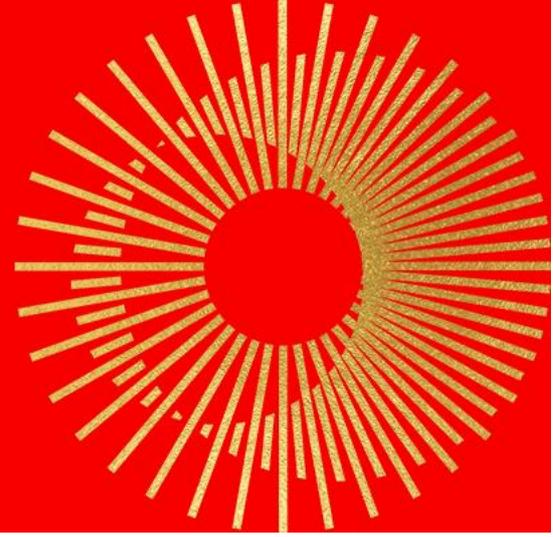


Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten Musik

24. Juli - 30. August 2026



PRESS KIT

of the

50th Innsbruck Festival of Early Music 2026

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Introductory Words from the Artistic Direction

„What are we celebrating?“

‘The spirit of this music may well help shape the music of the future,’ Prof. Otto Ulf is quoted in the 2013 brochure of the Ambrascher Schlosskonzerte.

Back in 1976, when the first ‘Woche der Alten Musik’ was held under his aegis, followed the next year by the ‘1. Festwoche der Alten Musik’, who could have imagined how groundbreaking and enduring this exact spirit would prove to be over the following decades? One ‘Woche’ turned into the plural ‘Wochen’, a concert series became a festival with everything the heart could desire, and an idea became a success story that accompanied the development of the Early Music scene and played a pioneering role in shaping it.

So when we ask ourselves the question ‘What are we celebrating?’, the answer is obvious and at the same time so multifaceted that it requires a few words:

We celebrate the thousands of artists who have formed, enlivened and influenced the Festwochen over these five decades – the big names, the up-and-coming talents, the regular and rare guests, the great voices and fine instrumentalists, the powerful ensembles and the quiet (sometimes secret) stars. We celebrate with them – in memory and in person. We are delighted to welcome back the two former Artistic Directors – Alessandro De Marchi and Rene Jacobs – and pay tribute to the great master Alan Curtis.

We celebrate the place where all this can flourish: Innsbruck. With its unrivalled scenic beauty, its significance in music history often overlooked in the public perception of Austrian cultural history, and a wealth of venues where Early Music can take root in its original sound and blossom into something that makes the Festwochen unique worldwide: a festival dedicated to Early Music in all its diversity and forms of expression.

We celebrate our audience. An audience that has never lost its curiosity over the years, that has grown up with the Festwochen and become well-versed in Early Music. An audience that is perceived by the artists with gratitude and sometimes almost disbelief for its knowledgeable and open attention. An audience to which, fortunately, new faces are constantly being added, unable to resist the appeal of Early Music. To all of them – new and familiar guests alike – we present a festivity in the Hofgarten, an entire Festwochen summer afternoon filled to the brim with music.

We celebrate music, Early Music in particular. This peculiar construct, whose archaic terminology deters many people from engaging with it; whose temporal scope is a vague ‘from – to’, leaving room for interpretation and encompassing some five centuries of music history; whose

historical performance practice at the beginning was a rebellion against the established form of interpretation, and which, almost exactly in line with the existence of the Festwochen, has moved out of its niche and into the programme consciousness of a broader public.

We celebrate its rhythm, its joy of improvisation, its complexity in execution and accessibility in listening, its emotions, its basso continuo, its da capo arias and its diverse instrumentation.

We celebrate the Innsbrucker Festwochen. Only here at the 50th anniversary can Cesti's 'unperformable' opera 'Il pomo d'oro' be presented; only here do music history, a pinch of musical utopia rooted in the origins of the Festwochen and an unconditional desire for Early Music for its own sake come together to create a unique event in the here and now that is not to be missed.

Let's celebrate! All this and much more – with the programme of the 50th Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten Musik – and hopefully with all of you in Innsbruck in the summer of 2026.

Eva-Maria Sens & Ottavio Dantone

Die Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten Musik

Who we are

The Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten Musik are an internationally renowned festival for original sound and a venue for masters of their field and the most exciting up-and-coming talents on the scene. Since the foundation of the festival in 1976, Innsbruck has been the starting point for many artists' careers and one of the most important addresses in the field of Early Music worldwide. In 2023, Eva-Maria Sens took over as Artistic Director together with Ottavio Dantone, who will serve as Musical Director for five years. During this time, his Accademia Bizantina, one of the world's most renowned orchestras for historical performance practice, will be Orchestra in Residence. The Innsbruck Festival 2025 will take place from 25 July to 31 August under the guiding question 'What are we celebrating'.

Where we are going

In the summer of 2026, the Innsbruck Festival will celebrate its 50th anniversary. It is an anniversary that underlines its pioneering role in the field of historically informed performance practice. Since its inception, the festival has not only provided a stage for great masters and renowned ensembles; young, up-and-coming artists have also been close to its heart, as it itself emerged from a summer academy, i.e. from the idea of learning. In keeping with this spirit, today's Singing Competition for Baroque Opera 'Pietro Antonio Cesti', the Barockoper:Jung opera project, and projects such as youngbaroque and the accompanying masterclass are leading the way in promoting young artists.

The Operas

Il pomo d'oro

Splendour, excess, spectacle: Pietro Antonio Cesti's *Il pomo d'oro* was unique even at its premiere in 1668 – and at the same time an almost unperformable undertaking. The enormous effort involved, the large number of roles and, last but not least, the absence of music from two acts – only the libretto has survived – have made the opera legendary over time. To mark the 50th anniversary of the Innsbruck Festival, Ottavio Dantone has reconstructed the missing parts from fragments and other works by Cesti, so that this festive opera can be heard in its entirety for the first time since its premiere – staged by Fabio Ceresa and his team.

On two consecutive evenings, the festival not only recounts the pomp and spectacle that accompanied Baroque operas in general, and none more so than *Il pomo d'oro*, but also presents the prehistory of the Trojan War on stage.

Amidst gods, heroes and allegories, moments of humour repeatedly flash into view. The Olympians reveal themselves to be idiosyncratically human and wonderfully “ungodly” – with jealousy, self-praise and petty malice that lend the work an almost cabaret-like quality. *Il pomo d'oro* thus depicts the two levels of heavenly splendour and earthly life, which sometimes intertwine and sometimes separate to determine the plot.

With its five acts and a prologue, comprising no fewer than 47 roles in the unabridged original version and a total length of more than eight hours, which are spread over two consecutive evenings by the Innsbruck Festival – as was the case at the time of its premiere – *Il pomo d'oro* is considered the epitome of Baroque court opera. These requirements eclipse most other Italian operas of the 17th century; even the elaborate spectacles that Lully created for Louis XIV do not demand more.

The diversity of the instrumental ensemble, the comic and serious elements, the arias and ensembles, the machinery and other scenic effects make this opera worthy of the Olympian status it has enjoyed in the history of opera since Guido Adler's publication in the ‘Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich’ (Monuments of Music in Austria) at the end of the 19th century.

Fri | 7.8. & Sat | 8.8., 6.30 pm (Premiere)
Tue | 11.8. & Wed | 12.8., 6.30 pm
Sat | 15.8. & Sun | 16.8., 4 pm
Tiroler Landestheater, Großes Haus
(Programme book p. 26)

The Barockoper: Jung «Atalanta»

In 2026, last year's Cesti participants will stage George Frideric Handel's opera ‘Atalanta’. The singers successfully competed in the 16th Pietro Antonio Cesti Singing Competition in 2025 and

will perform the drama per musica in a production by François de Carpentries and Karine Van Hercke. Under the musical direction of Andrea Buccarella, Baroque Opera: Young will feature Silvia Porcellini, Oda Nysæter, Justina Vaitkute, Salvador Simão, Peter Edge and Pierre Gennai.

Atalanta is one of the greatest successes that George Frideric Handel celebrated at the Royal Theatre Covent Garden. The libretto tells the story of the hunt for the Calydonian boar, as recounted in Ovid's Metamorphoses: the mighty beast can only be defeated when Atalanta, Princess of Arcadia, wounds it with an arrow. Against the backdrop of this dramatic event, love stories unfold between Atalanta, who disguises herself as the shepherdess Amarilli, and the mysterious Tirsi, who is actually the real King Meleager, as well as between the shepherd Aminta and his cunning lover Irene, whose relationship is marked by jealousy and misunderstandings.

All this takes place in a mythical, pastoral landscape of forest clearings and mountains, where hunters, shepherds, nymphs and villagers frolic. The different personalities and roles, as well as a diverse array of costumes, lead to all sorts of mix-ups and secrecy. At the end, Mercury, the messenger of the gods, blesses the couples and assures them of the happiness and support of their people. Handel designed the finale of the opera as a series of jubilant choruses and instrumental festive music.

Fri | 21.8., 7 pm (Premiere)

Sun | 23.8., 4 pm

Tue | 25.8., 7 pm

Wed | 26.8., 7 pm r

Haus der Musik, Kammerspiele

(Programme book p. 34)

The 'Ambrascher Schlosskonzerte' (Concerts at Ambras Castle)

The first Festwoche in 1976 developed from the final concerts of the summer academy in the Spanish Hall. To this day, the Festwochen return to this venue every year; for half a century, the Ambras Castle Concerts have heralded the start of the Festwochen.

The oldest series of early music concerts will kick off on 24 July with the Basel ensemble La Cetra performing the collection of the same name, 'La Cetra' by Giovanni Legrenzi, whose 400th birthday will be celebrated in 2026. The festive music unfolds as a dialogue between four violins and obbligato bass – a journey from Venetian sonic splendour to the pomp of the Viennese imperial court.

The next day, two masters of historical flute playing will meet: on 25 July, Dorothee Oberlinger and Dorothea Seel will bring the gentle elegance of the transverse flute into dialogue with the penetrating power of the recorder in 'Flöte hoch 2' (Flute Squared). Accompanied by the Barock Solisten München, musical narratives of nature's awakening will unfold.

On 31 July, La Petite Bande will make a comeback at 'Bach à 7' after 26 years under Sigiswald Kuijken, one of the defining personalities of the early days of the Ambras Castle Concerts. The pioneering ensemble, which now also includes three of Kuijken's daughters, is dedicated entirely to Johann Sebastian Bach. A particular focus is on the violoncello da spalla, which Kuijken has been instrumental in reviving for over twenty years. The series concludes on 1 August with a musical-historical journey of discovery to 'Dafne': Jörg Halubek and Il Gusto Barocco present the surviving fragments of Jacopo Peri's 'La Dafne' from 1598 – the first opera in music history. The three singers – all finalists in previous Cesti competitions – will take on all the roles according to historical precedent. Together with works by Marco da Gagliano and other contemporaries, this will provide a concentrated insight into the origins of opera.

Fri | 24.7. & Sat | 25.7.

Fri | 31.7. & Sat | 1.8.

Each at 8 pm

Ambras Castle, Spanish Hall

(Programme book p. 14-17)

The Concerts

On 10 August, **Ottavio Dantone** and his **Accademia Bizantina**, together with mezzo-soprano **Anna Bonitatibus**, will pay tribute to **Alan Curtis**. The American harpsichordist, conductor, pedagogue and musical archaeologist was a pioneer of staged productions at the Festwochen. The evening will commemorate him through arias and orchestral works. Two days earlier, on 'The Queen's Lute', lutenist **Elisa La Marca** will perform the demanding 'Masques' – pieces that once enticed even Queen Elizabeth I herself to the stage. On 13 August, the **Orchestre de l'Opéra Royal de Versailles, Solistes & Chœur de l'Opéra Royal de Versailles**, together with mezzo-soprano **Malena Ernman** and under the musical direction of **Jean Baptiste Nicolas**, will trace the

eventful life of Christina of Sweden. This patron of the arts converted to Christianity in Innsbruck's Hofkirche. The various stages of her journey will be set to works by Giacomo Carissimi, Antonio Bertali and several others. For the 'blaue Stunde' ('hour of twilight') in the pavilion of Innsbruck's Hofgarten on 14 August, **Anne-Suße EnBle** and **Philipp Lamprecht** invite audiences with their programme 'Nox et alba', which promises a poetic journey through the night. A journey through Italy, in turn – 'Un giro d'Italia' – awaits audiences on 17 August with the Festival's former orchestra, the **Academia Montis Regalis**, under the new direction of **Chiara Cattani** and featuring the brilliant soprano **Arianna Vendittelli**. Italian influences, or more precisely Neapolitan ones, also play a significant role in this year's 'Open Mind – Neapolitanisch aufg'spielt'. On 18 August, the **Talenti Vulcanici** join forces with the **Familienmusik Huber** from South Tyrol's Ahrntal, drawing from their respective origins, exchanging ideas and connecting Alpine with Neapolitan tradition in a jam-like fusion. Under the direction of **Alessandro de Marchi**, the long-standing artistic director of the Innsbruck Festival, 'Giuseppe' on 19 August becomes a resounding monument to Antonio Caldara. At the same time, it honours those vocal soloists who have decisively shaped the Festival's recent years. Following his phenomenal, 'programme-less' Innsbruck recital debut in 2024, **Jean Rondeau** returns on 20 August with 'Encore', featuring a French programme. Another keyboard virtuoso will be at work on 22 August at Innsbruck's Ebert organ: **Josef Laming**, winner of the 2025 International Paul Hofhaimer Prize. That same day, a living legend and former artistic director of the Festival comes to the Great Hall of the Haus der Musik Innsbruck: **René Jacobs**, who, together with soloists and the **Freiburger Barockorchester**, will perform Handel's first oratorio, 'La Bellezza ravveduta nel Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno'. Highlights from 'Bach & Söhne' will then be heard on 27 August from the **Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin** with **Xenia Löffler** and the exceptional harpsichordist **Francesco Corti**, before three 'Made in Tirol' concerts resound in St. Bartlmä on 28 August. Programmes ranging from Baroque music to electronic reworkings and contemporary pieces invite audiences to an evening in three parts, all originating from Tyrol. The penultimate concert of the summer, 'Ottavio plus' on 29 August, sees **Ottavio Dantone**, in this anniversary year, inviting audience favourite and star flautist **Giovanni Antonini** to embark together on a journey to the beginnings of the Innsbruck Festival. The concert's starting point is a programme once performed by early music legends Gustav Leonhardt and Frans Brüggen in 1981 in the same formation in the Giant Hall of the Hofburg. The Festival concludes with the final concert of the **17th International Singing Competition for Baroque Opera 'Pietro Antonio Cesti'**, at which the competition's finalists, having prevailed in the preliminary rounds, will compete for various prizes.

July to August
various days and venues

Final Concert 'youngbaroque & Masterclass'

A joint final concert forms the highlight of two very special projects through which the Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten Musik demonstrates its commitment to nurturing young musical

Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten Musik

talent. For the fourth time, the Festival is inviting young people from around the world to Innsbruck to make music together and discover the wonderful world of early music – this year under the guidance of harpsichordist and organist Jörg Halubek. At the same time, young singers will be refining their skills in a masterclass with the celebrated mezzo-soprano Anna Bonitatibus.

Thu | 7 Aug, 11 am
Haus der Musik Innsbruck, Kleiner Saal
(Programme book p. 68)

Free Programs, Workshops & Open-Air Concerts

In the summer of 2026, there will once again be a workshop concert, with the first notes of 'Il pomo d'oro' sounding on 25th July. Befitting the retrospective nature of an anniversary, 2026 will feature the format 'Festwochen-Stories', in which longstanding collaborators such as Howard Arman, Alessandro de Marchi, René Jacobs and others will offer insights into 50 years of the Festwochen across three dates. Another highlight of the jubilee is the festival day 'Wir feiern!' ('We're Celebrating!'), which will fill the Hofgarten Innsbruck with music on 9th August, culminating in an evening screening of the Festwochen-opera 'Ifigenia in Aulide' by Antonio Caldara—performed at the Grosses Haus in August 2025—projected on an open-air screen.

The long-established lunchtime concerts and the much-loved Concerto mobile remain as essential to the Festwochen programme in the summer of 2026 as ever, alongside Musica montana, the Schloss Ambras celebration and church services. In instrument-making workshops for children, Claudia Unterkofler will introduce the mysteries of violin construction, whilst Benedikt Sonnleitner offers a glimpse into the world of trumpet-making. And naturally, the Trompetenconsort Innsbruck will not be absent: 'Mit Pauken & Trompeten' ('With Timpani and Trumpets'), the musicians will fill the Old Town with festive sounds from the Goldenes Dachl.

Fri | 25.07. - Sun | 30.08.
various days and venues
(Program p. 64-75)

Numbers & Facts

62 events on 29 days at 22 venues

Period: 24 July to 30 August 2026

Events (total): 62

Ticket shows: 40

Free formats: 22

Venues: 22

Two staged productions

'Il pomo d'oro'

Pietro Antonio Cesti

Opera in one prologue and four acts

Libretto: Francesco Sbarra

Premiere: Vienna, 1668

'Atlanta' (Barockoper:Jung)

George Frideric Handel

Opera in three acts

Libretto: unknown, after Belisario Valerianos 'La caccia in Etolia'

Premiere: London, 1736

Venues

Alpengasthof St. Magdalena

Halltal 23
Absam

Christuskirche

Martin-Luther-Platz
Innsbruck

Dom zu St. Jakob

Domplatz 6
Innsbruck

Geigenbauwerkstatt Claudia Unterkofler

Grillparzerstraße 6A
Innsbruck

Goldenes Dachl

Herzog-Friedrich Straße 15
Innsbruck

Haus der Musik Innsbruck

→ Großer Saal
→ Kammerspiele
Universitätsstraße 1
Innsbruck

Hofburg Innsbruck

→ Riesensaal
Rennweg 1
Innsbruck

Hofgarten Innsbruck

→ Pavillon
Rennweg 6A
Innsbruck

Hofkirche Innsbruck

Universitätsstraße 2
Innsbruck

Meisterwerkstatt für Blechblasinstrumente

Maximilianstraße 5
Innsbruck

Schloss Ambras Innsbruck

→ Spanischer Saal
→ Nikolauskapelle
Schlossstraße 20
Innsbruck

St. Bartlmä

→ Halle 6
St. Bartlmä 3/Halle 6
Innsbruck

Stiftskirche Stams

Stiftshof 1
Stams

Stiftskirche Wilten

Klostergasse 7
Innsbruck

Tiroler Landestheater

→ Großes Haus
→ Probebühne 2
Rennweg 2
Innsbruck

Umbrügler Alm

Umbrückleralmweg 36
Innsbruck

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You can download press photos on the website of the Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten

Musik: [Press - Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten Musik](#)