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FONDATION
DOMINIQUE RENAUD

Thursday, 3 September 2026

3:00 — 5:00 p.m.

Main Pavilion, Geneva Watch Days

INVITATION TO THE SYMPOSIUM

Amplitude Op.II

“The Time of the Universe,
the Time We Imagine”

*“We create time.
It does not exist without us.
Perhaps time does not
exist at all...”*

Astrophysicist Janna Levin asks this question—but
is it not a question that lies within each of us?

On Thursday, 3 September, in Geneva, four leading
physicists, including a Nobel laureate, will attempt
to answer it—without necessarily reaching agree-
ment. This document introduces the Foundation
bringing them together, the symposium at which
they will meet, and the speakers taking part.

Reserve your
place now.

(Event held in English)

REGISTER NOW

Presented by the Dominique Renaud Foundation,
this symposium lies at the very heart of its mission.

Dominique Renaud Foundation

*A place where time is
viewed in a new way.*

A place where time is viewed in a new way. The Dominique Renaud Foundation (FDR) is an independent intellectual institution rooted in the canton of Neuchâtel. It explores new and future representations of time—not as something to be taken for granted, but as a territory that remains largely uncharted. “What time does not know about itself”: this is the question that has guided all the Foundation’s work since its inception.

Three initiatives embody this ambition. Transdisciplinary symposia, of which Amplitude is now the flagship, invite audiences to move beyond conventional representations of time. An open-science platform, currently in development, aims to bring independent watchmakers and engineers together around a form of collective intelligence unprecedented in their field. An academy, also in development, will train tomorrow’s watchmaking entrepreneurs to approach their discipline in a new way—as a field of exploration to be reinvented.

The FDR aspires to become a place where time is viewed from a new perspective, at the intersection of science, art and industry. Its work is not intended for watchmakers alone: it is for anyone who has ever stopped taking time for granted.

Following the success of its inaugural event in 2025,
the symposium returns for a second edition.

Amplitude Op. II

Following the success of last year’s Amplitude Op.I symposium, the Dominique Renaud Foundation is delighted to announce the second edition. In September 2025, during Geneva Watch Days, a capacity audience gathered to hear writers Sylvain Tesson, Noëlle Revaz and François-Henri Désérable discuss “time as lived” and “time as written”. The quality of their conversation confirmed the intuition on which the symposium was founded: the question of time resonates far beyond the world of watchmaking.

Amplitude Op.II enters a new field: cosmology. Entitled “The Time of the Universe, the Time We Imagine”, the symposium will take place on Thursday, 3 September 2026, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., at the Geneva Watch Days Pavilion in Geneva. The event will be held in English. It begins with a question a child might ask while looking at an alarm clock: is time a property of the universe, or a property of the observer?

Four leading voices will form the panel: Thomas Hertog, Janna Levin, Katie Mack and Didier Queloz, winner of the 2019 Nobel Prize in Physics. Their respective work—on the origins of the universe, black holes, scenarios for the end of the cosmos and the discovery of worlds beyond our solar system—offers an initial cosmography of tomorrow’s representations of time. Louise Ekland will moderate the discussion.

As with its first edition, Amplitude Op.II does not seek to reach a definitive conclusion. The four speakers may not agree with one another—and that disagreement is precisely what the Foundation hopes to encourage: not a final answer, but a better-framed question. Once again conceived by Pierre-Henri Verlhac, this second edition continues the ambition of the first: to make time a living question, reconsidered from a different perspective at every gathering.

*Is time a property of the
universe, or a property
of the observer?*



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The Speakers

*Four original voices brought
together around one question
—with no need for consensus.*



Thomas Hertog

A cosmologist, professor of theoretical physics at KU Leuven and former collaborator of Stephen Hawking, Thomas Hertog studies the origins of the universe and the nature of cosmological time, at the intersection of general relativity and quantum mechanics. His latest book, *On the Origin of Time*, presents the final theory he developed with Hawking.



Janna Levin

A professor at Barnard College, Columbia University, and Director of Sciences at Pioneer Works in Brooklyn, Janna Levin studies black holes, the topology of the universe and gravitational waves. In *Black Hole Blues* (2016), she chronicled the story behind the first detection of gravitational waves. Pioneer Works recently completed the restoration of an 1895 telescope equipped with a mechanical clock drive for tracking celestial objects—a project that reflects Levin's fascination with instruments designed to measure the universe using the technologies of their time.



Katie Mack

A theoretical cosmologist, Katie Mack holds the Hawking Chair in Cosmology and Science Communication at the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics. Her research explores scenarios for the end of the cosmos, from heat death to vacuum decay: approaching time from its ultimate endpoint in order to reveal what it becomes when nothing remains to measure it. Her first book, *The End of Everything*, was named a New York Times Notable Book. Her second, *How to Build a Universe*, is due to be published in March 2027.



Didier Queloz

A Swiss astronomer born in Geneva, Didier Queloz discovered 51 Pegasi b in 1995 with his doctoral supervisor, Michel Mayor. It was the first exoplanet discovered orbiting a Sun-like star. Twenty-four years later, this discovery earned them the 2019 Nobel Prize in Physics. Today, he is the Jacksonian Professor of Natural Philosophy at the University of Cambridge and Professor of Physics at ETH Zurich. Few voices are better placed to address, at a symposium held in Geneva, the question of time on the scale at which it becomes most profound: the birth of worlds.



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OPENING

Jean-Frédéric Jauslin

Jean-Frédéric Jauslin, President of the Dominique Renaud Foundation, will open the event. A native of Neuchâtel with a background in mathematics and computer science, he directed the Swiss National Library for fifteen years before becoming Director of the Federal Office of Culture. He later represented Switzerland as Ambassador to UNESCO and the International Organisation of La Francophonie. He will introduce the symposium's central question without proposing an answer, leaving that task to the speakers and the audience.

MODERATOR

Louise Ekland

Franco-British journalist and television presenter Louise Ekland has built a career spanning more than twenty years in the French media, including France Télévisions, BFM TV, M6, Europe 1 and RTL, before founding her own production company. An established moderator of institutional and corporate events, she also led the first edition of Amplitude. Bilingual in French and English, she will guide the Amplitude Op.II discussion with a world-class panel, preserving both its intellectual rigour and its pace.

CLOSING

Dominique Renaud

Dominique Renaud will close the symposium by bringing the discussion back to the practical act of measurement: what does it mean to measure something whose true nature ultimately remains unknown? The question will remain open. That is precisely where the Dominique Renaud Foundation intends to leave it.

PRESS CONTACT

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PRACTICAL INFORMATION

DATE	Thursday, 3 September 2026
TIME	3:00 — 5:00 p.m.
VENUE	Main Pavilion, Geneva Watch Days
LANGUAGE	English

