

## Discovering all the aspects of the piano on Lake Lucerne

From 12 to 18 January 2026, "Le Piano Symphonique" will once again bring both international and rising stars to Lucerne for a "piano festival of the highest order"\*



*Lucerne Symphony Orchestra with Martha Argerich in the KKL (c) Philipp Schmidli*

The Lucerne Symphony Orchestra's piano festival, "Le Piano Symphonique," has delighted audiences from the very beginning with a programme that attracted over 10,000 concertgoers in 2025. The festival, which will take place from **January 12 to 18 2026**, explores and illuminates all musical aspects of the piano in concerts, chamber music, solo recitals, masterclasses, and panel discussions – and it does so through surprising combinations. A concert

is never just a symphonic evening: it can suddenly turn into a recital or the intimate chambermusic setting of a quartet. This is also evident in the division of the programme into "Act 1" and "Act 2."

The **Lucerne Symphony Orchestra**, the initiator and central orchestra of the festival, is able to effectively showcase world stars such as **Hélène Grimaud**, **Maria João Pires**, and **Alexandre Kantorow**, as well as first-class chamber musicians and promising newcomers, resulting in inspiring and surprising performances for audiences. The artistic heart and shining light of the festival week is the *Pianiste Associée* **Martha Argerich**. "Her presence was palpable even when she wasn't performing," wrote the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* in its review of the 2025 edition.

In 2026, for the very first time, there will be a collaboration with the *Irving S. Gilmore International Piano Festival* to further enhance the unique and outstanding diversity of the programme

### Debuts and World Premieres

With "French Sound Poetry to Start the Festival," **Hélène Grimaud** will have the honor of kicking off an exciting week on Monday, January 12. She will perform the first half with her duo partner **Renaud Capuçon** (violin), before then presenting one of the most popular solo works in piano literature with the Lucerne Symphony Orchestra under **Michael Sanderling**: Maurice Ravel's Piano Concerto in G major. This concert marks Hélène Grimaud's debut with "Le Piano Symphonique." Also appearing for the first time is **Christoph Eschenbach**, who will conduct the evening concert on Thursday, January 15. The soloist in Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 3 in C major, Op. 26, is Gilmore Prize winner **Alexandre Kantorov**. After the interval, Kantorov will present a **world premiere** of the new work for solo piano commissioned by him from the Swedish composer **Anders Hilborg**.

### "Then all doors will open"

We can look forward to another debut on Wednesday, January 14, when **Robin Ticciati**, the former chief conductor of the German Symphony Orchestra (DSO), takes the podium of the Lucerne Symphony Orchestra. Together with piano legend **Maria João Pires**, he will perform Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 27 in B-flat major, K. 595. "Mozart embodies the truth of life," Pires explained in an interview with BR Klassik in 2024. "Everything is there, we just have to listen, and then all doors will open." This evening at the KKL Lucerne is remarkable, as, musically, it truly opens all doors. The programmatic idea of **offering two completely different halves of the concert** is dramatically new and exciting, even extreme in its contrasts. While the first act still features the classical structure with an overture (Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito*, K. 621) and solo concerto, the second act abruptly welcomes an entirely new pianist, who now plays excerpts from Sergei Prokofiev's 10 Piano Pieces from *Romeo and Juliet*, Op. 75 – **a recital with Beatrice Rana**. The Italian star pianist, whose hands *The Times* described as having "Orphic seductiveness," closes the evening with an arrangement of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*, Op. 71a, and Prokofiev's powerful, and even – in the final movement – wild Piano Sonata No. 6 in A major, Op. 82. Volume and symphonic quality are possible without an orchestra! That's exactly what "Le Piano Symphonique" means.

On Friday January 16, the music is accompanied by another component: an artificial light projection. In cooperation with the **Lucerne Festival of Light**, harpsichordist **Jean Rondeau** will present his intimate and immersive improvisation program "Sisyphus" in the Great Hall of the KKL Lucerne. **Martha Argerich** will open the evening with her trusted chamber music partners **Janine Jansen** (violin) and **Mischa Maisky** (cello). They will perform Beethoven's Piano Trio No. 5 in D major, Op. 70.1, the so-called "Ghost Trio."

### Lunchtime at the Schweizerhof

The KKL Lucerne isn't the only venue serving as a performance venue. **Three debut concerts** will take place at 12:30p.m. each day in the Zeugheersaal of the Hotel Schweizerhof Luzern. Bochum-born pianist **Schaghajegh Nosrati** will perform on Thursday January 15. **Roman Borisov** (Friday January 16) and **Fil Liotis** (Saturday January 17) follow. Following on from Schaghajegh Nosrati's debut concert, the English-language **panel** "Discovering and Nurturing the Next Generation: Different Approaches" invites you to explore a controversial topic on Thursday January 15. Christoph Eschenbach will lead a public masterclass at the Schweizerhof on Friday January 16, and Saturday January 17. Participants include the outstanding young pianists Elliott Wu, Jethew Lee, and Jan Schulmeister. "Le Piano Symphonique" 2026 will end with the **final masterclass concert** on Sunday January 18 at 11:00a.m.

### Film World Premiere

The evening of Saturday January 17 will see another world premiere celebrated at the KKL Lucerne; namely, "O quickly disappearing photograph," a film by South African theater and film director William Kentridge. In his artistic reflection, specially commissioned by the Lucerne Piano Festival, Kentridge will focus on Luigi Dallapiccola's work for piano *Quaderno musicale di Annalibera*. The evening concludes with **Martha Argerich** as soloist in Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat major, Op. 19.

### Full of Anticipation

**Numa Bischof Ullmann**, Artistic Director of "Le Piano Symphonique," looks forward to the fifth edition of the festival: "We are delighted to be able to offer so many unique and accomplished performances for our audiences at the next 'Le Piano Symphonique.' A commissioned work by the world-renowned South African artist William Kentridge, which will celebrate its world premiere here, underscores the importance of our piano festival. A world premiere and the new collaborations with the Gilmore

Festival and the Hong Kong Academy demonstrates the international reputation that our festival has achieved in its short history."

World premieres, high-profile reunions with international stars, and first-class debuts: The start to 2026 will be pianistic! SRF summed it up in its coverage: "A piano festival of the highest order."\*

\* SRF Kultur Kompakt, 20 January 2025

## LUZERNER SINFONIEORCHESTER

1805  
RESIDENZORCHESTER KKL LUZERN



Information & Tickets

Ticketline: +41 412260515

[karten@sinfonieorchester.ch](mailto:karten@sinfonieorchester.ch)

[sinfonieorchester.ch](http://sinfonieorchester.ch)

[kkf-luzern.ch](http://kkf-luzern.ch)

 Bettina Schimmer

Lindenstraße 14  
50674 Köln

+49 (0)221 - 168 796 23  
[bettina.schimmer@schimmer-pr.de](mailto:bettina.schimmer@schimmer-pr.de)  
[www.schimmer-pr.de](http://www.schimmer-pr.de)