

FRANZ HUMMEL, Composer

Franz Hummel was born in 1939 and is one of today's most renowned and original European composers. In his childhood, he was discovered, supported and encouraged by Richard Strauss, Eugen Papst, Hans Knappertsbusch and Elly Ney, and subsequently became a pianist (although he had started to compose at the age of seven). He gave concerts throughout Europe and the USA, making over 60 LP recordings that encompass almost the entire classical and romantic repertoire, as well as many modern works. His last major tour as a pianist was in 1973 through what was then the USSR. From 1973 on, he dedicated himself to composition and only gave sporadic concerts. Hummel's "farewell concert" in New York's Carnegie Hall in 1996, received a standing ovation and Kurt Masur, who was present at this concert, expressed his admiration for Hummel and his partner, the violinist Liana Issakadze.

Franz Hummel's operas, symphonies, ballet scores, concertos and chamber music have been played by famous instrumentalists and orchestras. Some of his operas (there are 19 to date) have been shown throughout Europe: *Zarathustra* based on Friedrich Nietzsche's life and philosophic work, was recently premiered in Regensburg, *Fouché* was the opening opera for the "Cultural Capital of Europe" Linz 09 in Austria, *Blaubart*, a parable on Sigmund Freud's Case History "Dora", was performed about 120 times in cities including Moscow, Paris, London and Rome. The production was recorded in 1985 for German Television.

Hummel's Violin Concerto *Archaeopteryx* was premiered in 1988 in German Television with the Südwestfunk Orchestra and the violinist Ulf Hoelscher, who then gave the live premiere in St. Petersburg with the Russian State Academic Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Vladimir Verbitsky.

Hummel improvises regularly with the world-famous Klezmer clarinetist Giora Feidman. The result of this symbiotic duo is soon to be released on two CDs with the title *Eine Reise nach Jerusalem (A Journey to Jerusalem)*.

Hummel has a longstanding association with the Moscow Symphony Orchestra, which has not only performed many of his symphonic works and played in Hummel's much acclaimed music festival "Sinfonischer Sommer Riedenburg", (Symphonic Summer Riedenburg), but also recorded the CD of his first musical *Ludwig II. – Sehnsucht nach dem Paradies (Ludwig II. – Longing for Paradise)* that received a euphoric reception when first performed in the new purpose-built Musical Theatre Neuschwanstein in Füssen in 2000. At the end of 2003, 1,5 Million spectators had seen this fantastic production that is based on the life of the Bavarian Fairytale-King.

In January 2006 Hummel's *Sinfonia funebre* was premiered in Kobe (Japan) in commemoration of the victims of the terrible earthquake of 1996. In 2006 and 2007 he composed the *33 Transformations on a Waltz by Anton Diabelli*. This extensive work, that lasts for over an hour, is a modern answer to Beethoven's famous "Diabelli Variations" and has recently been released on CD with the Argentinian pianist Carmen Piazzini by the label NEOS.