
FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY FOUNDATION

INFORMATION



FELIX-MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY-STIFTUNG
PRÄSIDENT KURT MASUR

June / July 2008

Leipzig Mendelssohn Prize 2008

This year's Mendelssohn Prize was presented on 6 March 2008. The violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter and the internationally-known philosopher Peter Sloterdijk were honoured at a special concert given by the Gewandhaus Orchestra conducted by Maestro Kurt Masur.

The Prize, which was first awarded in 2007, is named after Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, who represented the highest aesthetic values, both as a musician and composer and through his contributions to society. The Prize has three categories, which do not necessarily have to be recognised each year - contributions to music, society and the visual arts. This year the Prize was presented in the categories for music and society by the President of the Foundation, Maestro Kurt Masur and by the Chairman of the Board, Lord Mayor Burkhard Jung.

Anne-Sophie Mutter was honoured for her contribution to music. The Prize acknowledged her unique musicality and interpretive art. In addition the Mendelssohn Prize is of especial relevance in that she, like Felix Mendels-

sohn Bartholdy, is a committed advocate of both the classic and the contemporary repertoire. Her work with young artists, giving them support and guidance, was another reason for the award.

Peter Sloterdijk was honoured for his contribution to society.

Since the days of the composer's ancestor Moses Mendelssohn, philosophical social exchanges were very much a part of the Mendelssohn family life. Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy personal-

ly expanded his own interests through his studies with Friedrich Hegel.

This was certainly one of the reasons why, as the German philosopher and literary expert Hans Mayer in a Gewandhaus lecture said "Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, in a quite extraordinary way, embodied and brought together all the then known traditions of German music. Through his own creativity and perceptions he developed and passed on these traditions, in a way which was without parallel at the time." —>



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Peter Sloterdijk is an exemplary advocate of the integration of contemporary issues into a historical context. This allows him to address contemporary social questions in a new and multifaceted manner; thereby he is able to bring fresh light to previously unrecognised perspectives, and to draw new and unexpected conclusions.

The two Prize-winners expressed their thanks for the awards with enthusiasm and great pleasure. Anne-Sophie Mutter, who began the evening with a sparkling performance of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy's (Violin Concerto in E-minor) under Kurt Masur's intimate direction, was delighted to have had the honour of succeeding as Prize-winner Maestro Kurt Masur, who last year was the first to receive the award.

Peter Sloterdijk gallantly and philosophically acknowledged the resonances of the Violin Concerto, as he shared with the festive audience his thoughts about a poem by Rimbaud. He said that he now understood why a piece of wood must dream of one day becoming a violin; "I shall also try to achieve such a metamorphosis." With this homage Sloterdijk immediately won the hearts of the concert audience, who warmly applauded both Prize-winners.

After this concert, in which the Leipzig Mendelssohn Prize for 2008 was awarded, there was a Gala Dinner for a select group of supporters and donors of the Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Foundation. The President of the Foundation, Maestro Kurt Masur, and Board Chairman Lord Mayor Burkhard Jung in their speech thanked the guests for their unwavering support for the goals of the Foundation in the spirit of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy. They thanked them for their loyal and sincere involvement with Mendelssohn and with the musical city of Leipzig, which some of those present had supported for many years.



above: The musicians are full of concentration in response to the challenging direction of Maestro Kurt Masur, whose interpretations during the evening were greeted with great applause from the public.

picture centre left side: The Lord mayor gives his thanks to Tomoko Masur for her support

picture centre right side: Maestro Masur and Kurt Viermetz (member of the Kuratorium) in conversation about future schemes, a.o. in the Mendelssohn-year 2009

left: Maestro Kurt Masur, president of the foundation and Lord mayor Burkhard Jung exchange a pleased handshake, impressed by the successful evening, which was dedicated to Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy

Thanks

This year again many partners have contributed to the success of the prize-giving evening. Our grateful thanks for their tireless and dedicated support are due to:

Dom Pérignon, Gewandhausorchester, Gewandhaus zu Leipzig, Hotel Fürstenhof, Mercedes-Benz, Restaurant Stadtpfeiffer

Worldwide honouring of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy

The Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Foundation in Leipzig, the centre of Mendelssohn culture, is of course intensively preparing for the Mendelssohn Anniversary Year 2009. Here the objectives of the Foundation and of the Mendelssohn House are closely interwoven.

In close collaboration with Mendelssohn Societies and music institutions in Germany, Switzerland and Great Britain, many ideas are being developed and put into practice. For example an internet portal (www.mendelssohn-2009.com) was opened on 10 July 2008, and gives bilingual information about events in Hamburg, Leipzig, Berlin, Wilderswil, Paris, London, Wengen, Koblenz, Düsseldorf and other towns. Links to the websites of the various partners provide a very informative guide. A printed programme will appear shortly, which will allow those music lovers without internet access to have detailed news about activities in the Mendelssohn Anniversary Year.

However, Mendelssohn's music is not only ringing out in Europe, but also in America and Japan, where preparations are well under way. Thanks again to the great enthusiasm of Professor Kurt Masur and his wife Tomoko, all Mendelssohn programmes are being performed under the baton of Maestro Masur in 2009, for example; 22-24 January in Boston (Boston Symphony Orchestra; Hebrides Overture, 3rd and 4th Symphonies); 4-7 February in New York (New York Philharmonic Orchestra with Anne-Sophie Mutter, violin; Ruy Blas Overture, Violin Concerto in e minor, First Walpurgis Night).

Professor Masur will conduct Mendelssohn's second oratorio *Elijah* in Europe, on 10 and 11 January 2009 in Paris with the Orchestre National de France. Professor Christian Martin Schmidt of the Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Leipzig Edition/Saxony Academy for Arts and Sciences, with

the support of the Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Foundation, has carefully prepared the material for these concerts.

In Japan Mrs Tomoko Masur, together with the Goethe Institute and the Foundation's Japanese branch, which will be officially launched on 14 October 2008, is preparing a rich programme of Mendelssohn's works to be performed in December 2009 in Tokyo.

In conjunction with a Mendelssohn Exhibition being put together by the Berlin State Library, together with loan objects from the Mendelssohn House Leipzig, a programme will present facets of Mendelssohn's music and personality.

Maestro Masur will hold a master-class for conductors, Professor Gerhard Bosse will elucidate the style and technique of the violin concerto, and Professor Peter Schreier will give a master-class on Lieder as an example of Mendelssohn's creativity.

In addition Mendelssohn experts will hold a platform discussion on the composer's works and legacy.

The Gewandhaus Quartet, with its rich musical tradition, will enthuse large audiences in several towns.

As soon as all these ideas become concrete, they will be published on a Japanese website, and for those non-Japanese speakers the details will of course become available on www.mendelssohn-2009.com.

Scholarship programme

In March 2008, through the intermediary of Maestro Kurt Masur, two young American conductors took part in a Scholarship programme of the American Friends of the Mendelssohn Foundation, which was also supported by the Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Foundation.

They both travelled from New York to Vienna, where they attended Maestro Masur's rehearsals and concerts, to Leipzig, Weimar and Berlin, and back to New York. The Scholars enjoyed a particularly challenging programme in Leipzig, where one can best follow in Mendelssohn's footsteps. They got to know the Mendelssohn historic sites in Leipzig, visited the music museums, attended rehearsals and concerts, participated in seminars with practical details about Mendelssohn's works, in discussions with experts from the Hochschule für Musik und Theater, and in meetings with academics and performers.

The experiences gained from all these discussions and events helped them to build up a comprehensive picture, not only of the person and music of Mendelssohn, but also of the special influences of the musical city of Leipzig.

Fully laden with new insights and new knowledge: the stipendiaries Brett Mitchell and Marcelo Lehninger in the music salon of the museum in the Mendelssohn House



The Foundation promotes work in the Art and Sciences

We have already referred (page 3) to the financial support from the Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Foundation towards the performance edition of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* in the Complete Mendelssohn Edition. However there is wider co-operation between the Foundation and the Saxony Academy for Arts and Sciences; as in the previous year, the Foundation has renewed its commitment to financing half a position in the technical field of the Mendelssohn Research Department of the Academy.

After the Foundation's decision in 2006 to make technical equipment available, and thereby to facilitate significantly the work of researchers in reading and evaluating manuscripts on microfilm, the Foundation has broadened its support. The co-operation agreement has been extended to the Mendelssohn Anniversary year 2009.

Donors and Supporters since December 2007

Many grateful thanks are due to the extraordinary support of the following donors to the Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Foundation in the first half of 2008:

Herrn Dr. Wulff Aengevelt

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Frau Dr. Susanne Heiland

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Herrn Dr. Peter Krüger

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Titel: The bestowal of the Leipzig Mendelssohn Prize in the Gewandhaus zu Leipzig – Maestro Kurt Masur and Lord Mayor Burkhard Jung (2nd from right) with both of the Prize-winners of the year 2008, Anne-Sophie Mutter and Peter Sloterdijk