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Ernst von Siemens Music Prize 2009 awarded to Klaus Huber

The recipient of this year's International Ernst von Siemens Music Prize, with its €200,000 cash endowment, is the Swiss composer Klaus Huber. Born in 1924 in Bern, Switzerland, Huber is considered a leading figure in contemporary music. The Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts will present Huber with the coveted prize at an official awards ceremony to be held in Munich's Kammerspiele Theater on May 15, 2009. The laudatory address will be delivered by Swiss music journalist Max Nyffeler. The Ernst von Siemens Musikstiftung will award a total of €2.3 million in prize money this year.

Klaus Huber is considered to be a representative of new music who melds contemporary musical language with the counterpoint techniques of early music. His extensive range of compositions includes chamber music, oratorios and operas. While Huber's music is spiritual in nature, it also reflects a humanistic and political involvement in today's world. One of Huber's major works is *Cantiones de Circulo Gyrate*, which he composed in 1985. The lyrics comprise texts by Hildegard von Bingen and a poem by Heinrich Böll about the churches destroyed during World War II in the German city of Cologne. Huber's music is also influenced by liberation theology and the texts of the Nicaraguan priest and poet Ernesto Cardenal. During the past two decades, Huber also pursued an intensive study of Arab culture and music theory. He has continually evolved and developed as a composer.

Huber's openness and willingness to engage in dialogue also informed his teaching of music composition at the Music Academy in Basel, Switzerland (1961-1973) and in particular at the University of Music in Freiburg, Germany (1973-1991). Moving beyond the mere transfer of knowledge, Huber motivates his students to engage in contemplation and nurtures their individuality. Among his students are the two Ernst von Siemens laureates Wolfgang Rihm and Brian Ferneyhough. Huber, who has long been active as a guest professor, founded the international composers' seminar in Boswil, Switzerland in 1969. He is a member of the Bavarian Academy of the Fine Arts, the Academy of the Arts in Berlin, the Free Academy of the Arts in Mannheim, Germany and an honorary member of the International Society for Contemporary Music (IGNM). In addition, Huber holds an honorary doctorate from the University of Strasbourg, France.

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