

FRANCE

42nd CHAISE-DIEU FESTIVAL
20 TO 31 AUGUST 2008

More than 30 concerts given by a thousand French and European musicians (early and baroque music ensembles, choirs, and several symphony orchestras) will make up the 42nd La Chaise-Dieu Festival, which takes place this year from 20 to 31 August. Venues include the abbey church of Saint Robert in La Chaise Dieu itself, as well as the churches of Ambert, Chamalières-sur-Loire and Le Puy-en-Velay, the basilica of Brioude, the theatre at Puy-en-Velay, and many other locations. Participating ensembles include Les Éléments, The Sixteen, Les Folies Françaises, the Ukraine National Philharmonic, La Chapelle Rhénane, XVIII-21, Le Baroque Nomade, the E.V.Lausanne, La Chambre Philharmonique, Pygmalion, Le Concert de l'Hostel Dieu, Les Cris de Paris, Camerata Ireland, Cappella Amsterdam and l'Orchestre Français des Jeunes. Audiences will hear works by composers ranging from Palestrina to Messiaen and from Bach to Pärt in a programme that strikes a good balance between offerings devoted to lesser-known works and those that present music by the great masters. This year's festival features two main themes, "Beethoven and the Great Symphony Composers" (Brahms, Sibelius, Mahler and Dvorak, among others) and "Requiem" (works by Campra, Gilles, Mozart, Berlioz and Bruckner). Presentations designed to introduce audiences to selected concerts will also



Cyril Huvé

be given, with a series of free one-hour talks given about the works and composers. Fortepianist Cyril Huvé is the artistic director of a master class (sponsored by the Conseil Général de la Haute-Loire, the Spedidam, and the Académie de La Chaise-Dieu) in which young professionals will have a chance to explore Beethoven's chamber works; fellow teachers are violinist Patrick Cohen Akenine and cellist François Poly; and participants will give a concert on 27 August. The abbey church of La Chaise-Dieu houses a celebrated four-keyboard organ dating from 1779, which is particularly well suited to 17th- and 18th-century repertoire. Each concert given in the abbey will open with a piece or improvisation played on the organ by advanced students from the Paris and Lyon Conservatories. Nicolas Loth will officiate from 20 to 24 August, with Cindy Castillo taking over from 24 to 31 August. A workshop designed for 7- to 12-year olds from the La Chaise-Dieu area will also take place from 25 to 30 August. This scheme, which is sponsored by the Caisse des Dépôts, will lead to a closing concert on the morning of 30 August. Full details and reservations at www.chaise-dieu.com.

SWITZERLAND

GRUYÈRES EARLY MUSIC WORKSHOP
24 TO 31 AUGUST 2008

The 2007 Gruyères Early Music Workshop was devoted to the Renaissance guitar, and included a guitar-building workshop and a ball. The 2008 Festival again centres on the guitar and on the concept of linking instrument building and music making, but sets off in a radically different direction by focusing on both the romantic guitar and the little-known arpeggione. Invented in 1823 by the Viennese luthier Johann Georg Stauffer, the latter instrument is derived from the guitar but played with a bow. The only work in its repertoire is Schubert's "Arpeggione" Sonata, which is more often performed today on the viola or cello. In Gruyères, however, it will be played by gambist Amélie Chemin in its original version, on an instrument specially built for the occasion after a Stauffer arpeggione. The concert will also feature the same work played in more familiar guise by Belgian cellist Didier Poskin.

Was Schubert a guitarist? Like Berlioz, Rossini and Paganini, he certainly played the instrument occasionally. And like them, he also sometimes composed with a guitar, and published guitar accompaniments to some of his Lieder. The instrument was highly fashionable in the 1820s in Vienna, and Schubert himself owned a beautiful Stauffer instrument.



Anna Kowalska and Anton Birula

Schubert's music will be in the fore during the week of concerts in Gruyères with a performance of *Der Winterreise* given by the Swiss singer Michel Brodard, with Véronique Carrot accompanying on a Viennese fortepiano. Guitars will also be much in evidence with solo and duo recitals devoted to the virtuoso repertoires of Giuliani, Legnani, Sor and Schubert. Performers include Russian guitarists Anna Kowalska and Anton Birula and the outstanding Belgian player Raphaella Smits.

As is the case every year, the main attraction of this 6th festival will be the instrument-building workshop organised in the chateau, with participants building a "Legnani" model of Schubert's Stauffer guitar. This delicate work, open to public viewing, will be carried out under the watchful eye of Swiss luthier Maurice Ottiger. To sum up, the 2008 Festival theme – romantic music with guitar – will be illustrated with guitar and singing master classes, lectures, an exhibition on the romantic guitar, and of course the instrument building workshop and concerts. To enrol in the workshop or consult programme details: www.anselmus.ch.