

Press Release

Sion, 28 April 2023

Sion Festival 2023: an artistic plurality driven by hope

For its 58th edition, from 18 August to 3 September 2023, the Sion Festival will offer a programme marked by a spirit of plurality and an invigorating decompartmentalisation of genres. Breakdance will meet Bach with the Flying Steps, medieval Armenia will marry jazz with the Naghash Ensemble, Mediterranean folk and baroque will intermingle with Vincenzo Capezzuto, the Brass Band 13 Étoiles will dialogue with trumpeter Sergei Nakariakov. Alongside the headliners Janine Jansen, Mischa Maisky and Lena Belkina, there will be emerging talents to be applauded at the opening of the festival and at the finals of the Tibor Varga Competition, with the participation of the Festival Orchestra and the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra. The "Musique en fête" Day and the Norwegian Soloists' Choir will bring a refreshing north wind to the audience. The strength of hope will guide the steps of Artistic Director Pavel Vernikov.

"With my music and my programme, I want to transmit hope and joy of life", says Pavel Vernikov, referring to the "difficult times" we are currently experiencing. The opening concert of the festival (18 August) is emblematic in this sense. "In the first part, it presents young hopefuls of classical music: violinists Lilja Haatainen and Edna Unseld, and cellist Charlotte Melkonian. In the second half, Ukrainian and Hebrew music and French songs will be combined in the new multi-arts project 'La vie est belle', for a real emotional bath between sadness and joy".

The Ukrainian violinist will be accompanied by Svetlana Makarova (violin), Roland Vouilloz (narration) – texts by Olivia Seigne, Jean Morisod (illustration) and Maxime Gianinetti (video). Pavel Vernikov and Svetlana Makarova will perform the European premiere of *Blessed Sadness* by the contemporary Ukrainian composer Victoria Poleva.

"Year after year, our Artistic Director always surprises us", says Olivier Vocat, President of the Sion Violin Music Foundation. "For his 11th programme, Pavel Vernikov entertains us with freshness and originality. He invites us to discover hidden facets of music: from hip hop to Bach, via Brahms or Ukrainian tunes, emotions will run high.

Jansen, Belkina, Maisky, Nakariakov

Violinist Janine Jansen will be back in her adopted city at the end of the summer with two concerts (30 August and 3 September), the first devoted to Brahms' chamber music, the second to the French and Spanish repertoire. She will be joined by her faithful musical companions and friends Timothy Ridout (viola), Daniel Blendulf (cello) and Denis Kozhukhin (piano), among others.

The Ukrainian mezzo-soprano Lena Belkina will introduce the audience (19 August) to works by compatriot composers, in particular. She will be accompanied by the Ineo Quartet and Elena Zukhova (harpichord and piano).

An exceptional concert will bring together the "Paganini of the trumpet" Sergei Nakariakov and the Swiss brass band champion 2022, the BB 13 Étoiles, conducted by Frédéric Théodoloz (26 August). For the first time as guest of the Sion Festival, Mischa Maisky will perform Bach's Suites for Solo Cello in the sublime space of Sion Cathedral (25 August).

Breakdance meets Bach

The famous Leipzig choirmaster will also be honoured in the show *Flying Bach*, created more than ten years ago by the world breakdancing champions of the **Flying Steps** company and the director **Christoph Hagel**: a street art invites itself into the concert halls and gives wings to "high culture". For the occasion, the Sion Festival will be the guest of the **Théâtre du Crochetan** in Monthey (**23 August**).

Sometimes dancers, sometimes actors, the clarinetists and the percussionist of the ensemble **Les Bons Beccs** will blow a little "Wind of Madness" (*Vent de folie*) by revisiting the repertoires of classical, traditional and popular music (**24 August**). The countertenor **Vincenzo Capezzuto** and his **Soquadro Italiano** will cross geographical and musical borders with their concert enriched with video-projections *Migrant Music* (**27 August**).

Swiss Premiere of Songs of Exile

The **Naghash Ensemble** and composer **John Hodian** will reinvent the sound of medieval Armenia in the heart of the 21st century, combining traditional sacred music with jazz and post-minimalism (**20 August**). The Swiss premiere of *Songs of Exile* will be given in Sion with the participation of the **Festival Orchestra**, which will also accompany the soloists of the opening concert - established and emerging.

The encouragement of young talents, dear to the heart of artistic director Pavel Vernikov, is at the heart of the **Tibor Varga International Violin Competition**, whose two finals are part of the Sion Festival (**31 August** and **2 September**). The finalists will be accompanied by the **Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra** conducted by **Sergej Krylov**.

The Music which came in from the Cold

There is no Sion Festival without a family concert, and this edition will not fail in the tradition. The Swiss children's singer **Gaëtan**, acclaimed throughout the French-speaking world, will offer the best of his 150 songs, in duet with his musician Fred. A playful and comical concert for children from three years old, and all the others without age limit.

The Nordic countries will be honoured with a concert by the **Norwegian Soloists' Choir**, singing Norwegian pieces in particular, and the "**Musique en fête**" day, which will take place along the evocative theme of "The Music which came in from the Cold", with about ten free concerts in the old town of Sion.

Ticketing from 1st May

Phone: 027 323 85 69

Online: [Sion Violon musique | Sion Festival - Sion Violon musique \(sion-violon-musique.ch\)](https://sion-violon-musique.ch)

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Photos and videos: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/IWd8-l4tjPA5HXR3ObNQSxbFnp-oDubC6?usp=share_link