



The Lucerne Festival

Music in Switzerland

20–25 August 2023 (MJ 832)

6 days • £4,480

(including tickets to 5 performances)

Lecturer: Dr Michael Downes

A summer music festival of the first rank in the loveliest of Swiss cities.

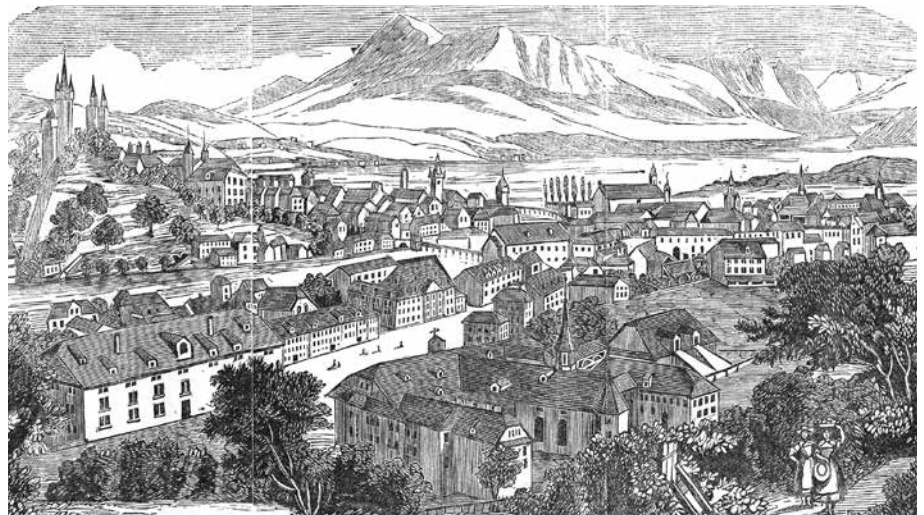
Performers in 2023 include Anne-Sophie Mutter (violin), the Mahler Chamber Orchestra with Daniil Trifonov (piano), and the Oslo Philharmonic with Klaus Mäkelä (conductor).

Guided walks and an excursion in the surrounding hills are balanced with plenty of free time.

Ever since its inauguration over eighty years ago, with a concert conducted by Arturo Toscanini in the grounds of the lakeside house where Wagner had stayed, the Lucerne Festival has been regarded as one of the most prestigious music festivals in Europe.

The event has been further enhanced by a brilliant venue. The KKL (Kultur- und Kongresszentrum Luzern) is a giant glass-and-steel arts complex located right on the lake just a few hundred yards from the old town of Lucerne. Designed by Frenchman Jean Nouvel and completed in 2000, this is modern European architecture at its finest. Its colossal cantilevered roof projects over the water's edge, bringing the changing moods of the lake right into the building, and water channels separate the various wings. The most advanced acoustical science has been lavished on the beautiful Konzertsaal.

And could there be a lovelier city in which to attend a summer music festival? Lucerne occupies one of the most picturesque settings in Switzerland, divided into two parts by its river, bordering on the dramatic shores of the Vierwaldstätter Lake and overlooked by craggy mountains. Its medieval prosperity is still visible in the squares, guildhalls and churches that line its riverbanks. The nineteenth century was a heyday for Lucerne as it led the way in attracting tourism to Switzerland.



Lucerne, engraving from *Incidents of Travel & Sketches of Remarkable Places*, 1875.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly in the morning from London Heathrow to Zurich (British Airways). Drive to Lucerne, a lively, historic city amid lake and mountain.

Day 2. A morning walking tour of Lucerne, starting at the oldest road bridge in Europe, the richly decorated Chapel Bridge, and continuing to the Spreuerbrücke, another historic covered bridge notable for its 'Dance of Death' roof panels. Visit the Rococo interior of the huge Jesuit Church and the 13th-century Franciscan Church. Free afternoon. *Evening concert at the KKL with Mutter's Virtuosi, Anne-Sophie Mutter (violin): Veracini, Violin concerto in D; J.S. Bach, Violin concerto in A, BWV 1041; Previn, Nonet; J.S. Bach, 'Brandenburg Concerto' No.3, BWV 1048, Concerto for two violins in D minor, BWV 1043.*

Day 3. A second walking tour includes Hofkirche, a 17th-century church with a lovely Italianate cloister and two Romanesque towers, visit the city's chief 19th-century monuments including the famous Löwendenkmal, a great lion-statue hewn from a cliff-face in 1821 in honour of Swiss mercenaries killed in the French Revolution, and the Bourbaki Panorama, a giant circular mural depicting events of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Optional afternoon visit to Richard Wagner's home on a headland by the lake where the composer spent some of his happiest years. *Evening concert at the KKL with Kent Nagano*

(conductor), Dresden Festival Orchestra, Concerto Köln and soloists: Wagner, 'Das Rheingold'.

Day 4. All-day excursion to Mount Rigi, traversing lake Lucerne by boat and taking the funicular to the start of the walk. Lunch on the mountainside with a majestic 360° panorama of the Swiss plateau before returning to Lucerne. *Evening concert at the KKL with Daniel Harding (conductor), Daniil Trifonov (piano), Mahler Chamber Orchestra: Schumann, Overture to the dramatic poem 'Manfred', Op.115, Piano Concerto in A minor, Op.54; Brahms, Symphony No.3 in F, Op.90.*

Day 5. A morning visit to the Sammlung Rosengart, an extraordinary collection devoted to 20th-century art including many works by Picasso. *Morning concert at the Lukaskirche with Timothy Ridout (viola) and Jonathan Ware (piano): Haraldsdóttir, new work for viola and piano; Clara Schumann, Three Romances, Op.22 for Viola and Piano; Franck, Violin Sonata in A, arr. for viola. Free afternoon before an evening concert at the KKL with Klaus Mäkelä (conductor), Johanna Wallroth (soprano), Oslo Philharmonic: Mahler, Symphony No.4; Wagner, Prelude and Liebestod from 'Tristan und Isolde'; Sibelius, Symphony No.7 in C, Op.105.*

Day 6. Drive to Zurich Airport for the return flight to London Heathrow, arriving in the early afternoon.

The Lucerne Festival
continued

Lecturer

Dr Michael Downes. Director of Music at the University of St Andrews, musical director of St Andrews Chorus, Scotland's largest choral society, and founding artistic director of Byre Opera. He has lectured for most of the UK's leading opera companies and writes programme notes for Wigmore Hall and Aldeburgh Music. Publications include books written with and about contemporary British composer Jonathan Harvey, and a collaboration with Nike Wagner, great-granddaughter of Richard; he is currently working on a new biography of Elgar for Oxford University Press.

Practicalities

Price, per person. Two sharing: £4,480 or £4,290 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £4,990 or £4,800 without flights.

Included: flights (Euro Traveller) with British Airways (Airbus 320); private coach travel; breakfasts, 2 lunches and 3 dinners with wine; admissions; all tips for drivers, waiters and local guides; state and airport taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

Music: tickets (first category) for 5 concerts are included, costing c. £850. Tickets are confirmed in March.

Accommodation: Romantik Hotel Wilden Mann (wilden-mann.ch): 4-star hotel dating back to the 13th century located in the heart of the historic town centre. All double rooms in the hotel have two single mattresses on one bed frame, as is the usual style in Switzerland. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use.*

How strenuous? A good level of fitness is necessary. It should not be attempted by anyone who has difficulty with everyday walking and stair-climbing. The concert hall is located half a mile from the hotel. The drive from Zurich Airport to Lucerne takes approximately 1 hour.

Group size: between 10 and 22 participants.

Combine this tour with: *The Schubertiade*, 25–31 August 2023.