

PRESS RELEASE

"Prize of Peace of Westphalia " 2010: Awarded to Daniel Barenboim and the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra

"We don't need negotiations in the Middle East, we need peace"

Münster/Westphalia, October 30, 2010 - Conductor Daniel Barenboim and the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, which he founded and directs and is made up of young Israeli and Arab musicians, were awarded the Prize of Peace of Westphalia in Münster today. "Daniel Barenboim and the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra live the ideal of a peaceful society of coexistence characterized by mutual respect and tolerance," said Federal Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle in his laudatory speech. Following the award ceremony, the prizewinners appeared on the town hall balcony to the cheers of hundreds of Münster residents.

"I am very touched," said Barenboim in thanks for the award and spoke a clear word in the direction of Israel and Palestine: "I have had enough of peace negotiations. I don't want negotiations, I want peace. It can be done." The conductor has already received several awards for his tireless commitment to peaceful coexistence between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples and was appointed UN Messenger of Peace in 2009.

Since 1998, the Wirtschaftliche Gesellschaft für Westfalen und Lippe e.V. (WWL) has awarded Germany's most valuable peace prize, worth 50,000 euros, every two years in equal parts to a personality and a youth group who have made an outstanding contribution to peaceful coexistence.

"Our award winners today impressively demonstrate that international understanding is possible on earth and that deep rifts can be overcome," said Dr. Reinhard Zinkann, Chairman of the WWL, underlining the great peace policy significance of the award winners. With the founding of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra in Weimar in 1999 and a concert in Ramallah in the Palestinian West Bank, Daniel Barenboim and the orchestra members had proven that understanding and cooperation is possible despite "learned enmity", according to Zinkann.

"Peace is not a piece of paper, it lives in people, it is the will to peace, it is embodied by these young musicians," emphasized Bernardino León, Secretary of State of the Spanish Prime Minister, in his laudatory speech for the youth prize winners. Every summer, the young adults meet for a workshop in Seville. On the subsequent concert tours, they perform at the world's most renowned festivals. "It is often difficult that the conflict in our home country is always present.

But it helps us to talk about it, to learn from each other and to hear how the other side is doing," said Israeli clarinetist Shirley Brill on behalf of her orchestra colleagues.

Barenboim emphasized the "unbelievable courage" that all the musicians have shown "to take part in such an adventurous project that is opposed from many sides".

In his welcoming address, Münster's Lord Mayor Markus Lewe called for the legacy of the Westphalian peace treaty of 1648 to be actively continued: "Peace, freedom and justice remain our most important and lasting tasks. We have economic globalization. But we do not yet have a world peace order." The current and previous award winners are exemplary of these efforts. Past recipients of the Prize of Peace of Westphalia include former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

At the press conference following the award ceremony, Daniel Barenboim announced the founding of an institute for musical education in Berlin for musicians from Israel, Palestine and Germany, which is to be financed with the prize money, among other things.

He is also planning a concert in Gaza with a small ensemble of musicians from top European orchestras - "if we get the approval of the Israeli government", he added.

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