

## Beethoven-anniversary year has officially begun

### Around 1.000 guests attended the festivity in Bonn sporting a top-class evening programme

December 16th 2019

The jubilee celebrations for Ludwig van Beethoven's 250th birthday have officially begun with an opening ceremony on Monday evening. One day prior to the composer's 249th baptism day, the celebrations occurred in the presence of around 1.000 guests in the opera house of Bonn Theatre, the official venue of the anniversary.

**Monika Grütters, Minister of State for Culture**, held the ceremonial address as a part of a top-class evening programme: „The confrontation with Ludwig van Beethoven the visionary, the humanist, and European by conviction, is now more relevant than ever. Beethoven was already considered a legend in his lifetime: an artist who challenged boundaries in his artistic radicalism, composing contrary to tact and decorum, and having enthralled the masses in doing so. Up until today his music touches, moves, enthuses and connects people all over the globe. He was one of the first global 'mega-stars' – a fact that helps bringing him over into our time. Tracing his resonance in our present times, this is what the Beethoven-anniversary year should be all about.“

The event programme BTHVN2020, coordinated by the **Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH**, stands under the motto of 'rediscover Beethoven' and spans more than 300 projects all over Germany, as well as thousands of events. Bonn being the composer's birthplace is of course the center of the action.

**North Rhine-Westphalia Prime Minister Armin Laschet** said in his welcoming speech: „Beethoven was a humanist and a cosmopolitan. He embodies the DNA of Northrhine-Westphalia. With this anniversary year we want to provide a forum for the talent of a century that Beethoven was, and also feature NRW as cultural location in all its facets. There is no better spot than Bonn to do so, a town which now stands for exactly what Beethoven stood for as a person: cosmopolitanism, humanism, and visionary thinking.“

**Lord Mayor of the federal city of Bonn, Ashok Sridharan**, emphasised in his speech: „Beethoven belongs to the entire world, to all of mankind. He is the embodiment of a universal language, music, that touches and inspires people worldwide. Bonn feels obligated to address the big topics and themes of our times, given that it is the birthplace of the German constitution, being a federal city, as well as being a German city of the United Nations. These topics are the same that Beethoven faced when living in Bonn as a young man.“

Not just Bonn, but also the region had considerably inspired and characterized Beethoven over the course of the 22 years that he spent in the Rhineland: „it has been handed down that Ludwig van Beethoven returned from his excursions in a mesmerized state, and that he was continually eager to travel the region more“, **Sebastian Schuster, county commissioner of the Rhein-Sieg-District** comments. „Excitement and a joy radiating into the future are what

# BTHVN

## 2020

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the festivities shall cause, we are more than happy to contribute to this in the Rhine-Sieg-District.“

Very much in the spirit of the year's motto the top-class artistic presentations spanned a range that by far surpasses the boundaries of classical music – from jazz to world music, from instrumental virtuosity all the way to vocal excellence: the **Beethoven Orchestra Bonn** under the leadership of Bonn's **General Music Director Dirk Kaftan** played the „Leonoren“-Ouverture III op.72b and the „Chorfantasie“ op. 80. A musical collage by the renowned **British writer Paul Griffiths** reflected on Beethoven's relevance in modern times. Also performing were the **Czech Philharmonic Choir Brno (Petr Fiala**, choral conducting and production), soprano **Ilse Eerens**, pianist **Olivia Trummer** and actor **Matthias Brandt**. Modern DJ Beats and world music by **culture manager Darius Darek Roncoszek**, who in 2020 will transport his sequences and interpretations of Beethoven's works with his World Beethoven Project, closed this evening's musical balancing act during the aftershow-party.

**Malte Boecker, Artistic Director of the Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH**, also commented on the kick-off of the anniversary celebrations: „In 2020 we do not only want to cherish Beethoven's works and visions, but rather we aspire to rediscover him and make him perceptible. I sincerely hope that the richness of the jubilee programme can show that there is plentiful to discover within the realm of Beethoven and that his spirit and his artistic force are still relevant in present times.“

„A joint effort of the many partners involved has enabled BTHVN2020 in the first place. Following a long and complex planning phase, we are happy to present to the world what the jubilee year has to offer“, concluded **Ralf Birkner, Commercial Director of the Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH**.

If you wish to receive regular updates on the Beethoven anniversary (in German), please subscribe to the newsletter on: [pressoffice@bthvn2020.org](mailto:pressoffice@bthvn2020.org)

**About Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH:** *The federal government, the land of Northrhine-Westphalia, the city of Bonn and the Rhein-Sieg-district instructed the Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH, founded by the Beethovenhaus, to coordinate the 250 year anniversary as a national event with international appeal, and to shape the anniversary regarding content and to anchor the brand regionally. The contentional range spans more than 300 promoted projects. The overview of the anniversary year can viewed in the events calendar on [www.bthvn2020.de](http://www.bthvn2020.de).*