



Second successful Beethovenfest for Director Ilona Schmiel

The Beethovenfest Bonn 2005 drew to a close yesterday evening with an acclaimed performance by Ingo Metzmacher and the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, plus soloist Hélène Grimaud in Brahms' 1st Piano Concerto.

The theme of the Beethovenfest Bonn 2005 was "Liberté" and this year's festival started with an open air concert in the Museumsplatz in Bonn. The echoes of French culture were many and varied, ranging from actor Dominique Horwitz' interpretation of chansons by Jacques Brel, to the performance of the requiem by the composer Francois-Joseph Gossec, one of Ludwig van Beethoven's contemporaries, who has in the meantime been virtually forgotten.

In the course of nearly four weeks 63 concerts were held at 25 locations, including new venues such as the Museumsplatz, the rooms of the Kunstmuseum Bonn, the Palais Schaumburg and the Collegium Leoninum. Forty-two of the events were sold out, overall attendance figures reached 86 per cent of capacity. An extensive supporting programme of over 75 events, consisting of readings, lectures, exhibitions, workshops and concerts in the Post Tower lounge, elucidated and elaborated on the central French theme.

Both internationally renowned performers (Lorin Maazel with the New York Philharmonic, Kurt Masur with the Orchestre National de France, the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen with Paavo Järvi, the Symphonieorchester des

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Bayerischen Rundfunks under Ingo Metzmacher, Alfred Brendel, Hélène Grimaud, Beaux Arts Trio) and also promising young artists were welcomed as guests, performing works by Beethoven and other well-known musical works (Brahms, Schubert, Debussy, Saint-Saens), but also playing unfamiliar, new works: there were six premiere performances, of which five were string quartets played simultaneously and three times in succession during a Long Night of String Quartets in the Kunstmuseum Bonn and all of these works were commissioned from young French composers by the Beethovenfest Bonn. Rarely-heard works were rediscovered – for example, Méhul’s “Opéra Comique” and Gossec’s “Grande Messe des Morts”, which became famous in 1789 when it was played for those who fell during the storming of the Bastille.

Particularly inspiring was the performance that brought together 220 young musicians from Venezuela, 80% of whom come from the poor districts of that country, and who have become incorporated in a social network through a musical education in a unique education system. Conducted by Gustavo Dudamel, who is already known and loved in Bonn from last year, they played Beethoven’s 7th symphony, Saint-Saens’ Organ Symphony and works by Latin American composers and received wild acclaim for their concert. The meeting of the Venezuelans with Bonn students of the same age in four Bonn schools also left lasting impressions.

The Orchestra Campus hosted by the Beethovenfest Bonn and Deutsche Welle was held for the fifth time. This year is German-Polish year and the Orchestra of the Krakow Music Academy conducted by Wojciech Czepiel gave a performance in the Beethovenhalle with pianist Ewa Kupiec. There was a successful premiere performance of the “2nd Symphony for 77 Musicians”, a work by the young Polish composer Agata Zobel commissioned by Deutsche Welle. In a workshop concert with the musicologist and conductor Peter Gülke, the young Polish musicians played works by Cherubini, Chopin and Lutoslawski.

The Beethovenfest Bonn and Theater Bonn presented a co-production of Beethoven’s “Fidelio” directed by Günter Krämer, as well the very promising

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premiere of Jan Müller-Wieland's experimental music theatre "The Madwoman or Nocturnal Angling".

The Beethovenfest Bonn 2005 aroused great interest from the media. Twenty-two of the 63 concerts were recorded by Westdeutscher Rundfunk, Deutsche Welle and DeutschlandRadio/Deutschlandfunk. There was also increased interest from the foreign press: journalists from Europe, Canada and Russia travelled to Bonn to report on the Beethovenfest.

Next year the Beethovenfest Bonn will be held from 31 August to 1 October 2006. Details of the programme will be published in March 2006. At 8 pm on 14 March 2006 a special Beethovenfest Bonn concert will be held featuring the pianist Grigory Sokolov; details of the programme will be published at a later date. On 8 April Ute Lemper will perform songs and chansons in the T-Mobile Forum: this is the replacement concert for the one originally scheduled to take place on 26 September 2005, which the artist had to cancel because she was pregnant. Advance booking has already started for both concerts.

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