

## Media Release

### Piano Festival

16 to 24 November 2019

#### Lucerne's Prelude to the Year of Beethoven in 2020: The Upcoming Celebration Will Be a Dominant Theme at the Final Piano Festival in 2019

Beethoven's piano concertos and sonatas rank among the most significant works of the keyboard literature. They will be in the spotlight at the 2019 Piano Festival, the final edition of which is being held this year. It starts with a Beethoven weekend in the KKL Luzern Concert Hall, where Rudolf Buchbinder and the Festival Strings Lucerne will perform all five piano concertos over two concerts. Igor Levit will conclude the Festival by continuing his ongoing Beethoven cycle. Between these bookends, Mitsuko Uchida, the Russian master pianists Evgeny Kissin and Arcadi Volodos, and the new star on the scene from Iceland, Víkingur Ólafsson, will appear in recitals. The Debut Series will present Claire Huangci, Danae Doerken, and Alexander Ullman.

For decades, Rudolf Buchbinder has been acclaimed for his Beethoven performances. He will play the Second, Third, and Fourth Piano Concertos with the Festival Strings Lucerne on the concert that opens the Piano Festival; the following day he will continue with the First and Fifth Concertos. Igor Levit continues his ongoing cycle of all of the Beethoven piano sonatas with the third and fourth recital installments; in the course of these, he will play a total of nine sonatas, including the *Appassionata*, Op. 57. Two of the most sought-after Russian pianists of our time, Evgeny Kissin and Arcadi Volodos, can be heard on two consecutive days. Kissin will also present a Beethoven program, including such works as the Op. 13 *Pathétique* Sonata in C minor and the Op. 35 *Eroica Variations*. Arcadi Volodos will focus on Franz Liszt, combining his music with Robert Schumann's *Kreiseriana*, Op. 16. The *New York Times* describes Víkingur Ólafsson as the "Icelandic Glenn Gould," and the 35-year-old pianist is currently one of the most successful newcomers in the field. His recital will pair original works by J. S. Bach with various transcriptions, including arrangements by Sergei Rachmaninoff and Alexander Siloti. Mitsuko Uchida, who is regarded as one of the most important interpreters of Schubert today, will offer an all-Schubert evening comprising three sonatas: in A minor, D. 537; C major, D. 840; and B-flat major, D. 960.

The performers in the Debut concert series at the Lukaskirche will include the following: Claire Huangci, winner of the first prize at the Concours Géza Anda in 2018; the German-Greek pianist Danae Doerken, who studied with Karl-Heinz Kämmerling and Lars Vogt; and the British pianist Alexander Ullman, who won the International Franz Liszt Piano Competition in Budapest in 2011. Martin Meyer will look back over his Piano Lectures to conclude the series; using recorded musical examples and drawing on his own memories, he will also explore the history of keyboard performance from the early 20th century into the present. The pianist Peter Hill will lead this year's master class in cooperation with the Hochschule Luzern – Musik. The master class will focus on Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* and Messiaen's works for piano.

The Piano Off-Stage, the jazz festival within the festival, will have its traditional launch on Tuesday evening in a program at the KKL Luzern's Lucerne Hall showcasing eight international jazz pianists. Emmet Cohen from the United States, Chris Conz from Switzerland, the Italians Luca Filastro and Lorenzo Vitolo, the Austrian Walter Fischbacher, and the Germans Béatrice Kahl, Bernd Lhotzky, and Jan Luley will perform over the course of five evenings at various bars and restaurants in Lucerne.

In addition to the KKL foyer and the Seebar, the performance venues will include the following hotels: Wilden Mann, Des Balances, Des Alpes, Schweizerhof Luzern, the Grand Hotel National, The Hotel, and, newly added on this year, the Bürgenstock Resort.

From 22 to 24 November, the event “Kultissimo” will take place for the first time, presented by Pro Juventute Luzern Zug in partnership with cultural institutions in Lucerne. As part of these days focused on culture for children, Igor Levit and the two jazz pianists Chris Conz and Bernd Lhotzky will talk about their instruments in workshops for Festival guests ages 7 and up.

As with the Easter Festival, the Piano Festival will take place for the final time in 2019. As part of Lucerne Festival’s new strategic direction, these will be replaced by two weekends of concerts starting in 2020, one each in the spring and fall, featuring artists who form part of the Festival’s in-house projects, including the Lucerne Festival Orchestra, the Lucerne Festival Academy, and the Lucerne Festival Alumni. The dates and program details for these two weekends will be announced at a later time.

Tickets may be purchased online starting 5 August 2019, 12.00 noon (Lucerne time).

Further information on ticket sales can be found at [www.lucernefestival.ch](http://www.lucernefestival.ch)

Information on “Kultissimo” can be found starting in September 2019 at [kultissimo.ch](http://kultissimo.ch).

Concert Sponsor – Julius Bär

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