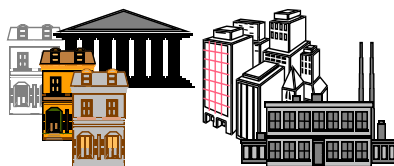


Houston-Leipzig Sister City Association



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members and Friends:

My exciting year as President is soon coming to a close. Our 10th Anniversary year was active and memorable. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has worked so hard over the last ten years to make this association one of, if not the best, sister-city association in Houston and Texas. Our volunteers are a dedicated, wonderful group indeed.

I hope to see you at our holiday party (see details below). We have had lots of fun at this holiday celebration and plan on doing so again this year.

In November the renown Leipzig String Quartet made its Texas debut at Rice University, partially due to a \$2,500 grant from this association. One of the most acclaimed quartets in Europe, the LSQ thrilled a packed house for this Houston Friends of Music concert. The LSQ played Beethoven, Berg, and Brahms, and let a Houston audience experience some of the best from the Leipzig music scene.

Finally, as my last request, please pay your 2004 dues as soon as possible. We want to be able to bring other noteworthy Leipzig attractions and exchanges to Houston, and only your contributions enable us to do so.

Best wishes to Roy De Gesero as he takes over as your President in 2004. See you soon!

Steve Braun, President

A NOTE OF APPRECIATION

In late September 14 students from the American Studies Institute at the University of Leipzig visited Houston to study volunteerism in America. Following are excerpts of a letter to Dr. Robert Moore and their host families from Professor Keil, who accompanied them:

"...On behalf of the whole group I want to thank you again for the hospitality and friendship that you showed us. I must confess we did not know exactly what we should expect in Houston, but our

Continued on p. 2

LET'S CELEBRATE!!!



Come and Join us for our

Holiday Potluck Party



7:00 p.m., December 11, 2003

Parsonage

Christ the King Lutheran Church

2342 Rice Boulevard

Everyone should bring a generous size of their favorite holiday dish, to serve at least 8-12 persons. Parking is permitted across Greenbriar on the Animal Hospital lot after 6:30 p.m.

Leipzig Texas debut is skillful, seductive

By Charles Ward

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The Leipzig String Quartet proved one of those rare ensembles that can seduce by sound alone in its Texas debut.

Founded in 1988, the group vaulted to international fame after winning a series of key awards, including the Munich international quartet competition in 1991. It boasts its own concert series in two of the most important concert halls in Europe (Leipzig's Gewandhaus and, starting next season, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw). Its large discography contains a highly regarded set of the complete quartet music of Schubert.

At Tuesday's recital at Rice University, the ensemble offered works central to the group's heritage: Beethoven's Quartet, Op. 18, No. 6 in B-flat Major; Berg's String Quartet, Op. 3; and Brahms' Quartet, Op. 51, No. 2 in A Minor.

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IN MEMORIAM

LISELOTTE GERTRUD BABIN

was born on August 4, 1923 in Ubermemel, Lithuania, and passed away October 30, 2003. Her parents were Ernst Bruno Milkereit and Gertrud August Bittens. Liselotte met Robert Anthony Babin in Regensburg, Germany. They married on August 25, 1955, in Bethesda, Maryland. From 1958 to 1962, Liselotte wrote articles for "The Vidorian" newspaper in Vidor, Texas. In 1961 the family moved to Houston, Texas, and became an integral part of the German community.

From 1972 until July 20, 2003, she hosted her own Sunday weekly "Musical Trot with Liselotte" radio program on KPFT, KENR, and KTEK radio stations. From 1979 to 1996 she published the Deutsche Welt-U.S.A. German American Newspaper in Houston, Texas.

In recognition of her services for German and American relations, she was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal by the President of Germany.

Liselotte is survived by her beloved husband Robert Babin; sons, Richard Babin and wife Paula, Will Babin and wife Kathy, Eric Babin and wife Linda, and Bruce Babin and wife Norma; grandchildren, Jason Babin and wife Samantha, Morgan Babin and wife Stephanie, Michelle Babin, Blake Babin, Justin Babin, and Julia Babin; and 9 great grandchildren.

Appreciation, *Continued from p. 1*

experience there surpassed anything that we had imagined. The success of this study tour was due to a very great degree to your willingness and generosity to host us. We just hope that we can return this hospitality for some or all of you when you visit Leipzig.

...The value of this study tour is already obvious; we learned so much from our various partners in city government, the churches, the universities, and the media. There are good prospects to establish a more permanent relationship with Rice University. We also would like to see a group of students visit us in Leipzig, and...we might do a...tour like this one again, perhaps in a couple of years.

Let me thank you again for the wonderful weeks and this exceptional experience of friendship and understanding.

Hartmut Keil
American Studies Institute
University of Leipzig"

Leipzig String Quartet, *Continued from p. 1*

Early in the recital, certainly no later than the middle of Beethoven's second movement, it was clear that the Houston Friends of Music audience was hearing something special. (The Houston-Leipzig Sister City Association was also a sponsor.)

All major touring quartets are exceedingly comfortable with the essential quartet literature. It's the center of their training, and they live and breathe it daily. But the Leipzig seemed to add something else: that elusive quality that Americans call "roots."

In cities like Leipzig and Vienna, tradition permeates life in ways cities like Houston can never fathom. For example, three of the Leipzig's members have served as principal players in the Gewandhaus Orchestra. Its history goes back to a concert society founded in 1743 and includes a long, intimate relationship with the city's conservatory, which Mendelssohn established in 1843.

As could be expected from a group that trots the globe, the Leipzig played all three works exquisitely -- even Berg's sonically tough music. But the music-making oozed a sense of familiarity that seemed much deeper, almost primordial.

The interpretations contained no surprises. Yet they seemed so fresh and true to life. Indeed, the fierce chord beginning the recapitulation in Beethoven's first movement could have been a terrifying shock were the music and style not so well-known.

A major contribution to that aura was the Leipzig's technical skill. The sound was splendid -- plush yet light, substantial yet svelte. The players handled difficult, delicate articulations so effortlessly that a listener could be distracted into anticipating the next awesome moment. It was possible not to care about anything more than the fabulous sound and sense of style.

Everything came together in the Brahms. As the players moved through the contrasting moods and styles -- from playful to spitfire fast -- the music became an utterly comforting contact with a great tradition.

Come and Visit Us on the Web

www.germanconsulatehouston.org/Houston_Leipzig

www.leipzig.de

SEND FAX, E-MAIL OR CALL YOUR EDITOR

Do you have news or an event to share? Want to comment, critique, create a column or communicate with other Leipzig aficionados? Call the editor at 713-973-9399, send a fax to 713-973-9499, or email to angelika@hal-pc.org.