

Return of the great orchestras and the “Piemontesi & Friends” Series at the 76th Settimane Musicali di Ascona

Great orchestras, some of the most celebrated names (Fabio Luisi, David Zinman, Daniele Gatti, Regula Mühlemann, Jordi Savall, Matthias Goerne), young and promising musicians (Alexi Kenney, Plamena Mangova, Yulianna Avdeeva, Alisa Weilerstein) and many debuts: the Settimane Musicali di Ascona celebrate the 76th edition 2021 with a high-profile program

Having, hopefully, left behind this public health emergency, we turn to Switzerland's second oldest classic music festival, from **September 2 to October 8**, with a series of six symphonic concerts in Locarno and a long weekend dedicated to chamber music, the “Piemontesi & Friends” Series, in Ascona.

The organization of this edition has been, to say the least, complex. “*Take the orchestras that stood still for almost a year and add the impossibility of defining programs, quarantine uncertainties, testing and closed borders*”, explains **Francesco Piemontesi**: “*It has been a real challenge. So we did not invite international orchestras; instead, we decided to bet on important Swiss and Italian ensembles, confirming the chamber program that was met with enthusiasm last year.*”

The Six Symphonic Concerts

The six symphonic concerts – which we had to renounce last year because of the pandemic – will all take place in Locarno. To begin we will host two of the best Italian symphonic orchestras.

The festival will open on **September 6** with the **Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia** directed by **Daniele Gatti**, with **Francesco Piemontesi** soloist in Mozart's *K 414 Concert*. This is a favorite of the Locarno pianist and one of the first to enter his repertoire.

Following, on **September 10**, the **Orchestra Sinfonica della RAI di Torino** directed by one of the stars of classical music, **Fabio Luisi**, with the German cellist **Jan Vogler** interpreter of Haydn's *Concert for cello No. 1*.

The **Orchestra della Svizzera italiana** will perform for the first time on **September 13** directed by the legendary **David Zinman**, together with the most prominent and internationally acclaimed contemporary Swiss singer, **Regula Mühlemann**: we will admire her in her favorite repertoire, Mozart arias.

On **September 17** the festival will host the **Sinfonieorchester Basel**. Conducted by the British director **Ivor Bolton**, the ensemble has gained international fame. They will perform with the explosive Bulgarian pianist **Plamena Mangova**, soloist in Mozart's *Jeunehomme*.

On **October 4** the **Orchestre de la Suisse Romande**, directed by **Jonathan Nott** who has earned respect in his long career. It is great anticipation that we await the solo performance of 27-year-old **Alexi Kenney**, a violin promise, in Mozart's *Concert for violin No. 3*.

Finally, on **October 8**, the 76th edition will close with the **Orchestra della Svizzera italiana (OSI)**, led by **François Leleux**, with pianists **Fabio Bidini** and **Gabriele Leporatti**: the program (Vivaldi, Mozart, Busoni, Schubert) will replicate the same concert that, back in April 1945, the OSI performed in the first edition of the Settimane.

The Six Meetings With “Piemontesi & Friends”

Inaugurated last year to ensure the Settimane’s continuity in the midst of the public health crisis, the chamber music series “**Piemontesi & Friends**” presents, from [Friday September 24 to Sunday 26](#), a total of six concerts – two per day, at 6.30 pm and at 9 pm – in the church of Collegio Papio in Ascona. With the participation of great soloists, these appointments invite you to enjoy a diverse, unique series of concerts.

Alongside **Francesco Piemontesi**, we will admire the winner of two Grammy awards, **James Ehnes**, acclaimed American cellist **Alisa Weilerstein** and pianists **Markus Hinterhäuser** (known as the artistic director fo the Salzburg Festival) and **Yulianna Avdeeva**, who is highly sought-after by all major festivals: “*she is excellent, one of my favorite colleagues*”, says Piemontesi of the Russian artist.

For the occasion, on [September 25](#), a concert that will bring together all five artists for a tribute to the great French composer, **Olivier Messiaen**. Highlight of the evening: “*Visions de l’Amen*”, a highly spiritual suite of seven pieces for two pianos, composed in 1938.

Piemontesi & Friends will also host **Jordi Savall**, a longtime absolute reference for music from the Middle Ages to Baroque (on [September 24](#), accompanied by the renowned ensemble **Hesperion XXI** in a concert dedicated to “*Folias & Romanescas*) and legendary German baritone **Matthias Goerne**. On [September 26](#) he will interpret Schubert’s *Winter Journey*, accompanied by pianist Markus Hinterhäuser. Two events you should definitely not miss.

Berlin wind ensemble for the lakeside open air and family concert

The program of the 76th edition is completed by two special events. To celebrate the post-pandemic revival of concert life, the Settimane Musicali, with the support of the Municipality of Ascona, present a free open air concert on the Ascona lakeside, on [September 2](#). Protagonists of the evening: the **Charlottenburger Bläsersolisten**, a spectacular wind ensemble from Berlin.

The second event, on Saturday [September 18](#) at the Cinema Rex in Locarno, will instead stage a show for families and children: “**La coppa dell’amicizia**” (“The Friendship Cup”) an evocative musical fable, written and set to music by Ernesto Felice. The free event is curated by the Associazione Amici delle Settimane Musicali in cooperation with the Gruppo Genitori di Locarno (Parents Association of Locarno).

Ticket sale from July 14, tickets and COVID regulations

The ticket and pass sale will begin on July 14 at the tourist offices in Ascona, Locarno and Brissago, on [ticketcorner.ch](#) and at all Ticketcorner vending points throughout Switzerland.

Conforming with the Federal Council’s decision of June 24, 2021, entry will be limited to people who are **fully vaccinated**, fully **recovered** or who present a **negative test** (above age 16). The PCR test should not be older than 72 hours and a fast pharmacy test should not be older than 24 hours. Face masks are optional.

Given the current evolving situation, programs and health dispositions might be subject to change.

Settimane musicali Ascona

Thank you

The 76th edition is organized by the Fondazione Settimane Musicali Ascona (that brings together Ascona Locarno Turismo, The Municipality of Ascona, Associazione Amici delle Settimane Musicali and Patriziato Ascona) with the support of: Repubblica e Canton Ticino (Swisslos Funds), Fondazione cultura nel Locarnese, Comuni di Brione s/Minusio, Locarno, Losone, Minusio, Muralto e Orselina. Sponsor: Cornè Banca, CORSI Società cooperativa per la Radiotelevisione svizzera di lingua italiana, Raiffeisen, Freunde der Altern Musik. Media partner: RSI Rete Due, Radio Swiss Classic, Corriere del Ticino, Tessiner Zeitung, SGA and Ticketcorner.

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