

Festival of Lights 2009

Leipzig is associated with the peaceful revolution as hardly any other town. The climax of the Leipzig Autumn in '89 was the 9 October when following the prayers for peace in four Leipzig churches about 70,000 people gathered together with candles, in spite of threats to shoot at them, in order to demonstrate for more freedom in the GDR. Thousands of police and soldiers stood in readiness. However, the demonstration went off peacefully. The events in Leipzig thus became the decisive event on the way to the collapse of the wall and German reunification.

With the „Leipzig Uprising - 20 Years of Peaceful Revolution and European Unity “ the city commemorated the 20th anniversary on 9 October. Following the prayers for peace in the church of St. Nicolas the City and Location Marketing of Leipzig Tourismus und Marketing GmbH (LTM) in cooperation with the city of Leipzig and the Initiative Autumn '89 organised a worthy memorial. The memorial "Light Festival" route with about 20 stages dealt with the historical incidents in an artistic manner and thus made history come alive.

Under the organisational management of the City and Location Marketing audio, video and lighting events were presented on 9 October along the historical demonstration route. The installations stood for unity, freedom and overcoming borders. They followed in dramatic manner the demonstrations of 1989. The memorial route itself was divided into stages: From Augustusplatz it went along the inner circular road up to the former Staasi headquarters, where today the museum in the "Round Corner" stands. The sections of the route were dedicated to the thematic subjects of insecurity, breakthrough, passage to freedom and break-up.

Since the Festival of Light included not only the peaceful revolution of 1989 and the urban planning context but also the European dimension, international partner towns and promoters also took part with their own contributions. As preparation for the memorial celebration, the Leipzig citizen Jürgen Meier organised about 20 artists with the themes of freedom, democracy, non-violence and citizens' involvement.

The City and Location Marketing of Leipzig took over the complete organisation for the Light Festival. Apart from the concept and planning, above all the speeches and coordination of the partners and sponsors as well as engaging the artists and the organisational management on the day itself were included in their work. Targeted public relations and media information were also the work of „Leipzig Freedom“. Those responsible mastered the baptism by fire bravely: Already at the premiere – the "Night of Candles" on 9 October 2007 – thousands of Leipzig citizens came to the St. Nicholas churchyard to light an illuminated "89" with their candles. In 2008 they also filled the square in the Leipzig city centre completely and provided a worthy memorial including light-shows, documentary and musical contributions.

