

Press release

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40th International Jazzfestival Saalfelden from 22 to 25 August 2019 All change for the anniversary and jazz concerts on the Alpine pastures

Jazzfestival Saalfelden is celebrating its anniversary, looking back on an impressive history while also building a bridge to the future with many innovations.

It all started in the mid-70s with a handful of young music fans who were sick of having to travel all the time to see jazz concerts. They decided to simply invite the jazz musicians to Saalfelden – and founded their own jazz festival. Initially held in stables, the festival has grown to one of the most renowned of its kind in Europe over the decades in between.

International acts and innovative projects

The main stage in the Congress Building in the town centre and the “Short Cuts” series of concerts in Kunsthaus Nexus are the flagships and playground for the international acts that arrive from around the world at the end of August each year. The festival has an excellent reputation among adventurers and explorers, as they have been discovering new and previously unknown, innovative and unusual projects here for decades.

Over 50 concerts in the town and on the surrounding mountains

The festival and its surroundings were restructured for the 40th anniversary: There are new stages in the small town in the heart of the picturesque mountain landscape, which also hosts concerts. From the 30-something concerts in previous years, the programme will grow to include over 50 events from 2019 on. Artistic director Mario Steidl and production manager Daniela Neumayer have big plans. “We are creating a new festival centre on the town square with a dedicated concert stage and a young and attractive hospitality concept. It will be a simmering and sizzling space, a meeting place for young and old, for local residents and international visitors,” says Daniela Neumayer.

New series of concerts and “Artists in Residences”

“We spent more than one year honing the new concept. We want to give far more people than ever before the opportunity to discover music, to open themselves to unusual acts or simply to have a good time at our festival,” says artistic director Mario Steidl. “There are so many great artists whose projects need smaller and more intimate spaces. I also wanted to create a new structure to allow artists to meet one another spontaneously.” To this end, Steidl nominated two Artists in Residence, Maja Osojnik and Lukas König, who will each present multiple projects – in an old, derelict district court and in the bookbinding company of an art-loving patron. Other concerts will take place in a bookshop and in Schloss Ritzen Museum, for example. There will be a few more surprises on the surrounding Alpine pastures – such as a full day guided concert hike with Austrian musicians or a mountain bike trail with jazz concerts one day before the official start of the festival. The free concerts in Kunsthaus Nexus in the “Nexus +” series will be supplemented with additional concerts and visual art projects. An entire park in the town centre will become a green musical meeting place – with three days full of DJ sets and concerts.

Sound of nature: Jazz in the surrounding Alpine pastures

The visual highlights of the jazz festival will still take place in the Alpine pastures – Jazz, outdoors and free-of-charge, against the awesome mountain backdrop of the Steinberge mountain range. A variety of combos will play live at three mountain huts – the Huggenberg, the Stöcklalm and the Vorderkühbühelhof. All anyone hoping to experience these truly outstanding concerts has to do is simply put on their hiking boots, climb the mountain and savour the unique atmosphere and cool jazz music with a cool beer and a hearty snack.

Free programme of events for jazz fans and insiders

With the new concept, Saalfelden promises five great festival days, full of concerts and with a programme that will be an absolute hot spot for jazz fans and insiders. With its free programme of events in and around the town, the festival also has a unique flair filled with music throughout the entire day. Anyone who still has not had enough after countless concerts, which run until late at night anyway, can party and dance the night away at the groovy late-night concerts in Kunsthaus Nexus.

First programme highlights from around the world

The festival is traditionally opened by an Austrian artist commissioned to produce a project. This year, the young bassist Manu Mayr was selected, and will perform as a duo with Susanna Gartmayer. Christian Muthspiel founded the 18-strong Orjazztra Vienna for Saalfelden, and Daniel Riegler will also present a new project with Anthony Coleman. Many international artists have already signed up: Sylvie Courvoisier from the USA will present her new album with Ken Vandermark, Nate Wooley and Tom Rainey, as will saxophonist Anna Webber. France's lively jazz scene will be presented in the form of the unusual Trio Abacaxi around guitarist Julien Deprez and the duo of Theo Ceccaldi and Roberto Negro. Scandinavia will also be represented by the energetic Mette Rasmussen, who will perform as a duo with Tashi Dori, and accordion player Frode Haltli will enchant visitors with his "Avant Folk" project. Of course, the big names in the modern jazz scene will be there: Drummer Jim Black will showcase a brand-new project in Saalfelden, and the exceptionally talented saxophonist Joshua Redman will play one of his few European concerts with Ron Miles, Scott Colley and Dave King. With all of these highlights, the 40th International Jazzfestival Saalfelden promises to be a very special one. www.jazzsaalfelden.com

The 41th Jazzfestival Saalfelden will take place from 27–30 August 2020.

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