

International Telekom Beethoven Competition Bonn

Soirée with prizewinners on June 17, 2011 at the Beethoven House, Bonn

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Magic musical colors

Hinrich Alpers and Sabine Frick give their audience a foretaste of the Beethoven Competition in the Chamber Music Hall.

The 2011 International Telekom Beethoven Competition is on the horizon. A concert in the Chamber Music Hall of the Beethoven House gave the audience a foretaste of the event, and the competition itself will take place over 88 piano keys in December. The spirit of the competition, which will take place for the fourth time this year, was revived by the 2009 winner.

Hinrich Alpers and his wife, the cellist Sabine Frick, played pieces for piano and cello by Ludwig van Beethoven, Claude Debussy and Gabriel Fauré. Both musicians impressed with their mature interpretations, which successfully combined creative intelligence and emotional expression. Beethoven's early G minor sonata was performed in lively and expressive terms, the rondo (which was the compulsory elective piece in the semi-final of the competition in 2009) was exciting and spirited. In Debussy's sonata in D minor, they revealed the magical musical colors and the mysteriously ethereal quality. They approached Fauré's sonata in G minor, an extremely high-pitched piece somewhere between ecstasy and whimsical caprice, with a clever mixture of passion and vigilance.

The formal perfection was carried over into Beethoven's melodious and energetic A major sonata. Once again Hinrich Alpers showed his amazing ability to present complex relationships clearly and to cast light on their structure. He revealed an enormous capacity for coping with details, a quality which always facilitates his clear musical statement. Splendid technical effortlessness went hand in hand with a fantastically cultivated, nuanced touch. Sabine Frick impressed with an emotional and intelligent approach that only very occasionally fell short in its rhetorical final touches.

The young presenters Lea Kuron, 11, and Jan Radermacher, 18, introduced the concert items to the audience. Relaxed, pleasant and sure of their lines, they passed their initiation test with flying colors. They had acquired their expertise in a workshop for presenters organized by the "Netzwerk Ludwig van B."

In a press conference before the concert, the organizers of the Beethoven Competition provided information on how preparations were going. Jury Chairman Pavel Gililov announced that the structure of the competition was being "streamlined." Of the current 93 contestants from 33 countries, including pianists from

Pakistan, India and Peru, only 24 would actually be allowed to take part in the competition.

For the first time the participants also had to submit audiovisual presentations. These ranged from the “profound” to the “amusing,” said Gililov.