

Press Release

Beethoven - an international flagship for Bonn

Lonely Planet, tourist flows and sustainable impulses: BTHVN2020, the German National Tourist Board and the Tourismus & Congress GmbH draw a positive balance despite Corona pandemic
Bonn, April 08, 2021

Ludwig van Beethoven's birthplace Bonn is at the centre of the Beethoven anniversary, which will continue until September 2021. Despite the Corona pandemic, the Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH, which is coordinating the extensive programme, draws a positive balance.

Ralf Birkner, managing director of Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH, explains: "Through targeted international communication and cooperation with the German National Tourist Board (GNTB), we have succeeded in exploiting the unique potential of the Beethoven anniversary and creating sustainable impulses for tourism, culture and business. As the most performed classical composer in the world, Ludwig van Beethoven is thus an important flagship for Bonn, NRW and Germany, even almost 200 years after his death."



*Statue at the Münsterplatz in Bonn
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Petra Hedorfer, Chief Executive Officer of the GNTB: "The activities for Beethoven's 250th birthday and the cooperation with Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH were an excellent opportunity to effectively showcase Germany's position as the Europeans' number one international cultural travel destination with the global theme campaign 'Discover Beethoven'. By combining digital marketing tools such as virtual reality applications, social media campaigns, classic public relations, and high-profile events in the markets, we were able to generate an extraordinarily high level of attention."

Based on a cooperation agreement between Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH and the GNTB, the GNTB realised the global marketing of the Beethoven anniversary 2020. As part of the campaign, it placed relevant content in over 50 countries worldwide. In all source markets, the GNTB used modern digital forms of communication to present Beethoven's classical legacy in a contemporary way. Thereby, it successfully promoted Germany, Bonn and the surrounding area as an attractive travel and cultural destination under the sign of Beethoven.

The appointment of Bonn as one of the world's top travel destinations by tourism publishers such as Lonely Planet and Frommer's are the fruits of this far-reaching positioning. While tourist interest and thus visitor flows increased noticeably at the beginning of the festivities, the Corona pandemic limited the development of immediate effects in the course of the year. "From the beginning, we focused on long-term impulses. This strategy is now paying off particularly. The international promotion of Bonn as a cultural destination is always a long-term invest, especially for areas such as Asia and the USA. People who want to take a vacation in Europe usually plan this several months, if not years, in advance. In this way, we increase Germany's attractiveness as a long-haul destination for tourists with longer stays, more overnight stays and a high level of consumption," Ralf Birkner emphasises. Digital offers and the extension of the celebrations up to and including September 2021

are intended to provide further inspiration for visiting and travelling experiences after the Corona pandemic. Ralf Birkner further explains: "Already with the first lockdown, we signalled to our funding institutions that we will extend the timeline and allowed them flexibility and freedom to also design their projects digitally. The resulting programme for 2021 and the diverse digital offerings whet the appetite for local culture."

So, Beethoven is not only a reason to travel to the region in 2020 and 2021. Through the successful national and international application, Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH and the GNTB have created sustained attention for Ludwig van Beethoven's home.

When the GNTB chose "Beethoven" as the main theme for 2020, the recommendation of the city of Bonn and the Tourismus & Congress GmbH Region Bonn/Rhein-Sieg/Ahrweiler played a decisive role regarding an effective marketing strategy and were significantly boosted by the cooperation agreement between Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH and the GNTB. Thus, the focus on "Beethoven" moved to the centre of national and international tourism marketing. The result was a multitude of activities and cooperations in the run-up to the anniversary year – internationally by the GNTB and nationally with a wide variety of partners from the travel industry such as the RDA, the VPR, the Association of Travel Journalists, the DTV, tour operators from a wide range of sectors, Tourismus NRW, etc.

Many cornerstones were laid in this context especially at the ITB, one of the world's largest international tourism trade fairs. "The strategy has contributed to a noticeable placement of Bonn and the region as a travel destination, especially regarding culture and music. The travel industry has also responded positively and actively placed offers in their marketing tools, both nationally and internationally. This led to a noticeable effect on enquiries and bookings, which took up the ideal combination possibilities with other core themes of the region. The synergetic effects of the key theme were consequently used for these other themes and offer the possibility to establish a tourism-sustainable range of themes of interest around the key theme," explains **Udo Schäfer, Managing Director of Tourismus & Congress GmbH**.

Corona has limited the results of the commitment in parts especially with a view to the planned 2020 programme (extension 2021). "However, the placement of Bonn and the surrounding area in the travel industry via the lead theme "Beethoven" remains. In times of the pandemic, topics can continue to be planned and taken up in perspective to get through and out of this exceptional situation," Schäfer continues.

Figures - Data - Facts about the GNTB campaign "Discover Beethoven" at a glance

A microsite in seven languages provided information about the anniversary and the cultural tourism offers online at www.germany.travel/en/. The GNTB also organised social media campaigns and influencer trips worldwide. The social media activities were consolidated under the hashtag #DiscoverBeethoven.

- Around 600 **posts** on 23 market-specific GNTB Facebook pages achieved a **reach of 18.6 million** and generated **over 100,000 interactions**.

- 95 **tweets** on Twitter resulted in **800,000 impressions**.

- **360° videos** on YouTube were viewed **1.6 million times**.

With international media partner CNN, the GNTB produced five videos in the "Great Big Story" series, which were played on the global Turner network and on the GNTB's social media channels and generated around **four million impressions**.

A podcast series with six episodes in six languages told of the life of Ludwig van Beethoven and related it to Germany as a travel destination. The podcasts achieved a **reach of 4.7 million listeners**.

The publications following research trips by individual journalists as well as group press trips reached **58 million people online and offline**.

Around **900 multipliers** – including partners from the travel industry and journalists visited the 15 market-specific events and campaigns (physical, hybrid and digital events).

A virtual reality application offered more than **1,000 international** guests the unique chance to "play" excerpts from the 9th Symphony live at the piano with Beethoven. Via an augmented reality application, one could produce "live photos" with Beethoven.

***About Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH:** Beethoven's 250. anniversary is celebrated worldwide. The Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH, an affiliate of the Beethoven-Haus Foundation, is supported by the federal government, the land of North Rhine-Westphalia, the city of Bonn and the Rhein-Sieg-district and is instructed to coordinate a national program. Patron of the anniversary program with the slogan "Rediscover Beethoven" is President of the Federal Republic of Germany Frank-Walter Steinmeier. The celebrations will continue up to and including September 2021. An up-to-date overview of the projects can be found in the calendar of events at www.bthvn2020.de/en*