

15 Years of Sound Art in the Dolomites

Festival Dolomites – formerly South Tyrol Festival

What began as a bold idea has become a cultural beacon in the heart of the Alps: in 2025, Festival Dolomites celebrates its 15th anniversary – a journey through music, emotion, and artistic vision. From the first notes in the Gustav Mahler Hall to spectacular open-air crossover experiences: world-class stars, world premieres, philosophy, and visual arts have shaped a festival that resonates far beyond South Tyrol.

15 years full of sound, depth, and surprise – and the journey continues.

Festival Dolomites celebrates its anniversary. What started in 2010 as the daring vision of Maestro Gustav Kuhn and the Haydn Orchestra of Bolzano and Trento has become a cultural landmark at the summit of South Tyrolean arts. The South Tyrol Festival – since 2023 known as Festival Dolomites – celebrates its 15th anniversary in 2025.

Over these one and a half decades, the Gustav Mahler Hall in Dobbiaco has regularly transformed into an acoustic laboratory of emotions. From requiems on Sunday mornings and jazz at sunset to intimate piano recitals – the festival has captivated audiences with its exceptional variety. Unforgettable is the performance of the *Symphony of a Thousand* in the newly built ice arena.

Numerous world-renowned classical music stars have graced South Tyrol: Zubin Mehta with the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Riccardo Chailly with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, the Mahler Chamber Orchestra under Daniele Gatti, Kremerata Baltica, and the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra.

New soundscapes have also found a place: Daniel Schnyder's saxophone concerto premiered here in 2010, Moritz Eggert's new version of the football oratorio – *The Depth of the Pitch*, based on the libretto by Michael Klaus, performed by the soloists, choir, and orchestra of the *Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes* in 2019, Marion Feichter's *The Age of Unease* in 2022, and in 2023, Xiaogang Ye's *Chinese Song of the Earth*.

The festival transcends genre boundaries. Crossover projects with artists such as Ute Lemper, Bente Kahan, Erika Pluhar, The Swingles, The Sweet Alps, or Martin Grubinger have impressively broadened the musical horizon. Even a football oratorio – *The Depth of the Pitch*, inspired by Giovanni Trapattoni's legendary "empty bottle" tirade – found its place in the program.

Accompanying panel discussions with philosophers like Peter Sloterdijk, Umberto Curi, or Manfred Osten opened new intellectual spaces, while exhibitions by artists such as Lois Anvidalfarei, Annemarie Laner, Will-ma Kammerer, and Julia Bornefeld enriched the festival visually.

Also unforgettable: the concerts of young "piano prodigies" and the moving festival visits by Italian Presidents Giorgio Napolitano and Sergio Mattarella.

Today, the festival is under the artistic direction of Christoph Bösch and Josef Feichter – and it continues to grow: musically, geographically, and ideologically. From Dobbiaco out into the world – and from the world straight to the heart.

Highlights:

2010: Mozart's *Requiem* with soloists from the Accademia di Montegral

2012: Verdi's *Messa da Requiem* with the Coro del Teatro Municipale di Piacenza

2013: Mahler's 9th Symphony with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra conducted by Riccardo Chailly

2013: Concert with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra conducted by Daniele Gatti – featuring Beethoven's 2nd, Schubert's 8th, and Webern's *Langsamer Satz* (in collaboration with the Gustav Mahler Music Weeks and Pustertal Music Summer)

2014: Orchestra del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino with Zubin Mehta

2018: In the new ice arena: performance of Mahler's *Symphony of a Thousand* with the Symphony Orchestra and choirs of the German National Academic Foundation (in collaboration with the Gustav Mahler Music Weeks and Pustertal Music Summer)

2019: *The Depth of the Pitch* – a football oratorio by Moritz Eggert, inspired by Trapattoni's "empty bottle" tirade, performed with the German National Academic Foundation (in collaboration with the Gustav Mahler Music Weeks and Pustertal Music Summer)

National and International Orchestras:

Haydn Orchestra of Trento and Bolzano – Orchestra Giovanile "Cl. Monteverdi" – Virtuosi Italiani & Orchestra Windkraft (Kaspar de Roo, conductor) – German National Youth Orchestra – Mahler Academy Orchestra (Grand Hotel Orchestra in Residence) – Orchestra da Camera di Mantova – Danish Chamber Orchestra – National Romanian Youth Sinfonietta – South Tyrolean Youth Wind Orchestra (conducted by Josef Feichter) – Dutch Youth Orchestra – Monteverdi Windband – Romanian Youth Orchestra – Orchestra Giovanile Italiana – South Tyrolean Youth Orchestra – Orchestra Regionale Filarmonia Veneta

Exhibitions:

2013: Lois Anvidalfarei

2014: Friedrich Sebastian Feichter – *HOMO SOLARIS*

2015: Annemarie – *YOU NEVER WALK ALONE*

2016: Heinrich & Franz Bacher – *Gais*

2017: Christian Stecher – *IF LIFE IS BUT A DREAM*

2018: Will-ma Kammerer – *TERRITORIUM*

2019: Julia Bornefeld

Artistic Directors:

2010–2014: Gustav Kuhn

2015: Daniele Spini

2016–2022: Hubert Stuppner

2023–present: Christoph Bösch and Josef Feichter

Yes, a festival with soul – full of passion, curiosity, and sonic magic.