

The Programme of the 50th Anniversary of the Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten Musik

'What do we celebrate?' This question lies at the heart of the anniversary of the Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten Musik. The highlight of the programme running from 24 July to 30 August 2026 is the baroque opera par excellence: **'Il pomo d'oro'** by **Pietro Antonio Cesti**, the legendary work by Innsbruck's great court composer. The Barockoper:Jung, **George Frideric Handel's 'Atalanta'**, will feature performers from the 2025 Cesti competition. Beyond these two celebratory operas, and befitting such a milestone, the 50th summer of the Festwochen will present a series of concerts that honour the festival's history whilst looking towards the future of the Early Music scene. The former artistic directors of the festival, **René Jacobs** and **Alessandro de Marchi**, will return as guest conductors, and the current musical director, **Ottavio Dantone**, will conduct a memorial concert for **Alan Curtis** with the festival's orchestra-in-residence, his *Accademia Bizantina*, and mezzo-soprano *Anna Bonitatibus*. Other stars of the scene, such as **Jean Rondeau**, **Giovanni Antonini** and **Arianna Vendittelli**, will also take part in the celebrations in Innsbruck. Numerous formats with free admission complement the concerts at a wide variety of venues, most notably a day-long celebration in Innsbruck's Hofgarten, featuring early music performances throughout the afternoon and culminating in a screening of **Antonio Caldara's 'Ifigenia in Aulide'** from the 2025 festival. For the third time, **Eva-Maria Sens** is responsible for the overall programme as artistic director. Advance ticket sales start on 9 December 2025.

'The 50th anniversary of the Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten Musik is a particular moment to pause and ask: What do we celebrate? We celebrate the early music that connects us all, the knowledge, talent and passion of the artists from around the world who come to Innsbruck year after year and shape our festival, and our loyal and curious audience. With Cesti's 'Il pomo d'oro', the baroque opera of all baroque operas, we are making a statement about the splendour and diversity of this art form and about the uniqueness of the Innsbrucker Festwochen,' **explains Artistic Director Eva-Maria Sens.**

'For 50 years now, the Festwochen have shaped Tyrol and our regional capital, Innsbruck. Half a century filled with highlights from early music that remain in the memory of thousands of visitors and locals alike. The beauty and timelessness of this music deserve to be celebrated, and I look forward to the people of Tyrol embracing the exciting and wide-ranging programme the Festwochen offer in this anniversary year,' **emphasises Governor Anton Mattle.**

'Fifty years of the Innsbrucker Festwochen represent a fixture in the cultural calendar and a widely visible hallmark of our city. As a magnet for the international music world, they strengthen Innsbruck's cultural radiance for the local population, but also far beyond the city's borders. Whether in the incomparable setting of Ambras Castle or on the stage of our Tiroler Landestheater – the Festwochen demonstrate impressively the significance that art and culture hold for our society. This success story will be celebrated in a particularly special way in 2026: half a century of glittering evenings and shared experiences upon which we, as a city, look back with great pride,' **remarks Mayor Johannes Anzengruber.**

Under the musical direction of Ottavio Dantone, **'Il pomo d'oro'**, with its **47 roles performed by 20 singers**, with dance and choral sections, will be heard for the first time since its premiere in

1668. The festival's Musical Director has also **composed the missing music for Acts III and V**, enabling the opera to be performed in its entirety. The production will be directed by the multi-award-winning Italian opera director **Fabio Ceresa**, who, together with costume designer **Giuseppe Palella**, known for his vibrant designs, and Austrian set designer **Nikolaus Webern**, will make the seemingly impossible possible: bringing 'Il pomo d'oro', with its more than 23 scenes, to the stage with visual power and great wit. Following their successful collaboration in 2024, the dancers from **Street Motion Studio** have once again been engaged for the dance sequences. However, they are not the only Tyroleans who will grace the stage: **NovoCanto** – guests at the Festwochen for many years – will contribute the choral parts.

From 21 August 2026, participants from the previous year's Cesti competition will bring **Handel's opera 'Atalanta'** to the stage. The singers will perform this festive opera in a production by **François de Carpentries** and **Karine Van Hercke** under the musical direction of **Andrea Buccarella**. Making their debuts in Barockoper:Jung will be, among others, Cesti winner **Salvador Simão** and third-place winner **Pierre Gennai**.

The concerts, in turn, showcase the full spectrum of early music as well as the vitality of today's scene: stars such as **Jean Rondeau**, **Giovanni Antonini**, **Anna Bonitatibus**, along with the **Orchestre de l'Opéra Royal de Versailles** and the **Academia Montis Regalis**, long familiar to Innsbruck audiences, will shine alongside numerous others. The anniversary programme is complemented by a wealth of emerging young artists who will bring music to various venues across Innsbruck. Thus, the Innsbrucker Festwochen in 2026 once again become a place where renowned masters and young talents inspire one another and create a unique experience. The glittering conclusion to the Innsbrucker Festwochen and this shared vision will traditionally be formed by the finale of the **17th Cesti Competition** on 30 August.

In 2026, the Innsbrucker Festwochen celebrate their 50th anniversary – a milestone that underscores their pioneering role in historically informed performance practice. Since their founding in 1976, the Innsbrucker Festwochen have served as a launching pad for numerous artistic careers and remain one of the world's most important destinations for early music. In 2023, Eva-Maria Sens took over as Artistic Director alongside Ottavio Dantone, who serves as Musical Director for a five-year term. During this period, his **Accademia Bizantina**, one of the world's most distinguished orchestras in historical performance practice, will accompany the festival as orchestra-in-residence.