

Media Release

Four Weeks to Go: Lucerne Festival Returns to Explore the “Open End” of Classical Music

Switzerland's largest classical music festival returns from 12 August to 14 September 2025 to offer a rich and varied program featuring some 120 events.

One of this year's highlights is the mobile concert hall Ark Nova, making its European debut from 4 to 14 September on the Lidowiese in Lucerne.

The official Opening Concert takes place on 15 August, with the Lucerne Festival Orchestra conducted by Riccardo Chailly and featuring Elīna Garanča as the soloist.

Lucerne, 16 July 2025. Summertime means festival season: Lucerne Festival launches one month from now with around 120 events exploring the theme “Open End.” This year's edition marks the final Summer Festival under Executive and Artistic Director Michael Haefliger and officially begins on 15 August. The Opening Concert will feature Gustav Mahler's Tenth Symphony performed by the Lucerne Festival Orchestra under the baton of Music Director Riccardo Chailly, as well as his *Rückert Lieder*, with mezzo-soprano Elīna Garanča as the soloist. In honor of the 100th birthday of Pierre Boulez this year, his work *Mémoriale* is also on the program. This year's “artiste étoile”, the musician and performance artist Winnie Huang, will also appear. Among the distinguished guests expected for the opening at the KKL Luzern are Federal Councilor Albert Rösti and prominent figures from the worlds of culture, business, and politics.

Running for 34 days, the Summer Festival takes place at the KKL Luzern and other venues throughout the city. A major highlight is the Ark Nova, a mobile concert hall on the Lidowiese, in front of the Swiss Museum of Transport, that will open its doors starting 4 September for 35 short-format concerts, ranging from classical and crossover to jazz, folk, and pop. At the KKL Luzern alone, audiences can enjoy 27 symphonic concerts by some of the world's most famous orchestras, including the Berliner Philharmoniker, the Vienna Philharmonic, and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, among other leading international ensembles. A host of classical music's biggest stars will be in attendance, including Cecilia Bartoli, Lang Lang, and Anne-Sophie Mutter, as well as the most sought-after young talent in the field. The Lucerne Festival Orchestra will be led not only by Music Director Riccardo Chailly, but also by Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Andrés Orozco-Estrada, and, for the first time, Sir Simon Rattle. Alongside Winnie Huang, violist Tabea Zimmermann will be highlighted as the second “artiste étoile” and will appear in three concerts. At the heart of the Lucerne Festival Academy are projects with this year's composer-in-residence, Marco Stroppa. A special series titled “Kosmos Boulez” pays tribute to the Academy's founder on his 100th birthday and features the Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra (LFCO) and other ensembles. Rounding out the wide range of programming are the popular free 40min series of brief concerts, the world music festival “In the Streets” (celebrating its 20th anniversary), and numerous Debut and Family concerts. Lucerne Festival bids farewell to its Executive and Artistic Director Michael Haefliger after 26 years of success with a grand closing concert, “Les Adieux,” on 14 September 2025.

Starting on 12 August, Lucerne Festival will also present a unique sustainability initiative on Europaplatz: “Quak: Sounds by the Water,” a collaboration with Pro Natura Lucerne, aims to raise awareness about endangered amphibian species. A natural pond will be created in part of the water basin in front of the KKL, featuring an educational trail, sound stations, and workshops where animal sounds can be experienced musically.

LUCERNE FESTIVAL

As in past years, many of Lucerne Festival's concerts will be broadcast on television and radio this summer. A full listing of dates is available [online](#).

You can find a press kit, including texts on all aspects of the Summer Festival and a selection of photos, at lucernefestival.ch/en/press.

Summer Festival

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