



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

Orchestra Campus organized by Deutsche Welle and Beethovenfest Bonn, this year with Iraqi Youth Orchestra

**The National Youth Orchestra of Iraq performing abroad for the first time,
supported by its German counterpart, the Bundesjugendorchester**

In this, the eleventh year of the “Orchestra Campus” organized by Deutsche Welle and the Beethovenfest Bonn, our guests are the members of the National Youth Orchestra of Iraq. The **patron** of the Orchestra Campus is the president of Germany, **Christian Wulff**. When musicians are chosen for the orchestra, neither ethnic origin nor religion play any role. The orchestra will be playing abroad for the first time. The 45 musicians of the National Youth Orchestra of Iraq (NYOI) are aged between 18 and 28. The orchestra is composed of Arabs and Kurds. The original **idea to form a national youth orchestra in Iraq** came in 2008 from the **pianist Zuhal Sultan**, who was only 19 at the time. Since 1959, there has been an Iraq National Symphony Orchestra, in which Shiites, Sunnis, Christians, Arabs, Kurds and Turkmen play together.

Zuhal Sultan herself took piano lessons in Baghdad at an early age, and gave her first concert at the age of 13 at a children’s festival in Turkey. In 2006 she joined a master course in Jordan. These appearances by Zuhal Sultan already took place under the most difficult of circumstances. Her parents had died as the result of war and disease, and since 2003 she had no longer had any lessons. In 2007 the American Voices Organization and the US Department of State made possible the holding of a summer course in Erbil in the north of Iraq, which was attended by Zuhal Sultan and 300 other young people from all parts of the country. To mark the end of the summer academy, an orchestral concert was given by 130 musicians, consisting of course participants, members of the INSO, and the **Iraqi Unity Youth Orchestra**, which had been set up there. Sultan played as solo pianist, and a short while later was invited by UNESCO to appear at the Iraq Culture Week in Paris. She was one of the first to have the opportunity of taking lessons as part of the Musicians for Harmony mentor programme, which allows selected young musicians to take lessons from well-known American music teachers by webcam, via Skype for example; sheet music and recordings are provided by the programme. Zuhal Sultan used her increasing popularity to develop further the idea of the national youth orchestra. Its members are largely self-taught. Sultan used the press to search for teachers who would, on

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the model of the Musicians for Harmony, commit themselves on a voluntary unpaid basis to the musical education of the young Iraqis, and give them lessons over the internet. She also found a **conductor** as a result of the press reaction to this unusual initiative: Scotsman **Paul MacAlindin** conducted a first phase of rehearsals in 2009 during a summer academy in Suleymaniyah. In the summer of 2010 this was followed by a second phase in the northern Iraqi city of Erbil.

Because of the difficult rehearsal conditions in Iraq, the orchestra will be the first campus orchestra to spend two weeks in Bonn, directly following on from a two-week rehearsal phase in Erbil at the beginning of September. **On 1 October**, to round off their stay in Bonn, the NYOI, along with members of the German Bundesjugendorchester, will be giving a **concert in the Beethovenhalle**. In this way the Bundesjugendorchester is supporting the work of its counterpart in Iraq, while continuing its long tradition of intercultural projects. For example the ensemble, which is financed by the Deutscher Musikrat, has already collaborated with the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra Ensemble in Venezuela, with the MIAGI Youth Orchestra in South Africa, and at home in Germany with musicians from the Beijing Central Conservatoire.

The programme will include, as always at the Orchestra Campus, a work by Beethoven and a composition from the orchestra's home country. In order to show the artistic and cultural potential of the contemporary Iraqi music scene, **Deutsche Welle has for the first time commissioned two works, „Desert Camel“ from an Arab composer, Mohammed Amin Ezzat, and „Invocation“ from a Kurd, Ali Authman**. Both premieres will be conducted by Paul MacAlindin at the Beethovenfest Bonn, the soloist in Beethoven's Violin Concerto is **Arabella Steinbacher**. In addition, the orchestra will play Joseph Haydn's Symphony no. 104.

In Bonn the young Iraqis will, for the first time at an Orchestra Campus, receive instruction from **tutors**, who have been part of the experienced teaching team of the Bundesjugendorchester for many years. In addition, the members of the National Youth Orchestra of Iraq will have the opportunity to attend numerous concerts at the festival. Also planned are **educational projects** with students from Bonn school. In addition, Deutsche Welle is organizing a **concert in Berlin**.

The Campus Concert is taking place on a politically significant weekend for Bonn: the **North Rhine Westphalia Day** (in fact, two days) on 1 and 2 October will be followed by the official federal government ceremony in the former capital to mark the **Day of German Unity** on 3 October. On 2 October an ensemble made up of musicians from the NYOI and the BJO will play at the family festival being staged by the German President Christian Wulff in the grounds of Villa Hammerschmidt.

The Orchestra Campus first took place at the Beethovenfest Bonn 2001 on the initiative of, and in co-operation with, Deutsche Welle. Following conservatoire orchestras from Kiev, Istanbul, Tblisi, Beijing, Krakow, Johannesburg, Cairo, St. Petersburg and Hanoi from 2001 to 2009, the guests in 2010 were the Sinfônica Heliópolis des Instituto Baccarelli from São Paulo, who began their European tour at the Beethovenfest. The musicians taking part in the Orchestra Campus live with **families in Bonn**. The particular hospitality shown by the city's residents in the last

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ten years has promoted cultural exchange on a very personal level, and often led to lasting contacts and subsequent meetings. The cultural exchange is being reinforced this year for the first time by the collaboration of two national youth orchestras. On the basis of joint music-making, and in spite of all language barriers, they will be working towards the common goal of the concert, and, incidentally, for openness, tolerance and co-operation.

The Orchestra Campus 2011 is supported by the German Foreign Ministry and the North Rhine Westphalia State Ministry for the Family, Young People, Culture and Sports. It is taking place in co-operation with the Deutscher Musikrat (German Music Council), the Bundesjugendorchester, the Förderverein Nationales Irakisches Jugendsinfonieorchester e.V. (German Friends of the NYOI) and Birkholz International. It has been made possible by the generous support of RWE.

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