

# GSTAAD MENUHIN FESTIVAL

& ACADEMY

Press Release

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## Christoph Müller, Artistic Director of Gstaad Menuhin Festival & Academy, to conclude his tenure by the end of 2025

Christoph Müller has informed the Board of Directors of Gstaad Menuhin Festival & Academy AG of his decision to step down from his role as Artistic Director upon the completion of the three-year programme cycle “Transformation 2023 – 2025”. The Board of Directors acknowledges this decision with regret and will convene on October 30 for a retreat to discuss the way forward.

*By the time the 2025 edition is completed, Christoph Müller will have curated 24 Festival programmes. “I owe a lot to the Gstaad Menuhin Festival, and I continue to approach my role for this beloved Festival with immense enthusiasm”, says Christoph Müller. “However, after careful consideration and thought, I’ve come to the decision that, following the “Transformation” cycle in the autumn of 2025 and my 24<sup>th</sup> Festival, it’s the perfect time to hand over the artistic direction.*

*Back in 2002, when I was just a little over 30 years old, the Board of Directors gave me the opportunity to completely reshape the Festival. This approach allowed for organic growth, and new formats and structures naturally integrated into the Festival’s expansion. Both the Board of Directors and the team embraced and implemented my ideas and visions, which brought me immense satisfaction year after year. I am convinced that the Festival is currently in a strong position and ready to enter into a new era. However, two Festival editions still lie ahead, and I will devote all my energy into ensuring they become a success. I’m very much looking forward to creating and enjoying the programmes for 2024 and 2025.”*

By the artistic direction of Christoph Müller, the Festival, located in the Bernese Oberland of Switzerland, transformed from solely offering concerts into a diverse and multifaced experience, where talent development and education have become integral parts. Since 2008, Müller has been gradually expanding the Festival’s scope, offering more than 50 concerts across various genres like chamber music, symphonic performances, operas in concertante and semi-staged performances, or contemporary music. Also, Christoph Müller has introduced initiatives like the Gstaad Academy, comprising five distinct academies, the Gstaad Festival Orchestra, digital events as part of the Gstaad Digital Festival, and numerous other projects. The Gstaad Conducting Academy, introduced in 2014 and honoured with the annual “Neeme Järvi Prize”, holds a unique position throughout Europe due to its outstanding contributions.

Christoph Müller has achieved a remarkable feat by establishing long-term partnerships with outstanding artists, including Cecilia Bartoli, Hélène Grimaud, Jonas Kaufmann, Jaap van Zweden, Sir Andrés Schiff, as well as internationally renowned orchestras such as the London Symphony Orchestra. Furthermore, he has played a crucial role in nurturing talents like Khatia Buniatishvili, Patricia Kopachinskaja, Sol Gabetta, and Andreas Ottensamer, while developing these exceptional artists into established collaborators of the Festival.

*“It is with deep regret, but also with understanding, that we acknowledge the decision of our Artistic Director”, says Aldo Kropf, Chairman of the Board. “Christoph Müller has consistently developed our Festival along with the idea and vision of our founding father, demonstrating remarkable creativity and ingenuity. He has firmly established the Festival’s presence within the national and international community of festivals.*

*Over the 22 years of his dedicated work, the number of festival attendees has almost doubled, from 14,000 back then to around 27,000 today.*

*The remarkable growth across all parts of our organisation, notably reflected in the increasing number of attendees, is a testament to the success of Christoph Müller. This achievement was also made possible through generous financial support from various sources. The long-standing engagement as our Artistic Director symbolises unwavering consistency, evident in the loyalty of our audience, numerous partnerships we've built, and the strong unity within our Festival team. We owe Christoph Müller immense gratitude and eagerly anticipate collaborating on our 2024 and 2025 Festival editions.*

*The search for a successor, considering infrastructure matters and plans for a "Gstaad Concert Hall", presents both a challenge as well as new opportunities. The Board of Directors will thoroughly assess the new situation during a retreat on October 30<sup>th</sup>."*

For any further inquiries, please contact:

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