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Press office of the city of Bonn

Beethovenfest 2011 honours Liszt

The virtuoso, composer, visionary and patron Franz Liszt “reminds” us to have a concert house that does justice to the high demands of the Beethovenfest Bonn in time for the 250th anniversary of Beethoven’s birth in 2020.

2011 is the bicentenary of Franz Liszt’s birth. He was a great admirer of Beethoven’s music and in 1845, when the Beethoven monument he donated was inaugurated on Münsterplatz, he organized a three-day music festival, which was to be the first Beethovenfest ever. This year’s Beethovenfest will be held in Bonn from 9 September to 9 October under the motto “Music of the Future. Beethoven, Liszt and Innovation in Music” and will honour this artist who has such a special connexion with Beethoven.

It was to Liszt’s insistence on a worthy venue that Bonn owed its first Beethovenhalle, a timber structure for 2,500 visitors, which was praised for its acoustics. The second Beethovenhalle, along with the third and current one, were also built to mark Beethoven anniversaries, by private initiative and also with financial support from the public. And thus Liszt “reminds” us to ensure that there will be a concert hall worthy of the occasion and meeting modern requirements in time for the 250th anniversary of Beethoven’s birth. “And since this cannot be achieved within eleven days, as was the case in 1845, the city will make sure that the decision about a concert hall in Bonn can be made in the near future,” said the city’s mayor Jürgen Nimptsch at the opening press conference for the Beethovenfest 2011.

Liszt, who, starting with Beethoven’s music, developed his own “music of the future”, also stands for what is new in music (“innovation in music”), which, according to Martin Schumacher, the city’s head of culture, is often neglected. “In my opinion, part of what is new in music is the current performance practice and interpretation, of which the Beethovenfest and the performing artists and ensembles give a wonderful overview.”

The city of Bonn will present very special concert experiences for the Deutschlandfest, in co-operation with the Beethovenfest. On 1 October, at 8pm, the National Youth Orchestra of Iraq, under its conductor Paul MacAlindin, will perform for the first time outside of Iraq: in the Beethovenhalle. The patronage of this year’s Orchestra Campus in close collaboration with the Deutsche Welle has been accepted by President Christian Wulff.

In order to honour Liszt this year, the Beethoven-Orchester Bonn will perform works by Liszt and Wagner conducted by musical director Stefan Blunier on 2 October 2011 at 6pm.

On 3 October, the Day of German Unity, there will be two concert highlights. The Beethoven-Orchester Bonn will perform Carl Orff’s “Carmina Burana” and the choral finale “Ode to Joy” from Beethoven’s Ninth at the Festkonzert zum Tag der Deutschen Einheit at 6pm. In the Aula of the University of Bonn the orchestra from Bonn’s Hungarian twin town of Budafok will perform at the same time: the Dohnányi Orchestra Budafok conducted by Gábor Hollerung will play at 6pm.

As always, the city of Bonn will supplement the advertising for the Beethovenfest by booking info screens in the central station, which will show the message a hundred times a day, with banners on the B 9 road, alternating them with those for the Day of German Unity, and with around fifty flags all around the city.

“I will emphasize it once again this year: despite the difficult economic situation, the city stands by the increase in funding from 1.27 million euros to 1.6 million euros that it promised to provide in 2008,” explained mayor Jürgen Nimptsch. In addition he thanked the intendant of the Beethovenfest Ilona Schmiel and the main sponsors, Sparkasse KölnBonn, Deutsche Post AG and Deutsche Welle, the many event sponsors and private initiatives for their commitment: “Those who contribute to the Beethovenfest are following in a long-standing tradition of civic commitment. The people of Bonn have achieved a lot for Beethoven already.” This tradition must be maintained and developed still further with Beethoven anniversaries coming up in 2020 and 2025.

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