

## Press Release

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**FESTSPIELHAUS BADEN-BADEN**

2025 1010 PR Program 2026 Festspielhaus Baden-Baden

### Forward with Pioneering Spirit

Festspielhaus Artistic Director Benedikt Stampa presents the annual program for 2026.

*With seven festivals throughout the year / Two staged operas / Long weekend with the Berliner Philharmoniker / Eight dance companies*

In presenting the 2026 program, Festspielhaus Artistic Director Benedikt Stampa is defining the direction in which he is leading the Festspielhaus into the future: it is becoming more European, with new offerings for an even more diverse audience. According to Stampa, the partnership with the city of Baden-Baden for privately financed artistic operations is proving itself especially now: "We were pioneers from the very beginning. When public support for cultural institutions is under cost-cutting pressure, entrepreneurial spirit and financial independence are paying off for the Festspielhaus, for the city of Baden-Baden, and for our audience."

### Easter Festival: Europe in the Black Forest

The Baden-Baden model makes it possible to offer seven top-class festivals in 2026 in addition to a variety of events in all categories. The Easter Festival (28.3.-6.4.) will be taking place for the first time with new partners: the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra from Amsterdam under shooting star Klaus Mäkelä and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra under Joana Mallwitz. As the orchestra's only festival venue worldwide, Baden-Baden is entering into a long-term partnership with the world-class Amsterdam ensemble. It will begin at the Easter Festival with Bach's St. Matthew Passion (30.3.) and concerts featuring Mahler's Fifth (1.4.) and Bruckner's Eighth (2.4.), all conducted by Klaus Mäkelä. A highlight of the Easter Festival continues to be the staged opera

production. Joana Mallwitz leads the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, founded by Claudio Abbado to gather together elite musicians from all over Europe, in three performances of Wagner's *Lohengrin* (28.3., 31.3., 5.4.). Johannes Erath will direct the production with Piotr Beczala in the title role and Rachel Willis-Sørensen as Elsa. After the festival premiere of *Lohengrin*, Joana Mallwitz conducts Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem* (3.4.): "I know of no other work that so intelligently, sensitively, and monumentally, yet without hollow pathos, captures in music the suffering of war and the hope for peace," Benedikt Stampa explains his decision to present this work, as topical as ever, at the 2026 Easter Festival. "With choir, children's choir, soloists, symphony and chamber orchestra, the *War Requiem* truly calls for a large-scale setting. And this is just what we will be creating at the Easter Festival – offering everything needed to do full justice to the work," promises the Festspielhaus Artistic Director. The trio of soloists featuring Matthias Goerne, Irina Lungu, and Singer of the Year (*Opera World*) Bogdan Volkov underscores the high standard intended for the performance. But this is not the only singing highlight at the Easter Festival: acclaimed soprano Asmik Grigorian makes her Baden-Baden debut with songs by Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff (4.4.).

### **Global stars and breaking new ground**

Even before the Easter Festival, global stars will be making their way to Baden-Baden. Jonas Kaufmann opens the year 2026 with a festive aria recital together with Italian baritone Luca Salsi (10.1). András Schiff will feature as soloist and conductor in Mozart piano concertos.

As the first festival of the year, Takeover (30.1.-8.2.) continues to grow with the goal of finding connections between electronic music and classical sounds. With the Berlin Techno Ballet and the São Paulo Dance Company, dance will be in the spotlight at Takeover 2026. The company from Brazil will present choreographies by Marco Goecke, Nacho Duato, and Stephen Shropshire. The performance by the Berlin ballet troupe begins as a rave with the audience dancing on stage – only gradually do the company's professionals emerge, dancing their choreographies with the audience in their midst.

In May, the Göteborgs DansCompani will present a guest performance in Baden-Baden for the first time (8.-10.5.) – combined with a ticket offer that

encourages anyone interested as well as dance fans to attend the performances with friends or family at a discount.

The dance festival The World of John Neumeier from October 1 to 11 will center around the Neumeier ballets *Illusions – like Swan Lake* with the Bayerisches Staatsballett and *The Nutcracker* with the Hamburg Ballet. The Winter Festival (11-20.12.) will offer a second look at *Swan Lake*, with Rudolf Nureyev's version of the ballet classic danced by the National Ballet Bratislava.

### **Operas: Wagner, Puccini, Mozart**

The opera year in the Festspielhaus, which begins with the new production of *Lohengrin* at the Easter Festival, also moves forward with Wagner: Yannick Nézet-Séguin continues his concert-version Baden-Baden *Ring* with *Siegfried* (26.4). The SWR Symphonieorchester under François-Xavier Roth performs as an opera orchestra at the Whitsun Festival for the first time in a concert-version *Der Rosenkavalier* (17. and 24.5). The Strauss opera will feature a reunion with audience favorite Jonathan Tetelman. For the Summer Festival, Antonio Pappano conducts the London Symphony Orchestra in the third act of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* with Clay Hilley and Sarah Jakubiak in the title roles (5.7.). The summer collaboration with the Gstaad Festival enters the next round with Puccini's *La Bohème* (23.8). Carolina López Moreno and Benjamin Bernheim sing the lead couple Mimì and Rodolfo. The opera year concludes with the second staged opera after *Lohengrin*: Iván Fischer conducts and directs Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (18. and 20.12).

### **Long weekend with the Berliners**

The Berliner Philharmoniker continues its connection with Baden-Baden over a long concert weekend at the beginning of December. Chief conductor Kirill Petrenko leads two concerts which offer the Berliners plenty of opportunity to showcase their world-famous sound. On 3.12, the program will feature Ottorino Respighi's magnificent *Roman Trilogy*. Star tenor Jonathan Tetelman brings more Italian flair with opera arias. On 4.12, Víkingur Ólafsson will be the soloist in Johannes Brahms's First Piano Concerto, before we hear Richard Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra*. In four more concerts, the Berlin Philharmoniker continues its Baden-Baden tradition of presenting itself in chamber ensembles. The most famous of these ensembles concludes the short Berlin festival: On St.

Nicholas' Day, the 12 Cellists of the Berliner Philharmoniker perform a program ranging from classical to pop.

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### **Engage partners, attract audiences**

Strengthening artistic partnerships will remain one of Festspielhaus Artistic Director Benedikt Stampa's central focuses in 2026 – even beyond established festival partners such as John Neumeier and Yannick Nézet-Séguin. Daniel Hope rounds out the Summer Festival in a trio together with his string colleague Pinchas Zukerman and conducting legend Zubin Mehta (12.7). On New Year's Eve, he returns for the Gala with special guests. Hélène Grimaud will delight her fans with Gershwin's *Concerto in F* on Valentine's Day before giving her Festspielhaus debut as a soloist and conductor in piano concertos by Brahms and Schumann at the Easter Festival. There will be plenty of opportunity to get to know young violinist Daniel Lozakovich, who can be heard in three concerts featuring violin concertos by Schumann (7.3.), Bruch (1.4.), and Shostakovich (7.11.) in Baden-Baden.

For the first time, the Festspielhaus will be offering themed packages with ticket purchases – including seminars, guided tours, and meet & greet events with the artists. With titles such as "Exploring Wagner" and "Opera for Beginners," they are aimed at both connoisseurs and anyone who is simply curious. "At the moment there is a lot of talk of division," Benedikt Stampa observes. "I am convinced that in the future, it will become even more important to create places where people can meet and enjoy cultural offerings." For this, Baden-Baden offers the best possible conditions: "With its rich tradition, the Festspielhaus, the museums, and its cosmopolitan hospitality, Baden-Baden has what it takes to become Germany's most important festival city. We are well on our way!"

Advance ticket sales start on Monday, October 13 at 9 am in the Festspielhaus app and on Friday, October 20, 2025 at 9 am in the web store and advance ticket sales outlets.

**Further information and tickets:** [www.festspielhaus.de](http://www.festspielhaus.de)

**Personal assistance and reservations:** Tel. +49(0)7221 / 30 13 101