

*Le Piano Symphonique – a new beacon in Swiss musical life **

A look back at the 2024 festival and a look ahead to outstanding, unforgettable pianistic moments at the festival «Le Piano Symphonique» in 2025 with Martha Argerich as «Pianiste Associée».



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Since 2022, the Swiss city of Lucerne has been moving towards becoming a new, magically attractive place of pilgrimage for lovers of piano, with all the radiant power of a pianistic «lighthouse in Swiss musical life», as the newspaper *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (NZZ) has described it. That was the year that the **Luzerner Sinfonieorchester** launched the festival «**Le Piano Symphonique**», in which the focus is on the piano, but often in association with symphonic sounds. The festival programme includes not just selected recitals, but also features intimate chamber-music ensembles and solo concertos with orchestra. «Le Piano Symphonique» is thus not just «a premier piano

festival », as the *BBC Music Magazine* wrote, but also a unique opportunity to experience internationally renowned artists from close-up.

The founder and director of the festival, Numa Bischof Ullmann, wants to explicitly break with «programming conventions», as Jan Brachmann notes in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. For example, instead of having a symphony performed in the second half of a concert after a piano concerto with orchestra in the first half, he uses chamber music as a counterpoint. The reputed piano journal *Piano News* recently wrote: «It is beyond question that «Le Piano Symphonique» has a great future with its exciting and diverse programming ... it is a blessing for all piano fans who want to discover something unusual and are ready to take a trip to beautiful Lucerne to do so.» And this concept has convinced festival visitors from all over the world, which is precisely the vision that Bischof Ullmann has for the festival.

Looking back at «Le Piano Symphonique» 2024

«Le Piano Symphonique» takes place annually in January. In 2024, it was particularly successful. **Twelve concerts** were put on in **three venues**: the big concerts took place in the concert hall of the KKL, while other festival locations were the Lukaskirche (Church of St Luke) and the Zeugherrensaal in the five-star Schweizerhof hotel. Four concerts were completely booked out: the opening concert with the pianist superstars **Martha Argerich** and **Mikhail Pletnev**, the recital by the «Discovery of Le Piano Symphonique», the highly talented young French pianist **Arielle Beck**, the Schubertiade by the French master pianist David Fray, and also the «Pianissimo Concert», in which 140 talented music pupils from the Lucerne Music School displayed their skills and put 800 delighted visitors under their spell. A performance by the young Israeli pianist, Yoav Levanon, the festival's «Rising Star», was very special: together with the Luzerner Sinfonieorchester under its principal conductor, Michael Sanderling, he played the two piano concertos by Franz Liszt as well as the «Totentanz» by the same composer. The concerts were recorded live and are being issued by the label Warner Classics as an album. The six-day festival drew altogether some **10,000 concert visitors** to Lake Lucerne, ensuring that on

average, the concert venues were filled to 90% capacity. This year, there was also a huge increase in sales of the festival pass over the previous year. And those who were not able to attend the festival in person had the chance to follow the top-flight pianistic encounters and magical moments digitally, as **Medici.tv** live-streamed seven concerts from «Le Piano Symphonique». You can still access these **unforgettable** musical documents on [Medici.tv](https://www.medicity.tv).

Looking ahead to «Le Piano Symphonique» in 2025

In January 2025, too, enthusiasts of piano music can look forward to experiencing outstanding artists. The festival will be opening its doors from **13 to 18 January 2025**. Three recitals with more star pianists will take place surrounding the festival as part of the concert season: with Khatia Buniatishvili (19 October 2024), Krystian Zimerman (13 March 2025) und Evgeny Kissin (20 June 2025). One of the highlights of the 2025 festival is also connected with **Evgeny Kissin: the «Shostakovich Project»**. Here, the Russian star pianist will play with long-time musical friends and companions such as Gidon Kremer, the Kopelman Quartet, the soprano Chen Reiss and the tenor Michael Schade in performances of works by the Russian composer. **Martha Argerich**, the «master of weightless sound» (NZZ), is to remain a key figure at the festival as **«Pianiste Associée»**. She can be experienced twice with the **«Carnival of the Animals»** by Camille Saint-Saëns: together with her daughter Annie Dutoit as narrator in the 2nd Act of the evening programme on 17 January 2025 and in a family programme in the morning of 18 January 2025 with an animated film by Sandra Albukrek. The «Grande Dame» of the piano will also top the programme of the closing concert of the festival. Other artists expected at the 2025 festival are: the Turkish pianist **Fazil Say**, who will open the festival with **Bach's «Goldberg Variations»**, **Leif Ove Andsnes**, who has something contemporary in store as well as pieces by Edvard Grieg and Frédéric Chopin, the Italian pianist **Beatrice Rana**, who will perform Mendelssohn's first piano concerto with the Luzerner Sinfonieorchester, and the German-Greek pianist **Kiveli Dörken**, who will play Late Romantic chamber music with **members of the Luzerner Sinfonieorchester**. There will also be a Berlin-style ballad and chanson concert with **HK Gruber** and **Kirill Gerstein**. And jazz fans will get their money's worth, too: the leading German jazz pianist of the younger generation, **Michael Wollny**, will be taking to the stage as a duo with the harpsichordist Tamar Halperin.

So there is a lot on offer at «Le Piano Symphonique», and it is well worth taking a dive into this magical festival world to experience some unforgettable musical moments — or as the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung sums it up: «piano concerts that will long stay in the memory».

* Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 20th January 2024

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Lucerne piano festival «Le Piano Symphonique»

Concert dates 13 - 18 January 2025 (short programme overview)

* MONDAY*

[13 January 2025 | 7 pm | Lucerne | KKL](#)

1st Act - Opening concert

Fazil Say *Piano*

Bach «Goldberg-Variations»
Aria with 30 variations BWV 988

2nd Act – «Berlin in the Light»
Ballads and chansons of the 20s and 30s

HK Gruber *Speaker*
Kirill Gerstein *Piano*

Songs by Hanns Eisler and Kurt Weill

* TUESDAY *

[14 January 2025 | 19 pm | Lucerne | KKL](#)

1st Act – Grand recital: Leif Ove Andsnes
Pearls from Norway

Leif Ove Andsnes *Piano*

Works by Grieg, Tveitt and Chopin

2nd Act
Martha Argerich & Friends

Martha Argerich *Piano*

The programme will be announced at a later date

* WEDNESDAY *

[15 January 2025 | 12:30 pm | Lucerne | Kunstmuseum](#)

Prizewinners Concours Géza Anda 2024
«Le Choix de Martha Argerich»

Presentation concert
Prizewinners of the Concours Géza Anda 2024

[15 January 2025 | 19 pm | Lucerne | KKL](#)

World premiere
«The Shostakovich Project 2025 Part 1»
Initiated by Evgeny Kissin

Chen Reiss *Soprano*
Rachel Frenkel *Mezzosoprano*
Michael Schade *Tenor*
Alexander Roslavets *Bass*
Kopelmann Quartett
Gidon Kremer *Violin*
Giedrė Dirvanauskaitė *Violoncello*

Evgeny Kissin *Piano*

Works by Dmitri Shostakovich

[15 January 2025 | 22 pm | Lucerne | Neubad](#)

Crossover Jazz
Harpichord and Piano

Tamar Halperin *Harpichord*
Michael Wollny *Piano*

* THURSDAY *

[16 January 2025 | 12:30 pm | Lucerne | Kunstmuseum](#)

Recital in the Kunstmuseum: Daniel Ciobanu
Daniel Ciobanu *Piano*

Works by Mussorgsky, Shchedrin, Liszt, Enescu,
Prokofiev and Gulda

[16 January 2025 | 19 pm | Lucerne | KKL](#)

1st Act – Big piano concerto I: Rachmaninoff 2

Yunchan Lim *Piano*
Michael Sanderling *Conductor*
Luzerner Sinfonieorchester

Works by Rachmaninoff and Tchaikovsky

2nd Act - Martha Argerich & Friends

Martha Argerich *Piano*

The programme will be announced at a later date

* FRIDAY *

[17 January 2025 | 12:30 pm | Lucerne | KKL](#)

Kammermusik im Kunstmuseum: Kiveli Dörken

Kiverli Dörken *Piano*
Soloists from the Luzerner Sinfonieorchesters

Works by Mahler, Brahms, Dvořák and Suk

[17 January 2025 | 19 pm | Lucerne | KKL](#)

1st Act - Big piano concerto II: Felix Mendelssohn

Beatrice Rana *Piano*
Michael Sanderling *Conductor*
Luzerner Sinfonieorchester

Works by Mendelssohn

2nd Act – Le Carnaval des Animaux
Martha Argerich et sa famille

Martha Argerich *Piano*
Annie Dutoit *Narrator*
Friends & Family *Instrumental ensemble*

Saint-Saëns «Le carnaval des animaux»

* SATURDAY *

[18 January 2025 | 11 am | Lucerne | KKL](#)

Family concert with film
«Carnival with Martha Argerich»
With animated film by Sandra Albukrek

[18 January 2025 | 19 pm | Lucerne | KKL](#)

«The Shostakovich Project 2025 Part 2»
Initiated by Evgeny Kissin

Gidon Kremer *Violin*
Maxim Rysanov *Viola*
Gautier Capuçon *Violoncello*
Evgeny Kissin *Piano*

Works by Dmitri Shostakovich

[18 January 2025 | 21:30 pm | Lucerne | KKL](#)

Final festival concert with Martha Argerich

Martha Argerich *Piano*

The programme will be announced at a later date

Extra concerts Pianofestival «Le Piano Symphonique» 2025

[19 October 2024 | 19:30 pm | Lucerne | KKL](#)

Grand Recital I: Khatia Buniatishvili

Khatia Buniatishvili *Piano*

The programme will be announced at a later date

[13 March 2025 | 19:30 pm | Lucerne | KKL](#)

Grand Recital II: Evgeny Kissin

Evgeny Kissin *Piano*

Works by Beethoven, Chopin und Shostakovich

[20 June 2025 | 19:30 pm | Lucerne | KKL](#)

Grand Recital III: Krystian Zimerman

Krystian Zimerman *Piano*

The programme will be announced at a later date

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Infos & Tickets

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