



BEETHOVENFEST BONN

Bonn, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2006

## Beethovenfest Bonn 2006 scores with Russian Theme “Rossiya”

A triumphant performance by young conductor Anu Tali with the Deutsches Symphonieorchester Berlin and violinist Maxim Vengerov brought Bonn's Beethovenfest 2006 to a close before a packed Beethovenhalle last night.

The Beethovenfest Bonn 2006, which was held from 31st August to 1st October in Bonn and the surrounding region, took “Rossiya” as its theme, focussing on the Russian culture in connection with the works of Ludwig van Beethoven. The Russia theme ranged from inviting Russian artists and performing Russian works to showcasing compositions with special links with Russia, such as Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*, the first complete performance of which took place in St. Petersburg in 1824.

The Beethovenfest Bonn 2006 was characterised by innovation, and much has been added to the programme since 2005. There were world premieres and experimental performances, such as “*Percussive Planet – Long Night of Percussionists*” featuring percussionist Martin Grubinger, a seven-hour percussive voyage around the world. *Percussive Planet* also gave percussion fans their first opportunity to take part in a Beethovenfest Bonn concert: Martin Grubinger and his percussion ensemble held two afternoon workshops to create the Brazilian Street Samba with which the “Long Night of Percussionists” opened. *Percussive Planet* was also in keeping with the Beethovenfest Bonn's aim of promoting young talent and attracting new audiences.

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This trend towards the modern was also demonstrated by the number of world premieres which took place, most of which were performances of pieces commissioned by the Beethovenfest Bonn. In total, there were six world premieres of commissioned pieces, including the extremely successful multimedia opera *Beyond the Shade* by Vladimir Tarnopolski, which was performed on five evenings in co-production with the Theater Bonn as part of the *bonn chance!* series. Two compositions by Michael Gordon and Johannes Harneit dealt with Beethoven's works.

Rarer pieces, such as Anton Rubinstein's String Quartet op. 47/2, Dmitry Shostakovich's Octet op. 11, Nikolai Kapustin's Concert for 2 Pianos and Percussion and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's *Mozart i Salieri*, were performed, as were several new compositions.

During the four and a half weeks of the festival, 60 concert and operatic performances were held at 22 different locations, including new venues such as St. Evergislus in Brenig (Bornheim), the Hotel Königshof, the Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, the T-Mobile Forum and the KfW Bank building. 35 of the events were sold out, with 83% of seats being sold overall. The 75 readings, presentations, exhibitions, workshops and Post Tower Lounge concerts held as part of a comprehensive fringe programme added to the Russian theme, and these offerings were also very well received by the public. The Beethovenfest was also able to sign up new partners for this fringe programme, including the Pantheon, the Animax Multimediatheater and the Bonn-Aachen International Center for Information Technology.

Once again, Beethoven's city played host to both internationally-renowned interpreters (including Christoph Eschenbach with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Riccardo Chailly with the Gewandhaus Orchestra Leipzig, the Koninklijk Concertgebouworkest under Jukka-Pekka Saraste, the Munich Chamber Orchestra with Christoph Poppen, Jonathan Nott with the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, Enoch zu Guttenberg and the Orchestra of the KlangVerwaltung, Thomas Hengelbrock and the Balthasar Neumann Ensemble, Arcadi Volodos, Mikhail Pletnev, Elena Bashkirova, the Gewandhaus-Quartett, Heinrich Schiff and

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Gerhard Oppitz) and outstanding young performers like Lisa Batiashvili, Martin Grubinger, Eldar Nebolsin, Alina Pogotskina and Henri Sigfridsson.

The Orchestra Campus was held for the sixth time by the Beethovenfest Bonn and Deutsche Welle, with the African continent being represented at the Beethovenfest Bonn for the first time. The 80 young musicians (aged between 13 and 24) of the South African National Youth Orchestra (SANYO) played in the Beethovenhalle under Conrad van Alphen with soloist Abel Moeng, who provided a piece of South-African culture with the *Princess Magogo Songs*. Deutsche Welle commissioned a piece by the South African composer Hans Huysen, whose *Proteus Variations* were inspired by the South African national plant protea. In a workshop concert hosted by music scholar and conductor Peter Gülke, the young South African performers worked on Tchaikovsky's 5<sup>th</sup> Symphony and – together with the Bonn Youth Symphony Orchestra - *Wellington's Victory* by Ludwig van Beethoven.

In co-production with the Salzburg Festival and the Bremen Music Festival, the Beethovenfest Bonn showcased the early Mozart opera *Il rè pastore* featuring the outstanding singers Annette Dasch, Marlis Petersen and Arpiné Rahdjian and tenors Andreas Karasiak and Kresimir Spicer. Both performances with the Balthasar Neumann Ensemble under the direction of Thomas Hengelbrock, who was also responsible for the staging, were received with great acclaim by both press and public.

Once again, the Beethovenfest Bonn 2006 attracted considerable media interest. Over a third of the 60 concerts were recorded by Westdeutscher Rundfunk and Deutsche Welle as well as by DeutschlandRadio/Deutschlandfunk. Three of the concerts were broadcast live, including the Campus Concert featuring the SANYO (by Deutsche Welle live to South Africa) and (live to Russia in cooperation with Radio Petersburg) the final concert by the Deutsches Symphonieorchester Berlin directed by Anu Tali and featuring the soloist Maxim Vengerov. DeutschlandRadio/Deutschlandfunk also broadcast the final concert live, while Westdeutscher Rundfunk broadcast the concert by the Concertgebouworkest.

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Both concerts by the Russian National Orchestra under the direction of Christian Gansch and with soloist Mikhail Pletnev featuring all five of Beethoven's piano concertos were recorded live by Deutsche Grammophon at the Beethovenfest Bonn 2006; the CD will be released in the near future.

There has also been a considerable increase in the amount of international media interest the event has attracted, with journalists from Great Britain, France, Austria, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Luxemburg, Denmark, Norway, Canada, Latvia, Russia and South Africa travelling to Bonn to report on the Beethovenfest.

Next year's Beethovenfest Bonn will be held from 24th August to 23rd September 2007. The programme will be announced in March 2007.

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