilation/air conditioning: outdoor air supply, cooling via type II ventilation

Smoke and heat exhaust system: three 11 kW inverter-controlled fans

Power supply: rented external transformer unit

Emergency backup power: diesel generator for low-voltage systems and lighting

Materials:

Roof and envelope: PVC-coated polyester membrane

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

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www.arknova.ch | www.lucernefestival.ch

Service Information

Lucerne Festival Ark Nova – Music Is Hope

Dates and Opening Hours

4 to 14 September 2025, Lidowiese Lucerne

Ark Nova's opening hours vary depending on the time of concerts and events. Please consult the program for details.

The opening hours of the special exhibition *Sculpture and Architecture, Artwork and Concert Hall* at the Hans Erni Museum are based on the operating hours of Ark Nova.

Getting There

Lidowiese Lucerne

Right on the lakeshore by the Swiss Museum of Transport
Haldenstrasse 44 | CH-6006 Lucerne

By public transport:

from Lucerne's main train station by train (S3 or Voralpenexpress) to the "Luzern Verkehrshaus" stop or bus lines 6, 8, or 24 to the "Verkehrshaus" stop

By boat:

Regular scheduled services operated by the Lake Lucerne Navigation Company run from the KKL Luzern to the "Verkehrshaus-Lido" stop. Travel on this route is free of charge with an Ark Nova Ticket (valid for round trip between the KKL Luzern to the Lido)

By car:

Parking spaces are available along Lidostrasse and opposite the Lido public beach.



Tickets

The first tickets will go on sale starting on 23 May 2025 at 10 a.m.

Concert tickets are available starting at CHF 15. With the "You decide" pricing model, audience members can decide for themselves how much they wish to pay. Prices start at CHF 15. Every additional franc goes directly to Lucerne Festival's "Music for Future" projects, which support young musical talent and also reach young audiences. Seating is unassigned, and an informal atmosphere prevails. There is no dress code at the Ark Nova. Tickets for individual concerts will be released for sale in staggered stages.

Tickets for guided tours cost CHF 15 per person.

Children up to 6 years are admitted free of charge to concerts as well as guided tours. The number of tickets that may be purchased per order is limited to four.

Online ticket sales: lucernefestival.ch

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Ticket sales by phone:

+41 (0)41 226 44 00 / Mon-Fri from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.; during the Summer Festival (12 August to 14 September), also from 2 to 4 p.m. and on weekends

On-site sales at the Ark Nova ticket counter:

4 to 14 September 2025, daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

At the Lucerne Festival ticket office (located at the main entrance to the KKL Luzern, on the lake side) from 12 August to 14 September, daily from 2 p.m. until the start of the evening performance

Each Ark Nova ticket includes:

- Free admission to the special exhibition *Sculpture and Architecture, Artwork and Concert Hall* at the Hans Erni Museum in the Swiss Museum of Transport (valid on the day of the booked concert or guided tour)
- Free boat travel on the KKL Lucerne – Lido route (valid on the day of the booked concert or guided tour)

Combined Offers:

Each Ark Nova concert ticket includes a voucher valued at CHF 10 for a Lucerne Festival Summer Festival event. The voucher can also be redeemed using the QR code printed on the Ark Nova ticket. Valid: 4 to 14 September 2025 (redeemable starting on 23 May 2025)

Additional benefits come with your Ark Nova ticket: present your concert ticket at the box office or visit www.verkehrshaus.ch/AN2025 to receive a 20% discount on admission to the Swiss Museum of Transport. Valid: 4 to 14 September 2025 (redeemable starting on 23 May 2025)

Accessibility

The entire Ark Nova site is wheelchair accessible.

Food & Drink

Enjoy snacks and refreshments at the café bar of the Brasserie, the self-service restaurant Mercato in the Swiss Museum of Transport, or at the food truck located on the Lidowiese.

Toilets

Located at the Swiss Museum of Transport, main entrance, 1st floor

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