

The **Duo Lontano** was created in 2004 by pianists Babette Hierholzer and Jürgen Appell. Babette lives in New York since 1991, while Jürgen divides his time between Berlin and Rome.

**Babette Hierholzer's** debut with the Berlin Philharmonic in 1978 was followed by numerous performances with this famed orchestra, led by renowned conductors Klaus Tennstedt, Sir Colin Davis, Leopold Hager, and Semyon Bychkov. Ms. Hierholzer has performed extensively in recital and chamber music, and as soloist with orchestras in most of the countries of Europe, the United States, South America, and Africa. In 1986, she gave her American debut with the Pittsburgh Symphony playing the Liszt Concerto No. 1. Other engagements have included the Philharmonic Orchestra Kiel, Philharmonic Orchestra Ulm, Hamburg Symphonic Orchestra, touring with the Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie, Orquesta Sinfónica de Bilbao, Spain, Orchestre du Festival International de Bordeaux, France, and the Kraków Philharmonic Orchestra, Poland. In May 1993, she performed the Liszt Concerto No. 1 with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Chile; in June 1993, she performed the same work with the Staatskapelle Berlin, Paavo Berglund conducting. In 1994, she performed the Clara Schumann Piano Concerto with the St. Louis Symphony and made her Canadian debut with the Saskatoon Symphony. In 1996 she again performed the Clara Schumann concerto with the Winnipeg Symphony and the Berlin Symphony. In January 1997, she performed the Robert Schumann Concerto with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Maracaibo and the Orquesta Sinfónica de Mérida, Venezuela.

Ms. Hierholzer has made a number of recordings with MARUS/EMI Electrola playing works by Schumann (including the recently discovered Exercises, variations on a theme by Beethoven), Couperin, Debussy, Mozart, and Scarlatti (Sonatas Vols. 1, 2 and 3), a CD of posthumous works of Franz Schubert, and Schumann's "Music for Children", Kinderszenen. Her most recent releases were Bach Concerto Transcriptions with GENUIN label and TESTAMENT recording of Mozart's Concerto in A major KV 488 in a live performance with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under Klaus Tennstedt. She performed the sound track and the double/stand-in role for Clara Wieck (Nastassia Kinski) in Peter Schamoni's movie "Frühlingssymphonie" (Spring Symphony), about the life and work of Robert Schumann.

Babette Hierholzer has won numerous first prizes in international competitions, including the Steinway Piano Competition, in Berlin, seven times; the All German National Piano Competition, twice; first prize in the Giovanni Battista Viotti Concorso Internazionale di Musica in Vercelli, Italy; the Medaille d'Argent of the Festival International des Jeunes Solistes in Bordeaux, France; first prize in the Joanna Hodges International Piano Competition plus the prestigious Andy Petlansky Memorial Award in Palm Springs, USA. In February 1992 she played her debut recital at Carnegie Hall as winner of the East & West Artists Prize for New York Debut.

Born in Freiburg, Germany, Ms. Hierholzer had her first piano lessons at the age of five with Elisabeth Dounias-Sindermann and Wolfgang Saschowa in Berlin, making her first public appearance at the age of eleven in the Philharmonic Hall in Berlin, playing Mozart's Concerto in A major KV 488. She then studied with Herbert Stessin at The Juilliard School, Precollege Division, in New York, with Paul Badura-Skoda at the Folkwang-Hochschule, Essen and in Vienna, with Maria Tipo in Florence, Italy, and with Bruno Leonardo Gelber in Buenos Aires. She was awarded scholarships by the Study Grant of the German People and Oskar und Vera Ritter Stiftung.

Recent performances include appearances with the Shreveport Symphony Orchestra, the DeKalb Symphony in Atlanta and Orquesta del Nuevo Mundo in Mexico City. Previously,

she stepped in for Horatio Gutierrez in a recital in Berlin's Philharmonic Hall. Ms. Hierholzer played the opening concert of the season with the South Carolina Philharmonic, playing Liszt No. 1, conducted by Nicholas Smith. In November 2001, she played a recital at the Frick Collection in New York City on very short notice and this season she returned to perform at the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC, with a recital of music by Clara and Robert Schumann. Babette Hierholzer is the Artistic Director to the "German Forum" in New York, <http://www.germanforum.org/artists.html>, and the RCMS, Rhinebeck Chamber Music Society, <https://www.rcmsmusic.org/artistic-director>.

While still a student with luminary pianists Elisabeth Dounias-Sindermann and Ingeborg Peukert, **Jürgen Appell** was a prize winner of the Steinway Piano Competition in Berlin three times. He was awarded a scholarship by the Study Grant of the German People and made his first public appearance at the age of sixteen in the Philharmonic Hall in Berlin, playing Schumann's *Études Symphoniques*. Following this early success he formed a piano duo with pianist Florentine Schubert and toured extensively throughout Europe recording some of the piano duet programs and repertoire for two pianos for German radio and television. With Florentine Schubert he also performed Bach's Concerto for 2 pianos and orchestra in C major, as well as the "Carnaval des Animaux" by Saint-Saens for 2 pianos and orchestra. In the late 1980s Jürgen Appell joined cellist Johannes Nauber, former member of the celebrated "12 Cellists" of the Berlin Philharmonic, for another extensive European tour, performing many pieces of the romantic repertoire for cello and piano.

In 2003 returning to the four hand and two piano repertoire Jürgen began another successful collaboration this time with Babette Hierholzer. After performing Mozart's concerto in F major for 3 pianos and orchestra with pianist Bettina Griepentrog and the Orquesta Normalista de Puebla, Mexico, conducted by Jorge Altieri, the piano duo embarked on international tour including Germany, Venezuela, Mexico, Italy, Poland, Russia, and the United States. In 2006 Jürgen together with cellist Johannes Nauber and English violinist David Johnson created a piano trio ensemble. The trio appeared in Berlin and in 2006, joined by Irish soprano Helen Kearns, was invited to perform at the Philharmonic Hall in Cologne.

In 2010 Babette and Jürgen performed a romantic program for two pianos at the International Kaatsbaan Dance Center, New York, and the Catskill Music Festival (USA). In December 2010, they received an invitation to Caracas, Venezuela, to perform Mozart's Concerto for 2 pianos and orchestra in E flat major KV 365 with the celebrated Orquesta Juvenil Simón Bolívar conducted by Maestro Gustavo Dudamel. In March 2016, they received an invitation to Havana, Cuba, to perform, apart from a series of 4 hand recitals, the "Carnival of Animals" by Saint-Saens for 2 pianos and orchestra with the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Cuba conducted by Enrique Pérez Mesa. More recently, they have been invited for four hand piano recitals to Palermo (Italy), White Plains, NY (USA), Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (Spain), and Petrópolis (Brazil).