



verbierfestival

MEDIA RELEASE

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VERBIER FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES 2021 EDITION – Musicians and Audiences return for Live Performances and Events over 17 days: July 16 – August 1, 2021

- The Verbier Festival returns for its 28th year for 17 days of live performances and events
- Venue capacities and configurations, length of concerts and elimination of intermissions are among enhancements to ensure public safety
- Festival favourites including Valery Gergiev, Evgeny Kissin and Mischa Maisky return
- Performances from some of the brightest young talents including Sheku Kanneh-Mason and Kian Soltani

November 5, 2020 – VEVEY (Switzerland) – The Verbier Festival, now in its 28th year, announces its return for 17 days of concerts, masterclasses, talks and education events in the picturesque setting of the Swiss Alps next summer [July 16 –August 1]. Following a virtual edition and limited live performances in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Festival is putting in place protocols and enhancements in consultation with medical professionals to ensure a live Festival edition will take place next summer. The full Festival programme will be announced on 28 January 2021. Safety remains the Festival's highest priority. Plans will be adjusted in response to public health measures as they evolve, both prior to the announcement of the Festival programme and leading up to the summer.

“We were among the first major festivals in Switzerland to call off its 2020 edition, knowing that if we had gone ahead it would have put our family of audiences, artists and team members at risk,” said Verbier Festival Founder & Director, Martin T:son Engstroem. And while it's clear we are not out of the woods yet, we are now optimistic that once the clouds part, we will once again come to together in Verbier for our 28th edition.”

“The Verbier Festival is an important event for our resort in the summer,” added Eloi Rossier, Commune de Bagnes President. “We are convinced that the careful planning underway for the Festival's 2021 edition will reassure the public and we are eager and enthusiastic about its return.”

The 2021 Festival will be opened by Verbier Festival Orchestra Music Director **Valery Gergiev** and Festival favourites **Evgeny Kissin** and **Mischa Maisky** return. Other highlights include two **Puccini** operas, *Fanciulla del West* and *La Bohème*—the latter sung by singers of the Academy—in addition to an evening featuring the second act of Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*.

This edition also features recent Academy alumni who have become some of the brightest young talents on the concert stage today: **Mao Fujita**, **Sheku Kanneh-Mason**, **Anastasia Kobekina** and **Kian Soltani**.

In addition, **James Gaffigan** conducts the Verbier Festival Junior Orchestra in his first year as the ensemble's Music Director.

VF at Home, the Verbier Festival's home of digital content, which launched with the Virtual Verbier Festival this year, continues with concert streaming courtesy of medici.tv, newly produced artist interviews, features and educational content. The Festival will also expand its immersive **Unlimited** series of cultural engagement events which take place in the incomparable surroundings of Verbier. These programmes attract a diverse public, from young audiences to 'culture junkies'. One of these events is the **Verbier Festival Philanthropy Forum**, which will focus on the environment and the power of philanthropy for our planet.

The Verbier Festival's key mission is to encourage encounters between great musicians and young aspiring artists from around the world. Audiences witness these unique encounters and partnerships through the Festival's programme of concerts set around Verbier, with its two main venues, the Salle des Combins and Église de Verbier. The 2021 Festival will include leading international artists from around the world who will perform solo, chamber and orchestral concerts alongside the next generation of artists in the Verbier Festival Academy's soloist, chamber music, voice and orchestral programmes.

As part of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Verbier Festival set up an emergency relief fund available to freelance, self-employed and newly unemployed Verbier Festival Academy alumni. This fund continues to be available for those who need it during the pandemic. Solo, chamber and orchestral instrumentalists, singers, conductors, plus alumni production and technical crew facing lost income because of pandemic are eligible for support. Approximately CHF 600,000 has been granted to more than 250 alumni since April. A second

phase of this programme now begins with the addition of a newly received donation of CHF 100,000.

The Festival's health and safety protocols aim to ensure a safe environment for performers, audience members, staff and volunteers. Measures will include the adjustment of venue capacities and seating plans, the presentation of shorter concerts without intermissions, as well as the wearing of masks. Quick and regular testing of musicians and team members is also being considered.

The Verbier Festival's 2021 edition is made possible with the generous support of Madame Aline Foriel-Destezet, The Friends of the Verbier Festival, the Festival's major philanthropic donors, including its Chairman's Circle, the Commune de Bagnes, and of Principal Sponsors Bank Julius Baer and Neva Foundation.



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PHOTOS

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