

Gstaad Festival Orchestra (GFO)

The Orchestra

Every year, the Gstaad Menuhin Festival thrills its audience with unique concerts and top-class musical programmes set amidst magnificent countryside. The Gstaad Festival Orchestra (GFO) grew out of the vision to spread the innovative, inspiring spirit of the Menuhin Festival abroad and to enable this celebrated annual music festival to resonate on an international platform.

Since its foundation in 2010, the GFO has soared again and again to new musical heights. The first widely celebrated tours took the orchestra to the Rheingau Music Festival, the Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, to the Festival La Chaise Dieu, the Festspiele Herrenchiemsee, the Meran Festival, the Stresa Music Festival, the concert house in Vienna, the Cologne Philharmonie, the Festival Theatre Bregenz, the Dresdner Frauenkirche, the Philharmonie in Munich, the Baden-Baden Festival Theatre and the Stuttgart Liederhalle as well as other places.

The Gstaad Festival Orchestra has established itself as a brilliant and charismatic first-class orchestra. Season upon season it has experienced new success. Between 2010 and 2016 the GFO has performed under the direction of Kristjan Järvi and Neeme Järvi alternately. Furthermore renowned soloists like Renée Fleming, Martin Grubinger, Renaud Capuçon, Truls Mørk, Sol Gabetta, Khatia Buniatishvili, Fazil Say and Vilde Frang have performed with the orchestra.

During a celebrated concert tour in the summer and autumn of 2015 the first live recording took place. It was published by Sony in January 2016. It features the new version of the Swan Lake suite by Tchaikovsky created by Kristjan Järvi.

The GFO regularly performs new compositions, e.g. by composers like Fazil Say, Daniel Schnyder, Dieter Ammann, Isabel Mundry, and Georg Breinschmid. These works include a newly composed piece by Mark-Anthony Turnage: "Dialogue" (2015), with the soloists Patricia Kopatchinskaja (violin) and Sol Gabetta (cello).

With the star conductor Jaap van Zweden taking the stand as principal conductor in the season 2017-2018, the successful project of the Gstaad Menuhin Festival will reach new heights of development. Jaap van Zweden – the designated music director of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra – will conduct several programmes with the Gstaad Festival Orchestra every year. Besides concerts in Gstaad, the GFO will perform at the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg in the summer of 2017 under the direction of Jaap van Zweden.

The Gstaad Festival Orchestra is made up of the best musicians from Switzerland's leading orchestras. These high-class musicians are now forming a sort of musical 'national team'. Its members are musicians from the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, the Zurich Opera Orchestra, the Kammerorchester Basel, the Basel Symphony Orchestra and the Bern Symphony Orchestra. Furthermore, some of the best students from Swiss and European high schools are selected every year to play with the GFO. The aim is to bring high-quality sound and famous musical spirit of the top Swiss orchestras together, in order to create a process of dialogue between the musicians and to forge at the same time a dynamic, unique-sounding orchestra every year.

In the summer of 2017, the GFO will participate in the Gstaad Conducting Academy, the heart of the Gstaad Academy, for the fourth time since 2014, as the "Orchestra in Residence". Between 12 and 15 young conductors from all over the world will have an opportunity to work with the GFO for three weeks and conduct concerts. This pan-European unique conducting academy will be headed by Jaap van Zweden (Artistic Director), Johannes Schlaefli (Head of Teaching), and Long Yu (guest professor).

LW, 01.12.2016