

The magic of BALOISE SESSION

When international stars like Rod Stewart, Zucchero or Alicia Keys come to Basel, the BALOISE SESSION is sure to be the reason. For the past 34 years, major stars have been coming to this popular Swiss boutique-music festival and have left festival audiences with concert memories they will never forget. Visitors are not only thrilled by the big stars, but also often by the many newcomers at the festival. With pop, rock, singer-songwriter, soul, funk, blues, jazz and world music all in the programme, the richly diverse line-up offers a range of music styles that appeals to all of its approx. 20'000 visitors.

Music stories told in an intimate setting

One very special feature of the BALOISE SESSION is the close proximity to the stars and the unique club-like setting with round tables and candlelight. The festival guests get up close to internationally renowned stars that generally play for well over ten thousand people in a concert hall which seats only 1'500 people. The intimate setting with seating at small round tables creates the ambiance of New York-style music clubs. Giant screens ensure that the audience members who are seated at the very back also will not miss any detail of the fascinating stage show.

Another unique feature of this indoor music festival in Basel is that each evening, two or three artists are presented who are linked in some way, giving them a common thread with which they can weave a story to thrill the audience throughout the evening. Instead of unrelated concerts that are simply slotted back to back, the audience at the BALOISE SESSION experiences a well-rounded evening with artists who have similar stylistic, historical, geographical backgrounds or some other shared characteristic which is often surprising.

With elegance and attention to detail

Music is clearly the main attraction at the BALOISE SESSION. Off-stage, this boutique festival also leaves nothing to be desired. All of the public and VIP areas are decorated with great attention to detail, giving the festival a touch of glamour. Guests appreciate the ambiance, well-known faces can often be spotted in the audience. At the sight of so much glamour, some guests have been overheard saying that they are surprised to encounter this much glamour in Basel since «there's nothing like this in London or Paris». Another exclusive element of the festival is the exquisite photo calendar featuring the evocative artist portraits taken by Flavia Schaub (formerly Marco Grob), which has developed a cult following amongst festival fans.

The festival's CLUB provides the perfect hospitality platform to entertain special guests. A maximum of 100 guests are treated to the culinary delights provided. Just like BACKSTAGE VILLAGE, the CLUB remains closed to sponsors during the performances – because at the BALOISE SESSION, music is the main event.

International stars love coming to Basel

Miles Davis was the first major star that performed at this premium Basel event back in 1988. Since then, BALOISE SESSION has made a name for itself with artists and agents all over the world. The biggest names in the business: Elton John, Eric Clapton, Tom Jones or Grace Jones all love coming to Basel.

The list of performing artists who have taken the BAS stage is the best recommendation a music festival could get.

Even the most successful musicians know they are in good company at the BALOISE SESSION. Some artists are sceptical when they see the club-like seating at the BALOISE SESSION, but after the concert they rave about the magical atmosphere in the hall and the intimate contact with the audience, also to the audience members who often jump out of their seats and start dancing right in front of the stage. The stars' feedback is unanimously positive. Mark Knopfler, for example, «loved the whole vibe» and P!nk «had the closest contact to the audience of the whole tour».

International media broadcasts

Thanks to the major interest of the media, the BALOISE SESSION has been able to reach an international audience. The concerts are all recorded and are broadcasted on five continents in over 140 countries. This means that the festival can be seen even in countries such as Japan, Argentina and China. Special programme highlights are even broadcasted live by EUROVISION and further live broadcasts are planned for the future. C Major Entertainment is responsible for the television marketing. Many of the concerts can also be heard on Swiss Radio SRF: Four legendary performances, namely the concert featuring Solomon Burke (2003), Katie Melua (2007), Jethro Tull (2008) and Paul Anka (2011), were released in America and all over Europe on DVD. Additional DVDs are planned.

Small but select – the secret to the BALOISE SESSIONS's success

Ever since the BALOISE SESSION was founded in 1986, it has stayed true to its initial concept refusing to increase capacity at the expense of its special club-like atmosphere. The intimate setting with only 1'500 people per evening combined with the seating at round club tables, creates an intimacy and proximity to the stars that no other festival can offer. It's no wonder that the BALOISE SESSION reaches 97-100% capacity each year and has won numerous prizes.

The BALOISE SESSION owes much of its success to its experienced team. For 30 years Matthias Müller was President of the music festival founded by himself and two friends, and through his devoted efforts and enthusiasm established the event as an international music happening. Following his death in July 2016, his long-time business partner and CEO Beatrice Stirnimann, the Members of the Board and the entire BALOISE SESSION-Team will honour his memory by continuing to organise the festival in line with its time-honoured 30-year tradition. A team of 12 people work all year long to provide the festival guests with unforgettable concert evenings. During the festival, the crew grows to include 250 people. Many of them have been with the festival for a number of years and their motivation and experience helps them as they devote themselves to satisfying the needs of the festival guests.

Friends, patrons and sponsors are the other important members of the festival family. Without them, the success of the Basel music festival would be unthinkable. A group of music enthusiasts from the Basel region make a substantial investment in the programme highlights. Thanks to their generous financial contribution and the excellent cooperation with our long-time sponsors the BALOISE SESSION will continue to make magical music moments possible in the future.