

### The Sion Festival is back with a large and happy audience

After two years affected by the pandemic, the Sion Festival was back in full swing at the end of the summer, with an average fill rate of 82% (2019: 73%). This 57th edition ended on Sunday 4 September after twenty or so concerts, including nine free concerts during the "Musique en paix" day in the old town of Sion, which attracted a colourful crowd of some 1,000 spectators. Headliners such as Richard Galliano, Janine Jansen, Sergei Nakariakov and the Rustavi Ensemble certainly ensured the event's greatest success in terms of attendance, but Nicola Campogrande's *Danze immaginarie* - a world premiere - and *Le Souffle de l'espoir*, a tribute to Stéphane Chapuis, were also well attended. This was Pavel Vernikov's tenth exceptional programme.

*"Each edition is like a child to me, and I loved all those ten children in the same way. But to see full houses and happy audiences after a period of great fear, like the one we experienced, makes this festival special. To hear that the audience was touched in the soul, that they even cried, makes me feel good,"* said artistic director **Pavel Vernikov**.

*"After two different years, the artists and the spectators were once again close together in the small square of the Théâtre de Valère and in its warm and intimate hall. This closeness has generated a lot of joy and positive emotions",* said **Olivier Vocat**, President of the Foundation Board.

The three exceptional concerts conceived by **Janine Jansen** particularly illuminated this edition, captivating the audience with original and ambitious programming. The Dutch violinist, a Valaisan by adoption and at heart, was surrounded by world-class musicians (such as **Boris Brovtsyn**, **Pablo Ferrández** and **Daniel Blendulf**) and her extraordinarily talented students from the HEMU - Valais-Wallis.

The world and Swiss premieres enthralled the public: **Nicola Campogrande's** *Danze immaginarie* - with the participation of **Pavel Vernikov** and **Svetlana Makarova** - as well as **Richard Galliano's** *Les Chemins noirs* with the beautiful complicity of the writer **René Frégni**, the **Ensemble Vocal de Saint-Maurice** and the **Festival Orchestra**. The festival also drew on the regional artistic melting pot (**Lionel Chapuis**, **Roland Vouilloz** and **La Fanfaribole du Conservatoire**) for **Michel Godard's** *Le Souffle de l'espoir*, a moving tribute to his friend Stéphane Chapuis and to "all the loved ones who have died".

The festival hosted three chamber orchestras, including the prestigious **Korean Chamber Orchestra**, with soloists **Simon Trpčeski** and **Sergei Nakariakov**. The **Kiyy Virtuosi Orchestra** and the **Rustavi Ensemble**, together in the opening concert, struck a chord with the audience. A message of hope was also conveyed by the "Musique en paix" day, which brought together Ukrainian and Russian music.

The fairy-tale and comical *Nutcracker* by the **Agora Ensemble**, illustrated live by **Juliette Barbanègre** and narrated by **Natalie Dessay**, made young and old dream and laugh. The festival also proposed classical music revisited by the **Philharmonix** and the **Janoska Ensemble**, while traditional music was invited at the end of the festival with the **Makedonissimo Quintet**, for a festive and joyful concert.

The Sion Festival bids farewell to an audience whose eyes are still shining, whose laughter is often close to tears, and bids them farewell until next year for the **58th edition**, which will take place from **17 August to 3 September 2023**.

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<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1mclKcPsgXwqm3pvPkDbsQHIOH8tcvsG?usp=sharing>