

Media Release

As the “Open End” summer of concerts comes to a close, Lucerne Festival reports outstanding results: 84,000 guests attended the Summer Festival, achieving an overall attendance rate of 89 percent.

In addition, Lucerne Festival Ark Nova, the mobile concert hall, drew 12,000 visitors.

Lucerne, 12 September 2025. As this year’s summer season draws to a close, Lucerne Festival reports a very positive outcome: over the course of 34 days, around 84,000 visitors – 3,000 more than in 2024 – attended 163 events at the Summer Festival, which centered on this year’s theme, “Open End.” The 2025 Summer Festival marked the final edition under the tenure of Executive and Artistic Director Michael Haefliger. The Festival’s overall attendance rate was 89 percent. Around 60,000 guests attended the 64 ticketed events, while an additional 24,000 visitors enjoyed the Festival’s 99 free events, including the 40min series, the 40min Open Air, school concerts, the world music festival “In the Streets,” and Lakeside Symphony – the popular live broadcast of the Opening Concert in Lucerne’s Inseli Park, where audiences gathered for a picnic-style experience. The Summer Festival concludes this coming Sunday, 14 September, with “Les Adieux,” the sold-out farewell celebration for Michael Haefliger, who will step down at the end of the year after 26 years at the helm, with Sebastian Nordmann set to succeed him as the Festival’s director.

Lucerne Festival Ark Nova – the inflatable concert hall makes its European debut

Starting on 4 September, an additional 12,000 visitors attended events at the Lucerne Festival Ark Nova, which was presented in Europe for the very first and only time, outside of Japan, as part of Lucerne Festival. Events there will continue through this coming Sunday. The spectacular, walk-in structure, created by Sir Anish Kapoor and Arata Isozaki and initiated by Festival Executive and Artistic Director Michael Haefliger, was installed and hosted performances for 11 days on the Lidowiese next to the Swiss Museum of Transport. The Ark Nova’s program included guided tours and 35 concerts, with one performance canceled due to a severe weather warning. The Hans Erni Museum is hosting a special exhibition, “Sculpture and Architecture, Artwork and Concert Halls,” on view through 12 October. In total, around 8,000 visitors attended the ticketed events, with every guided tour and 25 performances completely sold out. Some 4,000 visitors enjoyed the free-admission “Family Days” offerings or experienced the Ark Nova during designated free-access “Open for All” time slots.

The Ark Nova’s artistic program provided a unique complement to the Summer Festival centered around the KKL Luzern. With low-threshold ticket prices starting at CHF 15, a wide artistic range spanning classical music, crossover, and folk traditions to jazz and pop, as well as numerous free events, the Festival opened its doors to audiences of all ages. Four exclusive school concerts were completely sold out. In this way, Lucerne Festival also fulfilled the Ark Nova’s core mission on an artistic level: to bring people together through art and music, offering them hope and optimism. Performers in the aubergine-colored concert hall included Swiss singer-songwriters Mercee and Ursina, the Surprise Street Choir, the Ukrainian choir Prostir, pianist Igor Levit, and an ensemble from the Vienna Philharmonic.

“It is incredibly gratifying to be able to report such outstanding results for this, my final Summer Festival,” says Executive and Artistic Director Michael Haefliger. “The wonderful atmosphere in the city around the KKL Luzern and the Ark Nova, the thrilling concert experiences featuring music ranging from Charpentier and Mahler to Boulez and Stroppa that drew international attention, and the

enthusiasm of both audiences and artists – all of this shows what an important institution this Festival has become. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped make this possible.”

Highlights from the “Open End” Summer Festival Program

The theme “Open End” served as the leitmotif underlying the programming for this year’s Summer Festival, with a focus on works that are open-ended, unfinished, or cyclical in design. The Opening Concert on 15 August featured Gustav Mahler’s Tenth Symphony, performed by the Lucerne Festival Orchestra under Riccardo Chailly, while other programs included Anton Bruckner’s Ninth and Schubert’s *Unfinished* Symphony. The theme also paid tribute to the 100th birthday of Pierre Boulez, who throughout his life regarded composition as a work in progress – a creative process with no definitive endpoint. The Festival honored him with the series “Boulez Cosmos,” presenting twelve of his works in various concerts by the Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra (LFCO), as well as in the *räsonanz* Donor Concert presented in partnership with the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation, and right at the start of the Festival with Boulez’s *Mémoriale*, performed by the Lucerne Festival Orchestra.

In addition to Music Director Riccardo Chailly, the Lucerne Festival Orchestra was led this summer by Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Andrés Orozco-Estrada, and, for the first time, Sir Simon Rattle. This year’s “artistes étoiles” were violist Tabea Zimmermann and musician-performer Winnie Huang, both of whom appeared in multiple concerts, while Marco Stroppa served as composer-in-residence. Among the Festival’s celebrated soloists were Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Lisa Batiashvili, Seong-Jin Cho, Stefan Dohr, Isabelle Faust, Elīna Garanča, Julia Hagen, Augustin Hadelich, Janine Jansen, Magdalena Kožená, Lang Lang, Igor Levit, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Beatrice Rana, Sir Andrés Schiff, and Mitsuko Uchida.

Stars and Leading International Orchestras

Some of the world’s most renowned orchestras took turns performing on the stage of the KKL Luzern Concert Hall: the Berliner Philharmoniker with Kirill Petrenko, the Vienna Philharmonic with Franz Welser-Möst, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra with Klaus Mäkelä, and the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra with Daniel Barenboim. Additional highlights included the Mahler Chamber Orchestra under Maxim Emelyanychev, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France with Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, the Orchestre de Paris under Esa-Pekka Salonen, and the Orchestra dell’Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia with Daniel Harding. The Lucerne Symphony Orchestra performed under Michael Sanderling. Les Musiciens du Prince – Monaco joined Cecilia Bartoli for a performance of Rossini’s *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. Tonight (Friday), Kent Nagano continues *The Wagner Cycles* project with *Siegfried*, and tomorrow the Orchestra and Chorus of Teatro alla Scala will appear under Riccardo Chailly.

Contemporary Highlights and the Lucerne Festival Academy

At the heart of the Contemporary Division’s programming was, as usual, the work of the Lucerne Festival Academy, which brought together more than 128 participants from 26 countries. 17 of the Festival’s 21 world premieres were presented by the Academy, including works by composer-in-residence Marco Stroppa, Dai Fujikura, and the “Roche Young Commissions” winners Jakob Raab and Guillem Palomar. The eight composers who took part in the Composer Seminar, led by Dieter Ammann and Unsuk Chin, performed their works with musicians of the International Ensemble Modern Academy (IEMA Ensemble 2024/25). Two major Swiss premieres were also featured: *The Divine Thawing of the Core* by Chaya Czernowin and *Tombeau I* by Olga Neuwirth. The Contemporary-Conducting Program was directed by Baldur Brönnimann, with LFCO concerts led by conductors including Jonathan Nott, David Robertson, Elena Schwarz, and Vimbayi Kaziboni. In the *räsonanz* Donor Concert, Karina Canellakis conducted the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, while Esa-Pekka Salonen introduced his new Horn Concerto with the Orchestre de Paris, featuring

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Stefan Dohr as the soloist. The Festival's closing concert, *Les Adieux*, which takes place this Sunday, will feature the world premieres of Jüri Reinvere's new work for solo horn and the complete work *nexus of now* by "artiste étoile" Winnie Huang.

Music For Future: Rising Stars, Family Concerts, and School Programs

The Debut series at the Lukaskirche featured performances by pianist and winner of the 2025 "Prix UBS Jeunes Solistes" Vsevolod Zavidov, jazz saxophonist Jakob Manz, oboist Gabriel Pidoux, violinist David Nebel, Georgian pianists Giorgi Gigashvili and Tamta Magradze, and the Erinys Quartet.

For families, the Festival offered *BarkaBach*, a musical journey with African rhythms at Neubad Luzern, and the science-fiction opera *Klangmission* by Taschenoper Lübeck. Both productions were also presented exclusively for school classes from Lucerne. Additional events included a concert at the KKL Luzern with musicians from the Berliner Philharmoniker and two school concerts by the Munich Philharmonic in the Ark Nova. World music ensembles from the *In the Streets* series, along with the educational format *Sound and the City*, also visited local schools. In total, around 5,300 students took part in these exclusive performances. More than 1,200 children attended the four school concerts in the Ark Nova.

Yesterday, 11 September, as part of the Festival, this year's Swiss Music Prizes were awarded by the Swiss Federal Office of Culture (BAK), with Federal Councillor Elisabeth Baume-Schneider in attendance. This year's co-production between the Festival and the Luzerner Theater was Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes*, conducted by Jonathan Bloxham. The premiere on 6 September also marked the opening of the Luzerner Theater's 2025-26 season.

The Festival also made its presence felt on the Europaplatz with an extraordinary sustainability project: *Quak: Sounds by the Water*, created in collaboration with Pro Natura Lucerne, which raised awareness of endangered amphibian species. Nineteen school classes – more than 400 children in total – explored the educational trail and its interactive sound stations on guided tours. The natural pond in the water basin in front of the KKL will be open to visitors through Sunday, 14 September.

Lucerne Festival on Radio and TV

Swiss Television SRF 1, ARTE Concert, and MEZZO broadcast the Opening Concert featuring the Lucerne Festival Orchestra and Riccardo Chailly on 15 August live or with a short delay; Radio SRF 2 Kultur also carried the performance. The concert remains available on demand through SRF 1, ARTE Concert, and SRF 2 Kultur. The Lucerne Festival Orchestra's Rachmaninoff program with Riccardo Chailly and soloist Beatrice Rana was also streamed by ARTE Concert and will be shown on medici.tv on 2 September, on SRF 1 on 12 October, and on ARTE on 19 October. Starting in September, the concert will also be streamed in China by the NCPA. Radio SRF 2 Kultur recorded a total of ten Festival concerts and broadcast two evenings live, including the performance by the Orchestre de Paris under Esa-Pekka Salonen featuring Stefan Dohr as the soloist. A complete list of radio and television broadcast dates – both live and later airings – can be found at [On Air! Concert transmissions 2025 | Lucerne Festival](#).

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Summer Festival

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