



Press release

The 21st Festival of the Sommets Musicaux de Gstaad from 29 January to 6 February 2019

The violin takes centre stage

Renaud Capuçon, maestro Valery Gergiev
and his famous Mariinsky Orchestra
to open the Festival in the church of Saanen

Three concert cycles in three outstanding venues

Chapel of Gstaad: discovering young talent across eight concerts

Church of Saanen: the stars of the Festival, with five concerts and one musical story
for children

Church of Rougemont: five concerts featuring the artistic director's personal favourites

GSTAAD, 30 October 2020 – The Sommets Musicaux de Gstaad and -their artistic director Renaud Capuçon present the musical programme of their 21st edition. From 29 January to 6 February 2020, music-lovers will gather in the chapel of Gstaad and the churches of Saanen and Rougemont. In the spirit of the Festival's aims, which it has promoted since its inception in 2001, audiences at the Sommets Musicaux de Gstaad will be able to hear outstanding young talent as well as internationally renowned virtuosos over the course of nine days.

After a particularly difficult 2020, which saw a great many festivals cancelled, the Sommets Musicaux de Gstaad are delighted to invite you to a new year of the Festival, which features a programme brimming with excellence, variety and originality. This year, the violin will be in the spotlight throughout the Festival, with specially dedicated concerts in the chapel of Gstaad every afternoon, and from 11am at the concert on 31 January in the church of Rougemont. Performing at this concert will be the renowned conductor and violinist Jean-Jacques Kantorow – who will also take on the role of mentor to the young violinists – and the young rising star Guillaume Bellom at the piano, in a programme of music by Bach. The concert of 5 February in the church of Saanen with Fabio Biondi sees one of the world's most significant period instrument performers, who will appear with the orchestra Europa Galante, which he himself founded in 1990, in a striking programme of German and Italian Baroque music.

Renaud Capuçon has once again devised his programme with the aim of building bridges between new generations and established musicians of renown. Wolfgang Rihm, who has become a major figure in the world of contemporary music thanks to the quality and richness of his catalogue of almost four hundred works, has done us the honour of being our composer in residence for the week of the Sommets Musicaux de Gstaad. Rihm began his musical training – as well as studies in contemporary painting – at a very young age, studying with

Karlheinz Stockhausen in Cologne and with Klaus Huber and Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht in Freiburg. A renowned composer, Wolfgang Rihm has taught at Darmstadt since 1978 and since 1981 at Munich's Academy of Music and Performing Arts. From 1984 to 1989, he was also co-editor of the musical journal *Melos* and musical adviser to the Deutsche Oper in Berlin. He has received a number of prestigious awards throughout his career, including the Ernst von Siemens prize in 2003, the Golden Lion from the Venice Biennale in 2011 and the German Great Cross of Merit (Großes Bundesverdienstkreuz) in 2011.

Épisode, a piece for violin and piano composed by Rihm specially for the Festival, will be played every afternoon at 4pm by the young musicians specially invited to the festival.

The artistic director of the Sommets Musicaux de Gstaad is a firm believer that a festival should be personified by its musicians, its organizers and partners. The Festival is taking every possible step to ensure that the 2021 festival will be an outstanding one.

Chapel of Gstaad

Jean-Jacques Kantorow, mentor to the rising stars

Jean-Jacques Kantorow will be mentor to the rising stars. The French violonist and conductor began his violin studies at the Nice Conservatory at the age of six. He was only 13 when he entered René Benedetti's higher violin class at the Paris Conservatory, leaving it the same year with the First Prize for violin. As a violinist, Jean-Jacques Kantorow has played all over the world, giving more than 100 concerts every year, to acclaim from audiences and the press alike. Since 1970, he has taught in many schools of music, including the Conservatoire de Paris (CNSM), the Basel Academy and the Rotterdam Conservatory. He has given numerous masterclasses across the world. Since the beginning of the academic year in 2019, he has taught regularly at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, giving an annual series of masterclasses. Jean-Jacques Kantorow is a remarkable violinist, with a spectacular talent. Glenn Gould described him as 'one of the violin greats, a staggering talent – the most highly original violinist of this generation that I have ever heard'.

The concerts

The young violinists, alongside their partners on the piano, will be performing works by a wide range of composers: Bach, Rihm, Ysaÿe, Prokofiev, Maier-Röntgen, Fauré, Ravel, Bartók, Schumann, Saint-Saëns, Beethoven, Brahms, Mozart, Kreisler, Schnittke, Sibelius and Lutosławski.

This is truly a repertoire that Renaud Capuçon has been at pains to make as varied and diverse as possible.

English violinist **Louisa-Rose Staples** and German pianist **Julius Asal** (from the Yehudi Menuhin School and the Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler) will open the festival in the chapel of Gstaad on Saturday 30 January. French violinist (and composer) **Élise Bertrand** and her fellow countryman, pianist **Gaspard Thomas**, will appear on 31 January, with Russian violinist **Dmitry Smirnov** (winner of the Tibor Varga competition in 2015) and Italian pianist **Marco Scilironi** giving the 1 February concert. French violinist **Shuichi Okada** (Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel, under the auspices of Augustin Dumay) will be performing on 2 February, alongside his compatriot, pianist **Clément Lefebvre**; Danish violinist **Anna Egholm** (winner of the Ysaÿe International Violin Competition) and Russian pianist **Maria Baranove** will appear on 3 February; French violinist **Thomas Lefort** (semi-finalist at the Long-Thibaud-Crespin Competition in 2018) and fellow Frenchman **Pierre-Yves Hodique** will appear on 4 February; Belgian-Polish violinist **Alexandra Cooreman** (Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel, under the auspices of Augustin Dumay) and Russian pianist **Olga Kirpicheva** will be playing on the 5 February. Last but not least, Finnish-Dutch violinist **Rebecca Roozeman** (Sibelius Academy) will bring the 'Young Talent' series to a close on Saturday 6 February alongside her partner **Jan-Paul Roozeman**, who is none other than her brother.

All these talented young musicians will be in contention for the festival's two awards, the Prix Thierry Scherz and the Prix André Hoffmann.

The transmission of knowledge is a key theme for Renaud Capuçon, and the young musicians – who are true guests in their own right, not simply contestants – will take part in all

the activities organized during the festival. They will each arrive the day before their recital and will receive hour-long masterclasses with both Wolfgang Rihm and Jean-Jacques Kantorow before their concert in the afternoon.

Two prestigious awards: the Prix Thierry Scherz and the Prix André Hoffmann

The Prix Thierry Scherz is sponsored by the Fondation Pro Scientia et Arte and the association of Friends of the Festival ('les Amis du Festival'). It represents an opportunity to recognize one young violin virtuoso and offer them encouragement by giving them the chance to record a debut CD with orchestra for the Claves Records SA label.

The Prix André Hoffmann is designed to promote the performance of contemporary music. Endowed with 5000 Swiss francs, it will be awarded for the best interpretation of Wolfgang Rihm's work. It also provides the support enabling the Festival to host the composer in residence.

Concerts at the church of Saanen

The stars of the festival

The church of Saanen will be filled with the sounds of works by Mendelssohn, Debussy, Schumann, Franck, Rachmaninov, Saint-Saëns, Telemann, Nardini, Vivaldi, Pugnani and Mozart, performed by a host of star musicians. They will see to it that the Sommets Musicaux de Gstaad are a musical event not to be missed at the beginning of 2021.

On 29 January, the church of Saanen will be welcoming the iconic, globally renowned Russian conductor Valery Gergiev and his famous Mariinsky Orchestra to open the festival, in an evening devoted entirely to the music of Mendelssohn. On 1 February, the incomparable artistic personality Sir Andrés Schiff will present a programme of music by Debussy, Schumann and Franck on the piano, alongside Renaud Capuçon. The remarkable Martha Argerich will honour us with her presence in a programme for two pianos and narrator. She is in good company, performing as she will be alongside her fellow Argentine Nelson Goerner, one of the finest pianists of his generation, and her two daughters Annie Dutoit (narrator) and Lyda Chen-Argerich (viola). Audiences will be delighted to hear Rachmaninov's Symphonic Dances for two pianos op.45b and *Le Carnaval des animaux* ('Carnival of the Animals') by Camille Saint-Saëns, the 100th anniversary of whose death will be marked in 2021. Juan Diego Flórez, one of the greatest tenors of the contemporary operatic scene, Renaud Capuçon and the famous Camerata Salzburg will bring the Festival to a close on Saturday 6 February, with a programme dedicated entirely to the music of Mozart.

This year, in the church of Saanen, the Festival will be offering a special concert for local children: *Le Carnaval des animaux* on Wednesday 3 February at 10am.

A zoological fantasy written by Saint-Saëns in 1886 'to make audiences laugh', *Le Carnaval des animaux* is a series of 14 pieces each depicting a different animal, featuring Martha Argerich, Nelson Goerner, Annie Dutoit and friends among the performers.

Concerts in the church of Rougemont

The artistic director's 'coups de cœur'

The Romanesque church in Rougemont will play host to the 'coups de cœur', the personal favourites, of the festival's artistic director. There will be four spectacular concerts on 30 and 31 January and 3 and 4 February 2020. The series will be opened by the British pianist – and author – Stephen Hough, Commander of the Order of the British Empire and teacher at the Royal Academy of Music in London, who will present a programme of Bach-Busoni, Chopin and Schumann, with his magnificent cycle *Kreisleriana* op.16. Renowned conductor and violinist Jean-Jacques Kantorow, who will also take on the role of mentor to the young violinists, and young pianist Guillaume Bellom, pupil of Michel Dalberto and finalist at the Clara Haskil International Competition in 2015, will play Bach's four Violin Sonatas BWV 1014 to 1017 on 31 January: this concert will be offered to the public free of charge. Described by *Gramophone* as 'the most trailblazing and meteoric performer of all', the Russian pianist Nikolai Lugansky will be appearing the same day in a quartet with three distinguished young musicians, violinist Nikita Boriso-Glebsky, violist Maxim Rysanov and cellist Narek Hakhnazaryan in a programme of quartets by Fauré and Brahms. Winner of the Prix Thierry Scherz in 2020 at the Sommets Musicaux de Gstaad, Jean-Paul Gasparian will be accompanied by Kim Bomsori, who has recently appeared in concert and on recordings with Rafał Blechacz on Deutsche Grammophon, in a programme of Beethoven, Brahms and

Szymanowski on 3 February. Winner of the first Salzburg International Mozart Competition and the Clara Haskil Prize in 1975 and awarded 1st Prize at the Leeds International Piano Competition in 1978, Michel Dalberto will bring the series of concerts in the church of Rougemont on 4 February with Schubert's Sonata no.19 in C minor D958 and the Sonata no.21 in B flat D960.

A true winter rendezvous

The festival will feature a total of 19 concerts from 29 January to 6 February 2021. The Sommets Musicaux de Gstaad, it should be added, are one of the few festivals in Switzerland whose concerts take place exclusively in churches – to the delight of music-lovers who particularly value the unique magic and intimate atmosphere of this event.

The Sommets Musicaux de Gstaad, a bona fide winter rendezvous in the region and the first classical music festival of the year, have a tradition of organizing dinners in the Gstaad Palace after the concerts in Saanen, thus providing a rare opportunity for a music-loving audience to meet the artists. This is thanks to the patronage of a variety of active partners – whether individual sponsors, business ventures, foundations and associations – including Vera Michalski-Hoffmann, president of the Festival, Aline Foriel-Destezet, Les Amis des Sommets Musicaux de Gstaad, the Fondation Hoffmann, the Fondation Pro Scientia et Arte, the municipality of Saanen and surrounding towns, the canton of Bern and the Loterie Romande, to name only a few. As a result of the current circumstances resulting from Covid-19 which require the implementation of protective measures in accordance with federal law, these special events will not, unfortunately, be open to the public in 2021.

Association of the Sommets Musicaux de Gstaad

President: Vera Michalski-Hoffmann
Director: Ombretta Ravessoud
Artistic director: Renaud Capuçon

Programme, tickets and advance sales

www.sommets-musicaux.ch

In view of the present circumstances, tickets will be on sale exclusively at the Gstaad tourist office from 23 November 2020. Reservations can be made at:

- Gstaad tourist office: +41 33 748 81 82 ticketing@gstaad.ch

Ticket prices per concert: between CHF 30 and CHF 150 (Swiss francs), depending on the category and the venue

Young persons' rate ('Jeunesse', for those aged between 5 and 25): 50% discount

Locals' rates ('Indigènes'): 10% discount

The concert on 31 January at the church of Rougemont at 11am is free of charge

The concert for children on 3 February at the church of Saanen, *The Carnival of the Animals* at 10am is free of charge

A brief look at the Sommets Musicaux de Gstaad

From its inception in 2001, the Sommets Musicaux de Gstaad has been hailed as the ultimate reference point in winter festivals, an event to delight all aficionados of classical music. Every year young talented musicians, internationally renowned artists and lovers of music gather in this enchanting snow-capped paradise to perform and enjoy some of the finest works in the classical repertory.

The festival is structured in three categories: three concert cycles spread across three outstanding venues. In the afternoon, the Gstaad Chapel hosts a selection of the most promising young artists. In the evening, the churches of Rougemont and Saanen will delight their audiences with the sounds of celebrated soloists and internationally renowned orchestras.

Les Amis des Sommets Musicaux de Gstaad

Founded following the initial series of concerts, the friends' association Les Amis des Sommets Musicaux de Gstaad, under the leadership of its new chairman Pierre Dreyfus, offers invaluable support to the Festival.

The complete press kit including press release, the full programme of events, biographies of the artists and HD images of the artists and of the various venues, along with the Sommets Musicaux logo and the accreditation form, can be downloaded here: www.sommets-musicaux.ch/presse

For organizational reasons, we would be grateful if you could obtain your accreditation by Friday 18 December 2020: www.sommets-musicaux.ch/accreditation-form/accreditation-form-in-french (French version)

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