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A German musical journey

Dr Sugree Charoensook is back in Bangkok with funding for a new programme



Dr Sugree Charoensook with Franz Xavier Augstin, Goethe's regional director for Southeast Asia/Australia/New Zealand.

The Goethe Institute, the cultural outreach programme of the German government, last month celebrated the 60th anniversary of its founding in Munich. A select list of guests was invited, with Dr Sugree Charoensook being the only person to make the cut from Thailand and the rest of Southeast Asia.

Dr Sugree, dean of the College of

Music, Mahidol University, was one of three Asians on the exclusive guest list of just 13 names shortlisted from an initial field of 1,300, recognised for their lasting and constructive partnerships with the institute. The other two were from South Korea and Sri Lanka.

During the trip he also toured concert halls, watched a performance of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, was interviewed by German television, rode a hydroplane,

and visited Government House. He was also presented with 100,000 euros (4.3 million baht) in annual funding for the next three years to create a new chamber music programme.

His primary activity, though, was to attend the anniversary celebrations held at the Berlin Gemaldegalerie, where present were approximately 1,000 other guests from fields as diverse as arts and politics, including Klaus-Dieter Leh-

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mann, the president of Goethe Institute, and Germany's Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle.

Dr Sugree revealed plans to use the funding to support a special chamber music training programme in Southeast Asia.

“The goal of this project,” Dr Sugree said, “is for young people from Asean countries coming to live together, learn together with the same teacher, playing the same song, working with the same conductor, and then creating something new.”

When asked about the schedule for the programme, Dr Sugree replied, “I will do it immediately. We will audition musicians from Southeast Asia for chamber music beginning next March. They will come to Thailand to participate in a music camp for 10 days, and after that go on to perform in the major cities like Kuala Lumpur, Vientiane, Phnom Penh, Yangon and Bangkok.”