

## **BTHVN2020: Beethoven anniversary with international appeal, new formats, and long-term impulses despite pandemic**

**Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH draws a positive balance**

*Bonn, 16th of December 2021*



*Ralf Birkner, Managing Director of Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH (l.) and Malte Boecker, Artistic Director of Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH (r.) holding the final documentation of BTHVN2020 published today. The documentation is now available at [www.bthvn2020.de](http://www.bthvn2020.de) for free (in German only). (Image source: Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH)*

Today, one day before the 251st baptism day of Ludwig van Beethoven on 17 December 2021, the Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH, together with representatives of the public funders, drew a positive balance of the Beethoven anniversary "BTHVN2020" in a digital closing press conference.

Despite the Corona pandemic, the anniversary programme was largely realised and stimulated a contemporary engagement with Ludwig van Beethoven beyond Germany. Although many projects were delayed due to the restrictions caused by the pandemic or realised differently than planned, thanks to innovative formats and digitisation, the anniversary was able to set important artistic and socio-political impulses in motion and unfolded a great reach.

An extensive 176-page final documentation provides information on the various projects and highlights and lets funders, supporters, artists and sponsors have their say. The documentation is now available for free on the official website of the Beethoven anniversary [www.bthvn2020.de](http://www.bthvn2020.de) (in German only).

### **Nationally significant Beethoven programme**

The Corona pandemic notwithstanding, 244 projects with thousands of individual events could be realised throughout Germany from the end of 2019 up to and including September 2021 under the patronage of Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier. These include 160 of the originally planned 200 funded projects and 19 of the 23 Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH's projects. A further 65 projects were implemented under a separate federal funding programme.

In a unique alliance of the Federal Government, the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, the Federal City of Bonn and the Rhine-Sieg district, Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH received cultural funding for the realisation of the projects and marketing totalling 29.5 million euros and 1.5 million euros in material and personnel costs (15 million euros Federal Government, 10 million euros State of North Rhine-Westphalia, 3.5 million euros the City of Bonn, 1 million euros Rhine-Sieg district, 1.5 million euros material and the personnel cost subsidy City of Bonn). A total project budget of 24.2 million euros was created for the programme (funded projects: 68 per cent; own projects: 32 per cent).

The federal structure of the Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH, its decentralised and participatory funding structure with hundreds of organisers, proved to be a robust anniversary architecture that successfully defied the challenges of the pandemic. Thus, an exceptional, innovative, and multifaceted programme could be realised with the slogan "Rediscover Beethoven" under the umbrella brand "BTHVN2020".

The flexible organisational structure of Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH and the decision of the supervisory board early in the first lockdown to extend the celebrations up to and including September 2021 have made it possible further to develop the anniversary programme despite the difficult situation.

### **Anniversary with international appeal**

Programme highlights include a large anniversary exhibition in the Bundeskunsthalle, the Beethoven Pastoral Project, the BeethovenNacht powered by Telekom, the anniversary concert at Beethoven's 250th baptism day, and the European Symphony Marathon by ARTE were multiply received internationally. With extensive communication and marketing measures, the anniversary attracted much attention.

Throughout the anniversary from the end of 2019 to September 2021, more than 9,000 media reports were published in 96 countries worldwide, corresponding to a print and online reach of around 5.5 billion (social media not included). In addition, an impressive audience of 416 million people participated in the anniversary via TV and radio.

The success of the anniversary programme is also emphasised by the award of the umbrella brand "BTHVN2020" as "European Cultural Brand of the Year 2021" by the society for cultural marketing and cultural sponsoring Causales. The 40-member jury described "BTHVN2020" "as the most significant musical driving force of the last two years" and stressed the "consistent brand management with a lively brand identity".

### **Profiling Bonn and the region as Beethoven's home**

The strategic partnerships of Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH with the German National Tourist Board (GNTB) and the Tourismus & Congress GmbH of the region Bonn/Rhine-Sieg/Ahrweiler have sustainably raised the profile of Bonn as Beethoven's birthplace both nationally and internationally.

The extensive promotion strengthened the international profiles of Bonn and the region as cultural and Beethoven destinations. The nomination of Bonn among the world's top travel destinations by tourism publishers such as Lonely Planet and Frommer's are the result of this far-reaching positioning. Although the Corona pandemic has affected tourism, the sustainable tourism potential is clearly visible.

### **Sustainable impulses**

Also, at a regional level, the identification of Beethoven city and region with long-term effects on tourism have been strengthened. For example, with the installation of the Beethoven Tour in Bonn and the area, the Beethoven Hiking Trail in the Rhine-Sieg district, the relaunch of the Beethoven-Haus Museum and the establishment of the umbrella brand "BTHVN2020", that will remain the property of the Beethoven-Haus Foundation beyond the anniversary.

The five main themes of the anniversary - "Bonner Weltbürger" ("Bonn cosmopolitan"), "Tonkünstler" ("Composer"), "Humanist" ("Humanist"), "Visionär" ("Visionary") and "Naturfreund" ("Nature lover"), which make up the BTHVN logo - have successfully been used to present and communicate in a contemporary way what is still the most performed classical composer in the world today.

Under the most challenging conditions for the cultural sector, the programme set numerous cultural and socio-political impulses that will outlast the anniversary. These include hundreds of commissioned compositions, publications, audio and video contributions and much more. The Pastoral Project also produced, for the first time, a socio-political declaration by artists expressing that they want to be part of the solution for a more sustainable orientation of society and that the music business must also change sustainably.

With innovative offers such as 360° tours, augmented reality tours, digital theatre plays, hybrid and online events, which would not have existed without the anniversary, or only to a limited extent, it was possible to reach new, also international target groups. In addition, there is a range of new radio and television recordings, feature films and documentaries inspired by Beethoven.

### **Résumé of Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH and its four public funders**

In light of these events, Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH and the public funders comment as follows:

**Ralf Birkner, Managing Director of Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH:** "Together with our partners, supporters, sponsors and artists, we have succeeded, despite all adversities, in realising a perceptible anniversary with international appeal, which does credit to Ludwig van Beethoven in its creativity as well as in its resilience."

**Malte Boecker, Artistic Director of Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH:** "Together with hundreds of partners, we look back to exciting and contemporary reflections on Beethoven. Our different perspectives on the jubilarian have produced many new Beethoven images beyond the usual clichés, ensured much innovation in the classical field and reached out to new target groups."

**Dr Günter Winands, Head of Department for the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media and Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH:** "With BTHVN2020, not least with the generous support of the Federal Government, a multifaceted anniversary programme has been created that has had an impact not only in the region but also

nationwide and has received worldwide attention and recognition. This success is due to all those involved on-site, who have organised and transformed their programmes again and again with impressive creativity, extraordinary commitment and great passion for Beethoven."

**Isabel Pfeiffer-Poensgen, Minister of Culture and Science of the German State of North Rhine-Westphalia:** "The anniversary year has succeeded in bringing the personality of Beethoven very close to today's generation and time. At the same time, BTHVN2020 has underlined the value of the arts and their great vitality, especially in an enormously difficult time for culture. In this context, the dense cultural landscape of North Rhine-Westphalia offered an excellent environment in which - despite Corona - the multitude and diversity of projects from all the arts could unfold. Even after the end of the anniversary year, the traces of the many-voiced programme will continue to have an impact in North Rhine-Westphalia and thus enrich the cultural offerings for a long time to come."

**Katja Dörner, Mayor of Bonn:** "Through the Beethoven anniversary year, Bonn has been perceived internationally as a dynamic, future-oriented and sustainable city in the heart of Europe. The diverse programme had a broad impact on the city's society and brought the young Beethoven into focus - with his urge for curiosity and new horizons for artistic creativity. The anniversary year is thus also the initial spark for innovative Beethoven care, which further expands the interdisciplinary Beethoven network and profiles the city of Bonn as a future laboratory of music."

**Sebastian Schuster, District Administrator of the Rhine-Sieg district:** "Full of conviction, we have brought our characteristic profile and strengths to the Beethoven anniversary and participated with our initiatives and projects - and were rewarded in many ways. Although the joy of the anniversary was dampened by the pandemic and, in the end, also by the flood disaster in summer 2021, what remains is the positive experience of a great and joint cultural initiative."

**About Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH:** *Beethoven's 250. anniversary was celebrated worldwide. The Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH, an affiliate of the Beethoven-Haus Foundation, was supported by the federal government, the land of North Rhine-Westphalia, the city of Bonn and the Rhine-Sieg district and was instructed to coordinate a national program. Patron of the anniversary program with the slogan "Rediscover Beethoven" was President of the Federal Republic of Germany Frank-Walter Steinmeier. The celebrations continued up to and including September 2021. Further information about the anniversary at [www.bthvn2020.de/en](http://www.bthvn2020.de/en).*