

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

2021 Summer Festival

Composer-in-residence Rebecca Saunders

World premieres and Swiss premieres, music theater production

The concerts in the “Contemporary” category will present 16 world premieres and 12 Swiss premieres, including of works by composer-in-residence Rebecca Saunders. Some of the commissioned compositions have been adapted for smaller ensembles because of the coronavirus pandemic. The newly founded Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra (LFCO) becomes the artistic center in the field of contemporary music at Lucerne Festival. In addition, there will be Mauricio Kagel’s *Staatstheater*, a co-production with the Luzerner Theater.

Composer-in-Residence Rebecca Saunders

The compositions of Rebecca Saunders, who was born in London in 1967, possess a unique sonic language. She explores the plastic and spatial properties of sounds and plays with timbres using microtonal shadings that develop and unfold through dynamics and intonation. Saunders prefers to focus on specific instruments in her works. She studied with Nigel Osborne at the University of Edinburgh and with Wolfgang Rihm at the University of Karlsruhe. In Lucerne, twelve of her more recent works will be presented in five concerts, including the piano concerto *to an utterance*, which she has dedicated to the British pianist Nicolas Hodges. He will join with the LFCO under the direction of Ilan Volkov to give its world premiere. *to an utterance* was composed for the 2020 Roche Commissions, but its premiere had to be postponed for a year because of the coronavirus pandemic. On account of the current situation, Saunders has adapted the score for a smaller ensemble. The program also includes the Swiss premiere of Saunders’s *void* for two percussionists and orchestra.

The soprano Juliet Fraser will perform in two works that Saunders composed specifically for her: *The Mouth* for soprano and tape and *Nether* for soprano and ensemble, which is based on Molly Bloom’s final monologue in James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. Trumpeter Marco Blaauw will perform the piece *blaauw* for double-bell trumpet, which is named after him, and Quatuor Diotima will present *Unbreathed*. Other ensemble works for varying instrumental forces reflect the composer’s sound world. See page 20 of the Festival program for an overview of all the works by Saunders that will be presented.

World Premieres and Swiss Premieres

Of the 16 world premieres and 12 Swiss premieres, eight Swiss premieres and one world premiere are of works by composer-in-residence Rebecca Saunders. In addition, there will be eight world premieres by composers from the Composer Seminar. Under the direction of conductor Lin Liao, the performance of *Polyphonie X* by Academy founder Pierre Boulez will involve a veritable rediscovery, since Boulez withdrew the work during his lifetime. This first revival will juxtapose the piece with two world premieres, each of which was written by a graduate of the Composer Seminar: Victor Colțea (a participant in 2016) and Samir Amarouch (a participant in 2018). Lucerne Festival commissioned both of these young composers to write new works using the instrumentation called for in *Polyphonie X*.

The two compositions in the Roche Young Commissions edition are by Alex Vaughan and Kirsten Milenko (see the release about the Lucerne Festival Academy) and also number among the world premieres. Vaughan and Milenko have adapted their scores to accommodate the reduced instrumentation of the LFCO. The First String Quartet by Alex Nante, a work commissioned by the Festival, will also be premiered.

The *räsonanz* – Donor Concert, which is the Festival’s collaboration with the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation, will feature the Swiss premiere of Beat Furrer’s Concerto for Violin and Orchestra as well as world premieres by Iris Szeghy and Miroslav Srnka. The work by Srnka is the cycle *move 1-4*, which will be performed complete for the first time in Switzerland in an edition that includes the world premiere of a new version of *move 2*. The Swiss premiere of Ondřej Adámek’s *Where are you?* for mezzo-soprano and orchestra will be given by Sir Simon Rattle, Magdalena Kožená, and the London Symphony Orchestra.

Music Theater Production

The co-production with the Luzerner Theater marking the beginning of Ina Karr’s directorship of the Theater will be the Swiss premiere of Mauricio Kagel’s *Staatstheater*, featuring the Luzerner Theater ensemble and musicians from the LFCO. Director Lydia Steier will realize this staged composition as a grand collage of the potential opened up by theater.

List of World Premieres and Swiss Premieres

14 August | 16.00 | Quatuor Diotima | Hochschule Luzern – Musik

Quatuor Diotima: Yun-Peng Zhao and Constance Ronzatti violins | Franck Chevalier viola | Pierre Morlet cello

Nante Quatuor à cordes no. 1 *Prima Materia* (world premiere, commissioned by Lucerne Festival)

Saunders *Unbreathed* | **Beethoven** *Grosse Fuge* in B-flat major for string quartet, Op. 133

21 August | 11.00 | Portrait Rebecca Saunders 1 | KKL Luzern, Lucerne Hall

Marco Blaauw trumpet | **Arditti Quartet:** Irvine Arditti and Ashot Sarkissjan violins | **Ralf Ehlers** viola

Lucas Fels cello | **Trio Accanto:** Marcus Weiss saxophone | **Nicolas Hodges** piano | **Christian Dierstein** percussion

Saunders *shadow*. Study for piano (Swiss premiere) | *Fletch* for string quartet (Swiss premiere)

blaauw for double-bell trumpet | *That Time*. Trio for baritone saxophone, percussion, and piano (Swiss premiere, commissioned by Radio France, Lucerne Festival, Südwestrundfunk, and Milano Musica – Associazione per la musica contemporanea)

28 August | 14.30 | Composer Seminar: Closing Concert | Hochschule Luzern – Musik

Ensemble of the Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra

Composer Seminar Showcase: World premieres by participants in the Composer Seminar: **Arnau**

Brichs, Tyson Davis, Lanqing Ding, Theo Finkel, Anton Koshelev, Guillem Palomar, Daniil

Posazhennikov, and Senay Uğurlu | **Boulez** *Initiale* for seven brass players

28 August | 22.00 | Lucerne Festival Academy 1 | KKL Luzern, Lucerne Hall

Ensemble of the Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra

Johanna Malangré conductor | **Juliet Fraser** soprano

Xenakis *Syrmos* for 18 strings | **Illés** *Post Torso* for string orchestra (Swiss premiere)

Saunders *Nether* for soprano and ensemble (Swiss premiere)

29 August | 16.00 | Lucerne Festival Academy 2 | KKL Luzern, Lucerne Hall

Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra | **Lin Liao** conductor (Milenko) | **Johanna Malangré**

conductor (Vaughan) | **Heinz Holliger** conductor | **Felix Renggli** flute

Milenko *Traho* for orchestra (Roche Young Commissions world premiere) | **Vaughan** *Logos* for

orchestra (Roche Young Commissions world premiere) | **Mozart** *Masonic Funeral Music* in C minor,

K. 477 (479^a) | **Holliger** *Ostinato funebre* for small orchestra | *Turm-Musik* for solo flute, small

orchestra, and tape

3 September | 21.30 | Lucerne Festival Academy 3 | Südpol

Ensemble of the Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra | **Lin Liao** conductor

Coltea *Orbitor* for ensemble (world premiere, commissioned by Lucerne Festival with the support of the Swiss cultural institution Pro Helvetia) | **Amarouch** new work for ensemble (world premiere, commissioned by Lucerne Festival) | **Boulez** *Polyphonie X* for 18 instruments | Introduction with **Wolfgang Rihm** at the beginning of the concert (in German)

4 September | 11.00 | Portrait Rebecca Saunders 2 | Hochschule Luzern – Musik

Soloists of the Hochschule Luzern – Musik | **Clemens Heil** conductor | **Daniela Argentino**

soprano (*Skin*) | **Juliet Fraser** soprano (*The Mouth*) | **Charlotte Lorenz** cello (*Solitude*) | **Erik Borgir** assistant conductor | **Alexis Baskind/IRCAM** computer music design

Saunders *Solitude* for cello solo | *The Mouth* for soprano and tape (Swiss premiere) |

Sole. Trio in F-sharp for mobile accordion, percussion, and piano (Swiss premiere) | *Skin* for soprano and 13 instruments (Swiss premiere)

4 September | 18.30 | Lucerne Festival Academy 4 | KKL Luzern, Concert Hall

Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra | **Ilan Volkov** conductor | **Nicolas Hodges** piano |

Christian Dierstein and **Dirk Rothbrust** percussion

Saunders *void* for percussion duo and orchestra (Swiss premiere) | *to an utterance* for piano and orchestra (Roche Commissions world premiere) | **Webern** *Variations for Orchestra, Op. 30* |

Symphony, Op. 21 | **Stravinsky** *Movements* for piano and orchestra

5 September | 16.00 | Staatstheater | Luzerner Theater

Luzerner Theater Ensembles | **Ensemble of the Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra**

Stefan Schreiber musical direction | **Lydia Steier** staging | **Sophia Schneider** and **Barbara Lenartz** sets
Jennifer Mosen costumes

Kagel *Staatstheater*. Staged composition for singers, actors, dancers, and instrumentalists (Swiss premiere, a co-production of the Luzerner Theater with Lucerne Festival)

Additional performances until 19 September, detailed information at luzernertheater.ch

6 September | 19.30 | *räsonanz* – Donor Concert | KKL Luzern, Concert Hall

Bamberg Symphony | **Jakub Hruša** conductor | **Juliane Banse** soprano | **Ilya Gringolts** violin

Szeghy *Offertorium* for soprano and orchestra (world premiere) | **Furrer** Concerto for Violin and Orchestra (Swiss premiere) | **Srnka** *move 1-4* for orchestra (first performance of the complete cycle and world premiere of the new version of *move 2*)

8 September | 19.30 | London Symphony Orchestra | KKL Luzern, Concert Hall

London Symphony Orchestra | **Sir Simon Rattle** conductor | **Magdalena Kožená** mezzo-soprano

Adámek *Where Are You?* for mezzo-soprano and orchestra (Swiss premiere) |

Beethoven *Symphony No. 6 in F major, Op. 68 Pastoral*

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

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