

Festival of Lights 2010

Leipzig Celebrates "20 Years of German Unity" with the Arts and Citizens' Project: Leipzig Festival of Lights

On 9 October the Leipzig Festival of Lights invites everyone to collective commemoration and active participation. On the occasion of "20 Years of German Unity" the arts and citizens project of Leipzig Tourismus und Marketing GmbH (LTM) of the city of Leipzig and the initiative "Day of the Peaceful Revolution – Leipzig 9 October 1989" will take place at Augustusplatz between 8 p.m. and about 9.30 p.m. The concept unites thereby various projects to one overall dramaturgy: Sound and music elements will combine with lighting effects as well as the illuminated "89" into an event full of atmosphere.

Projects within the concept

In accordance with the successful concept, the Augustusplatz as historical location is once again the venue for activities. Again the arts are the medium and, as in 1989 the people themselves play the main roles. The connecting moment is a dense, continuous sound underlay from the artist Marek Brandt who had already produced one of the installations for the Festival of Lights 2009. The organist Jürgen Wolf (Cantor of the St. Nicholas Church) and Prof. Domenico Tagliente of Vienna will provide musical bridging, connecting Leipzig with Berlin. Both improvise simultaneously on well-known musical themes by Johann Sebastian Bach on organs in the St. Nicholas Church and in Berlin. This artistic project, which makes the historical relationship between Leipzig and Berlin a vital musical experience will be broadcast live. The music of today plays a further role. Singer and songwriter Rolf Stahlhofen, founding member of the group "Söhne Mannheims" will perform together with artists from various nations. His song "Zeit was zu ändern" ("It's Time for Change") will be presented in various languages. After this the elements will join together in a combined artwork: The forceful organ sounds from Jürgen Wolf will combine with the pop music of Rolf Stahlhofen and a laser performance, producing an acoustic and visual affiliation.

Candles were the dominant theme in the autumn of 1989 in Leipzig and in 2007/2008 the citizens of Leipzig came to the St. Nicholas church yard for a "Night of Candles". This year too, the medium is light. Parallel to the artistic impressions, guests of the Festival of Lights are invited to create with their candles a resplendent „89“.

Leipzig Festival of Lights: Concept with a Future

Last year Leipzig commemorated the Peaceful Revolution for the first time with a Festival of Lights at Augustusplatz and the inner city ring, where about 140,000 Leipzig citizens and guests of the city commemorated the events of 20 years ago. The Festival of Lights mastered the premier with flying colours – and the concept became a long-term approach. The Leipzig Festival of Lights is included in the plans until the 25th jubilee of the Peaceful Revolution in 2014. A continuation of the arts and citizens' project at historical locations within a European context is planned. The choice of artists is based on each of the focal themes and defines the content framework for citizen participation.

Background

After prayers for peace in four Leipzig churches on 9 October 1989, in spite of threatened orders to shoot, about 70,000 people with candles gathered in Leipzig to demonstrate for more freedom in the GDR. Several thousand policemen and soldiers stood by in the city. However, the demonstration went off peacefully. This is how the events of the Peaceful Revolution became the remarkable event as milestone on the road to the collapse of the Berlin wall and German unity.

