



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

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Beethovenfest Bonn 2013 announces record audiences

After ten years Ilona Schmiel hands over the artistic direction of a festival that has its finger on the pulse

The Beethovenfest Bonn 2013 festival finishes on 5 October after 67 concerts in the main programme and 95 events in the accompanying programme. This year the festival announces its largest audience figures since it was re-established in 1999. 75,000 visitors attended a total of 152 events in 2013 up from 70,000 in 2012 and only 40,000 in 2004.

The final concert with the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Daniel Harding and featuring soloist Christian Tetzlaff, also marks the end of Ilona Schmiel's period in office. The expansion of the festival is undoubtedly one of Ilona Schmiel's greatest achievements. Now 46, she became artistic director and general manager of the Beethovenfest Bonn in 2004, taking over from Franz Willnauer. Ilona Schmiel will assume the role of artistic director and general manager at the Zurich Tonhalle next year. Her successor in Bonn is Nike Wagner.

There were a total of 49,500 tickets on sale for 67 events in the main programme at 26 venues in Bonn and the surroundings. 24 of the concerts played to a full house, and overall, 82% of seats were sold. Most of the 95 events in the accompanying programme had excellent attendance figures: the Post Tower Lounge concerts all sold out and the workshops for children, young people and apprentices were all fully booked. The public screening of Beethoven's 'Fidelio' with Paavo Järvi and the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen attracted an audience of 3,000 in Bonn's Marktplatz.

The motto 'Metamorphoses' was reflected in forms of presentation and staging, in variations and adaptations of existing musical works and their visualisation, in the participation by regions in change, such as the Urals and Turkey, and in arrangements of Wagner's works in his bicentenary year.

In a series of 'residencies', orchestras including the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Manfred Honeck, the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen conducted by Kent Nagano and Paavo Järvi, the NDR Symphony Orchestra with Thomas Hengelbrock, the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra under Jonathan Nott, and the Academy of St Martin in the Fields with Julia Fischer and Sir Neville Marriner each presented programmes reflecting changing traditions.

The Beethovenfest Bonn 2013 also featured a strand with artists showcasing their traditional roots including Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Pekka Kuusisto, Ragnhild Hemsing and Caitríona O'Leary. The Moldovan violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja as 'Artist in Residence' represents a generation of young artists who reveal new sides to works that are so familiar, as she demonstrated impressively in her interpretation of Beethoven's *Violin Concerto*. András Schiff demonstrated the same thing in his Beethoven Sonata cycle, which he presented over two years at the Beethovenfest starting in 2012.

Following performances in Bonn and Bremen, the semi-staged production of *Fidelio* with Paavo Järvi and the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen and its stellar ensemble of singers comprising Burkhard Fritz (Florestan), Cecile Perrin (Leonore), Detlef Roth (Don Fernando), Evgenij Nikitin (Don Pizarro), Dmitri Ivashchenko (Rocco), Mojca Erdmann

(Marzelline) and Julian Prégardien (Jaquino), is going on tour and will be presented in Yokohama in November.

Ilona Schmiel summed up the festival as, 'Always having our fingers on the pulse. In the ten years I have been artistic director, we have often succeeded in being ahead of the times by presenting strong themes and artistic content. A good example is our collaboration with the Venezuelan 'El Sistema', which we presented in Bonn early in my tenure. Following my first visit to Caracas I became convinced by this form of musical education. For this reason I was confident that getting Gustavo Dudamel as the stand-in for the closing concert of my first festival in 2004 would not only work, but be a resounding success that would have echoes internationally. It was a similar story with Martin Grubinger: together we developed 'Percussive Planet' for the 2006 Beethovenfest; it lasted seven hours, but afterwards it was presented and fêted worldwide.'

Alongside artistic developments, the Beethovenfest, under the direction of Ilona Schmiel, has also heralded new social developments: in 2011 the National Youth Orchestra of Iraq appeared in Bonn, in 2010 the Sinfônica Heliópolis of Instituto Baccarelli in São Paulo, which found a model in the Venezuelan 'Sistema' and in 2007 the university orchestra from Cairo. These regions, like Turkey - which has been at the focus of the Orchestra Campus organized by Deutsche Welle and the Beethovenfest under the motto 'Beethoven le buluşma – Begegnung mit Beethoven' - are undergoing social and political upheavals which are also reflected in the musical landscape.

'I was always concerned with thematic relevance while maintaining the highest artistic standard,' says Ilona Schmiel. 'Because of continual changes to the framework conditions and social developments, we must remain in constant dialogue with the artists, the audiences, the sponsors and the politicians.'

Further facts and figures:

- More than 2,000 artists took part in the Beethovenfest Bonn 2013 in Beethoven's native city.
- 28 of the 66 concerts in the main programme were recorded or broadcast live by our media partners Westdeutscher Rundfunk, Deutschlandfunk / Deutschlandradio Kultur, and Deutsche Welle. Via Deutsche Welle, concerts can be heard worldwide on the radio or as podcasts.
- 3,700 children and young people were reached by the educational programmes offered by the 'Young Beethovenfest': 'Workshop with Igudesman & Joo', 'How does it work?', 'Question time', 'Backstage', 'Clear the stage for Beethoven', 'Young and curious – Beethoven for Trainees', 'Get-to-know-you party', 'Orchestra Campus Children's Concerts', 'Visits to Rehearsals', school student project with the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra; from February 'student managers' were busy organising the concert by Cameron Carpenter at the Telekom Forum on 14 September.
- The total budget of the Beethovenfest 2013 is €5.1 million euros.
34.8% of the budget comes from public grants:
 - The city of Bonn, the Rhein-Sieg district
 - Project support from the state of North-Rhine Westphalia
 - The Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The remaining funds are obtained by the company through:

- sponsorship
- foundations
- ticket sales
- media fees

Thanks to the main sponsors and other backers, the Beethovenfest is able to offer affordable admission prices varying from €9 to €120.

School and college students get a 50% discount for all concerts. At selected concerts there are a number of seats available for school and college students (below 30) for €8 on production of a valid student identity card.

The Beethovenfest Bonn 2014 will take place from 6 September to 3 October 2014; the programme will be announced in spring 2014.

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