



BEETHOVENFEST BONN

Bonn, 28. September 2008

Beethovenfest Bonn 2008 a success with “Macht. Musik.”

Beethovenfest Bonn 2008 under the motto “Macht. Musik.”:

92% of seats sold, 45 concerts sold out

The Bamberger Symphoniker conducted by Jonathan Nott ended this year’s Beethovenfest Bonn 2008 on Sunday evening with a magnificent concert featuring the whole of Beethoven’s “The Creatures of Prometheus” and the first performance of Wolfgang Rihm’s “Verwandlung 4”. The Beethovenfest Bonn 2008, which ran from 29 August to 28 September under the motto “Macht. Musik.” (“Power. Music.”), was extraordinarily successful: intendant Ilona Schmiel can look back with pleasure on 92% of seats sold, and no less than 45 concerts, out of a total of 60 events in the main programme, sold out completely. “I am particularly pleased that the audiences and sponsors have placed so much confidence in us, and that we managed to arouse their curiosity and interest in unfamiliar and totally new works,” she said.

In collaboration with the performing artists themselves, the intendant compiled the programmes for two-thirds of the concerts specially for the Beethovenfest Bonn 2008. “We viewed the motto “Macht. Musik.” from a whole variety of angles; particularly moving was, without a doubt, Daniel Hope’s confrontation with the Therezín composers in the Altes Wasserwerk.” The theme of the misappropriation and marginalization of composers and their works formed the central aspect of the Beethovenfest Bonn 2008. “Macht. Musik.” was concerned with the instrumentalization of music by those in power, on the one hand, and on the other with the power that music can unfold even in the most difficult political conditions. And because the German motto is a pun on the word “Macht”, it can also be read as “Make music!” – yet a third aspect of the Beethovenfest Bonn 2008.

Internationale Beethovenfeste Bonn gGmbH | Pressebüro Silke Neubarth
Telefon +49-228-20 10 340 | Fax +49-228-20 10 344 | presse@beethovenfest.de

The Beethovenfest Bonn 2008 was ushered in by Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, which was heard at the inaugural concert on 29 August 2008 in a highly transparent interpretation by the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen conducted by Paavo Järvi. But the second performance of this symphony at the Beethovenfest Bonn 2008 attracted no less applause. 2,000 fans in the Beethovenhalle and more than 3,000 others at the open-air "public viewing" on the nearby Marktplatz gave a standing ovation to Kurt Masur and the Orchestre National de France on 10 September. For Kurt Masur this was a very special evening: he was not only concluding the Beethoven symphony cycle (which was spread over four concerts), but also celebrating the 60th anniversary of his first public appearance, and, what's more, was awarded the Wilhelm Furtwängler Prize for outstanding services to classical music. In his address, Hans-Dietrich Genscher laid stress not only on the conductor's musical achievements, but also honoured Masur as a political personality who had helped usher in Germany's peaceful revolution in 1989. "Macht. Musik.", he said, was embodied by Kurt Masur in a very special way as a result.

Hanns Eisler's music was heard at the Beethovenfest in various interpretations in the context of the political motto. The Beethoven Orchester Bonn conducted by HK Gruber played his "Deutsche Sinfonie" or "German Symphony", which is also seen as an anti-Nazi symphony. The sopranos Claudia Barainsky and Annette Dasch gave intimate and moving recitals of Eisler's lieder repertoire. Further compositions with a political message were heard, such as George Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess" as well as music which was exploited by those in power, such as Anton Bruckner's Symphony No. 8. This latter was conducted by Lorin Maazel on his farewell European tour with the New York Philharmonic: the concert on 12 September, which at Maazel's express request was the last of the tour, was one of the high points of this year's Beethovenfest Bonn.

The Beethovenfest Bonn 2008 played host to further outstanding orchestras and soloists: audiences enthused no less over Daniel Harding and the London Symphony Orchestra with the pianist Hélène Grimaud than over the Gewandhausorchester conducted by Riccardo Chailly, András Schiff and his ensemble Cappella Andrea Barca, the soloists Sol Gabetta, Renaud Capuçon, Martin Grubinger, Max Raabe and the debut of 17-year-old Serge Zimmermann. At the "Orchestra Campus" organized jointly by Deutsche Welle and the Beethovenfest Bonn the Anton Rubinstein Orchestra of the St Petersburg Conservatoire spent a week as guests in Bonn. While

the orchestra is old, its 76 members are young, aged between 18 and 26: they gave two impressive concerts in the Beethovenhalle and, with their fascinating soloist Nikita Borisoglebsky, gave a first performance of “Caprice for Violin and Orchestra” by their 28-year-old compatriot Kuzma Bodrov. A further three premieres were staged by the Neue Vocalsolisten Stuttgart, whose programme included the first performance of a work commissioned by the Beethovenfest Bonn and Musik der Jahrhunderte Stuttgart from Manuel Hildalgo: an arrangement for six voices a cappella of the scherzo from Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony.

Die Prinzen also confronted the œuvre of Beethoven: together with a 12-woman chamber orchestra, they enthused the audience in the T-Mobile Forum with their greatest hits, new songs from their latest CD, due out on 5 October, and allusions to Beethoven. Jocelyn B. Smith, Hans Liberg and the cabaret duo Igudesman & Joo also made reference to Beethoven and his influence.

The extensive accompanying programme of the Beethovenfest Bonn 2008, consisting of exhibitions, concerts, readings, workshops, a symposium and films was equally successful. The Beethovenfest Bonn compiled the 74 events in co-operation with partners and institutions in the city and with international partners worldwide. New partners from Bonn itself included the Haus der Geschichte (the museum of post-war German history), with whom the Beethovenfest Bonn developed a film series on the motto “Macht. Musik.”, which included Salfati’s film “Beethovens Neunte” and Sánchez-Lansch’s documentary “Das Reichsorchester”. The very well attended symposium, with its distinguished panel, on the motto “Macht. Musik.” titled “Music is no longer a matter for the few – music and power in Germany in the 20th century” was staged by the Beethovenfest together with the Haus der Geschichte and the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (Federal Centre for Political Education).

Beethoven was a visionary and although he didn’t travel much, maintained an extensive network of relationships with composers, musicians and patrons throughout Europe. The Beethovenfest in the city of his birth has an obligation to his heritage and continues his tradition. That is why we take it as self-evident that his œuvre should be nurtured worldwide, for example by organizing competitions and master-classes, and simulating the establishment of offshoots of the Beethovenfest in other countries and on other continents. This international activity includes the involvement of the Beethovenfest in the piano competition in Henan in China, in the

First Thailand International Piano Competition in Bangkok and participation in the Azerbaijan Year in Germany in 2008.

Ilona Schmiel has been involved for years with the Beethoven festival in Caracas. The close links with the stars that emerged from this festival, the Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela and their conductor Gustavo Dudamel, has been reflected in regular guest appearances of the Venezuelans at the Beethovenfest since 2004. The concert given by the Venezuelan youth orchestra at the Beethovenfest Bonn 2007, together with their preparations in Caracas, were captured on film by Enrique Sánchez-Lansch. The resulting documentary, "The Promise of Music", received its European premiere on the 22 September at the Beethovenfest Bonn 2008.

A few days earlier, it had been chosen as the best documentary film at the Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival. The film was made in co-operation with Deutsche Welle TV, ZDF/3sat and Unitel classica.

Deutsche Welle is, alongside Deutsche Post WorldNet and the Sparkasse KölnBonn, one of the chief sponsors of the Beethovenfest Bonn. The podcasts of live concert recordings of the Beethovenfest were downloaded on a large scale. International Deutsche Welle trainees accompanied the "Orchestra Campus" for a week with a variety of media and recorded their experiences in a blog. All in all, more than half the 60 concerts of the Beethovenfest Bonn were either recorded or broadcast live by Deutsche Welle, Deutschlandfunk/DeutschlandradioKultur or Westdeutscher Rundfunk. The festival was well reported by the media: more than 50 journalists gave their accounts regionally, nationally and internationally in print, on the radio, on TV and online. Arts journalists travelled in to cover the event from Britain, the USA, Finland, Spain, Russia, Japan, Thailand and Israel.

Next year's Beethovenfest Bonn will take place from 4 September to 4 October 2009. The programme will be issued in March 2009.

Internationale Beethovenfeste Bonn gGmbH | Pressebüro Silke Neubarth
 Telefon +49-228-20 10 340 | Fax +49-228-20 10 344 | presse@beethovenfest.de