



Press Release of the Salzburg Festival

Salzburg - New York

The Salzburg Festival Society in New York celebrates its 20th anniversary with a sold-out fundraising gala featuring the artists

Asmik Grigorian and Jonathan Tetelman

(SF, 24 April 2026) The Salzburg Festival Society, the American association of Friends of the Festival, celebrated its 20th anniversary in its hometown of New York.

Over the years, the great American tradition of private philanthropy has played a decisive role in enabling the Salzburg Festival to implement artistic projects and create spaces such as the SalzburgKulisse at the Haus für Mozart, which would have been impossible without this help.

150 guests from the world of culture, business and society attended the event at the exclusive Union Club in Manhattan; the gala was quickly sold out.



The Executive Board of the Salzburg Festival Society, featuring Asmik Grigorian, Festival President Kristina Hammer, and Heinrich Spängler, President of the Friends of the Salzburg Festival © Annie Watt

The musical highlight of the evening was a performance by **Jonathan Tetelman**, one of the most sought-after tenors of our time. He delighted the Friends in New York City with arias from the operas *Tosca* by Giacomo Puccini, *Fedora* by Umberto Giordano and *Carmen* by Georges Bizet, as well as the zarzuela *La tabernera del Puerto* by Pablo Sorozábal.

Jonathan Tetelman was accompanied at the piano by Israel Gursky.

The celebrated soprano **Asmik Grigorian** was the special guest of the gala evening.

Both singers will perform in Salzburg in the new production of Georges Bizet's *Carmen* this summer.



Jonathan Tetelman, accompanied by Israel Gursky on the piano, captivated the audience in New York. © Annie Watt

In her speech, Festival President Kristina Hammer emphasized the importance of this long-standing, transcontinental partnership.

Kristina Hammer: “Since its founding, the Salzburg Festival Society has not only strengthened the connection between Salzburg and its American Friends, but also carried on a remarkable tradition of transatlantic support which goes back to the very beginning of the Festival. Over the last 20 years, this spirit of friendship and philanthropic support has enabled the Festival to implement so many of the artistic achievements we are celebrating today.”



Petra Schneebauer, Austrian Ambassador to the United States; Kristina Hammer, Festival President; and Stephan Hutter, Austrian Honorary Consul General in Frankfurt am Main © Annie Watt

Artistic Director Karin Bergmann sent a video message from Salzburg: “It is a great honour and pleasure for me to accompany our artists this summer and beyond, and sharing with them and you the impressive programme created by Markus Hinterhäuser.”

The chairwoman of the SFS, Elisabeth Muhr, chose the motto “*Celebrating the Contributions of Markus Hinterhäuser*” for this year’s anniversary gala. Since its founding by actively engaged personalities, the Salzburg Festival Society has increasingly become one of the most important international platforms of supporters of the Salzburg Festival: “The Spring Gala celebrates the Salzburg Festival and a community of loyal international supporters. The Salzburg Festival Society is proud to connect American patrons with the Salzburg Festival, creating a bridge through classical music, opera, and theater.”

Photographs for downloading are available here:

<https://www.salzburgerfestspiele.at/en/photos/fundraising-gala-of-the-salzburg-festival-society>