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PRESS RELEASE

PORTRAITS AND STORIES BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE MONTREUX JAZZ FESTIVAL

The Montreux Jazz Festival and Anoush Abrar present "The Elegance of Time"

To mark its 60th edition, the Montreux Jazz Festival presents *The Elegance of Time*, a new book created in collaboration with Swiss-Iranian photographer Anoush Abrar, who has been working closely with the Festival's artists since 2018. The book showcases over 150 striking portraits, offering a journey behind the scenes of the Festival and exploring its singular sense of time, suspended each summer between the magic of the moment and the echoes of its rich history.

OVER 150 ICONIC PORTRAITS

QUINCY JONES · STING
CARLOS SANTANA · GRACE JONES
RAYE · SAM SMITH · DIONNE WARWICK
JANELLE MONÁE · JON BATISTE
NILE RODGERS · MARCUS MILLER
NORAH JONES · CHAKA KHAN
LIONEL RICHIE · SEAL · CARL CRAIG
GILBERTO GIL · ALANIS MORISSETTE
MORCHEEBA · ANGELIQUE KIDJO
BUDDY GUY · ASAF AVIDAN
NATHY PELUSO · NUBYA GARCIA
YUSSEF DAYES · PULP
LONDON GRAMMAR · FKA TWIGS
JAMES BLAKE · CHRIS ISAAK
JAMIE CULLUM · BILLY COBHAM
JACOB COLLIER · LIL NAS X · WOODKID
RAG'N'BONE MAN · BENSON BOONE
MARC REBILLET · SOFIANE PAMART
HERMANOS GUTIÉRREZ ...

Amid the hustle and bustle of backstage at the Montreux Jazz Festival, Anoush Abrar often has only seconds to capture his portraits — a fleeting window he transforms into a timeless artistic gesture. To celebrate its 60th edition, the Montreux Jazz Festival presents *The Elegance of Time*, a book featuring more than 150 of the photographer's portraits. The book brings together generations of musicians, from legendary figures such as Quincy Jones, Santana, Grace Jones and Dionne Warwick to the new voices who have become part of the Festival's story in recent years, such as Raye, Sam Smith, Jacob Collier and Sofiane Pamart.

Since 2018, the Swiss-Iranian photographer has enjoyed privileged access to the artists who pass through Montreux. The book revisits some of these rare moments: capturing **RAYE**, visibly moved alongside her Swiss grandfather, in a portrait that would later feature on the cover of her album *Live at Montreux*; **Marc Rebillet** inviting Abrar onto the Lake Stage, before posing in his underwear in front of 5,000 spectators; photographing **Grace Jones** dressed as a vintage aviator in her room at the Montreux Palace; and documenting **Quincy Jones** during what would prove to be his final evening at Montreux.

***« The Montreux Jazz Festival makes anything feel possible. It's no wonder so many artists choose to take part. Of course, the Festival's aura inspires them to leave their mark, but what really sets Montreux apart is the way people are made to feel at home here — a legacy of Claude Nobs, nurtured and carried forward through the years. »* — Anoush Abrar**

Time as the Festival's unifying thread

Time is the thread that runs through this book, unfolding across **some thirty stories**. The Montreux Jazz Festival unfolds at its own distinctive rhythm, poised somewhere between the magic of the moment and the echoes of its storied past. A brief interlude each summer, where rare, and even legendary, moments are born. Measured in minutes, days or years, every story is anchored in a specific moment in time: 2.45am, the time when **Sam Smith** joined a late-night jam session alongside an African kora player; 16 days, the length of **Jon Batiste**'s stay, from the Festival's opening day to its close; 1978, the year **Gilberto Gil** introduced Brazilian music to Montreux; or 11.15pm, when **Benson Boone** brought his concert to a close with an acrobatic dive from the Lake Stage.

***« Giving each encounter the time it deserves, leaving space for spontaneity, for the unexpected. This perception of time is what gives Montreux its unmistakable elegance. In this serene setting, between the lake and the mountains, many artists choose to stay on a little longer. They reshape their tours to fit in with more intimate venues, allow themselves to take risks they wouldn't elsewhere, and play long into the night. Here, time doesn't close doors — it opens them. »* — Mathieu Jaton, CEO Montreux Jazz Festival**

A testament to an extraordinary chapter: the Lake Stage

The Elegance of Time also recounts the two unforgettable years of the Lake Stage, bringing a poetic close to this chapter in the Festival's story. In 2024 and 2025, Anoush Abrar moved away from his fixed studio at the Convention Centre and adopted a fully mobile approach, photographing artists at the very heart of the Festival's settings: the lake and surrounding mountains, as well as technical areas, dressing rooms and the stage itself. Without a fixed base, he was able to move with greater freedom and instinct. His portraits became delicate witnesses to a fleeting, extraordinary moment in time. This more direct, flexible approach—far removed from the traditional studio setting—has since become a core part of his practice, one that he intends to continue in future editions of the Festival.

Biography of Anoush Abrar

Anoush Abrar is a renowned Swiss-Iranian photographer born in Tehran. Driven by an insatiable curiosity, he has made the exploration of hidden or hard-to-reach worlds his signature. Whether stepping into the cockpits of fighter jets, meeting the descendants of the Kosovo Liberation Army, or entering the closed circles of Kyoto's geishas, he seeks complete immersion as a way of understanding. Portraiture is his chosen language, which he approaches with the same intensity whether his subject is an unknown face or a head of state, an international star or a forgotten figure. He works with light as his medium, and treats each subject with equal care, guided by the trace each encounter leaves behind on the viewer, and on himself.

Abrar has been nominated four times for the prestigious Taylor Wessing National Portrait Gallery Prize, and reached the final shortlist on two occasions. His portraits and projects have been exhibited in galleries around the world, and he has received a number of major awards.

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