

## **Hilti Foundation supports youth orchestra from Venezuela Ceremonious instrument handover in Lucerne**

**Lucerne, 31 August 2008 – As one of the main sponsors the Hilti Foundation is supporting the successful Venezuelan youth orchestra Simón Bolívar, among other things with the purchase of high-quality concert instruments to a total value of about three million US dollars. At a concert during the Lucerne Festival 2008 Michael Hilti, President of the Hilti Foundation, handed the first newly-acquired music instruments to conductor Gustavo Dudamel.**

The Hilti Foundation had already signed a three-year sponsorship agreement together with representatives of the orchestra at the end of 2007. Under the agreement the Hilti Foundation will be subsidizing the 200-member orchestra in the coming years. Besides support of the orchestra management this will also extend to the purchase of first-class concert instruments. As a result the promising Venezuelan young talents, all aged between 16 and 26, will be receiving their first string instruments this year.

The seven double-basses, six cellos, five violins, four violas and 12 string instruments originated in selected studios and workshops in Madrid, Rome, Lucerne, Berlin and London. Leading musicians and music professors of the orchestra selected the music instruments and on their joint tour they were even able to acquire a violin made by Lorenzo Ventapane (Naples) dating from 1840–1850.

For Egbert Appel, Director of the Hilti Foundation, this commitment is a perfect example of the fundamental orientation of the Foundation. “For over a decade we have been sponsoring selected, sustainable projects and initiatives worldwide with a social, cultural and educational background. The support of the State Youth Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela unites all these aspects in one project,” Appel explains.

### **Chance for a secure income**

The *Sinfónica de la Juventud Venezolana Simón Bolívar* was founded in 1975 by Venezuelan economist and musician José Antonio Abreu. The orchestra, named after South American freedom fighter Simón Bolívar, has become one of the 30 leading professional orchestras belonging to the *Fundación del Estado para el Sistema de Orquesta Juvenil e Infantil de Venezuela* (FESNOJIV).

The goal of this state-subsidized programme is to enable children and young people, particularly from deprived backgrounds, to obtain a sound musical training and give them an opportunity to earn a secure income and independence. Despite the primarily social orientation, the *Sistema* orchestra and musicians have produced outstanding quality. Conductors such as Claudio Abbado, Sir Simon Rattle and Zubin Mehta are impressed by the skills and commitment of the young people and come to Venezuela regularly to work with them.