



## Media Release

### Extension of Riccardo Chailly's Contract as Music Director of the Lucerne Festival Orchestra

Lucerne, 11 February 2021. Riccardo Chailly's contract as Music Director of the Lucerne Festival Orchestra has been extended until the end of 2026. He became Claudio Abbado's successor in the summer of 2016, when he took over direction of the storied Lucerne Festival Orchestra.

The Lucerne Festival Orchestra's collaboration with Riccardo Chailly began with Mahler's monumental Eighth Symphony at the opening of the 2016 Summer Festival. In the years that followed, he successively expanded the orchestra's repertoire with works by Richard Strauss, Igor Stravinsky, Maurice Ravel, and Richard Wagner, additionally performing these programs on concert tours to Asia each fall in 2017, 2018, and 2019. The orchestra appeared in Japan, South Korea, and China and, in 2018 and 2019, made guest stops at La Scala in Milan and concertized as part of a residency in Shanghai. In the summer of 2019, Chailly led Gustav Mahler's Sixth Symphony in Lucerne and launched a major Rachmaninoff cycle with the orchestra. He and the Lucerne Festival Orchestra will continue this cycle in the summer of 2021 with the Second Piano Concerto and the Second Symphony; their program will also include Gustav Mahler's First Symphony and Alban Berg's Three Fragments from *Wozzeck*.

"Having the opportunity to continue leading the Lucerne Festival Orchestra as its Music Director fills me with great pride," remarks Riccardo Chailly. "I continue to regard preserving the extraordinary sound of this orchestra to be an important task, for this is Claudio Abbado's impressive artistic legacy. At the same time, it is important to explore new artistic horizons into the future for these outstanding musicians and to open up new musical worlds for the audience. By now I feel a friendly connection with many of these musicians, and I look forward to working with Michael Haefliger to plan the coming years with great enthusiasm and creative energy."

"I am exceptionally pleased that the collaboration with Riccardo Chailly and the Lucerne Festival Orchestra can continue for the next five years," says Michael Haefliger, Lucerne Festival's Executive and Artistic Director. "Through this collaboration we share a sense of trust and inspiration. Over the last few years, we have indeed managed to further develop the orchestra's core repertoire. Continuing the valuable connection that this orchestra has with Riccardo Chailly promises additional great artistic peaks for the future."

As part of the successful cooperation with Accentus Music, four DVDs featuring the Lucerne Festival Orchestra under the direction of Riccardo Chailly have already been released. The most recent release, the Rachmaninoff program from the opening concert in 2019, has just received the International Music Award (ICMA) in the Video Performance category. In collaboration with Decca, two CDs have appeared on the market to date: the Richard Strauss and Stravinsky programs from 2017, with the Strauss recording receiving the Diapason d'Or de l'Année. Additional CD releases are in the planning stages. Currently, the following three recordings are available as video-on-demand on the Festival's website at the Masterpieces@Home link on the tab "Connected": Bruckner's Seventh Symphony (2018), Wagner Overtures (2018), and Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony (2019). All three videos (together with additional introductory videos) can be accessed until the end of March.

**Riccardo Chailly**, who was born in Milan in 1953, has been Music Director of La Scala in Milan since 2015. He studied in Perugia, Rome, and Milan and became Claudio Abbado's assistant at La Scala in Milan at the age of 18. He led the Royal Concertgebouworkest as chief conductor from 1988 to 2004 and, from 2005 to 2016, the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra as Gewandhauskapellmeister. He regularly conducts the leading symphony orchestras in Europe and the USA, including the Vienna Philharmonic, Berlin Philharmonic, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, and Chicago Symphony Orchestra. He has made frequent guest appearances at such major opera houses as the Metropolitan Opera in New York, the Royal Opera House in London, the Bavarian State Opera in Munich, and Zurich Opera. Riccardo Chailly has been a regular guest at Lucerne Festival since 1988, appearing as chief conductor of the Royal Concertgebouworkest and of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra.

By founding the **Lucerne Festival Orchestra**, which was introduced to the public for the first time in August 2003, the conductor Claudio Abbado and Festival Executive and Artistic Director Michael Haefliger established a link to the very origins of Lucerne Festival in 1938. It was then, with a legendary "Concert de Gala," that Arturo Toscanini gathered celebrated virtuosos of the era together to form a unique elite orchestra. The Lucerne Festival Orchestra comprises internationally acclaimed principals, chamber musicians, and music teachers, as well as members of the Mahler Chamber Orchestra and the Filarmonica della Scala. Claudio Abbado served as the artistic director of this "orchestra of friends" — as he himself called it — until his death in January 2014. In 2014 and 2015, the orchestra gave concerts under the direction of Bernard Haitink and Andris Nelsons featuring works by Johannes Brahms, Frédéric Chopin, Joseph Haydn, and Gustav Mahler. Riccardo Chailly has been at the helm of the ensemble since 2016.

Photos may be downloaded at [lucernefestival.ch/en/press/photos](http://lucernefestival.ch/en/press/photos)

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