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# MENUHIN FESTIVAL GSTAAD



## PRESS RELEASE

*Menuhin Festival Gstaad: the innovative spirit of a young artistic director*

## Christoph Müller a lifting of the Spirit for Gstaad

**Christoph Müller's artistic concept for Gstaad's Menuhin Festival rests on three main pillars. The dynamic Artistic Director is presenting chamber music, symphonic works and operatic concerts, as well as the new experimental projects of the cycle, "TODAY'S MUSIC". The Menuhin Festival's increased efforts to promote talented young artists are completely in the spirit of Lord Menuhin. The orchestra workshop "Play Along" is open to young amateur musicians for the first time this year. The workshop provides the unique opportunity to work and make music together with professionals. And for the first time in 2009 talented singers will have the opportunity to participate in the master class "Gstaad Vocal Academy" with Cecilia Bartoli and her mother, Professor Silvana Bazzoni Bartoli.**

With the young Basler musician and manager, the second largest festival in Switzerland has effectively engaged one of the youngest leaders in the field. "It is a great honour to take over the artistic direction of this festival", commented Christoph. However it is not by chance that the Menuhin Festival Administrative Board decided in favour of the young cellist and economics graduate. Since 1996 he has been the Manager of the Basel Chamber Orchestra and in this role, achieved great things. "Thanks to a skilful combination of old and new we were able to considerably increase interest in the festival and thereby succeeded in bringing conductors and soloists of world renown to the orchestra" states Müller. A further high point was the introduction of a high quality series of concerts of the 'Lucerne Chamber Circle' in the Lucerne Business and Culture Centre, which he established with the team of 'Swiss Classics', the agency he founded. As a consequence of this concept he was also successful in offering high quality classical concerts outside the festival and thus attracting a wider public.

### **A Renaissance for the spirit of Menuhin**

"Taking up and extending Yehudi Menuhin's artistic themes provides a constant challenge. The perpetual delight of which he took in new ideas intrigues me. *Back to the roots* here means moving forward to what is fresh, uncomplicated and creative. So we are working to transform this fundamental into a modern format". Müller is convinced that his ideas would have been in tune with those of Menuhin, who was the premier virtuoso violinist of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. At only 39, Christoph Müller is one of the youngest on the classical festival scene. During the past seven years he has conferred a new image to the second oldest classical festival. The concept is based on three main strands: an intensive chamber music week with a renowned artist in residence; great symphony concerts and concert performances of operatic works and operettas in the festival tent; and the cycle "TODAY'S MUSIC", including days of improvisation and projects where musicians of all styles, types and cultures meet.

## KEY FACTS

### Christoph Müller, Intendant (since 2002)

- born in 1970 in Basel, brought up in Möhlin (AG)

### Studies:

- 1990 Advanced level Economics in Muttenz (BL)
- 1991 Cello studies at the schools of music in Bern (teacher: Patrick Demenga) and Biel (teacher: Conradin Brotbek)
- 1995 Teaching diploma, with mention "very good"
- 1996 Joined the concert training class at the Winterthur school of music (Thomas Grossenbacher)
- 1997 Orchestra diploma (under Conradin Brotbek)
- 1999 Advanced concert diploma, with mention "very good"

### Professional Activities:

#### *As a Cellist*

- Cellist in the trio 'Trio con Brio'
- Teacher at various music schools
- Solo cellist with the Swiss Chamber Orchestra
- Cellist in the Swiss Philharmonic Orchestra (Orchestre Philharmonique Suisse)
- Cellist with the Basel Chamber Orchestra

#### *As Culture Manager*

- since 1996, general manager of the Basle Chamber Orchestra, since 2007 orchestral director
- 1999, foundation of the «Swiss Classics» agency in connection with the conception and organisation of the «Lucerne Chamber Circle» at the Lucerne Culture and Congress Centre
- 2000, collaboration with the cultural department within the administration of the Lucerne Culture and Congress Centre
- since 2002, artistic director of the Menuhin Festival Gstaad, since 2007 Intendant of the Festival
- since 2005 also artistic director of the Interlakner Musikfestwochen (new name: Interlaken Classics) which, starting from 2007, will take place before Easter, in agreement and coordination with the Menuhin Festival.
- 2006: foundation of the Solsberg Festival in collaboration with cellist Sol Gabetta. The chamber music festival in the Baroque monastery church in Olsberg has developed into a major cultural event in the Basle area in only four years with an annual attendance of nearly 3,000 visitors.

### Awards:

- 1995 Prize for cultural promotion SBS
- 1998 «Orpheus-Concerts» award (with Trio con Brio)

### Recordings:

- 2000: CD of Trio con Brio (works by Tchaikowsky and Paul Juon)