

Press release January 2020

## **Ernst von Siemens Music Prize goes to Tabea Zimmermann**

**The 2020 international Ernst von Siemens Music Prize goes to the German musician Tabea Zimmermann. The award for a lifetime in service to music comes with €250,000 prize money. The award ceremony will take place on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020 in Munich's Prinzregententheater. The laudation speech will be given by Norbert Lammert, former President of the Bundestag. In total, the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation is providing over €3.6 million in prizes and subsidies.**

In giving the award to Tabea Zimmermann, the board of the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation has decided to highlight the work of an artist who has put all of her energy into the very core of musical life, sharing this with her audience. Through her deep musical understanding and her unconditional love of music, which she expresses with indescribable enthusiasm, she has used her viola to help shape the musical landscape in a most impressive manner. This prize thus honours her incorruptible musicianship, her authentic and personal approach as well as her artistic integrity, in addition to her uncompromising standards of quality, the new life she has breathed into the viola as an instrument, her dedication to contemporary music and, last but not least, her incredible contribution to education.

Tabea Zimmermann was born in 1966 in the Black Forest as the fourth of six children and began playing the viola at the age of three. Her extraordinary talent was noticed and nurtured by her first teacher, Dietmar Mantel. The almost revolutionary teaching style of the time, based on movement – both physical and mental, listening skills, the ability to adapt to others – was taught to Zimmermann by Mantel from the very beginning through chamber and orchestral music and is something that has remained with her to this day, indeed is something that has led her to become one of the most loved chamber music partners and someone who is treasured by orchestras and conductors alike. A key element of her life in chamber music over the past few years has been the Arcanto Quartet with Antje Weithaas, Daniel Sepec and Jean-Guihen Queyras, as well as trio work with Jörg Widmann and Dénes Várjon, and duos with pianists Javier Perianes, Kirill Gerstein and Thomas Hoppe. Her passion for chamber music likewise shows itself through her directing of the Beethoven Week in Bonn, which Tabea Zimmermann has led with Luis Gago since 2015. Under the banner of 'Pure Beethoven', the entirety of Beethoven's chamber output is being performed as part of the jubilee year at Beethoven House in Bonn.

As a soloist, she regularly performs with some of the most world-renowned orchestras such as the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Berlin Philharmonic, the Orchestre de Paris, the London Symphony Orchestra, Les Siècles, the New World Symphony and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra to name but a few. She has likewise established a strong musical friendship with the Ensemble Resonanz, for whom she was artist in residence for two years and who she often led as violaist.

Tabea Zimmermann also came into contact with New Music at a young age. It was a lucky combination of having perfect pitch and a guide in the form of her music teacher in high school, Herbert Söllner, who also worked as a composer. He helped her to prepare the piece *Antiphonen* by Bernd Alois Zimmermann and extended her vantage point beyond that of the individual voice. This is something that she has retained since she premiered a piece that Söllner wrote for her at the age of thirteen, along with her enthusiasm for the new and unknown: 'The ability to assist in something's creation, collaborating with a composer, the understanding of others' thoughts, reading scores in new ways, and discovering new things still brings me great joy (...)'. Tabea Zimmermann has since been able to awaken interest for the viola in a multitude of contemporary composers with over 50 premieres of works from Ligeti, Kurtág, Rihm and Holliger to Jarrell, Lentz, Höller, Mantovani and Poppe under her belt and many more pieces brought into the standard concert and chamber music repertoire.

In addition to her concert work, Tabea Zimmermann has also been heavily involved in music education. Originally as a professor at the Music Conservatory in Saarbrücken, where she was younger than most of her students, she has since worked at both the Frankfurt Music College and – since October 2002 – as a professor at the Hanns-Eisler Music Conservatory in Berlin, filling each position with constant enthusiasm: 'Teaching and communicating with young people forms a large part of my life. It is very important to me to approach this with a sense of value such that something can be passed on through music that they can carry with them for the rest of their lives.'

From 1987 until his early death in 2000, Tabea Zimmermann regularly performed with her husband, the conductor David Shallon, and still maintains a close relationship with Israel – its language and culture. She lives in Berlin and has three almost grown-up children.

Tabea Zimmermann is one of the greatest performers of her era and has managed to bring the qualities of the viola into the consciousness of the contemporary music world. The richness, depth and beauty she can produce is unmatched: 'I imagine that my soul is full of small pieces of mirror and that every piece, phrase and melody touches something in me – by allowing this process to be reflected, I am able to produce something personal!'

#### **Award Ceremony on 11th May 2020 in Munich's Prinzregententheater**

The Ernst von Siemens Music Prize will be presented to Tabea Zimmermann on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020 in Munich's Prinzregententheater as part of a concert. The laudation will be given by the former President of the Bundestag and chairman of the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation, Norbert Lammert. The Hamburg-based Ensemble Resonanz will perform *Lachrymae* by Benjamin Britten, who was the first recipient of the Ernst von Siemens Music Prize, with Tabea Zimmermann. In addition, Zimmermann will perform solo works from Kurtág as well as Berio's *Naturale* in conjunction with the percussionist Christoph Sietzen. Ensemble Resonanz will furthermore perform pieces by this year's composer-prize winners, whose names will be announced on 19th February.

#### **The Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation to award over €3.6 million**

In total, the foundation will award over €3.6 million in prize money and subsidies in 2020, with around 120 worldwide projects in the contemporary music sector being supported. The largest share of the funding is attributable to composition commissions, but festivals, concerts, children's and youth projects, academies and publications are also recipients. €250,000 has been assigned to the main prize, and €35,000 will be awarded to each of the composer prize-winners along with the production of a CD. For the first time, the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation has set up an Ensemble Award in 2020, which will support the artistic and structural development of prominent, young ensembles with a total of €150,000. In addition, the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation provides funding for the *räsonanz – Stifterkonzerte* series of concerts in cooperation with the LUCERNE FESTIVAL and *musica viva* (Bayerischer Rundfunk), which will take place on 23<sup>rd</sup> May in Munich's Prinzregententheater and on 25<sup>th</sup> August at the KKL Lucerne.

#### **Note**

The Ernst von Siemens Music Prize (EvS Music Prize) has been awarded every year since 1973 by the privately-run *Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation* (EvS Music Foundation), which is based in Switzerland. Please note that it is not associated with Siemens AG or their own foundation, the *Siemens Stiftung*. As such, we request that you ensure that the name of the foundation and the prize are detailed correctly.

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