

49th Innsbruck Festival of Early Music officially opened

The Innsbruck Festival of Early Music was opened on the morning of 8 August with celebrations in the Spanish Hall of Ambras Castle, attended by high-ranking representatives from politics and culture. The event focused on music, performed by a group of renowned artists from the Innsbruck Festival. In the evening, Antonio Caldara's opera 'Ifigenia in Aulide' will premiere at the Tiroler Landestheater – a work that already takes up this year's guiding question of the Innsbruck Festival: 'Who is pulling the strings?' Artistic Director Eva-Maria Sens and Music Director Ottavio Dantone will present a wide-ranging programme until 31 August: in addition to three Baroque operas, the Innsbruck Festival will offer the audience numerous concerts. As every year, the Ambras Schlosskonzerte marked the start of the festival.

This year's two rediscoveries – 'Ifigenia in Aulide' by Antonio Caldara and 'Ifigenia in Tauride' by Tommaso Traetta (from 27 August) – deal with the mythological story of Ifigenia, daughter of Agamennone and Clitennestra. Both works also have historical links to the House of Habsburg: Antonio Caldara worked at the Viennese court from 1716, and his 'Ifigenia in Aulide' premiered two years later, in 1718, at the Leopoldisches Hoftheater. After more than 300 years, it can be heard at the Tiroler Landestheater from 8 August under Ottavio Dantone, musical director of the Innsbruck Festival since 2023. The Accademia Bizantina, the festival's resident orchestra, will perform. Tommaso Traetta's 'Ifigenia in Tauride' premiered at Schönbrunn Palace in 1763 and enjoyed great popularity in the late 18th century. The Innsbruck production, which opens on 27 August, will be conducted by Christophe Rousset and his ensemble Les Talens Lyriques.

Starting on 17 August 2025, Cesti participants from the previous year will perform Antonio Vivaldi's opera 'Il Giustino' on stage. The singers will interpret the drama per musica in a production by Claudia Isabel Martin Peragallo under the musical direction of Stefano Demicheli. Making their debuts in the Baroque opera will be Cesti winner Maximiliano Danta and runner-up Jiayu Jin, among others. The Innsbruck Festival and this joint vision will be brought to a glittering close with the traditional finale of the 16th Cesti Competition on 31 August.

'The Innsbruck Festival celebrates the beauty of Early Music and the reflection on it. Early Music echoes our times and, through reflection, can be an oasis for discursive engagement between the past and the present. To have a venue

like the Innsbruck Festival of Early Music for this is an immeasurable blessing,' said Artistic Director Eva-Maria Sens in her opening remarks.

Landeshauptmann Anton Mattle emphasises, 'Early music belongs to Innsbruck like the Golden Roof or the Bergisel ski jump – it has been part of the city's DNA since Innsbruck developed into a centre of musical life throughout Europe almost 400 years ago. The festival draws on this heritage when it transforms Innsbruck into a modern centre of Early Music every year. I am particularly pleased that the festival deliberately reaches out to people, moving out of the opera house and into the old town, the Hofgarten and the alpine huts around Innsbruck. I wish the festival every success for its 49th edition and hope that the audience will enjoy some very special moments!'

Mayor Ing. Johannes Anzengruber, BSc, invites everyone to celebrate together: 'The Innsbruck Festival shows once again that Early Music is anything but dusty – it is alive, exciting and inspiring. For young artists, it is an invaluable opportunity to present themselves and their art. For all of us, they are a celebration of music – and Innsbruck knows how to celebrate.'

Under the guiding question 'Who is pulling the strings?', the 2025 Innsbruck Festival will focus on the interplay of fate and decision, power and music – musically, scenically and programmatically. In addition to opera and concerts, the programme will also include free open-air events, city performances, workshops and public discussions. International stars such as Christina Pluhar, Andreas Scholl, Giovanni Antonini and Julien Chauvin will meet young talents from all over the world.

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