

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

Kölnische Rundschau
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Separating the wheat from the chaff

The contestants in the Fourth Telekom Beethoven Competition are now known

BONN. Pavel Gililov, the Chairman of the Jury, announced in the Beethoven House the current state of play in the Fourth Telekom Beethoven Competition: 93 musicians aged between 18 and 32 had applied to take part. 24 of them had passed the test with the videos they had sent in (Bach fugue and late Beethoven sonata): 11 female and 13 male pianists from 15 countries, including for the first time contestants from Luxembourg and Serbia. They will compete for the prizes between December 2 and December 10. Telekom CFO Timotheus Höttges was impressed by the continually rising number of contestants.

Professor Gililov had already pointed out to a smaller group that the quality of applications was also on the rise, as was the interest among those already proven to be super-talents – which was necessary for the competition's survival. It had even been possible to reject the winner of the first prize at a renowned competition because of weaknesses with Beethoven. Because in its preliminary rounds the Telekom Beethoven Competition not only requires performances of works by Beethoven, as is the case with other competitions, special attention must of course be given to the reputation of the Beethoven Competition. Only the orchestral finale concentrates entirely on Beethoven's piano concertos.

The competition has run every two years since 2005, and is renowned for its generous prizes – EUR 30,000, 20,000 and 10,000 for the top three, and special prizes, including a prize awarded by the public in the final, chosen through an electronic survey. Hinrich Alpers (photo) did not collect that one last time, but he did win an excellent first prize. Telekom has made sure that he has appeared several times in Bonn since.

To launch the proceedings this year, he came with his wife, the cellist Sabine Frick, and a challenging program, containing the well-chosen combination of Beethoven, Debussy's cello sonata and Fauré's second sonata for cello and piano. Of course the highlight was Beethoven's sonata in A major. It was particularly exciting that Gabriel Fauré's beautiful G minor sonata was also played. The French composer is unjustly ignored here in Germany. (ter)