

# About...

## Classical Music in Luxembourg

Music is an important part of Luxembourg's cultural life. Despite the fact there has never been a true Luxembourg school that distinguishes the Grand Duchy from its neighbouring countries, musical practice has nonetheless left its mark on the national identity of this state established in 1815. The country boasts a host of musicians and singers, both professional and amateur, who interpret a wide repertoire in a diverse range of settings. Musical laboratories and platforms for musical expression have transformed the 2,586 km<sup>2</sup> of surface area into a great space of audio colours, bearing witness to the musicality of the Luxembourg people.

### A singing country

Long before the creation of a Luxembourg state at the Congress of Vienna in 1815, which also saw the start of a local musical culture, the territory of Luxembourg had been a flourishing crossroads for the propagation and practice of music. The muses Erato and Euterpe are featured on the 3rd-century Roman mosaic of Vichten, which is currently housed at the National Museum of History and Art. They testify to a musical presence that dates back to the Gallo-Roman period. During the 6th century, the Latin poet Venantius Fortunatus declared himself impressed by the music he heard during his stay in our region. It



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Grand Duchy  
of Luxembourg

Capital:  
Luxembourg

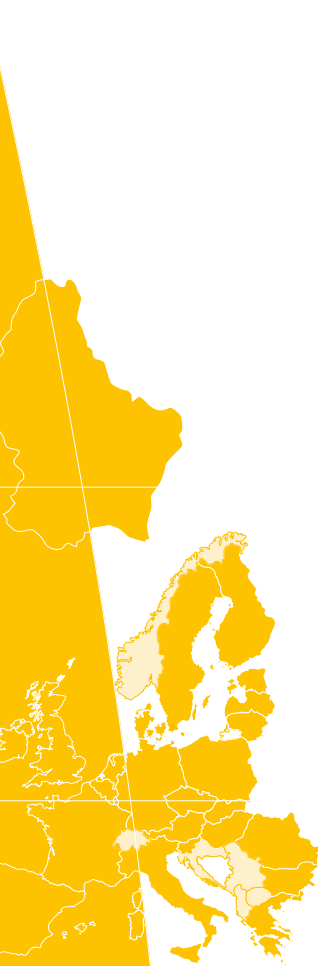
Form of  
government:  
constitutional  
monarchy

Neighbouring  
countries:  
Germany,  
Belgium,  
France

Area:  
2,586 km<sup>2</sup>

Population:  
483,800  
inhabitants,  
of which  
205,900  
are foreigners

Population density:  
187 inhab./km<sup>2</sup>  
(2008)



was the songs chanted by the winemakers that created a bridge of harmony, joining the two banks of the Moselle, the natural border between Luxembourg and Germany.

The Benedictine abbey of Echternach was founded in 698 by Saint Willibrord (658-739) and from then on played a fundamental role in propagating the liberal arts.<sup>1</sup> For eleven centuries, Echternach was a musical centre with a reputation that extended beyond the country's borders. The monastic hub of Echternach took part in the great "avant-garde" movement of liturgical and musical creation "which paved the way for all composers of liturgical services of the centuries to come" (Fabian Lochner).<sup>2</sup> The "music biography" formed by the *Officium Sancti Willibrordi*, thought to date back to the 9th century, is one of the first accounts of a Luxembourg musical notation. The Echternach sacramentary and antiphony, kept at the Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek in Darmstadt, is certainly a fascinating treasure of Gregorian chant penned by the Echternach monks during the 11th century.

The first traditional song in the Moselle-Franconian language, from which the Luxembourg language is derived, is thought to date back to the end of the 15th century. While love songs and war chants abounded throughout the centuries, the Luxembourg landscape was never set to music prior to the creation of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg in 1815.

During the 19th century, parallel to a growing national sentiment, a two-tiered musical culture was born: that of music for the people and that of music for the church.

### Music for the people

Music "made in Luxembourg" was above all traditional, patriotic and evocative of the military: it hardly went further than the traditional operettas penned by the Luxembourg poet and musician Edmond de la Fontaine, also known as Dicks (1823-1891). His first vaudeville work in the Luxembourg language, *De Scholdschäin*, was created in 1855. Owing to a lack of both structure and infrastructure, music was essentially a local reality tinged with idealism, which often took place against a military backdrop – that of the federal fortress of

Luxembourg City. In Ettelbruck, a town situated in the north of the country, the Société philharmonique took shape upon the initiative of the curate in 1854 and was joined by a wide range of individuals, from the tanner to the bootmaker, blacksmith, cabinetmaker, tinsmith, weaver, joiner, watchmaker, saddler and student.

To celebrate the inauguration of the first railway in Luxembourg, Michel Lentz (1820-1893) – a contemporary of Dicks and, like the latter, also a poet and composer – musically captured the momentous event in a song composed especially for the occasion, *De Feierwon*, which was to become the country's first anthem.

In 1852, the first music competition was held in the Grand Duchy, and from then on music and singing societies were springing up all over the country. Many local composers contributed to a plethora of music scores, in particular vocal and light pieces, but not many symphonic works. They were written for the choirs and brass bands that joined forces in 1863 to form the Allgemeiner Luxemburger Musikverein, which, after 1891, became the Union Grand-Duc Adolphe (UGDA), the national music federation. Today, approximately 340 music, choral and folklore societies perpetuating the tradition of musical practice on a local level are affiliated to the UGDA. Its name pays tribute to the patronage bestowed upon it by the first sovereign of the nation's dynasty.

The choirs and brass bands often boast a history of more than a century and bear witness to a lively cultural life. From children's choirs to the Complaints Choir, created in 2008 to mark the occasion of a contemporary art exhibition, and the multiple vocal troupes made up of enlightened amateurs and experienced professionals, singing influences the life of the Luxembourg people throughout the country's hundred or so municipalities. An important body for the promotion of vocal art is the Institut européen de chant choral (INECC) (European Institute of Choral Singing), which offers courses and organises concerts for people of all ages.

At the first music festival held in 1864, 500 singers and 240 instrumentalists performed the very first rendition of the song *Ons Hémécht* (Our homeland), which was to become and has remained the Luxembourg national

<sup>1</sup> Schools of the Middle Ages taught seven liberal arts: grammar, dialectic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy.

<sup>2</sup> Any quotes featured in this publication have been freely translated from French.



The Orchestre de Radio Luxembourg performing during the 1950s under Henri Pensis in the new Art Deco auditorium of Villa Louvigny  
 © Archives Luxemburger Wort

anthem. The melody has an almost religious character and is reminiscent of the first bars of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Ave verum*. It was written by Jean-Antoine Zinnen (1827-1898), a composer of German origin, while Michel Lentz penned the lyrics.

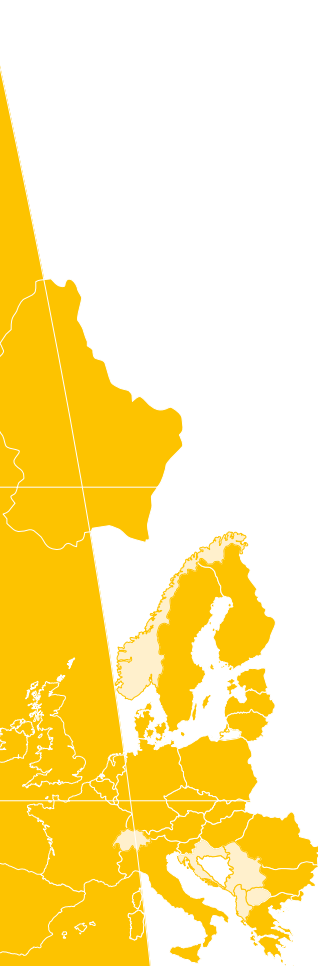
This was also the period when Guillaume Stomps, who was originally from the Rhineland and became the owner of the first music shop in Luxembourg City, published the operettas by Dicks as well as the first anthologies of traditional songs. These included the *Lëtzebuurger Lidderbuch* (1898), a booklet containing 101 traditional songs. One of the particularities of these manuals was the international aspect of their lyrics and melodies. Among the 195 popular traditional songs published in 1912, 16 were in the Luxembourg language. Some of the German songs were passed on by the soldiers of the Prussian garrison stationed in Luxembourg City until 1867 and these stood alongside songs written in the French language. Straddling the Germanic and the Romance worlds, Luxembourg's musical folklore was thus fuelled by both the German and French cultures. The melodies were often also borrowed from foreign countries, such as the tune – originally German – of Echternach's renowned skipping procession, which is held every year on Whit Tuesday in honour of Saint Willibrord, the only saint to have been buried on Luxembourg territory.

### Music for the church

Religious music was intimately linked to two significant happenings: the revival of the cult of the Virgin Mary and the creation of a national Catholic church during the mid-19th century.

The veneration of the statue of Our Lady of Luxembourg, dating back to the 17th century, was to experience an unprecedented revival during the 1840s under the impetus of the apostolic curate Théodore Laurent. The 19th century also saw the number of pilgrims celebrating the Octave increase from year to year. To this day the Octave remains the most important pilgrimage in the Grand Duchy. Following the interventions of Msgr Laurent at the Holy See, the curacy of Luxembourg soon had its own *missa propria* called *Ave spes nostra*, after the introit (introduction to the mass) of the same name, of Luxembourg origin and perpetuated by generations of pilgrims. Numerous composers bequeathed to posterity hymns honouring the Consoler of the Afflicted.

Among the protagonists of *musica sacra*, special attention must be drawn to Henri-Joseph Cornély (1786-1866), "a real catalyst of musical life during the 19th century and of its development in the Grand Duchy" (Paul Ulveling), the organist and composer Heinrich



Oberhoffer (1824-1885), who made Luxembourg into the home of an international journal of sacred music entitled *Cäcilia*, and the greatest Luxembourg composer of religious music Théodore Decker (1850-1931), whose hymn *Lauda Jerusalem* brought him fame beyond the country's borders. Religious music also served to propagate national sentiment, in particular during the Second World War, when the songs honouring Our Lady, the patron saint of the capital and the country, took on a patriotic flavour.

In recent times, the heritage of religious scores in the Luxembourg language has been brought up to date by the Union Saint Pie X. The Saint Pius Union was founded in 1969 and groups together all the church choirs of the archdiocese of Luxembourg. In 2008, the Musica sacra publications of the Union Saint Pie X brought out a collection of four masses by Luxembourg composers. The Luxembourg language, which has erupted into the repertoire of sacred music, enhances the multilingualism of the choirs, who can pride themselves on being able to delve into a treasure chest containing Latin, German and French liturgical songs that provide the musical framework for religious services, where prayers are also said in these languages.

In a bid to revive and cultivate Gregorian chant with its double purpose of elevating man and praising God, several Luxembourg protagonists are devoting themselves with enthusiasm and success to interpreting this millennium-old genre. Experienced ensembles such as Misericordias, Schola Willibrordiana or Ad cor altum have been able to cement their reputation beyond the country's borders. Once a year, the Journées du chant grégorien (Gregorian Chant Days) gather lovers of this music to the abbey of Clervaux, the haven of the practice of Gregorian chant in the Luxembourg Ardennes since it was first established in 1910. The Benedictine monks who carried out the first masses to be broadcast in Europe have several recordings to their credit. And, to quote Olivier Messiaen, is Gregorian chant not the "source of all music"?

## Orchestral emancipation

### From the Orchestre de Radio Luxembourg...

The ambition of composers to explore beyond popular and religious music can be traced back to the early 20th century.

From 1933 onwards, Luxembourg became intimately associated with orchestral music via a radio channel, Radio Luxembourg, and its symphonic phalanx, the Orchestre de Radio Luxembourg. Originally a dream that was then converted into reality by the "discoverer of musical scores" (Paul Ulveling) and Luxembourg conductor Henri Pensis (1900-1958), the orchestra carved a reputation for itself to the extent that it became the natural voice of so-called classical and modern music, making the name of Luxembourg shine on the horizon of the musical world. During the pre-war years, the broadcasts of Radio Luxembourg were the most listened to in Europe, with 15 million listeners tuning in every day, from the Iberian peninsula to the Scandinavian countries. The musical Grand Duchy aroused the envy of many. The best soloists came to play with the conductor and musicians of Europe's greatest channel, which placed great emphasis on contemporary music. Renowned musicians such as Richard Strauss, Darius Milhaud, Béla Bartók and Francis Poulenc came to perform their own works with the orchestra. In between taking the waters in Mondorf-les-Bains, the country's only thermal resort, Maurice Ravel attended rehearsals of the Orchestre de Radio Luxembourg and played cards with the musicians at Villa Louvigny, the first seat of the Compagnie luxembourgeoise de radiodiffusion.

In celebration of the 1937 World Exposition in Paris, Henri Pensis and his musicians travelled abroad for the first time. This even resulted in an invitation to attend the World Exposition in New York in 1940, an invitation they were unable to accept because of the war. Thanks to his eclectic spirit, Henri Pensis resolutely supported local composers such as Jules Krüger, René Mertzig and Norbert Hoffmann.

In 1953, Villa Louvigny, located in the capital's municipal park, was fitted out with one of Europe's most beautiful auditoriums. This "radio cathedral" sported an Art Deco style and was to become the orchestra's

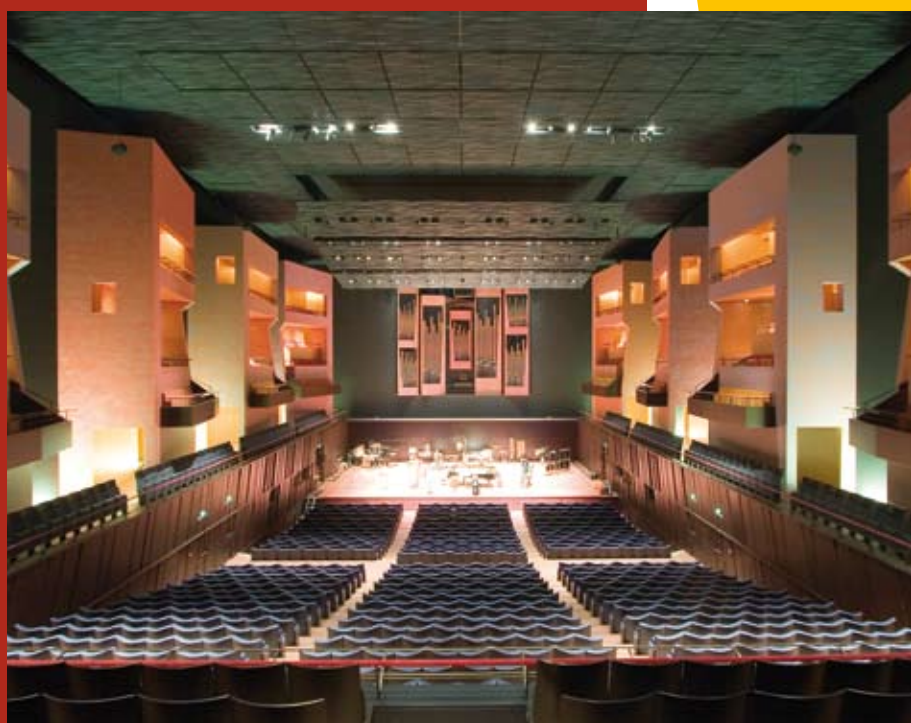
## The entire world of music under one roof: the Philharmonie

The Salle de concerts Grande-Duchesse Joséphine-Charlotte, also known as the Philharmonie, was designed by French architect Christian de Portzamparc and Chinese-born acoustics engineer Albert Xu, and opened its doors in June 2005. Situated on Place de l'Europe on Kirchberg, one of the capital's quarters, the Philharmonie is both the residence of the Orchestre philharmonique du Luxembourg (OPL) and the new music bastion that welcomes prestigious orchestras such as the New York Philharmonic, the Vienna Philharmonic, the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra or the Bayreuth Festival Orchestra. As a member of the European Concert Hall Organisation (ECHO), the Philharmonie has access to a network of Europe's most prestigious concert halls and can take advantage of co-operation opportunities to develop large-scale international projects, while opening up new horizons for Luxembourg musicians, ensembles and orchestras.

The Grand Auditorium, which combines the acoustic qualities of a classic rectangular-shaped concert hall with those of a Shakespearean theatre, can seat at maximum capacity an audience of 1,500. Two smaller rooms provide more intimate settings for chamber music performances (300 seats) and a multifunctional platform for electro-acoustic music and more unusual music events (120 seats).

The Philharmonie offers several subscription series, from the "Grands orchestres" (great orchestras) series to jazz sessions, from modern music to chamber music. It also hosts "Ciné-concerts" (movie concerts) in collaboration with the Cinémathèque of the City of Luxembourg. The diversity and the creative power of the Luxembourg music scene are also reflected in

the concert cycle called "Fräiraïm" (free spaces). An attractive programme, aimed especially at young people, completes the offer.



The Philharmonie, inaugurated in 2005, is the residence of the Orchestre philharmonique du Luxembourg. Its Grand Auditorium can welcome up to 1,500 guests.  
© Christof Weber/SIP



The Solistes européens Luxembourg during a performance in the context of the 2006 festival of Wiltz, with the Renaissance castle in the background  
© Festival de Wiltz/Jos Scheeck

production and broadcasting home until the opening of the new Salle de concerts Grande-Duchesse Joséphine-Charlotte in 2005.

In 1955, Radio Luxembourg entered the audiovisual era and the orchestral unit made use of new technologies: the Orchestre symphonique de Radio-Télé-Luxembourg (RTL) produced its first televised broadcast in 1957.

Over the years the Orchestre symphonique de Radio-Télé-Luxembourg became a pillar of Luxembourg cultural life, under the baton of its successive head conductors: Luxembourger Henri Pensis, Frenchman Louis de Froment, who released 150 recordings with international labels featuring the orchestra, Luxembourger Pierre Cao – currently a sought-after choral conductor in Europe – and Austrian Leopold Hager.

1996 marked a new era when RTL ceded the orchestra to the Luxembourg state. Under its new name, Orchestre philharmonique du Luxembourg (OPL), the orchestra has since been managed by the Fondation Henri Pensis and its increase in size has been accompanied by a new artistic boom.

It was under Israeli David Shallon, appointed to head the OPL in 1996, that a recording agreement was struck with French label Timpani for works by composers of the 20th century. The orchestra's recorded output was honoured with over 75 international awards.

Following the unexpected death of David Shallon in 2000, British conductor Bramwell Tovey conducted the orchestra from 2002 to 2006. He also went on to accompany the Luxembourg musicians on their first tour to Asia. This was also the period that the OPL took up residence in its new surroundings on Kirchberg, the capital's home to the European institutions: the Salle de concerts Grande-Duchesse Joséphine-Charlotte, commonly known as the Philharmonie.

In 2006, the eminent French maestro Emmanuel Krivine became the permanent head conductor of the OPL. The OPL's tours, which meet with huge success abroad, have led the Grand Duchy's musical ambassador as far as China. The national orchestra, which performs around 40 concerts a year in Luxembourg, more recently also accompanies candidates at the Concours international de direction d'orchestre Evgeny Svetlanov

(Evgeny Svetlanov International Orchestral Conducting Competition), launched in the Grand Duchy in 2007 by informed music lovers.

The OPL boasts a 75-year tradition and while it is true that it is the country's senior symphonic orchestra, it is far from being the only reputable instrumental ensemble contributing to Luxembourg musical life.

### ... to multiple orchestral accomplices

In 1989, the orchestral ensemble *Solistes européens Luxembourg* (SEL) was created and for 20 years has been performing in the Grand Duchy and abroad, under the baton of its founding conductor Jack Martin Händler and in the company of both accomplished soloists from the international scene and promising young talents from the local scene. They interpret above all the incontestable greats from the classical repertoire, without however ignoring music from the 20th century. Subscription concert cycles, tours abroad and CD productions – the SEL manage their own publishing house, SEL Classics – account for the principal activities of this instrumental ensemble. In addition, the European rationale of this ensemble makes it one of the pillars of the Luxembourg music scene.

Since 1974, the *Orchestre de chambre du Luxembourg Les Musiciens*, an interpreter of the correspondence of the arts, has welcomed the public to thematic music sessions that promote the musical and architectural heritage of the Grand Duchy and the Greater Region. Since 1982, more than 200 combined concerts and visits, sometimes enhanced by previously unpublished scores, have taken place within the confines of architectural jewels. Concerts are preceded by in-depth musical and historical research work.

These first-rate ensembles are joined by other flexible orchestral ensembles, such as the *Estro Armonico* and the *Ensemble de la chapelle Saint-Marc*, which are very active orchestras in Luxembourg, not forgetting the chamber music ensembles that perpetuate the tradition of concerts performed in days gone by before the gallery of the first *Société de musique de chambre* established in the plush salon of Guillaume Stomps at the end of the 19th century. Today, the *Quatuor de Luxembourg* or the *Quatuor Louvigny* are proof of a

maturity recognised beyond national borders. Chamber music rendezvous are regularly organised by the *Action artistique des enseignants du Conservatoire de musique de la Ville de Luxembourg* (Artistic Initiative of Teachers at the Luxembourg City Music Conservatoire) – “Actar concerts” – not forgetting the concerts hosted by the *Kammer Musek Veräin Lëtzebuerg*.

The military band *Musique militaire grand-ducale* performs around 50 concerts a year and is another experienced accomplice of musical life in Luxembourg. Boasting a tradition that goes back more than 150 years, this regiment of professional musicians, besides performing at official ceremonies, takes audiences on a tour spanning the different musical genres both inside and outside of a country where contemporary creation sets the rhythm to musical practice.

## A laboratory of contemporary music

Contemporary classical music has enjoyed a significant upswing thanks to visionary Luxembourg composers, to several associations that are particularly active on a national level and to an infrastructure that matches the ambitions of its key players and the expectations of a discerning public.

Since the founding of the OPL in 1933, the contemporary repertoire has benefited from a supranational distribution, promoted by composition competitions such as the *Prix de la composition musicale* (Musical Composition Prize) of 1963, which was won by *genius loci* Jules Krüger (1899-1976).

While contemporary opera is the favoured stronghold of the Luxembourg National Theatre, whose creations and commissions spark interest beyond the country's borders, the promotion of contemporary music these days is principally ensured by three associations. Founded in 1983, the *Lëtzebuurger Gesellschaft fir nei Musek* (LGNM) has its own ensemble, the *Luxembourg Sinfonietta*, its own international composition competition with the *Concours international de composition* and a *Luxembourg Music Information Centre*, the mission of which is to index and publish catalogues of

## From Liszt to Messiaen: a passing reference to musicians visiting the Grand Duchy

Numerous foreign soloists and composers of international repute have performed in Luxembourg in the past.

The composer Franz Liszt performed in Luxembourg City for the first time on 24 November 1845, after completing a concert series in Lorraine. At the end of this first concert, the “Paganini of the piano” dropped his gloves, which were “picked up by a few enthusiastic ladies, literally cut into pieces and distributed among the members of the female sex present at the performance” (editor of the Brussels periodical *Le Politique*, 4 December 1845). He returned to Luxembourg in July 1886 to attend a gathering at the Casino bourgeois (nowadays known as Casino Luxembourg – Forum of Contemporary Art). A modest commemorative plaque gracing the Casino’s façade reminds passers-by that the virtuoso pianist gave his last public recital here on 19 July 1886. The pianist Arthur Rubinstein also performed at the former Casino bourgeois, in 1935.

It should be pointed out in this context that the great Steinway piano no. 15814 built in 1866 – the instrument on which Liszt played his final concert – is housed at the Instruments Museum of the Conservatoire de musique de la Ville de Luxembourg (Luxembourg City Music Conservatoire).

Besides Liszt, attention must also be drawn to the visit of the pianist Clara Schumann-Wieck, widow of the composer Robert Schumann, who in 1863 played under the baton of local composer Laurent Menager.

In 1929, the Cercle municipal, situated in the heart of the capital, played host to the Berlin Philharmonic under Wilhelm Furtwängler and, ten years later, on 8 May 1939, it welcomed Richard Strauss, who conducted his *Don Juan* there.

The arias of Richard Wagner resonated among the bottles of champagne hailing from the Mercier estab-

lishments. From 1886 onwards, the outlets of “titan” Eugène Mercier of Épernay (France) in the station area of Luxembourg City – 21 perpendicular and parallel vaults measuring three to four kilometres each – became the stage for concerts, which enjoyed great popularity among the Luxembourg people. This is where, in 1914, the Metzger Konzertverein announced via the press the *Grande Messe des morts* by French composer Hector Berlioz!

In 1982, the French composer Olivier Messiaen attended an interpretation of his symphony *Turangalîla*, recorded live from the auditorium of Villa Louvigny. Louis de Froment and the musicians of the Orchestre symphonique de Radio-Télé-Luxembourg were congratulated by the composer and the international press for their exemplary execution of the work.



Franz Liszt gave his final performance in 1886 at a public recital at the Casino bourgeois in Luxembourg City. The piano that he played, the great Steinway no. 15814, is housed at the Instruments Museum of the Luxembourg City Music Conservatoire.  
© SIP/Nicolas Bouvy



works by Luxembourg composers. Created in 1999, the Luxembourg Sinfonietta, under the leadership of Luxembourg composer and conductor Marcel Wengler, stages much acclaimed performances featuring lively programmes, both in the Grand Duchy and abroad.

The LGNM also publishes a series of recordings featuring works by local composers. The series entitled “Anthologie de musique luxembourgeoise” provides a fine overview of musical creation in the Grand Duchy.

A second staunch supporter of the repertoire of the 20th and 21st centuries is the chamber music ensemble United Instruments of Lucilin. The musicians that make up this variable ensemble are known for exploring the different possibilities raised by new works.

Thirdly, the association Noise Watchers Unlimited is dedicated to the domain of contemporary music in general, and electro-acoustic music in particular. The members of the association work with the high-performance equipment of the electro-acoustic and digital studio at the Philharmonie, which enables them to introduce the public to new sound worlds.

Several generations of composers have moulded the musical landscape and striven towards a “grand-ducalisation” of music. Talk of a Luxembourg school would nevertheless be a bit exaggerated: there are as many “styles” as composers. Luxembourg music – or indeed “musics”, to use the plural – is sometimes interiorised, sometimes exteriorised, occasionally retrospective, and seems to some extent to reflect the cosmopolitan character of the Grand Duchy.

Ambitious projects, often beyond national borders, are championed by composers such as Claude Lenner, Marcel Wengler, Alexander Müllenbach, Camille Kerger, Georges Lentz or Walter Civitareale, all remarkable vehicles of musical creation.

This musical effervescence is reflected in one of the country’s most unusual and stunning contemporary music festivals: Rainy Days, which has taken place since 1999. Full of contagious enthusiasm, this festival injects “a momentum into music, a contemporary sensual art”. These interdisciplinary encounters are not restricted to the concert hall, but also transform public spaces. In 2007, part of the festival took place

in the galleries of the Luxembourg casemates, which had already hosted concerts back in 1898, while the 2008 edition took over swimming pools for an unrivalled sound experience.

## Do, re, mi: musical education

Music plays an important role in the education of Luxembourg’s young people. One of the distinctive features of the contemporary music scene is the educational vocation of its key players, which is in line with a general climate that is favourable to the education of the *ars musica*. At the Conservatoire de musique de la Ville de Luxembourg (Luxembourg City Music Conservatoire) for instance, classes held by Alexander Müllenbach or Claude Lenner provide a launching pad for budding composers.

Music education establishments are found in the four corners of the country and a significant number of children and young people attend classes at either the conservatoires or the public and private music schools.

Music education is – once again – anchored in tradition. The first music school opened its doors in Luxembourg City in 1822 upon the initiative of Henri-Joseph Cornély. During the mid-19th century, singing also found its way into primary schools, for which a singing manual was published. Already in 1818, pupils at the Athénée carried in their satchels a copy of the collection of *Lieder für die Gesang-liebende Jugend am Athenäum zu Luxemburg*.

Today, music courses are held on a local and regional level. The Grand Duchy is home to three music conservatoires, which constitute good stepping stones for international music colleges. Following the closure in 1882 of the capital’s first music school, the new Luxembourg City conservatoire opened its doors in 1906. Just after the First World War, the establishment had around 600 pupils on its books and employed around 30 teachers of different nationalities. In 2008, 134 teachers taught music to more than 2,500 pupils.



In 1924, a conservatoire was founded in Esch-sur-Alzette, the iron and steel “metropolis” in the country’s south. Its first director was one of Luxembourg’s great composers: Alfred Kowalsky, a student of Charles-Marie Widor and Richard Strauss, who bequeathed to posterity several orchestral and operatic works. The Conservatoire de musique de la Ville d’Esch-sur-Alzette (Music Conservatoire of the City of Esch-sur-Alzette) can pride itself, among other things, on teaching the only Gregorian chant class in the country. In more recent years, the Conservatoire de musique du Nord (Music Conservatoire of the North) provides courses in two different locations in the Luxembourg Ardennes: in Ettelbruck, at the Centre des arts pluriels, and in Diekirch. Individual courses and ensemble playing, an important exercise for any aspiring musician, are very developed in all three establishments. Musicians who successfully make a name for themselves abroad have passed through one of these institutions with a supranational influence.

In parallel, the UGDA music schools teach courses to approximately 3,600 pupils throughout 65 of the country’s municipalities, from introductory music courses to instrumental practice. This is the country’s largest music school. Added to this are the municipal music schools,

grouped together under the Association des écoles de musique (AEM) (Association of Music Schools), as well as numerous private initiatives and establishments.

Substantial efforts have been made in the last few years to introduce the very young to the universe of music. Activities aimed at children also enjoy huge popularity all-round. The Philharmonie for instance hosts an entire range of music education workshops, from playful concerts for those aged one year and up to events grouped together under the label “login : music”. The Jeunesses musicales Luxembourg (Luxembourg Musical Youth), for their part, are in charge of organising the free “Musicroissants” – concerts accompanied by a croissant and chocolate milk. Founded in 1946, the Jeunesses musicales Luxembourg also perform in schools and offer a discount card – in the form of the Crescendo card – in order to attract young people to concerts and introduce them to the repertoire of what is known as classical music.

In addition, the private school École privée Notre-Dame Sainte-Sophie offers, since 2003, vocal and musical training. Within a vocal ensemble, pupils from fundamental and secondary education can open themselves up to the musical world. Music education



The preparatory orchestra of the Luxembourg City Music Conservatoire, featuring around 60 children and adolescents playing a string instrument, has a double objective: to develop the musical abilities and the social conduct of young people  
© Philippe Hurlin/SIP

## Luxembourg, a country of organs

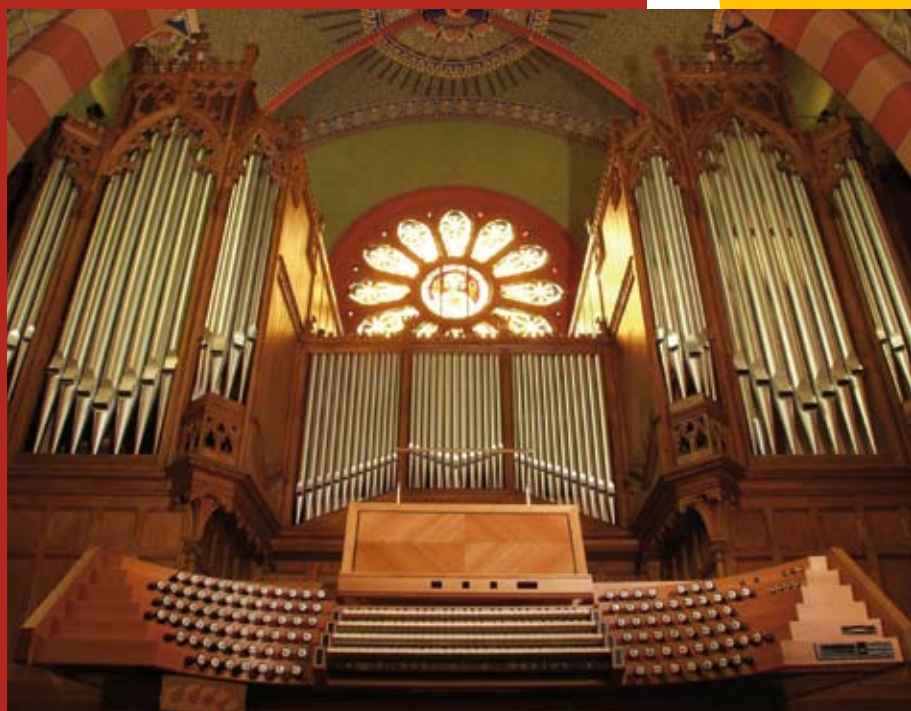
Many of the Grand Duchy's churches are home to the "queen of instruments". The country features a real organ route, with instruments of such varied sounds that a detour is recommended!

The country's oldest historical organ can be found in the church of Saint Michael, the oldest church of the capital. Originating from the monastery of the Franciscans, the instrument is equipped with a magnificent case dating back to 1662. Another Baroque jewel from the 17th century is the organ at the Trinitarian church in Vianden, in the north of the country.

One of the most powerful instruments in the Grand Duchy is the Stahlhuth organ (1912), the successful renovation of which was completed in 2002 under the supervision of the Jann factory. It has its home in the church of Saint Martin in Dudelange. This Romantic organ built by Georg and Eduard Stahlhuth from Aix-la-Chapelle was the country's largest organ until 1938, the year the symphonic organ was installed in the cathedral of Luxembourg City. The sumptuous Dudelange organ well and truly reflects the twofold French and German culture, which Luxembourg has been known to take advantage of throughout the course of its history.

Under the aegis of the organ factory Manufacture d'orgues luxembourgeoise, created in 1922, one organ was designed to best reflect the cosmopolitan and multicultural climate, in short the melting pot of cultural influences of the 17th and 18th centuries: the so-called "classic" organ of the cathedral of Luxembourg City. Inaugurated in Easter 1995 in celebration of Luxembourg, European City of Culture, this instrument built by Georg Westenfelder embraces Spanish, Flemish and French tradition.

During these last decades, restoration efforts have multiplied and the Manufacture d'orgues luxembourgeoise has constructed organs from Boston to Tokyo via Belgium and France. Associations like the organ friends Amis de l'orgue are dedicated to promoting the heritage of the instruments as well as the Luxembourg repertoire – which incidentally is very rich, from the monk and composer Dom Paul Benoît (1893-1979) to the appointed players of the organs of the cathedral of Luxembourg City.



Dating back to 1912, the organ of the parish church of Dudelange was built by Georg and Eduard Stahlhuth. It was the country's largest organ until 1938.  
© Jérôme Dichter



The chamber music ensemble United Instruments of Lucilin during a concert at the Kulturfabrik cultural centre in Esch-sur-Alzette  
© Pierre Grandidier

teachers and an entire educational team are in charge of training young choral singers, in parallel to their school education.

Finally, the INECC offers introductory singing workshops and also publishes booklets accompanied by a CD featuring the children's choir Zinglabumm, which interprets popular songs, of both Luxembourg and foreign origin.

## A great musical city...

The topography of the locations in which these numerous musicians perform is rich and varied. The concert halls as well as the host of music festivals throughout the country bear witness to both a decentralisation and a diversification of cultural life.

The Festival européen de théâtre en plein air et de musique (European Open-Air Theatre and Music Festival) of Wiltz, in the Luxembourg Ardennes, was created in 1953 and is the oldest of the festivals. Each summer,

the surroundings of the Renaissance castle of 1631 play host to lyrical performances and classical music and jazz concerts.

The Festival international Echternach (International Festival of Echternach), which was founded in 1975, takes place in the abbey town of Echternach, the hub of musical creation during the Middle Ages. Since 2008, the festival boasts remarkable new surroundings for its concerts, which stage performances by international stars: the Trifolion, Echternach's new cultural, tourist and conference centre. Convivial and multifunctional, the Trifolion accommodates a concert hall that can seat an audience of 700 people who enjoy high-quality cultural events, thanks to its excellent acoustics.

Dating back to the 12th century, the castle of Bourglinster provides a meeting point for lovers of chamber and piano music. For the last quarter century, the greatest interpreters from the international scene have graced its Knights' Room with their presence in first-rate performances in the context of the Festival de musique de Bourglinster (Music Festival of Bourglinster).

Created in 1987 by the Fanfare de Marnach, De kleng Maarnicher Festival (The Little Marnach Festival) is the country's most northern musical rendezvous, sporting a concert hall situated at a geographical height of 521 metres and hence called Cube 521, which acts as a forum for cultural players from Luxembourg and its neighbouring regions. Also in the north, the Schubertiade Luxembourg sets Schubertian melodies to the tune of this landscape interspersed by plateaus, fortified castles and sunken valleys. It is thanks to this decentralisation, to which one could also add

the Centre des arts pluriels in Ettelbruck with its entire cultural offer, that the Luxembourg Ardennes are undergoing significant redevelopment, favouring creativity and social exchange.

More towards the centre of the country, the chamber music festival Musek am Syrdall (Music in the Valley of the Syre), founded in 1987, takes place in the main villages of the Widdebiërg, the cradle of the royal house of the Württembergs, while the Soirées musicales de Bissen (Musical Nights of Bissen) provide a stage

## Documentation centres

- The Département de la musique de la Bibliothèque nationale (Music Department of the National Library) comprises the Centre d'études et de documentation musicales (CEDOM) (Music Research and Documentation Centre), which documents the musical creation and life in Luxembourg, and a music archive allowing information to be obtained on the history of music and the music scene on an international scale.

Created in 1989, the mission of the CEDOM is to collect, centralise, index and render accessible Luxembourg's musical heritage in all its forms, and to manage the archives of composers, be they Luxembourgers or foreigners who live or have lived in Luxembourg. The CEDOM currently houses 3,500 scores, 2,000 sound recordings and 1,800 works, brochures and programmes, all directly linked to musical creation and life in Luxembourg. The musicological archives hold approximately 6,200 monographs.

- The Centre de documentation de l'Union Grand-Duc Adolphe (UGDA) (Documentation Centre of the Grand Duke Adolphe Union) comprises scores for brass bands and wind ensembles, accordion orchestras, plectrum orchestras and choirs, as well as Luxembourgish theatre pieces.

- The Centre de documentation de l'Union Saint Pie X (Documentation Centre of the Saint Pius X Union) houses some 4,000 scores of religious music works and specialised publications.

- The library of Cid-femmes (Women's Information and Documentation Centre) is home to musical archives gathering around 1,800 scores of female composers, from the Middle Ages to the 21st century. These include 140 original scores by the Luxembourg composer Helen Buchholtz (1877-1953), who bequeathed to posterity vocal works, sonatas for piano and orchestral pieces.

- The Lëtzebuurger Gesellschaft fir nei Musek (LGNM) (Luxembourg Society for Contemporary Music) publishes catalogues of contemporary music works.



The Music Conservatory of the City of Esch-sur-Alzette is the only establishment in the Grand Duchy to offer classes in Gregorian chant  
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in particular for great vocal music. The agenda of the *Rencontres musicales de la vallée de l'Alzette* (Musical Encounters of the Valley of the Alzette) features concerts for lovers of ancient and Baroque music, in which Luxembourg ensembles join renowned groups and soloists from abroad.

In Luxembourg City, the latest festival addition is the Luxembourg Festival, founded in 2007 to celebrate the occasion of Luxembourg and the Greater Region, European Capital of Culture. Upon the initiative of the Philharmonie and the Great Theatre of the City of Luxembourg, and in collaboration with the OPL, the Grand Duke Jean Museum of Modern Art (MUDAM) and the Luxembourg City History Museum, the Luxembourg Festival hosts from October to November a diverse programme, very colourful and rich in unusual productions, featuring theatre and opera performances, concerts and exhibitions.

The Festival international de musique d'orgue (International Organ Music Festival) in Dudelange, in the south of the country, brings together organ aficionados. The Forum international pour flûte et piano (International Forum for Flute and Piano) – started 20 years ago by the flautist, teacher and conductor Carlo Jans – and Les Concerts de Koerich (The Concerts of Koerich) perform their musical works respectively in the church of Saint Lawrence in Diekirch and in the Baroque church of Koerich, a small village located in the west of the country.

Other musical cycles characterise the theatre seasons, in particular those of the Great Theatre of the City of Luxembourg, the Theatre of Esch-sur-Alzette and the National Theatre of Luxembourg. The capital's Great Theatre hosts world-class productions thanks to its opportune collaboration with a handful of very prestigious establishments, such as La Monnaie in Brussels or the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence.

In terms of performance site, mention must also be made of the famous bandstand on Place d'Armes in Luxembourg City, a reminder of the times when military bands used to perform on the kiosk, from the mid-19th century onwards. Each summer, brass bands and wind ensembles, hailing from Luxembourg or abroad, entertain the public with a wide range of melodies and rhythms, but always with the purpose of reinforcing the tourist attraction of the capital.

The media are also vehicles for the promotion of classical music. The sociocultural radio station Radio 100,7 for instance, a public establishment created in 1993, records and broadcasts a significant number of concerts. In addition, the specialist music magazine *Pizzicato*, a member of the jury at the MIDEM Classical Awards, acts as a megaphone for the inspiring rendezvous that take place in the great Luxembourg "city" of music.

## ... on a European and global scale

Situated in the heart of Europe, Luxembourg has always been a stage of choice in the "musical resonance" beyond its national borders. Given the migratory flow and demographic constellation of the country, its musical workforce has always been international. Since time immemorial, the territory of the current Grand Duchy has been a crossroads of favoured exchanges, even "the refuge for minstrels", in particular during the seven years leading up to the Second World War.

Indeed, from the moment Hitler seized power in Germany in 1933, Luxembourg became a place of temporary refuge for numerous musicians and composers of Jewish origin, who were to play an active part in Luxembourg's community life. The Austrian composer

Bruno Granichstaedten (1879-1944), for instance, found in Luxembourg a place that encouraged the development of his musical activities. He put his talent at the services of the Lëtzebuenger Operettebühn by promoting Viennese operetta. In general, exiled musicians enriched the Luxembourg scene between 1933 and 1940, in particular in the domain of jazz.

The Grand Duchy was a founding member of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) after the Second World War and remained open to foreign musicians who participated in harvesting this vast cultural field, the fruits of which were to become increasingly abundant. While the forefathers of the OPL lent their support to the concert cycle organised by the ECSC – its High Authority having chosen Luxembourg City as the seat of its first headquarters – the Grand Duchy is today home to numerous initiatives in which the European idea is daily lived. There are many examples of supranational cooperation, be they workshops, European music courses or encounters between a local orchestra and a foreign choir. Given the small size of the country, cross-border collaboration has always been a common, in fact a natural, reality.

An entire generation of young accomplished musicians, among them some very good pianists, currently successfully defends Luxembourg's colours beyond the country's borders.

The international visibility of Luxembourg is also reinforced by various actions undertaken by players on the Luxembourg scene: the annual presence of the music scene at the international music market MIDEM in Cannes, the organisation in the Grand Duchy of the only international competition for percussion ensembles created thanks to the initiative of the percussionists of Luxembourg, and the exclusive radio broadcasting of philharmonic concerts performed in the context of the Euroradio exchange of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) – “the world's greatest concert hall” (Remy Franck). These are all examples of the incontestable cultural influence wielded by the Grand Duchy, which makes it a real “musical republic”.



During its tour to China in November 2008, the Luxembourg Sinfonietta performed a concert at the music conservatoire of Chengdu, capital of Sichuan province

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## Useful addresses

Ministère de la Culture, de l'Enseignement  
supérieur et de la Recherche  
Tel.: 247-86619  
[www.mcesr.public.lu](http://www.mcesr.public.lu)

Jeunesses musicales Luxembourg  
Tel.: 22 45 06  
[www.jeunessesmusicales.lu](http://www.jeunessesmusicales.lu)

Union Grand-Duc Adolphe (UGDA)  
Tel.: 46 25 36-1  
[www.ugda.lu](http://www.ugda.lu)

Union Saint Pie X  
Tel.: 26 20 18 99  
[www.piusverband.lu](http://www.piusverband.lu)

### Music education

Conservatoire de musique de la  
Ville de Luxembourg  
Tel.: 47 96-5555  
[www.cml.lu](http://www.cml.lu)

Conservatoire de musique de la  
Ville d'Esch-sur-Alzette  
Tel.: 54 97 25  
[www.esch.lu](http://www.esch.lu)

Conservatoire de musique du Nord  
Tel.: 80 31 15-20 (Diekirch)  
Tel.: 26 81 26-1 (Ettelbruck)  
[www.cmnord.lu](http://www.cmnord.lu)

European Music Academy Schengen  
Tel.: 46 27 65 30  
[www.sel.lu](http://www.sel.lu)

Institut européen de chant choral (INECC)  
Tel.: 26 43 04 81  
[www.inecc.lu](http://www.inecc.lu)

### Documentation centres

Bibliothèque du Cid-femmes  
Tel.: 24 10 95-1  
[www.cid-femmes.lu](http://www.cid-femmes.lu)

Bibliothèque nationale  
Tel.: 22 97 55-1  
[www.bnl.lu](http://www.bnl.lu)

Luxembourg Music Information Centre  
Tel.: 22 58 21  
[www.lgm.lu](http://www.lgm.lu)

### Orchestras

Luxembourg Sinfonietta  
Tel.: 22 58 21  
[www.luxembourg-sinfonietta.lu](http://www.luxembourg-sinfonietta.lu)

Noise Watchers Unlimited  
Tel.: 26 68 48 48  
[www.nowa.lu](http://www.nowa.lu)

Orchestre de chambre du Luxembourg  
Les Musiciens  
Tel.: 76 00 29  
[www.ocl.lu](http://www.ocl.lu)

Orchestre philharmonique du Luxembourg  
Tel.: 22 99 01  
[www.opl.lu](http://www.opl.lu)

Solistes européens Luxembourg  
Tel.: 46 27 65 30  
[www.sel.lu](http://www.sel.lu)

United Instruments of Lucilin  
Tel.: 621/35 53 55  
[www.lucilin.lu](http://www.lucilin.lu)



## Concert halls

Centre des arts pluriels Ed. Juncker (CAPE)  
Tel.: 26 81 21-1  
[www.cape.lu](http://www.cape.lu)

Cube 521  
Tel.: 52 15 21  
[www.cube521.lu](http://www.cube521.lu)

Mierscher Kulturhaus  
Tel.: 26 32 43-1  
[www.kulturhaus.lu](http://www.kulturhaus.lu)

Op der Schmelz – Centre culturel régional  
Tel.: 51 61 21-290  
[www.opderschmelz.lu](http://www.opderschmelz.lu)

Philharmonie  
Tel.: 26 02 27 1  
[www.philharmonie.lu](http://www.philharmonie.lu)

Trifolion – Centre culturel, touristique et  
de congrès Echternach  
Tel.: 26 72 39-1  
[www.trifolion.lu](http://www.trifolion.lu)

## Music festivals

De klenge Maarnicher Festival  
Tel.: 92 08 51  
[www.dkmf.lu](http://www.dkmf.lu)

Festival de musique de Bourglinster  
Tel.: 78 81 56  
[www.bourglinsterfestival.eu](http://www.bourglinsterfestival.eu)

Festival européen de théâtre en plein air  
et de musique (Wiltz)  
Tel.: 95 81 45  
[www.festivalwiltz.lu](http://www.festivalwiltz.lu)

Festival international de musique d'orgue,  
Dudelange (FIMOD)  
[www.orgue-dudelange.lu](http://www.orgue-dudelange.lu)

Festival international Echternach  
Tel.: 72 83 47  
[www.echternachfestival.lu](http://www.echternachfestival.lu)

Les Soirées musicales de Bissen  
Tel.: 83 57 35  
[www.musicales-bissen.lu](http://www.musicales-bissen.lu)

Luxembourg Festival  
Tel.: 26 02 27-1  
[www.luxembourgfestival.lu](http://www.luxembourgfestival.lu)

Musek am Syrdall  
Tel.: 77 01 96  
[www.betzdorf.lu/msyrdall](http://www.betzdorf.lu/msyrdall)

Rencontres musicales de la vallée de l'Alzette  
Tel.: 621/37 98 79

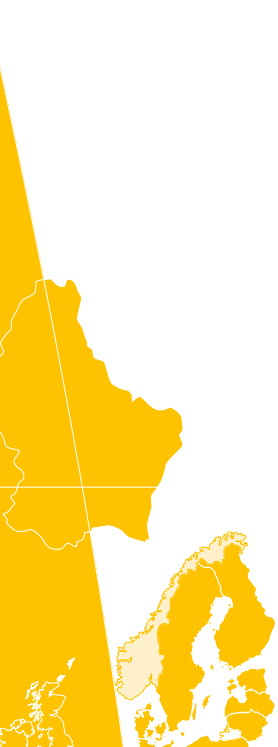
## Other addresses

Amis de l'opéra  
[www.amisopera.lu](http://www.amisopera.lu)

Amis de l'orgue Luxembourg  
[www.amisdelorgue.lu](http://www.amisdelorgue.lu)

International Percussion Competition  
Luxembourg  
Tel.: 691/19 19 19  
[www.ipcl.lu](http://www.ipcl.lu)

Les Concerts du Foyer européen  
Tel.: 43 01 35-205  
[admin-lux-cercle-culturel@cec.eu.int](mailto:admin-lux-cercle-culturel@cec.eu.int)



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The Information and Press Service of the Luxembourg Government published *About... Popular Music in Luxembourg* in September 2007.

## Selective discography

10-CD series “Anthologie de musique luxembourgeoise”, published by the Lëtzebuenger Gesellschaft fir nei Musek (LGNM), featuring works by Camille Kerger, Walter Civitareale, Luc Rollinger, Marco Kraus, Alexander Müllenbach, Victor Fenigstein, Georges Lentz, Jules Krüger, René Mertzig, Edmond Cigrang, Jeannot Heinen and Marcel Wengler, among others

CD series “Portraits”, published by the LGNM, dedicated to Luxembourg composers Jos Kinzé, René Hemmer, Jeannot Heinen, Marcel Wengler and René Mertzig

Contemporary music recorded by the ensemble United Instruments of Lucilin for the Fuga Libera label

Discography of the Orchestre philharmonique du Luxembourg and the Solistes européens Luxembourg

CD boxed set *Déi schéinste Lëtzebuenger Märsch a Wierker*, recorded by the Musique militaire grand-ducale (1996)

CD *Franz Liszt. Luxembourg 1886 – Last public performance* (SEL Classics, 1996).  
Michèle Kerschenmeyer plays the piano that Liszt performed his final concert on.

CD *150 ans de musique pour orchestre d'harmonie et de fanfare au Grand-Duché de Luxembourg and 150 ans de musique profane pour chorales au Grand-Duché de Luxembourg*, published by the Union Grand-Duc Adolphe in celebration of the 150th anniversary of the independence of Luxembourg (1990)

2 CD *Musique sacrée luxembourgeoise* with the collaboration of the Orchestre de chambre du Luxembourg Les Musiciens (Radio classique Bergen, 2000)

CD *Officium Sancti Willibrordi* (SEL Classics, 1996)

Live recording of the symphony *Turangalîla* performed by the Orchestre symphonique de Radio-Télé-Luxembourg under Louis de Froment at Villa Louvigny (Forlane, 1982)

CD Naji Hakim, *L'orgue Georg Stahlhuth, Saint-Martin Dudelange* (AEOLUS, 2002)

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