



B E E T H O V E N F E S T B O N N

Zubin Mehta receives the 2011 Wilhelm Furtwängler Prize

Sir Peter Jonas gives the eulogy at the Beethovenfest Bonn 2011

Zubin Mehta will receive the 2011 **Wilhelm Furtwängler Prize** at the Beethovenfest Bonn. The conductor celebrated his 75th birthday on 29 April. In addition he can this year look back on a 50-year partnership with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, which in turn is also celebrating 75 years of existence this year. In addition the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra can celebrate a Bonn anniversary in 2011: the orchestra first performed in Germany in 1971; at the instigation of Johannes Wasmuth, the guiding light of the Bahnhof Rolandseck, this special concert was held in Bonn.

The eulogy in honour of Zubin Mehta will be given by **Sir Peter Jonas**. He has been particularly close to Zubin Mehta since their time together at the Bayerische Staatsoper from 1998 to 2006, when Sir Peter Jonas was Staatsintendant (artistic director; since 1993) and Zubin Mehta the Generalmusikdirektor (general music director). Both of them always worked for musical performances at the highest artistic level and were ambassadors for contemporary composers. They established 'Oper für alle' ('opera for all'), during which an important performance of the Munich Opera Festival is transmitted live to a large screen in the city centre. Since their joint farewell from Munich in 2006, they have both been honorary members of the Bayerische Staatsoper.

Following their guest performance at the Beethovenfest Bonn 2007, **Mehta and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra** will return to the Beethovenfest Bonn **on 11 September 2011** with a programme featuring Beethoven, Liszt and Tchaikovsky. Mehta will conduct Beethoven's overture "Leonore no. 3" from the opera Fidelio op. 72, Franz Liszt's symphonic poem "Les Préludes" S 97 and Tchaikovsky's Symphony no. 4 in F minor op. 36. The fanfares at the start of the first main theme from "Les Préludes", which Liszt composed between 1848 and 1854, could be heard during the Second World War as the theme tune of the weekly cinema newsreel (an instrument of Nazi propaganda). With this programme the Beethovenfest is defending its policy of not banning abused music from the festival, and instead deliberately making it a theme, as was done during the Beethovenfest Bonn 2008 under the motto "Macht.Musik" ("Power Music" or alternatively: "Make Music").

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“The concert with Zubin Mehta and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra will definitely be a very impressive one that will continue to have an impact for a long time. I am convinced that Mehta and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra are the perfect symbiosis for performing this special programme here with us. We will award Zubin Mehta the Wilhelm Furtwängler Prize during the concert to honour his musical and social commitment,” said **Ilona Schmiel**, the Intendant of the Beethovenfest Bonn, explaining why Zubin Mehta was chosen for the Wilhelm Furtwängler Prize in 2011.

The Wilhelm Furtwängler Prize has been awarded as part of the Beethovenfest Bonn since 2008. In 2008 it went to Kurt Masur for his life’s work, in 2010 the conductor Kent Nagano was honoured.

Once again **Prince Alexander and Princess Gabriela zu Sayn-Wittgenstein-Sayn** have agreed to be the **patrons** of the Wilhelm Furtwängler Prize. There is no monetary award associated with the prize, but the recipient is given a bronze bust of Wilhelm Furtwängler.

The conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler is considered to be one of the most significant Beethoven interpreters of the 20th century. The prize which bears the great conductor’s name was initiated by his widow Elisabeth Furtwängler and Ermano Sens-Grosholz in his memory. The prize honours outstanding soloists, orchestras, conductors and ensembles for excellence in the field of classical music. The first recipient of the Wilhelm Furtwängler Prize was Placido Domingo in 1990. In subsequent years prizewinners have included Agnes Baltsa, José Carreras, the Vienna Philharmonic, James Levine, Lorin Maazel, Daniel Barenboim and the Staatskapelle Berlin.