

ART AND SOCIAL POLITICAL CHANGE

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WELCOME FROM ISPA

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to Lugano! We don't often have the opportunity to be in such a bucolic location (New York aside, of course), and yet have the opportunity to engage in such a meaningful dialogue with peers.

In many respects, the theme of the congress is a continuation of our dialogue in New York earlier this year, where we identified many of the urgent issues facing the arts and, for that matter, society. I think many of us thought 2025 would be an opportunity for a new beginning, post-pandemic, but we are still grappling with many, some unimaginable, challenges. That is why your presence, and active participation is so vital.

I want to thank our hosts at LAC for their tireless efforts to bring all the elements of a great congress together. Lastly, I want to thank you, the delegates, for investing your time and energy in the dialogue – I am sure it will be a rewarding week.

Sincerely,

David Baile
Chief Executive Officer
International Society
for the Performing Arts



WELCOME FROM THE ISPA CHAIR

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the Board of the International Society for the Performing Arts, I am pleased to welcome you to the Lugano Congress.

At a time when the role and leadership of major arts institutions around the world are under increasing scrutiny and, in some cases, subject to abrupt and troubling change, our theme 'Art and Social Political Change' could not be more relevant. Recent headlines remind us that the values of independence, integrity, and openness in the arts are not guaranteed and must be defended and reaffirmed at every opportunity.

Over the coming days, we can reflect on how our sector can respond to these challenges, and how the arts can maintain their capacity to inspire, heal, and foster dialogue, even in difficult circumstances. ISPA is committed to providing space for honest exchange and for considering new ways to support you, the artists we work with, the communities we serve, and each other.

I thank all who have contributed to shaping this congress programme, funders as well as our partners and of course, our hosts. I look forward to our discussions, some of them will undoubtedly be challenging, and to the opportunities for collaboration that will arise during our time together.

With best wishes,

Alfonso Leal del Ojo
Chair, Board of Directors
International Society
for the Performing Arts,
(Chief Executive,
The English Concert)



WELCOME TO LUGANO

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the ISPA Lugano Team, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 2025 Mid-Year Congress. We are thrilled to host you here in Switzerland and honored that ISPA selected Lugano as the destination for this year's gathering. Bringing to life such a dynamic and meaningful program is truly a collective endeavor.

I am sincerely grateful to the LAC team, to Pier Luigi Sacco, academic consultant, and our dedicated partners at ISPA New York and CEO David Baile. Your time and passion have been instrumental in shaping this congress.

It has been a genuine pleasure working alongside each one of you — thank you. I would also like to heartfelt thanks our funders and partners, whose invaluable support has made this event possible. A special mention goes to the City of Lugano, whose visionary decision to establish the LAC marked a turning point in Lugano's evolution into an international cultural hub. Likewise, our sincere thanks go to Lugano Region, for their unwavering belief in this congress since its inception.

We look forward to sharing this inspiring week with you — engaging with outstanding speakers, participants, and performers, and exploring together the vital role of the performing arts in times of global change. Please, do not hesitate to introduce yourself. We are eager to exchange ideas and engage in meaningful conversations throughout the congress.

Warm regards,

Michel Gagnon
General Director
LAC Lugano
Arte e Cultura





MY OWN
**LUGANO
REGION**



LUGANO UNEXPECTED CLASSIC TOUR



**MONDAY 9TH JUNE 2025
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

MEETING POINT:
LUGANO REGION TOURIST OFFICE
VIA MAGATTI 6, LUGANO

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MY OWN
**LUGANO
REGION**



LUGANO – GUIDED CITY WALK



**SATURDAY 14TH JUNE 2025
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

MEETING POINT:
LUGANO REGION TOURIST OFFICE
VIA MAGATTI 6, LUGANO

DIFFICULTY LEVEL / WALKING:
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SCHEDULE

10 JUNE

Tuesday
LAC, Hall

9:00AM—6:00PM
Registration/ Check-in

9:00AM—2:00PM
Coffee service

2:00PM—2:30PM
Opening Ceremony/ Session
and Welcome

2:30PM—3:45PM
SESSION 1/ Culture and
Wellbeing: Arts and Healing
Communities

INTRODUCTION
Enzo Grossi
MD IBSA Foundation
for Scientific Research
Switzerland

MODERATOR
Pier Luigi Sacco
Professor University
of Chieti-Pescara
Italy

SPEAKERS
Nils Fietje
Technical Officer
Behavioural and Cultural
Insights (BCI) Unit
at the WHO Regional
Office for Europe
Denmark

Rarita Zbranca
Program Director Cluj
Cultural Centre
Romania

Roberto Casarotto
Co-Director Aerowaves
Europe
Ireland

Stephanie Jenke
Managing Director Gasteig
München GmbH
Germany

4:00PM—5:00PM
SESSION 2/
Arts and Political Change

SPEAKERS

Alicia Adams
ISPA Past-Chair, Former
Vice President, International
Programming & Dance
United States

Alfonso Leal del Ojo
ISPA Board Chair,
Chief Executive
The English Concert
United Kingdom

6:30PM—7:45PM
Concert, Orchestra
della Svizzera Italiana

7:45PM—10:00PM
Opening Reception

10:00PM—LATE
Cocktail Klatch

SCHEDULE

11 JUNE

Wednesday
LAC, Hall

9:00AM—4:00PM
Registration/ Check-in

9:00AM—10:30AM
Coffee service

9:00AM—10:00AM
City Tour, Discover Lugano*

10:15AM—10:30AM
House Keeping Session

10:30AM—12:00PM
BREAKOUT SESSIONS
In Conversation with:

Cathy Levy, CM
International Advisor
Jacob's Pillow Dance
Festival
Canada

Natália Oszkó-Jakab
Festival Director Valley
of Arts Festival
(Művészetek Völgye)
Hungary

Dorcy Rugamba
Artistic Director
Kigali Triennial
Rwanda/Belgium

12:00PM—1:45PM
Lunch

* Sold out

1:45PM—3:00PM

**SESSION 3/ Arts in Conflict:
Resistance and Hope**

MODERATOR

Mikko Fritze

Director Finnland-Institut
Germany

Kateryna Botanova

Independent Cultural

Researcher and Curator
Ukraine and Switzerland

SPEAKERS

Amany Abouzeid

Regional Arts Director,
MENA British Council
Egypt

Jonathan Harper

Chief Executive

Paraorchestra

United Kingdom

Julia Lagahuzère

Co-founder/General

Director Opera for Peace
Italy

3:05PM—3:35PM

Refreshment break

4:00PM—5:10PM

**Opera for Peace,
Leading Voices of the World**

9:00PM—LATE

ISPA Night

PERFORMERS

Luigi Maglione (Kashmere)

Italian-Swiss Artist
Switzerland

Julie Meletta

Swiss Pop

Singer-Songwriter
Switzerland

SCHEDULE

12 JUNE

Thursday
LAC, Hall

9:00AM—4:00PM
Registration/ Check-in

9:00AM—10:00AM
Coffee service

10:00AM—12:00PM
PITCH NEW WORKS
[VIEW HANDOUT](#)

Host, Anthony Sargent CBE
International
Cultural Advisor
United Kingdom

12:00PM—2:00PM
ProEx/ Lunch

2:00PM—2:15PM
ISPA Award Presentation, Part 1

International Citation of Merit
Michael Haefliger
Executive and Artistic Director
Lucerne Festival
Switzerland

2:15PM—3:30PM
**SESSION 4/ Upholding Artistic
Integrity in a Polarized World**

MODERATOR
Piersandra Di Matteo
Performing Arts Scholar,
Curator, and Dramaturg
Università IUAV
di Venezia
Italy

SPEAKERS

Wray Armstrong
Chairman and CEO
Armstrong Music
and Arts
United Kingdom

Linda Brumbach
Creative & Executive
Producer
Pomegranate Arts
United States

Jurriaan Cooiman
Founder and Artistic
Director Culturescapes
Switzerland

Cindy Van Acker
Artist
Cie Greffe
/ Cindy Van Acker
Switzerland

3:30PM—4:00PM
Refreshment break

4:00PM—5:00PM
ISPA Award Presentation, Part 2

Angel Award
Claus Christiansen
The Danish Research
Foundation
Denmark

Angel Award
Kevin, Rosemary, and
Hannah Rose McNeely
KHR Family Foundation
United States

Distinguished Artist Award
Łukasz Twarkowski
Theater Maker, Director
Poland

Distinguished Artist Award
Cindy Van Acker
Artist
Cie Greffe
/ Cindy Van Acker
Switzerland

5:15PM—6:15PM
City Tour, Discover Lugano*

8:30PM—10:00PM
Performance
Titizè, A Venetian Dream*
Compagnia Finzi Pasca

10:00PM—LATE
Cocktail Klatch

* Pre-registration required

SCHEDULE

13 JUNE

Friday
LAC, Hall

9:00AM—12:00PM
Registration/ Check-in

9:00AM—10:00AM
Coffee service

10:15AM—11:30AM
**SESSION 5/ Can the Arts Make
a Difference Today?**

MODERATOR
Fizza Hasan
Founder and Artistic
Director Theatre Wallay
Pakistan

Boris Nikitin
Theater Director, Writer,
Curator It's The Real
Thing Studios
Switzerland

SPEAKERS
Cathy Levy, CM
International Advisor
Jacob's Pillow Dance
Festival
Canada

Dorcy Rugamba
Artistic Director
Kigali Triennial
Rwanda/Belgium

Łukasz Twarkowski
Theater Maker, Director
Poland

12:00PM—1:30PM
Closing Reception

1:30PM—5:00PM
Wine tours*

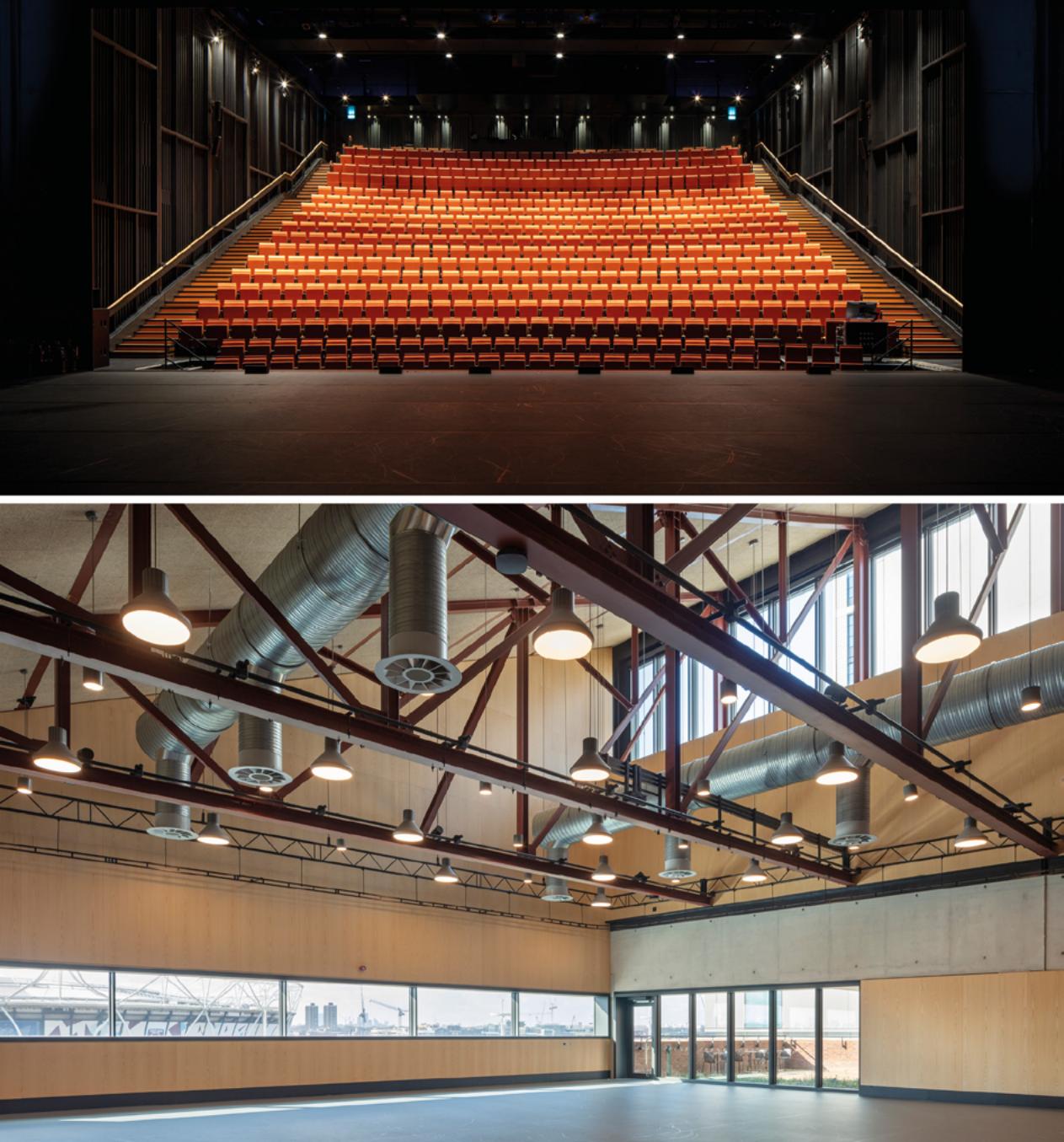
1:30PM—5:00PM
Individual Networking

5:00PM—7:00PM
Lake Lugano Cruise
*BOARDING LOCATION:
DEBARCADERO CENTRALE*

7:00PM **End of Congress**

* Pre-registration required

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MICHAEL HAEFLIGER

**Director Lucerne Festival
Switzerland
2025 International Citation
of Merit Recipient**



For nearly 40 years, Michael Haefliger has led the most significant festivals in the world, fostered innovation in the new music space, and created lasting and meaningful educational and early-professional opportunities for young artists. A violinist and graduate of Juilliard, Haefliger began his career as a performing artist; he carries that training with him in his management career, with an arts-forward approach that prioritizes cooperation, education, and musical innovation. Over his lengthy career, Haefliger has built bridges between the arts and society at large, pioneered festival formats and themes that

have set the standard for programming at institutions around the world, and cultivated an extensive network of contacts at all levels of classical and contemporary music: from emerging artists and composers to seasoned institutional figures, legendary conductors and instrumentalists, and high-value sponsors.

As Artistic and Executive Director of the Lucerne Festival since 1999, Haefliger has utterly transformed the institution, working together with fellow visionaries Claudio Abbado and Pierre Boulez to establish the Lucerne Festival Orchestra and Lucerne Festival Academy, elevating the

festival into a world-renowned international brand synonymous with musical excellence and innovation, and doubling the festival budget while maintaining a 95% self-funding rate. Now spread across multiple venues—ranging from the KKL Concert Hall and the streets, hotels, and restaurants of Lucerne, to the innovative Ark Nova Mobile Concert Hall and Connected streaming platform—and with several tours and extended residencies throughout Europe, Asia, and the United States, the Lucerne Festival, Orchestra, and Academy have had a profound impact on the cultural, musical, and educational landscape around the world.

For his efforts, Haefliger has been recognized with major international awards and titles. In 2000, he was named Global Leader for Tomorrow by the World Economic Forum Foundation in Geneva; further honors include the Cultural Award of Central Switzerland, Medal of Honor of the City of Lucerne, Swiss Society of New York Award, and European Cultural Innovation Award.

Haefliger serves on the boards of the Lang Lang International Music Foundation, UBS Cultural Foundation, Pierre Boulez Foundation, Davos Festival Foundation, and Foundation of the Swiss Music Youth Competition; he is also the Chairman of the Jury for the UBS Young Artist Award, and Vice-Chairman of the Board of the Swiss Top Events. He previously served on the boards of the World Arts Forum, American Friends of Lu-

cerne Festival, and Avenir Suisse Foundation in Switzerland.

Born in West Berlin in 1961, Michael Haefliger began studying the violin and piano at the age of six; he completed his violin studies at the Juilliard School of Music in New York in 1983, graduating with a Bachelor of Music degree. As a performer, Haefliger made appearances at festivals including Interlaken and Spoleto; in 1985, together with his brother Andreas, he made his debut at the Lucerne Festival. He subsequently studied management at the Schools of Business, Law, and Social Sciences at St. Gallen University, earning his Executive MBA in 1999.

In 2003, Haefliger received a scholarship (through the Harvard Club of Switzerland) to attend the General Management Program at Harvard University. Haefliger speaks German (native), English, Spanish, French, Italian, and Russian.

CINDY VAN ACKER

Artist
Cie Greffe
/ Cindy Van Acker
Switzerland
2025 Distinguished
Artist Award Recipient



Trained in ballet in Antwerp, Cindy Van Acker danced for the Royal Ballet of Flanders and the Grand Théâtre in Geneva, before joining in the 90s the contemporary dance scene of Geneva. Since 1994 she has created her own pieces, founding the Compagnie Greffe in 2002. Since then she has created about thirty pieces for Cie Greffe, as well as works for Ballet de Lorraine, Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève, P.A.R.T.S. and choreographies for Romeo Castellucci's productions. Her artistic path has been marked by her collaboration with the choreographer Myriam Gourfink, the scenographer Victor Roy,

the composer Mika Vainio (Pan Sonic), the director Romeo Castellucci and the dancers with whom she has established a long-term relationship of mutual trust. Her choreographic writing deals with a quite peculiar field in which the starting point is always the search for a form that might suggest the unutterable. Her dance, essentially formal and abstract, is composed by manipulating time, body and other matters, aiming at the idea of absence and out-of-frame, thus trying to open imaginary and emotional spaces that can overcome the form itself. Through her writing, which combines

a sober aesthetics with refined movement, a meticulous composition and electronic music, Cindy Van Acker analyses through an almost scientific approach the connections between body, mind, sound and rhythm, thus creating pieces that breach the frontiers between dance, performance and plastic arts. In November 2017, she becomes associated artist of ADC in Geneva, alongside Anne Davier. Her pieces Diffraction and Speechless Voices are granted the award of Choreographic Production by OFC. She is the winner of the 2023 Swiss Grand Award for the performing arts / Hans Reinhart Ring and the Leenaards Cultural Prize 2023.

ŁUKASZ TWARKOWSKI

Theater Maker/ Director
Poland
2025 Distinguished
Artist Award Recipient



ŁUKASZ TWARKOWSKI is a creator of multimedia performances combining theatre and visual arts. He places his projects in the context of extending reality through multimedia. A crucial element of Twarkowski's creative work is investigating the ability and limitations of theatre as a medium and tool of communication. By permanent deconstruction of narratives, questioning the fixed habits of the audience and by meaningful usage of new media, Twarkowski creates a new, original language of stage performance based on multimedia and, more widely, digital technologies. In using

these, Twarkowski analyses and observes increasingly complex relations between the Real, the Symbolic and the Imagined.

His projects are being programmed at the most important festivals and stages around the world, among others: Odéon - Théâtre de l'Europe, Ruhrtriennale, New York Skirball Center, Piccolo Teatro de Milano, Festival de Otoño de Madrid, Wiener Festwochen, Southbank Center London, Onassis Stegi, Taipei Performing Arts Center, Holland Festival, Münchner Kammerspiele, Théâtre de Vidy, Thalia Theatre.

CLAUS CHRISTIANSEN

The Danish Research Foundation
2025 Angel Award



He graduated as a medical doctor from the University of Copenhagen in 1971, and earned his doctoral degree in 1976. From 1978 to 1992, he was head of the Department of Clinical Chemistry at Glostrup Hospital, affiliated with the University of Copenhagen. In 1991, he co-founded what would become Nordic Bioscience together with Dr. Bente Juel Riis. The following year, they established the Center for Clinical and Basic Research (CCBR), where Christiansen served as CEO until 2013. His scientific career began in 1971 with the publication of his first peer-reviewed article.

Since then, he has authored over 1,100 scientific publications and book chapters spanning multiple disease areas. He is especially known for his pioneering research in calcium metabolism in post-menopausal women and holds an H-index of approximately 160.

MCNEELY FOUNDATION

**Kevin, Rosemary,
and Hannah Rose
McNeely**

**KHR McNeely Family
Foundation
2025 Angel Award**



The KHR McNeely Family Foundation, based in Sonoma, California, is a family-led philanthropic organization committed to advancing the arts, education, environmental stewardship, and community development. Founded by Kevin and Rosemary McNeely and joined by their daughter Hannah Rose, the Foundation supports cultural institutions, land trusts, artist residencies, and youth-focused education programs both in the U.S. and abroad. Kevin W. McNeely, President and CEO, has over four decades of experience in philanthropy and business, including his leadership at the Manitou Fund since 1980 and his pivotal role in shaping the Sonoma International Film Festival (2004–2023). He is a Claremont McKenna

alumnus (BA, Economics) and received an honorary doctorate from Franklin University Switzerland in 2023, where he has served as a trustee for over 25 years. Rosemary McNeely, Vice President, brings an arts education background from MassArt and the Philadelphia College of Arts, with extensive experience integrating arts into social impact work. Their daughter, Hannah Rose McNeely (FUS Class of 2023), brings expertise in global program development and communications, with experience in Italy, New York, and Switzerland. Together, the McNeelys lead the Foundation with a collaborative, intergenerational approach rooted in creativity, cultural engagement, and lasting community impact.

VENUE

LAC Lugano Arte e Cultura

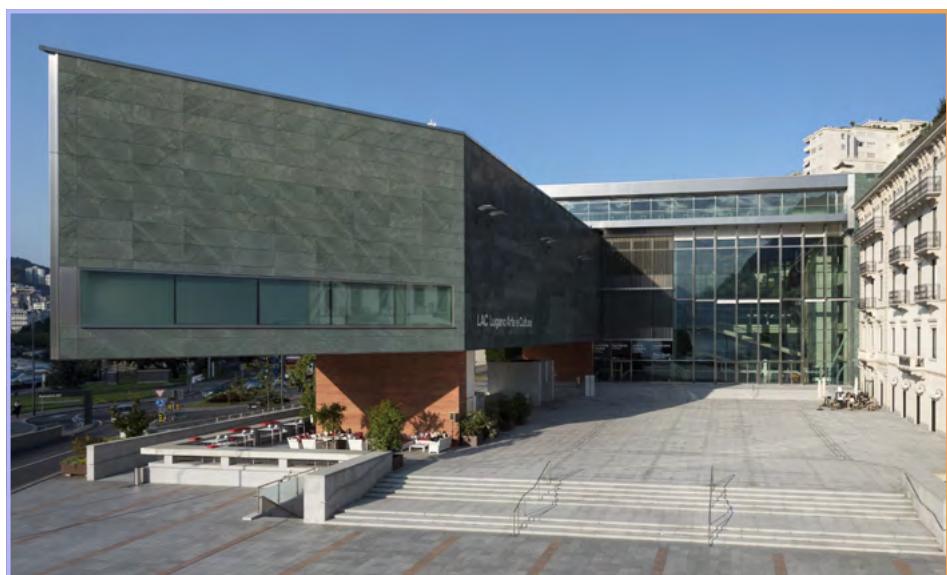
Lugano, set between its lake and the Alps, offers a mix of natural beauty and culture. The city features historic churches, lively piazzas, and panoramic views from Monte San Salvatore and Monte Brè, making it a great spot for leisure, nature, and the arts.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE LOCAL ATTRACTIONS](#)

The LAC – Lugano Arte e Cultura – is an arts center designed by the Swiss architect Ivano Gianola and his team. The cornerstone of the project is the large entrance hall: a modern agora, from which visitors can either go to the concert and theatre hall or to the museum area. The concert and theatre hall has a 1000 seating capacity and is a concentrate of modular and cutting-edge engineering solutions.

The combination of new and old is one of LAC's salient characteristics. The entire structure of the arts center also includes several pre-existing or restored architectural gems, such as the important Santa Maria degli Angioli church containing sixteenth century frescoes by Bernardino Luini, the Franciscan convent and the adjoining cloisters.

All areas of the venue are fully accessible to wheelchair users via ramps and elevators. Additionally, the theater hall features an induction system for those using hearing aids. A quiet room will also be available for those who need a calm space.



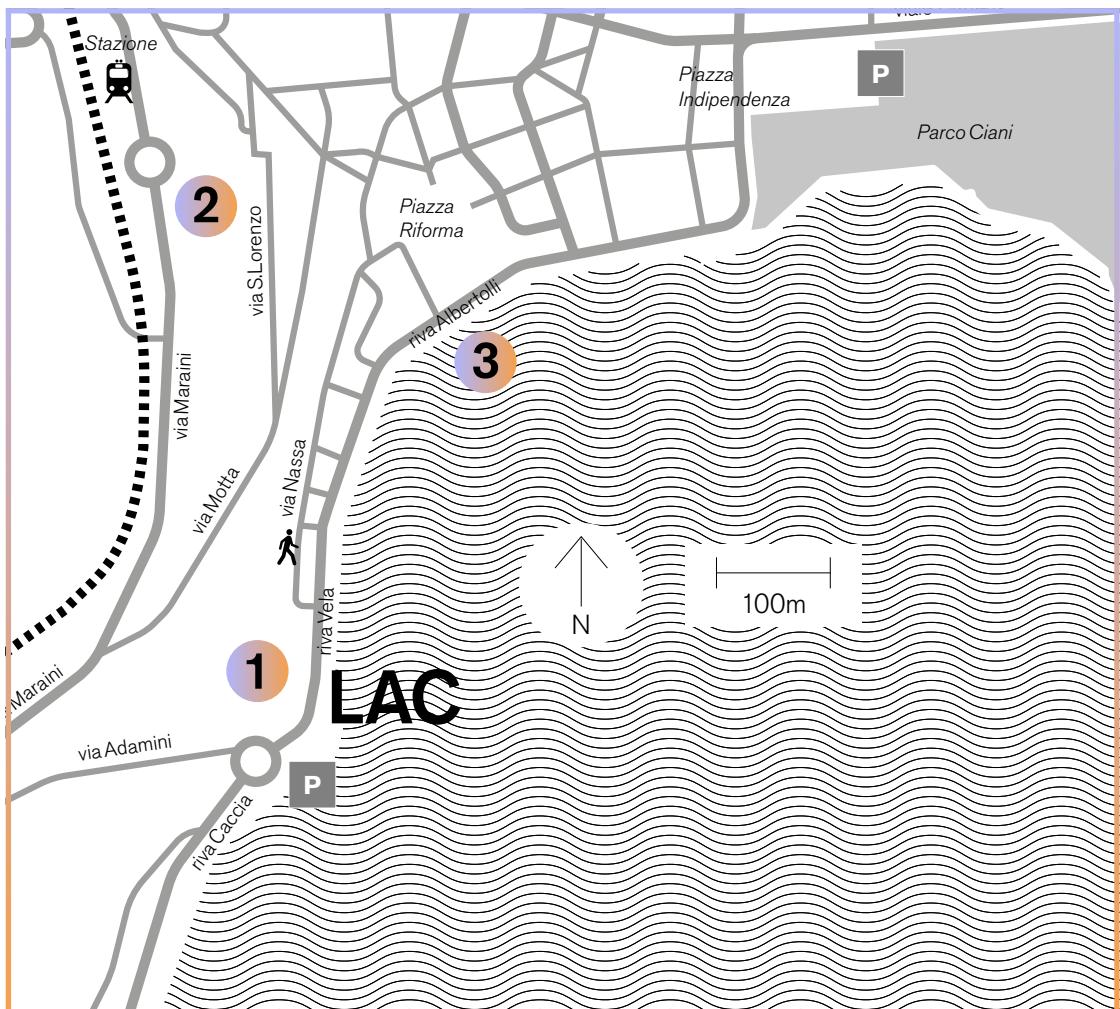
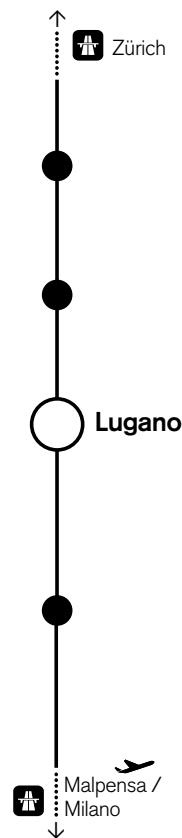
MAP

1 LAC Lugano Arte e Cultura

Piazza Bernardino Luini 6,
6900 Lugano,
Switzerland

2 Train station

3 Lake Lugano Cruise
Boarding location:
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By donating, you will strengthen ISPA's capacity to engage members from less represented regions and communities, cultivating a more diverse and inclusive global arts sector. Your support directly benefits ISPA's Global Fellowship, Regional Initiatives, Pitch New Works, Digital Programs, and more. Thank you to these generous individuals for their support!

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Nora Fleury	Allen Moon	Johann Zietsman
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FESTIVAL**

OPEN VIEGO END

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FROM
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12.08. – 14.09.

2025 Summer Festival

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Berliner Philharmoniker | Riccardo Chailly | Isabelle Faust |
Janine Jansen | Patricia Kopatchinskaja | Lang Lang |
Igor Levit | Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra
(LFCO) | Lucerne Festival Orchestra | Klaus Mäkelä |
Anne-Sophie Mutter | Yannick Nézet-Séguin |
Orchester des Teatro alla Scala | Kirill Petrenko |
Sir Simon Rattle | Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra |
Sir András Schiff | Mitsuko Uchida | Franz Welser-Möst |
West-Eastern Divan Orchestra | Wiener Philharmoniker |
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build meaningful connections, advance professional
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