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# FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY FOUNDATION

## INFORMATION

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FELIX-MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY-STIFTUNG  
PRÄSIDENT KURT MASUR

June 2010

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## Brilliant Mendelssohn Gala 2010

### *Award of this year's Leipzig International Mendelssohn Prize*

The famous Leipzig Gewandhaus was once more the generous host of the Mendelssohn Gala, when the Chairman of the Felix-Mendelssohn-Bartholdy-Foundation Burkhard Jung handed out this year's Leipzig International Mendelssohn Prize.

In the "Music" category the Chinese pianist Lang Lang was honoured, who has not only supported projects to advance music education of children and young people, but has also played the music of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy all over the world and brought it to a public of millions. Last year's Gewandhaus-Orchestra tour under Riccardo Chailly, with Lang Lang as soloist, had won especial notice and great enthusiasm, with interpretations from the pianist that were sensitive and original, and always true to the compositions. Despite his relative youth, he has shown an extraordinary musicality, that is particularly evident in his interpretations of European classical music.

His early shaping and continuous development has allowed him to grow into one of the most important ambassadors of Western music in his native China. With his understanding of the music and his ability to enthuse audiences, Lang Lang has made an important contribution to the dissemination of Mendelssohn's legacy.



The German actress Iris Berben was honoured for her especial "Social Engagement". Iris Berben has worked for those ideals which bring cultures and people openly together, not only as an actress but also through her great personal commitment. She has made a particular contribution to communication between Jewish and German cultures. She has worked decisively against political evils, racism, anti-Semitism and the extreme-right in the projects and contributions which she has initiated. The actress has already received many international awards for her services to understanding and reconciliation between Germany and Israel.

Iris Berben has demonstrated her open-minded approach not only politically, but also in humanitarian fields, for example on the Council of the German Aids Foundation, where she has worked with all her strength to help people. Through her example and attitude the German artist has become a model for all classes and age-groups in our society, always striving uncompromisingly to recognise and address their grievances. Thus the actress does justice in an extraordinary way to the ideals of the famous composer Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, who in his well-known works, brought religions together.

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continuation of the titel report:

The actress Veronika Ferres presided over the evening, aptly presenting to the public not only the concert programme and the role of the Foundation in preserving and disseminating Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy's legacy, but also the occasion of the Mendelssohn Gala and its objectives.

The best chef in Germany is currently Joachim Wissler, 3-star chef at the Grandhotel Schloss Bensberg. He and his team with the excellent Leipziger Fairgourmet conjured up a post-concert Gala Dinner, which was a treat for eyes and palates. Like the other artists of the evening, he received lively applause.

In a festive address to the Gala guests, Leipzig Lord Mayor Burkhard Jung, in his capacity as Chairman of the Foundation, spoke about the objectives of the evening. He again explained the benefit purpose – the financing of the collection of first editions which the Mendelssohn-Haus had acquired last year, and its digitalisation. In addition he very heartily thanked the prize-winners, as well as all the guests and artists, for their commitment to the music city of Leipzig and to the recognition of the composer Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy. He then welcomed the guest who had made the longest journey, Mrs Emiko Tsuji from Osaka (Japan), who at the age of 96 had travelled to Leipzig because she had felt closely linked to the Mendelssohn-Haus and its aims for many years.

The Lord Mayor Burkhard Jung was able to declare, with satisfaction and gratitude, that the evening had generated a splendid 70,000 euros in donations to the Felix-Mendelssohn-Bartholdy Foundation to support their work in 2010. And he could tell all the guests: The next Gala event will take place during the Mendelssohn festival in September 2011.



Veronika Ferres (left), the two prize-winners of 2010 Lang Lang and Iris Berben and Leipzig Lord Mayor Burkhard Jung, who as the Chairman of the Felix-Mendelssohn-Bartholdy-Foundation handed out this year's Leipzig International Mendelssohn Prize.



photo above: Gewandhaus Director Professor Andreas Schulz (left) and the Managing Director of the foundation Jürgen Ernst with the German actress Iris Berben before the ceremony in the concert hall of the Leipzig Gewandhaus

photos below: Leipzig Lord Mayor is handing out the Mendelssohn Prizes to Iris Berben and Lang Lang. Both thanked him and the Jury heartily for this great honour. Veronika Ferres who presided over the evening congratulated the prize-winners.



To close the Mendelssohn Year the Japan branch of the Felix-Mendelssohn-Bartholdy-Foundation under the leadership of Mrs Tomoko Masur organised a Mendelssohn Week in three Japanese cities, with a varied programme; exhibitions, concerts and scholarly symposia were presented to a large and interested public.

On 8 December the Goethe-Institute of Tokyo opened its doors for a travelling exhibition Felix, which also opened the Mendelssohn Week. Some 20 panels of texts and pictures informed the numerous visitors to the exhibition of the life and works of the composer Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy. Some episodes from the life of the artist were illustrated in more detail, supplemented by original material, such as the composer's notes, letters, pictures and pens from the archive of the Mendelssohn-Haus Leipzig. Importantly, the Goethe-Institute also displayed in its foyer an information desk with much material about the Mendelssohn-Haus.

As part of the Mendelssohn Week Maestro Kurt Masur gave several days of conducting master-classes in Tokyo – the excellent results of the class participants could be seen in a final concert at the Tokyo Senzoku Gakuen Concert Hall.

14 December also provided a special event in a sold-out Hall in Kanazawa; a brilliant chamber music, with the celebrated Gewandhaus-Quartet among others, and a scholarly symposium chaired by Professor Hiromi Hoshino. There were contributions from Professor Kurt Masur (Leipzig), Dr Peter Ward Jones (Oxford, ex-Bodleian Library), Dr Ralf Wehner (Leipzig, Mendelssohn Complete Edition and the Saxony Academy of Research, Professor Hiromi Hoshino (Tokyo, Rikkyo University), and the Music Director of the Kanazawa Ensemble Orchestra Michiyoshi Inoue. In the foyer of the Hall, the concert guests could enjoy

the Felix exhibition, which was again supplemented by exhibits from the Mendelssohn-Haus. After the event there was a further meeting of scholars and symposium members with students from Kanazawa University, and discussions with representatives of the Kanazawa Ensemble Orchestra.

The next day this orchestra played in the Great Hall of the Culture Centre under the direction of Maestri Masur and Inoue – naturally including works by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, whose music dominated all the concerts.

On 17 December there was also a concert in Breezé (Osaka); the guests enjoyed an evening introduced by Tomoko Masur with the Osaka Orchestra and once again the Gewandhaus-Quartet, who were in Japan not only for concerts but also gave quartet master-classes – and were very pleased with the results.

Back in Tokyo, the Mendelssohn specialists accompanying Tomoko and Kurt Masur took part in a podium discussion in the Tokyo Goethe-Institute on 18 December. Professor Hiromi Hoshino, Dr Peter Ward Jones and Dr Ralf Wehner gave short presentations about Mendelssohn's works and their reception, about the newly created Mendelssohn catalogue and about Mendelssohn source material in Japan; this led to a discussion, chaired by Dr Uwe Schmelter, Head of the Goethe-Institute, to which Professor Kurt Masur and Christiane Schmidt contributed.

On 19 December the arrival in Tokyo of Leipzig Lord Mayor and Felix-Mendelssohn-Bartholdy-Foundation Chairman Burkhard Jung, and the Felix-Mendelssohn-Bartholdy-Foundation Director Jürgen Ernst coincided with the final concert of the Mendelssohn Week in the New Nikkei Hall. Beforehand they both called on the German Embassy to brief HE Dr Stanzel on the successful conclusion

of the Mendelssohn Year 2009 in Leipzig and in Japan, and to discuss future cooperation. At the concert that evening the Gewandhaus-Quartet and the Okayama-Quartet joined forces for Felix Mendelssohn's Octet. After the concert Burkhard Jung, as Felix-Mendelssohn-Bartholdy-Foundation Chairman, invited the members of the Japanese Felix-Mendelssohn-Bartholdy-Foundation branch, members of the Embassy and the Goethe-Institute, to a Reception at which he presented the Leipzig Golden Needle of Honour to Dr Kazoi Watanabe and Mrs Emiko Tsuji for their many years of support for the Mendelssohn-Haus. The Chairman formally thanked the two Japanese colleagues for their commitment, loyalty and continuous support, even during the difficult years, which they had given to the Mendelssohn-Haus.

This official ceremony in Tokyo closed the Japanese Mendelssohn Week, which had inspired many positive comments and echoes, not only in Japan.

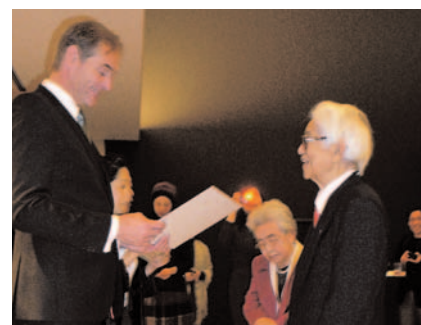


photo above: Lord Mayor Jung presents the Leipzig Golden Needle of Honour to Dr Kazoi Watanabe and Mrs Emiko Tsuji

photo below: Maestro Kurt Masur and Lord Mayor Jung tell the guests of the evening more about Mendelssohn and his last home in Leipzig





Illustrations; above left: Professor Masur with the class participants of his conducting master-classes in the final concert at the Tokyo Senzoku Gakuen Concert Hall.

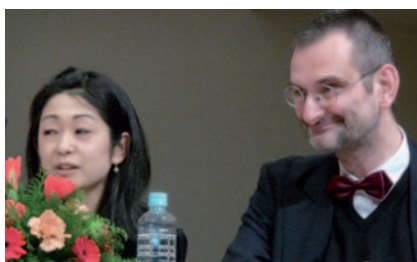
below: The Gewandhaus Quartet in Kanazawa, who were in Japan not only for concerts but also gave quartet master-classes in Kanazawa, Osaka and Tokyo.

above right and below: Concert guests are interested in the travelling exhibition Felix with 20 panels and original material from the Mendelssohn-Haus archive

adjoining: Professor Hiromi Hoshino, Mrs Tomoko Masur, Maestro Kurt Masur and the Music Director of the Kanazawa Ensemble Orchestra Mr Michiyoshi Inoue.

below, left: Dr Ralf Wehner, Saxony Academy of Research, Mendelssohn Complete Edition, who spoke about the newly created Mendelssohn catalogue, which he published in 2009

right: Dr Peter Ward Jones from Oxford, where he searched for many years with original Mendelssohn manuscripts in the Bodleian Library. In this library one can find one of the biggest Mendelssohn collections, not only the music but also letters, paintings, drawings and other material.







The 200th anniversary of Felix Mendelssohn's birthday provided many opportunities around the world to honour the great composer.

The Chinese musician Sheng-Chun Gao, well-known in his mother country under the artistic name Guitar Gao as a leading E-guitarist and rock musician, has moved onto classical paths; since 1996 he has been working on an arrangement of Mendelssohn's fabulous Violin Concerto in E minor, opus 64, BWV O 14. In the anniversary year 2009 he printed his arrangement for E-Guitar, band and orchestra onto an artistically created 16-metre-long gold-plated silk roll.

At a press conference on 31 March 2010, Gao presented this "golden roll" to the Felix-Mendelssohn-Bartholdy-Foundation in Leipzig. The Chinese artist expressed his admiration for the composer Mendelssohn through this gift, and stressed the interrelationships between the cultures – very much in the spirit of Mendelssohn. Leipzig Lord Mayor Burkhard Jung accepted this gift in the name of the Foundation, of which he is the Chairman.

In return for this valuable gift Burkhard Jung presented the Chinese guitarist with a formal certificate from the Felix-Mendelssohn-Bartholdy-Foundation in Leipzig.

The presentation of the golden roll had been announced at a press conference in Beijing in January 2010, at which the Foundation had been represented by its Director Jürgen Ernst. The announcement had generated significant media interest in China. The news of Gao's visit and presentation in Leipzig was also widely covered in the Chinese media.

The first performance of Gao's guitar work is planned for October 2010 in Beijing, when Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto and Gao's arrangement will be performed one after the other.



Illustrations; above left: Two guitarists – Guitar Gao and Leipzig Lord Mayor Jung speaking about Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto and the tricks how to play it  
above right: Guitar Gao playing the guitar in the New Town Hall in Leipzig, Jürgen Ernst is happy  
below: The "golden roll" and its admirers – Guitar Gao explaining his ideas to arrange the Violin Concerto for E-Guitar, band and orchestra adjoining: 16 metres of silk and gold leaf  
below: Burkhard Jung and Jürgen Ernst with Guitar Gao and his new formal certificate from the Felix-Mendelssohn-Bartholdy-Foundation



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*UK Friends with a new project*

The UK Friends of the Felix-Mendelssohn-Bartholdy-Foundation supported a "Foyle Future Firsts" concert in the Royal Festival Hall in London on 12 February 2010 with the theme "The Spirit of Mendelssohn". The concert was part of a programme initiated by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, which takes place each year. It is designed to facilitate the transition from conservatoire to the profession of young musicians. This year the musicians were Artem Kotov and Lisa Obert (violin), Jennifer Edwards (viola), Andrei Simion (cello), Laura Pou (flute), Joanna Stark (bassoon), Tiffany Stirling and Sam Jacobs (horn), Carl Woodcroft (tuba), Stefanie Beck (harp) and Michele Gamba (piano) – see photo. As the title suggests the concert consisted not only of Mendelssohn's own works, but those of his fore-runners, as well as by his contemporaries and successors, in order to demonstrate his influences as a composer. The excellent performances were warmly applauded by an enthusiastic audience, including the UK Friends with their Chairman Desmond Cecil, who look forward to hearing the progress of the young artists.

*Donors since December 2009*

In the first half of this year the Foundation again received many valuable contributions, as well as much valuable help; all supporters are most warmly thanked for their generous support of our work:

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titel: Iris Berben and Lang Lang are the happy prize-winners of this year's Mendelssohn Prize

*Imprint*

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