

PRESSE-INFORMATION

Frankfurt, September 12, 2010

José Luíz Gómez Ríos (32) wins the fifth International Conductors' Competition Sir Georg Solti in Frankfurt am Main

The 5th International Conductors' Competition Sir Georg Solti has a winner: the 32 year old in Venezuela born Spanish **José Luíz Gómez Ríos** picked up first prize. **Kevin Griffiths** (32) from Great Britain received second prize, and **Tito Muñoz** (27) from the USA came in third place.

First prize is €15,000, second prize €10,000 and the candidate in third place receives €5,000. The first and second prize winners also received bonus prizes: invitations to conduct for the Frankfurter Opern- und Museumsorchester, the Frankfurt Radio Symphony as well as other German and international orchestras.

The public finale concert today, Sunday morning, in Frankfurt's Alter Oper saw three finalists at the conductor's stand of the Frankfurter Opern- und Museumsorchester performing the following works (selected by drawing lots): Ludwig van Beethoven's Overture to "Egmont" op. 84 (Tito Muñoz), Bedřich Smetana's Overture to "The Bartered Bride" (José Luíz Gómez Ríos) and Hector Berlioz' "Roman Carnival" Overture (Kevin Griffiths). Then all three candidates each conducted Richard Strauss' "Till Eulenspiegel" op. 28.

After a short break to discuss the winner, the jury chairman Rolf-E. Breuer announced the decision, unanimously agreed by the members of the jury after evaluating the two rehearsal days, Friday and Saturday, and the public finale today, Sunday. "This year, the level of the final round was higher than it has ever been, which made it not that easy for the jury", Breuer said "Nevertheless, the members came quite quickly to their decision."

To conclude the morning's thrilling events there was a performance of Gioacchino Rossini's Overture to "Semiramide", conducted by José Luíz Gómez Ríos, the first prize winner.

The members of the **jury for the final round**, as chaired by Rolf-E. Breuer, were: Ulrich Edelmann (1st Concertmaster of the Frankfurt Radio Symphony), Bernd Loebe (Artistic Director of the Frankfurt Opera), Sir Roger Norrington (Chief Conductor of Radio-Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart), Matthias Pintscher (composer and conductor), Karl Rarichs (Director of the competition; Vice chairman of Frankfurter Museums-Gesellschaft), and Christian Zacharias (Pianist; Principal Conductor of the Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne and Principal Guest Conductor of the Gothenborg Symphony Orchestra). For health reasons, Lady Valerie Solti (Patroness of the competition and member of the jury) unfortunately had to cancel her participation at short notice.

From its beginnings in 2002, the Conductors' competition Sir Georg Solti was made possible only through the **Deutsche Bank Foundation's** financial commitment as main sponsor - which has equally been continued in 2010.

Due to this generous support, this year again participants of the competition did not have to pay registration fees or accomodation expenses. Furthermore, the Deutsche Bank Foundation once again provides the prize money totalling €30,000.

576 young conductors aged 19 to 35, from 75 countries applied to participate in this year's competition. 21 of them were invited to perform in Frankfurt with the **Frankfurt Radio Symphony** (from September 6 to September 9 in the

INTERNATIONALER
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SIR GEORG SOLTI



FRANKFURT AM MAIN
INTERNATIONAL CONDUCTORS COMPETITION

Ihr Kontakt:

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Great Broadcasting Hall of the Hessischer Rundfunk) and 3 finalists were selected from the group.

About the winners

1st Prize Winner:

José Luís Gómez Ríos

Born in Maracaibo, Venezuela, José Luís Gómez Ríos studied Music and Violin at the Conservatory of his home town and at Manhattan School of Music. At the age of eleven, he became Concertmaster of the Youth orchestra of Zulia State and joined “El Sistema de Orquestas Juveniles de Venezuela” where he gained initial experience as conductor. Currently, he is conducting student and assistant conductor to Lü Jia, Principal and Artistic Director of the Tenerife Symphony Orchestra and Macao Orchestra. 2009, he was one of the finalists of the 51th International Competition for Young Conductors, which was being broadcasted live by ARTE Television. He conducted several chamber music ensembles in Italy and Tenerife. As a violinist, he performed with well-known musicians such as members of the Berliner Philharmoniker. As a member of the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester, he worked with Maestros like Claudio Abbado, Mariss Jansons, Iván Fischer and Franz Welser-Möst.

2nd Prize Winner:

Kevin Griffiths

The London-born conductor Kevin Griffiths has lived in Switzerland most of his life, where he worked with orchestras such as the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, the Lucerne Symphony Orchestra and the Basel Symphony Orchestra. His international career included conducting engagements with the Brandenburgisches Staatsorchester, the Anhaltische Philharmonie Dessau, the Orquesta Sinfónica de Navarra and the Südwestdeutsche Philharmonie. He is principal conductor and co-founder of the internationally renowned London Steve Reich Ensemble; in 2008, the ensemble's debut CD with the label CPO was awarded the *Diapason d'Or*. Another side to Kevin Griffiths' work is his dedication to making classical music accessible for young people. He directs and narrates concerts for children at large-scale venues. During his fellowship at the Royal Northern College of Music, he conducted opera productions including Ravel's double bill *L'heure espagnol / L'enfant et les sortilèges* and *Die Fledermaus* by Johann Strauss. In France, he conducted several performances including the opening concerts at the Musique Cordiale Festival and an opera production of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. He is a member of the Pocket Opera Company Zurich, where – among a number of other works - he conducted Offenbach's *Barbe-Bleue*. Griffiths initially was trained as a violinist. He received his first conducting lessons from his father. He has participated in master classes and has studied with conductors as Sir Colin Davis, Jorma Panula, Lothar Zagrosek.

3rd Prize Winner:

Tito Muñoz

Tito Muñoz is currently Assistant Conductor of The Cleveland Orchestra and a League of American Orchestras Conducting Fellow. Former engagements included Assistant Conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra. An alumnus of the National Conducting Institute, he made his professional conducting debut in 2006 with the National Symphony Orchestra. In the same year, he conducted the Cleveland Orchestra at the Blossom Music Festival. Other recent engagements include appearances with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Indianapolis Symphony, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Abroad, he made his European debuts with the Orchestre Lyrique de Région Avignon-



Provence. During the summers of 2004 through 2006, he attended the American Academy of Conducting at Aspen where he studied with David Zinman and participated in master classes with Asher Fisch, Leon Fleisher, George Manahan, David Robertson, and Leonard Slatkin. Also an accomplished violinist, Muñoz has performed in many of New York's leading ensembles. Born in 1983 in New York City, he began his musical training on the violin at age thirteen in the Juilliard School's Music Advancement Program, continuing studies on violin and composition at the Manhattan School of Music Preparatory Division.

The International Conductors' Competition Sir Georg Solti is a joint project between the Alte Oper Frankfurt, Frankfurter Museums-Gesellschaft e.V., Hessischer Rundfunk and Frankfurt Opera; it has been made possible by the Deutsche Bank Foundation. Lady Valerie Solti is Patroness of the Competition.

We request publication please.
Best regards,
Press Department
ALTE OPER FRANKFURT

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SIR GEORG SOLTI



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