

The Competition – Promoting Excellence

Since 1991, Stiftung Niedersachsen has been hosting the International Joseph Joachim Violin Competition in Hanover, Germany, under the direction of Professor Krzysztof Wegrzyn. The competition's 10th edition will not only celebrate a special anniversary, but also a story of great success. High artistic demands, outstanding international juries, and attractive monetary awards have made the competition into one of the world's finest of its kind. Its former awardees have become successful, internationally renowned musicians since competing in Hanover.

For many of them, the successful completion of the Joseph Joachim Violin Competition was a crucial stepping stone on the road to success. Those who have been able to prove their exceptional talent, virtuosity and artistic personality in front of the Hanover jury have found themselves well-equipped to successfully perform in some of the world's most famous concert halls. With anniversary concerts featuring all former first prize winners, the 2018 competition will turn Hanover into a city of violin, presenting the artistic excellence of its winners to a broad audience.

The Joseph Joachim Violin Competition is a unique combination of the highest artistic standards and an atmosphere of warm hospitality. A long-standing network of caring host families ensures that competitors feel at home in Hanover and are able to approach the competition with ease. They will find conditions to be more than favorable, with suitable practice rooms, excellent accompanists and the opportunity of presenting themselves twice before the jury makes its first decision – Stiftung Niedersachsen has created an ideal space for fostering and promoting excellence.

Rooted in Lower Saxony, the foundation takes promising young artists across the entire state with a comprehensive music pedagogy program and a state-wide concert series. The reputation and unique atmosphere of the competition attracts some of the finest young violinists to gather in Lower Saxony, offering a stage for exceptional encounters with these up-and-coming virtuosos.

Stiftung Niedersachsen

Since 1991, Stiftung Niedersachsen has been inviting exceptional young violinists from all over the world to compete in the 'Joseph Joachim International Violin Competition Hannover', which is held every three years.

The foundation, which was founded in 1987, presents this exceptional endowment program in order to further especially gifted young musicians. These efforts have received international recognition. The competition is framed by a statewide program with special focus on music pedagogy, as the Stiftung Niedersachsen is committed to strengthening cultural diversity across the entire state.

The foundation's efforts as a reliable partner in cultural affairs include projects such as the independent theater festival 'Best OFF – Festival Freier Theater in Niedersachsen', the international photography award 'Spectrum – Internationaler Preis für Fotografie', and 'LiteraturLabor Wolfenbüttel', which offers stipends to young writers. By lending aid to several sub-foundations, the Stiftung supports private initiatives dedicated to the common good.

Since its founding, the foundation has supported some 2,800 projects with a total value of 100 million Euro. The foundation supports projects in the areas of art, music, education and science, literature, theater and dance, and socioculture.

Krzysztof Wegrzyn | Artistic Director



Krzysztof Wegrzyn, the Artistic Director of the ›Joseph Joachim International Violin Competition Hannover‹, is also the founder of this outstanding music event in Lower Saxony. He was born in Gdansk, Poland and was educated in Warsaw, Freiburg and London. His collaborations with artists such as Zenon Brzewski, Wolfgang Marschner, Yfrah Neaman and Dorothy De-Lay gave him his vital artistic stimulation.

For years, Krzysztof Wegrzyn served as concertmaster for Niedersächsisches Staatsorchester Hannover and, since 1993 he has been a professor at the Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media. His brilliant violin classes are internationally known, with many of his students having won awards at international competitions and being members of renowned orchestras.

Krzysztof Wegrzyn has himself won awards at prestigious international events such as the Louis Spohr and Montreal Competitions, and has earned the First Prize of the Karol Szymanowski and Rodolfo Lipizer competitions. Even today, he regularly travels both around Germany and abroad to give concert performances, where he has gained special acclaim by performing the works of contemporary composers such as

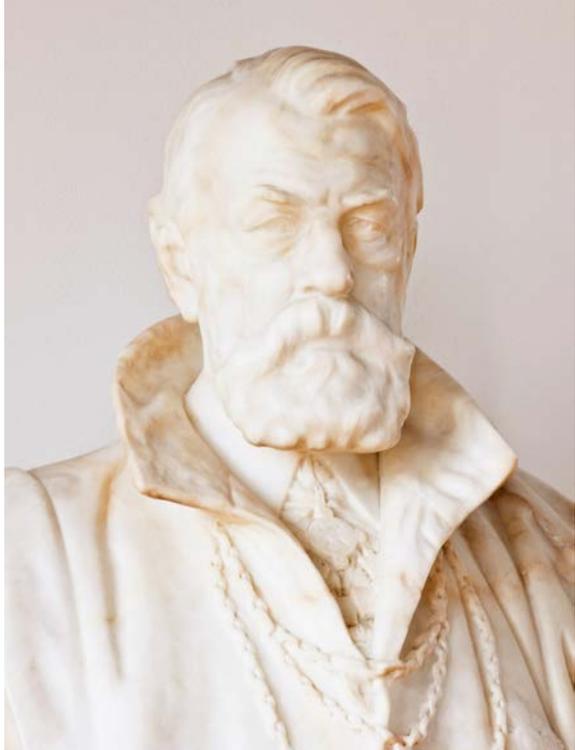
Lutoslawski, Ligety, Nono, Schnittke, Pärt and Penderecki in addition to the standard repertoire.

Another focus of his artistic and educational work is the management of master classes in Europe, USA and Asia, which include the Holland Music Sessions, Ishikawa Music Academy, Keshet Eilon, Juilliard School, and music academies in Seoul, Shanghai and Tokyo. In addition, Krzysztof Wegrzyn is regularly called on to join international juries, such as at the Tchaikovsky, Kreisler, Paganini, ARD and Sendai competitions recently.

He has been involved in chamber music for many years and is the founder of the ensemble 'il gioco col suono'. In 2004, Krzysztof Wegrzyn was awarded the *Musikpreis des Landes Niedersachsen* for his contributions to music.

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Joseph Joachim



Joseph Joachim was born on June 28, 1831, in Kittsee, near Pressburg (Austria-Hungary), in a Jewish merchant family. In 1833, the family moved to Budapest, where the child was given his first violin lessons by the Polish concertmaster of the Pest Royal Opera, Stanislaw Serwaczynski. His talents were immediately apparent and it became clear that music was to be his destiny.

The following years in Leipzig, where Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy became his mentor and role model, formed Joachim's artistic personality. Mendelssohn saw to it that his student was instructed not only on the violin but also in the humanities and composition. He took Joachim to London, where the latter first performed Beethoven's violin concerto to wide critical acclaim. Mendelssohn's extensive concept of art and the artistic personality provided the young violinist and composer clear orientation in both his musical and personal development.

Joseph Joachim was 16 years old when Mendelssohn suddenly died. The loss of his revered mentor devastated him, and the subsequent period was difficult. In 1849 he went to Weimar, where he met Liszt and Wagner, became concertmaster and composed. Here, his determination to continue the legacy Mendelssohn's musical ideals grew.

In the fall of 1852, Joachim signed a contract to go to Hanover. The city was to be his home base for the next 15 years. He influenced the music life of the city as concertmaster and general music director and as soloist and good friend of King George the Fifth, who also became Joachim's godfather. The years in Hanover also marked his close friendships with Johannes Brahms and Clara Schumann (Robert Schumann died in 1856), his marriage to the opera singer Amalie Schneeweiss and a personal musical development which, in the words of a contemporary critic, "elevated him high above today's virtuosity ... to the service of genuine, true art." He dared to present Johann Sebastian Bach's solo works for violin in public; he played not only his own compositions but also those of his young contemporaries (most of whom were his friends); he was the true incarnation of "the musician, above all", the performer in the service of music itself.

In 1866 Hannover was turned over to the Prussians. Joachim left the orchestra. Two years later, he accepted the position of founding director of the Royal Academy of Music in Berlin. There, he established his own orchestra and the legendary Joachim Quartett. He was active as a performer and teacher for almost 40 years, until his death on August 15, 1907. The academy honored its late teacher with a grand funeral (the sculptor Otto Lessing quickly finished a portrait bust of Joachim for the occasion). In June 1913 a Joachim monument was installed in the foyer of the Academy Concert Hall. In 1936 and 1938, the Nazis removed both the bust and the monument from the academy in a – wasted – attempt to erase from memory the great artist, teacher and composer. Stiftung Niedersachsen honors the artist since 1991 in a particular way by arranging the triennial 'Joseph Joachim International Violin Competition Hannover'.