

Media Release

The first edition of Lucerne Festival Forward has concluded

Forward breaks down the traditional boundaries of the concert experience, venturing creative redefinitions of sound and space

Lucerne, 22 November 2021. This past weekend, the first Forward Festival for contemporary music unveiled new perspectives for the concert experience of tomorrow. Lucerne Festival even took unusual steps in developing and preparing for this newly conceived festival: under the direction of Felix Heri, Director of the Contemporary division, and dramaturge Mark Sattler, 18 members of the international Academy network worked as a team to curate the diverse program that was presented over the past three days.

Last May, Executive and Artistic Director Michael Haefliger announced the establishment of this fall festival as part of Lucerne Festival's new strategy. Contemporary music by young composers from all over the world was performed, including pieces that transformed the KKL Luzern's outstanding acoustics into a completely new experience, subverted traditional listening habits, enacted a reversal of roles played by audience and artists, and explored sound and space in myriad diverse ways. A total of over 1300 visitors attended this inaugural edition from 19 to 21 November, which offered four concerts and other performances in and around the KKL Luzern. Six world premieres of works commissioned by Lucerne Festival were heard. A total of 37 musicians from the Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra (LFCO) performed four concerts in various ensemble configurations, in collaboration with the conductors Mariano Chiacchiarini and Elena Schwarz.

The topics of spatiality and the connection between musicians and audience played a decisive role in all of the works presented, which included one in which a single person shared the space with the performer Winnie Huang, who concentrated on her counterpart and recorded and processed facial expressions and reactions during her performance. Other examples range from concerts that began in darkness, such as Oliveros's *Out of the Dark*, to works in which the musicians were positioned around the audience, encouraging them to hum, as in Annea Lockwood's *Water and Memory*. Jessie Cox brought bells specifically for the premiere of his work *Alongside a Chorus of Voices*, in which the bells were suspended above the audience.

In Michael Pisaro's *ricefall*, 49 participants from the population took part and let rice fall on various objects from different positions in the Concert Hall, thus creating an almost meditative rain of sound. The 49 kg of rice used for this project will be donated by the festival to "Toni's Zoo" in Rothenburg, where zebras, kangaroos, and camels will benefit.

Lucerne Festival provided additional insights on its digital channels, which offered audiences videos and interviews to become better informed in advance of their concert visits. The composers and Contemporary curators presented individual introductions to each piece in 21 short videos, which were also available for playback as a virtual program booklet on site via QR code. These videos are still available on the Festival's YouTube channel and website at lucernefestival.ch/de/Looking-Forward. And in July, two interactive webinars provided an in-depth look at the co-curation process, while conductor Mariano Chiacchiarini was also a guest in the Festival's video series "Deep Listening: New Music."

The curatorial team of Lucerne Festival Forward:

Chloë Abbott trumpet (Great Britain) | **Jack Adler-McKean** Tuba (Great Britain) | **Cecilia Bercovich** violin and viola (Spain) | **Ettore Biagi** clarinet (Italy) | **Winnie Huang** violin and viola, performance artist (China/Australia) | **Helga Karen** piano (Finland) | **Edward Kass** double bass (USA) | **Marina Kifferstein** violin, composer (USA) | **Angus Lee** Flöte, composer and conductor (China) | **Alex Lipowski** percussion (USA) | **Stephen Menotti** trombone (USA) | **Benjamin Mitchell** clarinet (USA) | **Benjamin Roidl-Ward** Fagott, improviser (USA) | **Michelle Ross** violin (USA) | **James Austin Smith** oboe (USA) | **Nathan Watts** cello (USA) | **Johanna Wu** violin, performer, and improviser (USA) | **Andrew Zhou** piano (USA/Canada)

Felix Heri Director of the Contemporary Division | **Mark Sattler** Lucerne Festival Dramaturge

Swiss Re - Founding Partner Lucerne Festival Forward

Photos can be downloaded at lucernefestival.ch/en/press/photos



Opening on Europaplatz: Performance with the musicians of the LFCO
© Priska Ketterer/Lucerne Festival



Charlie Sdraulig *tend* for for gesturing, vocalizing performer and audient with Winnie Huang
© Priska Ketterer/Lucerne Festival



Extinction Events and Dawn Chorus by Liza Lim
© Peter Fischli/Lucerne Festival



Extinction Events and Dawn Chorus by Liza Lim
© Peter Fischli/Lucerne Festival



Members of the Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra (LFCO) will improvise to works by Vivian Suter
© Peter Fischli/Lucerne Festival



World premiere of *Alongside a Chorus of Voices*, a new work by Jessie Cox
© Priska Ketterer/Lucerne Festival



Alongside a Chorus of Voices by Jessie Cox
© Priska Ketterer/Lucerne Festival



Michael Pizaros *ricefall* with 49 participants
© Peter Fischli/Lucerne Festival



Olga Neuwirth's *Construction in Space*
© Priska Ketterer/Lucerne Festival



World premiere of *Exhalation*, a new work by Annie Hui-Hsin Hsieh
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