

**THE VERBIER FESTIVAL ENTERS ITS 27TH YEAR WITH OVER 60 CONCERTS ACROSS 17 DAYS WITH 90+ INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS AND 220 ACADEMY STUDENTS, CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND WORK OF BEETHOVEN FOR HIS 250TH ANNIVERSARY
17 JULY – 2 AUGUST**

5 December 2019 – VEVEY (Suisse)

FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Beethoven's Triple Concerto for violin, cello, piano and orchestra with Gautier Capuçon, Valery Gergiev, Leonidas Kavakos and Yuja Wang to open the 2020 Festival [17 July]
- Quatuor Ébène perform all of Beethoven's 16 String Quartets across 6 concerts
- Miklós Perényi and András Schiff present all 5 of Beethoven's Cello Sonatas across two concerts [29 + 30 July]
- 20th anniversary of the Verbier Festival Orchestra
- Leading soloists include Martha Argerich, Pamela Fran, Miloš Karadaglić, Evgeny Kissin, Stephen Kovacevich, András Schiff and Pinchas Zukerman, amongst many others
- World premiere of Gabriel Prokofiev's new creation for chamber ensemble, electronics and processed field recordings in response to Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony, as part of After Dark series

The Verbier Festival, now in its 27th year, returns for 17 days of concerts, masterclasses, talks and education events in the picturesque setting of the Swiss Alps [17 July – 2 August]. 2020 marks the 250th anniversary of the birth of Beethoven, and the Festival pays tribute to him with his works, influences and those he has inspired. More than 90 world-class artists come together for over 60 mainstage concerts across the Festival.

The 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 in the unrivalled surroundings of Verbier, with its two main venues, the Salle des Combins and Église de Verbier. The 2020 programme includes over 90 leading international artists who will perform solo, chamber and orchestral concerts alongside the next generation of artists in the Verbier Festival Academy, Verbier Festival Orchestra and Verbier Festival Junior Orchestra. Succeeding the celebrations of its quarter century, the 2019 edition resulted in positive revenue and ticket sales, despite another major event taking place during the same time (Feast of Winegrowers). The Festival continues to reinforce its place in the cultural landscape as an unmissable event for audiences worldwide.

Alongside the big names such as Evgeny Kissin, Mischa Maisky, Denis Matsuev, Mikhail Pletnev and Pinchas Zukerman, legends of classical music are making their long-awaited return to the Festival after more than five years of absence: Martha Argerich, Nelson Freire, Stephen Kovacevich and René Pape.

BEETHOVEN 250

Valery Gergiev, the Festival's Music Director, opens the 2020 Festival with an all-Beethoven programme, sharing the stage with an exceptional trio - Yuja Wang, Leonidas Kavakos and Gautier Capuçon - who perform the composer's *Triple Concerto*. The Verbier Festival Orchestra then immerses the public in the masterful *Symphony No. 9* for which an unparalleled voice casting will be reunited on stage: Camilla Nylund, Magdalena Kožená, Evan LeRoy Johnson, René Pape and the Oberwalliser Vokalensemble. The Verbier Festival Orchestra also performs Beethoven's *3rd Symphony* [19 July] and *6th Symphony* [21 July], whilst the Verbier Festival Chamber Orchestra performs the composer's *Symphony No. 2* with Gábor Takács-Nagy [20 July].

Quatuor Ébène – who celebrate their 20th anniversary in 2020 – return to Verbier to present a world exclusive six-concert series featuring Beethoven's 16 String Quartets performed across the whole Festival [18, 19, 22, 24, 28 July and 1 August]. Pinchas Zukerman takes to the stage with the Verbier Festival Orchestra and Valery Gergiev to perform Beethoven's *Violin Concerto in D major* [19 July] whilst Mikhail Pletnev presents Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No. 3* [21 July]. Miklós Perényi and András Schiff, who have performed and recorded Beethoven's works together for many years, return to the stage to present all five of Beethoven's *Cello Sonatas* across two concerts [29 + 30 July].

RECITALS

Each year the Verbier Festival presents an unrivalled programme of piano recitals by leading pianists from around the world. The 2020 Festival includes performances by Alexander Kantorow [18 July], Mao Fujita [21 July], Stephen Kovacevich [23 July], Seong-Jin Cho [24 July] and András Schiff [25 July].

An important strand of the 2020 Festival is its 'Unexpected Encounters' series which sees a group of leading soloists perform chamber music together. All five concerts within the series include works by Brahms, including his *Clarinet Sonata* [Fröst, Wang], *Violin Sonata No. 2* [Kavakos, Kissin], *Piano Quartet No. 1* [Babayan, Zukerman, Kam, Forsyth], *Cello Sonata No. 2* [Hagen, Pappano] and more.

The annual programme also includes recitals by pairs of leading musicians, some of which will perform together for the first time in 2020, and some have performed together throughout their careers. Duo recitals include Gautier Capuçon and Yuja Wang [20 July], James Ehnes and Lucas Debargue [21 July], Mischa Maisky and Martha Argerich [26 July], Benjamin Bernheim and Carrie-Ann Matheson [27 July], Kristóf Baráti and Sergei Babayan [27 July] and Miklós Perényi and András Schiff [29 + 30 July] amongst others. Beethoven continues to be a strong theme throughout, with performances of his *Violin Sonata No. 9* [Baráti], *Piano Sonata No. 32* [Matsuev] and *Cello Sonatas Nos. 1 and 4* [Perényi], amongst others.

VERBIER FESTIVAL ACADEMY

As in previous years, the Verbier Festival continues to nurture the next generation of musicians through its Verbier Festival Orchestra [VFO], Verbier Festival Junior Orchestra [VFJO], Conducting Programme, Atelier Lyrique Programme and Soloists/Chamber Music Programme, working with musicians from around the world between the ages of 15 and 35. 2020 marks the 20th anniversary of the Verbier Festival Orchestra, which has become a rite of passage for today's exceptional young musicians. The Verbier Festival Academy has an impressive list of alumni from over 60 countries who have been engaged by the world's leading orchestras since training at Verbier, and ten of the mainstage soloists in the 2020 Festival have come up through the Verbier Festival Academy, including Kit Armstrong, Martin James Bartlett, Timothy Chooi, Mao Fujita, Daniel Lozakovich and Yoav Levanon.

The musicians this year will be trained by leading musicians such as Stephen Kovacevich, András Schiff, Pamela Frank and Barbara Frittoli through over 100 masterclasses, rehearsals and workshops. The Academy and Orchestras will perform throughout the Festival with visiting conductors and soloists. The Atelier Lyrique

musicians perform an afternoon of Shakespeare songs and readings alongside Sir Simon Russell Beale [31 July].

In the 2020 Festival the Verbier Festival Orchestra perform seven concerts, including the Festival's opening concert of Beethoven's Triple Concerto for violin, cello and piano with Leonidas Kavakos, Gautier Capuçon and Yuja Wang, and Beethoven's 9th Symphony conducted by Valery Gergiev [17 July]. Other highlights with the Orchestra include Beethoven's 3rd and 6th Symphonies with Valery Gergiev [19 + 20 July], scenes from Wagner's *Die Walküre* with Gianandrea Noseda [24 July] and Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 2 with Sir Antonio Pappano [30 July]. The Verbier Festival Orchestra closes the 2020 Festival with a performance of Mozart's Flute Concerto with Stathis Karapanos and Mahler's 6th Symphony, conducted by Christoph Eschenbach [2 August]. The Verbier Festival Chamber Orchestra also presents a series of concerts throughout the Festival, including a number of performances with conductor Gábor Takács-Nagy (Mozart's 'Don Giovanni' [18 July] and Beethoven's Symphony No. 2 [20 July]).

OPERA AND CHORAL WORKS

In addition to the recitals and orchestral concerts, opera and choral works are also a big feature of the programming at Verbier. Verbier Festival Chamber Orchestra and its Music Director Gábor Takács-Nagy perform Mozart's 'Don Giovanni', with Peter Mattei in the title role [18 July]. Gianandrea Noseda, a regular at the Festival, returns to conduct extracts of Wagner's 'Die Walküre' (Act 1: Scenes 1 and 3, Act 3: Scenes 1 and 3) with a star cast including Sara Jakubiak, Michelle DeYoung, Stephan Genz and Matthias Goerne [24 July]. The Verbier Festival Junior Orchestra presents Puccini's 'La Bohème' with Stanislav Kochanovsky [2 August]. Choral works include Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 [17 July], Schönberg's *Un survivant de Varsovie* [19 July], Schubert's *Mirjams Siegesgesang* [20 July] and Mozart's Requiem [22 July].

BEYOND CLASSICAL

Beyond classical repertoire, guitarist Miloš Karadaglić performs a solo recital of works by Paul McCartney and George Harrison paired with works by Villa-Lobos, Bach and Granados [22 July]. Grammy-Award-winning Beninese singer-songwriter Angélique Kidjo also returns to the Festival after 8 years with a new programme of African music [29 July]. The Georgian National Ballet, Georgia's first professional state dance company, present "Sukhishvili", a spectacular acrobatic show which tells the story of the battles, suffering and heroism of the Georgian people [31 July].

UNLIMITED [AFTER DARK, PHILANTHROPY FORUM, VF KIDS, OPEN AIR, TALKS AND DOCS]

Unlimited, the Verbier Festival's series of free and accessible activities for all ages, returns in 2020 to stimulate curiosity for the arts and culture. From an open-air pastoral breakfast [18 July] to a concert-conversation about the impact of Beethoven by cellist Estelle Revaz [27 July], the series offers something for everyone. Not all of the Verbier Festival events are in the two primary venues. Audience members will have the opportunity to scale the heights of Mont Fort, a nearby mountain which is 3,330 meters above sea level, with the Verbier Festival Academy for a 4:30am musical dawn [25 July], or an afternoon concert of fanfares on the slopes of La Chaux [1 Aug]. Other events include an easy morning hike through the Verbier 3-D Sculpture Park with musical stops along the way [25 July]. Across two five-day periods, children in Verbier present their own interpretation of some of the works programmed in the Festival, including Puccini's 'La Bohème' [24 July] and the story of the Three Little Pigs on Beethoven's 5th Symphony [1 Aug].

The After Dark series offers late-night events that push classical music out of the traditional concert hall. Thomas Quasthoff and Pe Werner kick off the series [25 July] and two secret concerts are scheduled, where the mystery artists reveal their identity at the beginning of the concert [19 & 23 July]. Jan Harlan, Stanley Kubrick's Executive Producer, talks about how the duo integrated classical music into storylines in a special conversation event with pianist Hinrich Alpers playing excerpts from Kubrick's scores before the Academy musicians present an After Dark performance of works from Kubrick's filmed scores with introductions by Jan Harlan [28 July]. Gabriel

Prokofiev presents the world premiere of his new composition for chamber ensemble, electronics and processed field recordings in response to Beethoven's 'Pastoral Symphony' with Verbier Festival Academy musicians, followed by a DJ set [18 July].

Verbier's Philanthropy Forum has become an important part of the Festival, and this year the key topic is how philanthropy is mobilizing for the planet. The event, in partnership with the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation, takes place in the Cinéma de Verbier and aims to talk in depth about climate change and the severe changes our planet is experiencing, whilst also exploring philanthropic initiatives that are mobilizing in favour of the environment [18 July].

FINALE

The closing day will be the culmination of nearly three weeks of interaction with some of the world's greatest musicians. The Festival closes with flautist Stathis Karapanos performing Mozart's Flute Concerto No. 2 and Mahler's powerful Symphony No. 6 performed by the Verbier Festival Orchestra and Christoph Eschenbach [2 August].

STREAMING PARTNERS

For the 14th year running the Festival is collaborating with the production team Idéale Audience to offer live and on demand videos with medici.tv. Swiss radio RTS Espace 2 will be offering live and rebroadcast concerts throughout the Festival and Radio Classique will provide highlights of the Festival. The official audio streaming partner IDAGIO will be streaming playlists and exclusive concerts.

verbierfestival.com

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TICKETS

The ticket office opens to the public on Monday 16 December

Office of the Verbier Festival

Jean-Jacques Rousseau Street 4, 1800 Vevey

Open from December 19th from Monday to Friday | 13:00 - 17:00

Exclusive pre-sale to Friends from December 5th to 19th Closed on December 25th, January 1st and 2nd

BOX OFFICE VERBIER

Sports Center Street 3, 1936 Verbier

Open from December 21st to January 5th from 17:00 to 19:00

Closed on December 25th, January 1st and 2nd

PRESS KIT

Download the 2020 Verbier Festival press kit

PRESS PHOTOS

These photographs, taken by the official photographers of the Verbier Festival can be downloaded from our press photo database.

Please contact presse@verbierfestival.com to get the access details

The Verbier Festival is a classical music festival that encourages encounters and sharing between great musicians and young aspiring artists from around the world. It is committed to excellence in music education through its highly-respected artist training programmes. The 27th edition of the Verbier Festival takes place 17 July to 2 August 2020 in Verbier (Switzerland) with the support of the Neva Foundation and Bank Julius Baer.