

Media Release

"Life Is Live" | 14 to 23 August 2020

Lucerne Festival will launch a festival consisting of nine concerts in mid-August. The opening on 14 August features the Lucerne Festival Orchestra, conducted for the first time by Herbert Blomstedt, with Martha Argerich as the soloist. Other artists in the lineup of programs include Cecilia Bartoli and Igor Levit. Additionally, *Luzerner Glocken - con sordino* by Peter Conradin Zumthor, a large-scale sound installation in public space, as well as the "In the Streets" Festival will be presented.

Lucerne, 26 June 2020. The measures taken by the Swiss Federal Council to ease coronavirus restrictions make it possible for Lucerne Festival to take place from 14 to 23 August with a short, concentrated program of events. The theme is "Life Is Live": following weeks of standstill in the concert world, the Festival celebrates the vibrancy and uniqueness of the live experience that is shared with audiences in the KKL and in the city of Lucerne.

The concerts will take place with up to 1000 persons in the KKL Luzern Concert Hall, performed by international stars who live predominantly in Switzerland. In addition to Martha Argerich, Cecilia Bartoli, Herbert Blomstedt, Valentine Michaud, and Mauro Peter, the Lucerne Festival Orchestra will feature a roster of 35 musicians. Igor Levit will continue his cycle of Beethoven piano sonatas over two evenings, and an ensemble of Lucerne Festival Alumni will perform works by young Swiss composers led by Baldur Brönnimann. The sound installation *Luzerner Glocken - con sordino* ("Lucerne's Bells - con sordino"), conceived by the percussionist Peter Conradin Zumthor, makes a musical statement in the era of coronavirus and leads the audience on a sonic journey through prepared church bells in Lucerne. And the popular festival "In the Streets," presenting four groups over five days, brings world music to various central squares in the city.

"With 'Life Is Live,' Lucerne Festival returns to 'life,' so to speak," explains Executive and Artistic Director Michael Haefliger. "After weeks of privation, the time has come for the live experience, and we are very much looking forward to helping shape this moment. With the Federal Council's decision on a limit of 1,000 people for events through the end of August, we can now present a series of wonderful concerts live onstage, in front of a limited audience. The safety of the visitors and artists is our top priority, and we will adhere to the health protection guidelines developed for the KKL Luzern."

"I would very much like to commend Michael Haefliger and his team for being able to organize a short festival, 'Life Is Live,' as a replacement for the Summer Festival during these times -- and to do so with such an appealing program," says the Lucerne Cantonal Councillor Marcel Schwerzmann.

Opening Weekend with the Lucerne Festival Orchestra

The Festival opens with two concerts by the Lucerne Festival Orchestra under the baton of Herbert Blomstedt and features works by the composer whose anniversary we are celebrating this year, Ludwig van Beethoven. The soloist is Martha Argerich, who will open both evenings with the First Piano Concerto. The Second Symphony will be performed on 14 August, and the Third, the "Sinfonia eroica," on 15 August. These concerts will be played by the original number of about 35 musicians, as was the practice during Beethoven's lifetime. A chamber concert with soloists from



the Lucerne Festival Orchestra will take place on 16 August; here, too, Beethoven will be the focus with a performance of his Op. 20 Septet. All three concerts can be viewed live on arte.tv. In addition, the Beethoven piano concerto from the Opening Concert on 14 August will be broadcast by Swiss television on 16 August on SRF 1.

International Stars from Switzerland and Europe

In the Festival week that follows, the much-sought-after tenor Mauro Peter, a native of Lucerne, will make his Lucerne Festival debut with a song recital. The French saxophonist Valentine Michaud, winner of this year's Credit Suisse Young Artist Award, will perform both a solo recital and a program with Lucerne Festival Alumni. On 21 August, Cecilia Bartoli and her orchestra Les Musiciens du Prince – Monaco will perform a program titled "What Passion Cannot Music Raise" and featuring music by Handel and others. And Igor Levit will play piano sonatas by Ludwig van Beethoven as part of his ongoing cycle of the complete sonatas on 22 and 23 August, including the Sonatas in D minor, Op. 31 no. 2 *The Tempest*, in C minor, Op. 13 *Pathétique*, and in C-sharp minor, Op. 27 no. 2 *Moonlight*. An ensemble of Lucerne Festival Alumni led by Baldur Brönnimann will perform works by young Swiss composers, including the world premiere of a new work by Barblina Meierhans, which was commissioned by Lucerne Festival, and compositions by Oscar Bianchi and Nadir Vassena. Valentine Michaud will appear as the soloist. The KKL Lucerne Concert Hall will host an NZZ podium on 16 August led by the journalist and author Martin Meyer. Among the guests is Patricia Kopatchinskaja.

Sound Installation: *Luzerner Glocken – con sordino*

The percussionist Peter Conradin Zumthor will lead audiences on a sonic path from the Jesuitenkirche via Peterskapelle and the Matthäuskirche to the Hofkirche. For his large-scale sound installation *Luzerner Glocken - con sordino* ("Lucerne's Bells - con sordino"), he covered the clappers of 17 church bells with rubber material, thus resulting in a new kind of sound with a muted vibration ("con sordino"). By defamiliarizing the sounds of church bells, Zumthor aims to uncover an innovative kind of sonority and beauty: "The church bell no longer strikes; it sounds. Overtone-rich bands of sound fill the air." The sonic path lasts about 75 minutes and will take place on three different days.

"Connected": New Platform for Digital Formats

In order to enhance anticipation of the live concerts in August, various online formats have been available since mid-June via the new platform called "Connected" on Lucerne Festival's website (lucernefestival.ch/en/connected). The offerings will increase regularly in the coming weeks. The "Luzern klingt" series presents seven mini-concerts by two chamber music ensembles of the Lucerne Festival Orchestra, which were recorded in June at well-known Lucerne locations. "Pizz'n Bits," an interactive project for children, consists of short videos by the musicians Eleonora Savini and Federica Vecchio, which are shown weekly on the Festival platform. During "Happy Hour," musicians meet on via the Zoom video platform for live exchanges; these can also be accessed subsequently in the video archive. "That Is the Question!" presents experts responding to questions from the audience about music, concert life, and the program in short video podcasts. In the blog series "We are Lucerne Festival," concertgoers, artists, and partners recall formative moments they experienced at the Festival, and the series "World's Best Friends" is dedicated to



great moments played by international orchestras culled from recent years. Dates for each of these series can be found on the Festival website.

Advance sales of tickets for the Festival start online on 13 July 2020 at 12.00 noon (Lucerne time): lucernefestival.ch/en/program/life-is-live-2020

Additional information on the health protection guidelines and security regulations can be found on the Festival website at lucernefestival.ch/en/press/media-releases

Friday, 14 August | 18.00 | KKL Luzern, Concert Hall

Lucerne Festival Orchestra | **Herbert Blomstedt** conductor | **Martha Argerich** piano

Ludwig van Beethoven

Piano Concerto No. 1 in C major, Op. 15 | Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 36

Saturday, 15 August | 18.30 | KKL Luzern, Concert Hall

Lucerne Festival Orchestra | **Herbert Blomstedt** conductor | **Martha Argerich** piano

Ludwig van Beethoven

Piano Concerto No. 1 in C major, Op. 15 | Symphony No. 3 in E-flat major, Op. 55 *Sinfonia eroica*

Sunday, 16 August | 14.30 | **NZZ Podium** | KKL Luzern, Concert Hall

"Die Welt seit Corona" ("The Coronavirus Era"). Roundtable conversation (in German) with **Patricia**

Kopatchinskaja violinist and **Karin Mölling** virologist, Zurich and Berlin

Dr. Martin Meyer Introduction and Moderation

Sunday, 16 August | 18.30 | KKL Luzern, Concert Hall

Soloists of the Lucerne Festival Orchestra

Wolfgang Amadé Mozart Divertimento in D major for oboe, two horns, two violins, viola, and double bass, K. 251 *Nannerl Septet* | **Ludwig van Beethoven** Septet in E-flat major, Op. 20 for violin, viola, clarinet, horn, bassoon, cello, and double bass

Monday, 17 – Wednesday, 19 August | always at 20.30 | **The Bells of Lucerne**

Jesuitenkirche, Peterskapelle, Matthäuskirche, Hofkirche St. Leodegar

Peter Conradin Zumthor *Luzerner Glocken – con sordino* für 17 church bells across Lucerne.

A sound installation in public space

Registration (required) starts on 13 July at lucernefestival.ch/bells

Tuesday, 18 August | 19.30 | **Recital: Mauro Peter** | KKL Luzern, Concert Hall

Mauro Peter tenor | **Helmut Deutsch** piano

Robert Schumann *Liederkreis*, Op. 39 after Joseph von Eichendorff | *Dichterliebe*, Op. 48 Song cycle from Heinrich Heine's *Buch der Lieder*

Wednesday, 19 – Sunday, 23 August | **In the Streets** | Europaplatz, Kornmarkt, and Jesuitenplatz

The Music Groups: **Fatoumata Dembélé** | **JMO** | **Mirakolo** | **NN**

All Dates: Opening Concert with all groups | Europaplatz | 19 August | 17.30

Closing Concert with all groups | Europaplatz | 23 August | 14.00–17.00

Additional performances | Kornmarkt & Jesuitenplatz

19 August | 19.00–22.00 and 20 – 22 August | always 18.00–22.00



LUCERNE FESTIVAL

Thursday, 20 August | 19.30 | **Recital: Valentine Michaud** | KKL Luzern, Concert Hall

Valentine Michaud saxophone | **Akvilė Šileikaitė** piano

Sergei Prokofiev Sonata No. 2 in D major, Op. 94, arranged for soprano saxophone by Michaud

Alexander Glazunov *Chant du ménestrel*, Op. 71, arranged for alto saxophone by Michaud

Kevin Juillerat *L'Etang du Patriarche* for piano and alto saxophone

Francis Poulenc Sonata for Oboe and Piano, Op. 185, arranged for soprano saxophone by Michaud

Edison Denisov Sonata for alto saxophone and piano

Friday, 21 August | 19.30 | **Concert: Cecilia Bartoli** | KKL Luzern, Concert Hall

Les Musiciens du Prince – Monaco | **Gianluca Capuano** conductor |

Cecilia Bartoli mezzo-soprano

"**What Passion Cannot Music Raise**" Works by **George Frideric Handel** and others

Saturday, 22 August | 18.30 | **Recital: Igor Levit 1** | KKL Luzern, Concert Hall

Igor Levit piano

Ludwig van Beethoven Piano Sonata in D minor, Op. 31, no. 2 *The Tempest* |

Piano Sonata in B-flat major, Op. 22 | Piano Sonata in C major, Op. 2, no. 3 |

Piano Sonata in C minor, Op. 13 *Grande Sonata Pathétique*

Sunday, 23 August | 11.00 | KKL Luzern, Concert Hall

Ensemble of the Lucerne Festival Alumni | **Baldur Brönnimann** conductor |

Valentine Michaud saxophone

Barblina Meierhans new work inspired by the Festival theme "Life Is Live" (world premiere, commissioned by Lucerne Festival)

Nadir Vassena *materia oscura* for saxophone and ensemble

Oscar Bianchi *Contingency* for ensemble

Sunday, 23 August | 17.00 | **Recital: Igor Levit 2** | KKL Luzern, Concert Hall

Igor Levit piano

Ludwig van Beethoven Piano Sonata in D major, Op. 28 *Pastorale* | Piano Sonata in G major,

Op. 31, no. 1 | Piano Sonata in E-flat major, Op. 27, no. 1 *Sonata quasi una fantasia* |

Piano Sonata in C-sharp minor, Op. 27, no. 2 *Sonata quasi una fantasia*

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