

"Life without music would simply be an error, a strain, an exile" – Friedrich Nietzsche

Dear public,

The pandemic, which paralysed the world of culture for more than a year, is without doubt one of the worst – if not the worst – trials the Société de Musique de La Chaux-de-Fonds has faced in the course of its existence. Since its establishment in the final years of the nineteenth century, our society has welcomed many famous names from the world of classical music. It has also welcomed young, talented artists on the cusp of their international careers. Our thoughts are with those who have devoted their lives to music, many of whom have suffered terribly during this total cultural eclipse. For those whose careers had not yet started when the pandemic struck, the coronavirus may well have put paid to their musical ambitions. Our thoughts also turn to our audience, which has been deprived of the social rites that are the Société de Musique de La Chaux-de-Fonds' concerts.

As a mark of solidarity and at the request of our season ticket-holders, our committee has decided to reschedule the concerts that we were forced to cancel in 2020 and 2021. We believe that both our abandoned seasons and the artists who were unable to perform deserve a second chance. Some concert programmes will remain unchanged; others will get some "added value" in the form of an additional, no-less prestigious soloist. We are also adding a completely new operatic concert devoted to bel canto.

The Société de Musique de La Chaux-de-Fonds is proud to be able to reschedule the concerts featuring such outstanding talents with unique artistic personalities and a host of stars who have performed in the world's greatest concert halls. We cannot wait to – at long last! – welcome back as many of you as possible to the magnificent Salle de musique with its legendary acoustics.

Our main series

The season kicks off on 24 October 2021 with pianist Alexander Melnikov, winner of the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels, who will perform among other works the *Symphonie Fantastique*. Ukrainian violinist Valeriy Sokolov will join us on 14 November 2021, accompanied, as always, by Evgeny Izotov on the piano. They will be joined on stage by Canadian cellist Gary Hoffman, professor at the Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel in Brussels. The end of 2021 will see concerts being performed by two top-class chamber music ensembles and one star soloist. On 21 November 2021, we will play host to the Nash Ensemble of London, which is made up of musicians from some of England's greatest musical institutions, one of whom is none other than the son of Alfred Brendel. The musicians of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra (which now goes by the name of Concertgebouworkest) who make up the Camerata RCO will be accompanied on 16 December 2021 by a very special guest indeed, the celebrated baritone Matthias Goerne. 2022 will get off to a wonderful start on 16 January when we have the very great pleasure of welcoming Les Vents Français and its co-founder Emmanuel Pahud. On 28 January 2022, the Jerusalem Quartet is set to shine in a concert that will include one of its favourite composers, Shostakovich. The Second Viennese School will be paying a visit to La Chaux-de-Fonds on 20 February 2022 with the Alban Berg Ensemble, of which Ariane Haering is a member. On 24 February 2022, we will welcome German

pianist Ragna Schirmer and the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra in a concert that will pay homage to Clara Schumann. Other events closely linked to this concert include a conference organised by Brigitte François-Sappey at Club 44 on 10 February 2022 and the screening of "Song Of Love", a biographical film about the Schumanns, at the Centre de culture ABC on 27 February 2022. Before the screening, Mr François Lilienfeld, musicologist and member of the committee of the Société de Musique de La Chaux-de-Fonds, will give an introduction to the film. Mr Lilienfeld will be making several appearances this season. The Bern-based ensemble Les Passions de l'Âme, Meret Lüthi, and the English vocal ensemble Solomon's Knot will perform "The Thunder Ode" on 24 March 2022. In a first for the Société de Musique de La Chaux-de-Fonds, we are delighted to welcome the Ensemble Symphonique Neuchâtel with its new conductor Victorien Vanoosten and the great lyrical singer Patrizia Ciofi on 31 March 2022. Our 129th season ends on 22 May 2022 with Andreas Ottensamer, the young solo clarinetist with the Berlin Philharmonic, performing with the Basel Chamber Orchestra.

"I prefer that which touches me to that which surprises me" – François Couperin

The aim of the Société de Musique de La Chaux-de-Fonds' Parallels Series 2021–2022 is to focus on discovery. On 5 December 2021, Trio Eclipse, which won a scholarship from Pour-cent culturel Migros in 2019, will perform a concert that brings together the worlds of music and the silver screen. The film "An American in Paris" will be screened at the Centre de culture ABC at 11 a.m. on the same day and will be preceded by an introduction by François Lilienfeld. Israeli pianist Iddo Bar-Shai and shadow artist Philippe Beau (Cirque du Soleil) are both established artists. Together they will perform "music for four hands" that combines the work of François Couperin with Chinese Shadows on 12 December 2021. Isabel Villanueva (alto) and François Dumont (piano) are experienced young musicians and teachers who have won prestigious competitions. They will be performing on 23 January 2022. At 23, Martin James Bartlett is possessed of a maturity and elegance unheard of in a musician of this age. This talented young British pianist will perform in La Chaux-de-Fonds on 3 April 2022. The series will be rounded off by a concert by the Big Band of the Neuchâtel Conservatory of Music (BEC) under the direction of Steve Muriset on 8 May 2022.

We would like to thank our partner amongst them Swiss radio RTS for their long-term partnership.

We have a variety of documents for download containing all the information you need on the 2021–2022 season.

We hope to see you soon at one of our concerts.