

Lucerne Festival to Build on Its Strengths

Lucerne, 7 May 2019. The internationally acclaimed Lucerne Festival is recognized for the quality of its artistic strengths. In order to build on these, and to further enhance its profile, as of 2020 Lucerne Festival will focus on developing the Summer Festival. This strategy will center on the in-house projects: the Lucerne Festival Orchestra, the Lucerne Festival Academy, and the Lucerne Festival Alumni, as well as on other activities within the city and the region of Lucerne. A new initiative consisting of two weekends will take place, one each in spring and fall, featuring varied events designed around these in-house projects. As part of this strategy, the Easter and Piano Festivals will be discontinued.

The decision to adopt this new structure, which will take effect in 2020, was made by Lucerne Festival's Board of Trustees and Executive Board as part of their periodic review of strategy.

As Foundation Board Chairman Hubert Achermann and Festival Executive and Artistic Director Michael Haefliger reported to media representatives on Tuesday, the new structure is designed "to make the five key success factors of Lucerne Festival even more effective."

These success factors include the following:

- the **Summer Festival**, which is one of the major international orchestral festivals and which presents the world's most acclaimed symphony orchestras in performances at the KKL Lucerne;
- the **Lucerne Festival Orchestra**, established in 2003 by Claudio Abbado and Michael Haefliger and led by Music Director Riccardo Chailly, which is regarded as one of the finest symphony orchestras in the world and which promotes Lucerne abroad as an ambassador for tourism and culture through its international tours;
- the **Lucerne Festival Academy**, founded in 2004 by Pierre Boulez and Michael Haefliger, today under the artistic direction of Wolfgang Rihm, which is an innovative crucible for developing talented musicians, conductors, and composers in the field of contemporary music;
- the **Lucerne Festival Alumni**, a unique global network of former Academy participants whose significance has been steadily increasing through the growth of the Alumni's concert activities both in Lucerne and abroad. The Alumni represent the Festival in Europe, the USA, and Asia and thus also enhance the City of Lucerne's reputation as an international classical music metropolis;
- Activities and innovative concert formats specifically designed to reinforce the **Festival's ties with its hometown and with the Canton of Lucerne**. These include such events as the live concert broadcast at Inseli Park, the "In the Streets" Festival, the Special Event Day, and the "40min" series.

Spring and Fall: Weekends as the Framework for New Creative Formats

As part of their evaluation, the Board of Trustees and the Executive Board have assessed the Easter Festival and the Piano Festival as “strategically of less importance” for the goal of further strengthening the Lucerne Festival brand. These two small festivals are therefore being held for the last time this year.

In 2020, two new weekends will be launched, one each in spring and fall. These are intended to offer audiences high-quality, widely varied concerts designed around in-house projects. “We will therefore continue to develop the core of our brand in a consistent way through in-house projects featuring the Lucerne Festival Orchestra, the Academy, the Alumni, and Lucerne Festival Young,” according to Executive and Artistic Director Michael Haefliger.

He adds that further strengthening the Summer Festival is important because it forms the basis for Lucerne Festival's national and international success, giving it an unmistakable identity. “We had to decide what we wanted to focus on in the future, and in the context of being 95% self-financed as well,” Haefliger explains, “and we came to the conclusion that the weekends that we have envisaged, with their varied in-house productions, are more important for our continuing development than the Easter and Piano Festivals.”

According to Foundation Chairman Achermann, the main sponsors “reacted positively to these planned innovations.” He said that they support them and see great potential in particular in the further development of projects abroad. Two studies carried out by the German market research institute GfK in 2016 and 2017 with the Friends of Lucerne Festival Foundation and other interviewees similarly revealed a clear preference for the Summer Festival. Achermann: “This contributed to the decision to strengthen the Summer Festival further by expanding the activities associated with it.”

The same, Achermann added, applies to the most recent economic feasibility study of Lucerne Festival by the University of St. Gallen, which was also conducted in 2017. This study, according to the Foundation Chairman, “has likewise clearly shown that the Summer Festival generates the highest added value for us and for the region of Lucerne.”

For these reasons, the Board of Trustees and the Executive Board are convinced that this new strategic orientation will help Lucerne Festival achieve even greater recognition and make it even more successful. “We have done what any good company leadership does, whether in the cultural, service, or industrial sectors: we have analyzed our activities and decided to focus on our core areas in order to further strengthen them in the future,” according to Hubert Achermann and Michael Haefliger.

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