

The 50th Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten Musik 2026 look back on a highly successful edition

The 50th Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten Musik 2026 came to a close with the final of the Cesti Competition on 30 August. With more events and a resulting increase of around 9% in tickets sold, the festival achieved a new high, with revenues up by around 8% compared with the previous year.

Attendance exceeded 95%. From 24 July to 30 August, more than 20,000 visitors from Austria and abroad attended a total of 62 Festwochen events at 20 venues – including 23 free formats. The anniversary year also attracted particularly strong media interest from Austria and abroad. No fewer than 62 media representatives attended the three performances of the main opera 'Il pomo d'oro' by Pietro Antonio Cesti alone. In total, 81 media representatives attended the numerous performances of the varied programme, many of which were completely sold out.

As always, the festival opened with the four Ambras Castle Concerts, all of which were well attended or sold out. Among them was 'Bach à 7', featuring Sigiswald Kuijken and La Petite Bande in a programme that evoked the early days of the Festwochen. Beyond the Ambras concerts, further tributes to artists who have accompanied the Festwochen over the years also proved particularly popular with audiences: 'A Tribute to Alan' with **Anna Bonitatibus and the Accademia Bizantina**, as well as guest appearances by former **Musical Director Alessandro De Marchi** (2010–2023) with the **Coro Maghini** ('Gioseffo') and the oratorio 'Il Trionfo' with the **Freiburger Barockorchester and Attilio Cremonesi**, who stepped in at short notice for René Jacobs (1997–2009), who was taken ill.

Full houses were also recorded for 'Christina von Schweden', a programme by the **Orchestre de l'Opéra Royal de Versailles** dedicated to the 400th birthday of the eponymous queen, 'Die blaue Stunde' at the Hofgarten Pavilion, and **Francesco Corti** with the **Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin** in 'Bach & Söhne'. The **Talenti Vulcanici** and **Familienmusik Huber** also met with an enthusiastic response for their cross-cultural programme 'Neapolitanisch aufgespielt', as did 'Ottavio plus' with recorder player **Giovanni Antonini**, the return of French harpsichordist **Jean Rondeau** in 'Encore', and many other concerts.

Under the main question '**What are we celebrating?**', the Innsbrucker Festwochen presented **Pietro Antonio Cesti's** opera 'Il pomo d'oro', long considered impossible to perform, as the highlight of the anniversary year. Twenty soloists, a choir, dancers from two companies and the **Accademia Bizantina** brought the work, partially reconstructed by **Ottavio Dantone**, to the stage under his musical direction. The audience's enthusiasm, expressed in

standing ovations on every evening for the production by **Fabio Ceresa**, the costumes by **Giuseppe Palella** and the set design by **Nikolaus Webern**, was echoed by the media response: 'At the end, you discover an absolute masterpiece.' (La Libre Belgique, 11 August 2026)
'It is an opera you fall in love with because it has everything except boredom.' (La Stampa, 10 August 2026)
'Innsbruck can do it. Go there! The Golden Festival Apple 2026 is unequivocally going to Innsbruck.' (Welt, 11 August 2026)

The promotion of emerging talent also remains a matter close to the heart of the Innsbrucker Festwochen. The four performances of the **Barockoper:Jung production 'Atalanta'**, which had sold out months in advance, were a great success, while the concert of **youngbaroque & Masterclass** was also enthusiastically received by the audience. Further young talents took to the Festwochen stages with **Josef Laming** in 'Sonare organo' and the **Cardinal Points Ensemble** and **Vierhalbiert** in 'Made in Tirol'.

Artistic Director Eva-Maria Sens looks back on this exceptional anniversary: 'This anniversary year has above all shown just how vibrant the Innsbrucker Festwochen and Early Music are. We have reunited with artists who have accompanied and shaped the Festwochen over decades, while at the same time giving a platform to young talents who will shape the future. It was important to me that our 50th anniversary should not be a mere retrospective. That is why, with 'Il pomo d'oro', we took on a work that had long been considered impossible to perform – and in doing so perhaps demonstrated more clearly than with any other project what drives us: to take the past seriously in order to create something outstandingly new from it. This anniversary year provides a foundation on which we can continue to build with curiosity, courage and artistic joy.'

'Our 50th anniversary year was a great success for the Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten Musik in every respect. The high attendance, rising ticket sales and the increase in revenues are a welcome affirmation of our artistic work and give us confidence in the Festwochen's continued development,' says **Managing Director Dr Markus Lutz**.

Since their foundation in 1976, the Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten Musik have been the starting point for many artists' careers and have established themselves as one of the world's leading institutions in the field of Early Music. In 2023, Eva-Maria Sens took over as Artistic Director alongside Ottavio Dantone, who will serve as Musical Director until 2028. During this period, his Accademia Bizantina, one of the world's most renowned ensembles specialising in historically informed performance practice, is the Festwochen's Orchestra in Residence.