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'89



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Leipziger Freiheit

Leipzig Tourismus
und Marketing GmbH

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6 July 2011

Creating a bridge between Leipzig and Danzig: Leipzig's Festival of Lights remembers, in Germany and Poland, the autumn of '89

It is tradition that the Leipzig Festival of Lights, a project uniting art and the people of Leipzig, invites all to the Augustusplatz on 9 October. But in 2011, for the first time ever, the event will also create a bridge within Europe: in Leipzig and Danzig people will simultaneously remember the events of autumn '89 as they actively join in the festival. Both cities will confront issues like liberty, solidarity and civic engagement.

On the evening of 9 October in the Polish Baltic Philharmonic Danzig a special concert commemorating the anniversary of the Peaceful Revolution will take place. The orchestra will play under the direction of Jürgen Wolf, Cantor of Leipzig's St. Nicholas Church and Musical Director of the Festival of Lights. The programme is to include works by Polish and German composers.

Simultaneously, in Leipzig the historically resonant Augustusplatz will again take centre stage. There, participants can experience a video performance, projected in large-scale format onto the façade of Leipzig's opera house. The Festival's Artistic Director, Jürgen Meier, will connect historical points of reference from Danzig and Leipzig with current perspectives and integrate these into a live screening of the Danzig concert. All festival visitors are warmly invited to create a glowing '89 on the Augustusplatz with candles. The concertgoers in Danzig will, at the same time, be able to gain impressions of the events in Leipzig via a live screening.

The Festival of Lights is presented by Leipzig Tourism and Marketing (LTM) GmbH in cooperation with the City of Leipzig and the initiative "Day of the Peaceful Revolution – Leipzig 9 October 1989". The Polish Institute in Leipzig has provided considerable support in terms of liaison with the Polish partners and coordination of the activities in Danzig. The Festival of Lights has already received a great deal of attention from neighbouring Poland and is receiving top level support: festival patrons include, among others, Mieczyslaw Struk, Marshall of Voivodeship Pomerania, and Paweł Adamowicz, Mayor of Danzig. In addition, this collaborative Festival of Lights has been recognised as an official project by the Polish Presidency of the European Council (1 July – 31 December 2011). An invitation has been issued by Germany's Consulate General in Danzig to a concert and an official reception honouring the Day of German Unity.



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For a United Europe

2011 marks the 20th anniversary of the signing of the German-Polish Neighbourhood Treaty. Leipzig's Festival of Lights picks up as a theme the events that led to the political system change in neighbouring Poland, which had a decisive meaning for the developments in Germany and Europe. The wave of developments, which began in Poland, spread and continued to gather impetus in the former GDR, will be made symbolically visible in Leipzig's Festival of Lights.

Leipzig, City of the Peaceful Revolution

Leipzig has for many years cultivated a culture of active remembrance of the autumn of '89. Among the most important events on the key date of 9 October are the traditional prayer for peace and the address on democracy. The element of light has, since 2007, continued to play a part – then and also in the following year the LTM GmbH held a “Night of Candles”.

In 2009 for the first time a Festival of Lights commemorated the Peaceful Revolution. On that occasion around 150,000 Leipzig citizens and visitors took to the Augustusplatz and the inner city Ring in remembrance of the events that took place 20 years ago. After the successful premiere of the festival in 2009, and a moving Festival of Lights in 2010 commemorating “20 Years of German Unity” and including an organ concert in Berlin, this year follows with the creation of a bridge to Poland. Strategically, the festival continues up until 2014 with the defined themes of Hungary (2012), the Czech Republic (2013) and the 25th anniversary of the Peaceful Revolution (2014). The continuation of artistic and citizen-based projects at historical locations within a European context is foreseen.

Danzig, City of Liberty

In 1980 in Danzig (Gdańsk), Europe's unparalleled Peaceful Revolution began with the strikes in the city's docks led by Lech Walesa, and the emergence of the people's movement, Solidarnosc. The events became the first milestone on the way to the autumn revolution of 1989 in Europe, which led to the collapse of the communist system and ultimately brought to an end an era of a divided Europe. Each year, Danzig celebrates the memories of August 1980 with a “Festival of Liberty”.

You can find further information on the internet at: www.leipzig.de;
www.leipziger-freiheit.de; and www.herbst89.de.



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Statements from the Press Conference Participants

Burkhard Jung, Mayor of the City of Leipzig:

“This year marks the 20th anniversary of the signing of the German-Polish Neighbourhood Treaty. In recognition of this, this year’s Festival of Lights is dedicated to the political system change that took place in Poland, and its meaning for the subsequent developments in Germany and Europe. With the Festival of Lights we will celebrate simultaneously in Danzig and Leipzig the now grown-up German-Polish partnership, and in doing so send a strong, positive signal to the world. To achieve this we are working closely with Leipzig’s resident Polish Institute, which has made a key point of bringing the Polish culture to the people and consolidating the German-Polish relationship.”

Maciej Buczkowski, Deputy Director in the Danzig Mayoral Chambers:

“When Leipzig approached us some months ago with the idea of a combined Festival of Lights we agreed straight away. We liked the idea of a virtual bridge between our cities very much. Danzig sees itself as the place where the movement, which ultimately led to the fall of the Berlin Wall, originated.”

Basil Kerski, Director of the European Solidarnosc Centre (ECS):

“The European Solidarnosc Centre is concerned equally with the past as well as important questions of the future, and occupies itself with core European values like solidarity and democracy. Our contribution to the Festival of Lights therefore fits perfectly. On 9 October Leipzig and Danzig will set a standard in how stories of liberty can be told collectively.”

Tobias Hollitzer, Spokesperson for the initiative “Day of the Peaceful Revolution – Leipzig 9 October 1989”:

“In 2011 our focus is on the European dimension of the Peaceful Revolution in Europe. I believe that with this and the further nation-themed Festivals we will be able to make European history increasingly accessible and recreate the old tradition of solidarity, as prevailed in 1989.”



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Agnieszka Surwillo-Hahn, Deputy Director of Leipzig's Polish Institute:

“The creation of a bridge between Leipzig and Danzig is important because it now gives us the possibility of nurturing a common culture of remembrance. We are able to point out that values like liberty, democracy and solidarity are not just a matter of course, but that just a few years ago people had to take a stand for them and in doing so put themselves at great risk.”

Volker Bremer, Manager of LTM GmbH:

“If the Festival of Lights was up until this point focused on Leipzig as the event location, we are now building a bridge to our neighbour, Poland. We are impressed by how much political support we have received from Danzig and are looking forward to a Festival of Lights of so far unprecedented international renown.”

Marit Schulz, Marketing Manager and Official Representative of LTM GmbH/Manager of Leipzig's Festival of Lights:

“More than a year ago I began talks with the Polish side of things. Since then a partnership has developed, which has exceeded even my expectations. The German-Polish project team has learnt a great deal from each other and has – without a doubt – grown closer together.”



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Festival of Lights Programme on 9 October 2011 in Danzig and Leipzig

Danzig

Polish Baltic Philharmonic Danzig

8 pm:

Salutations from the Danzig patrons, Marshall
Mieczyslaw Struk and Mayor Paweł Adamowicz

Concert:

Works by Penderecki, Górecki, Bach, Brahms
Orchestra of the Polish Baltic Philharmonic Danzig,
Conductor Jürgen Wolf, German and Polish soloists

Leipzig

Augustusplatz

8 pm:

Salutations from Burkhard Jung, Mayor of Leipzig

Video performance and live transmission of the concert
from the Polish Baltic Philharmonic Danzig

Salutations from a representative of the Republic of
Poland

Continuation of the video performance and live
transmission from Danzig

Simultaneously:

Visitors to Leipzig's Festival of Lights create a huge "89"
from candles

Grimmaische Straße/Nikolaistraße

Evening:

Installation by Norbert Meissner und Jörg Pfeiffer on the
facade of the San Remo icecream café. The projection
shows the fight for liberty of the people in Danzig,
Budapest, Prague and Leipzig.



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Further Events on 9 October

3 pm, St. Nicholas Churchyard

Opening of the open air exhibition "History from behind the Iron Curtain. Dictatorship and resistance in Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Romania and the GDR 1945 – 1989". The exhibition shows Poland's most recent history from 1945 to the present, with a particular emphasis on the Solidarnosc Movement and its effect on the geopolitical changes in Europe and the world.

5 – 6 pm St. Nicholas Church

Peace Prayer

"Do not be afraid." Sermon: Hans-Friedrich Fischer.

Music: Bach Choir of Leipzig and the Brass Ensemble of the St. Nicholas Parish.

From as early as 1982, peace, environmental, and human rights groups held prayers for peace in the St. Nicholas Church. In 1989, the church was the setting of the peace prayers and the starting point for the Monday demonstrations.

6.30 – 7.30 pm, St. Nicholas Church

Address on Democracy

Since 2001 the "Address on Democracy" in the St. Nicholas Church has been one of the highlights of the "Autumn '89" celebrations. Each year on 9 October a representative of an administrative organ of the Federal Republic of Germany speaks. This year, for the first time, a key figure from the Republic of Poland will deliver a speech.

From 9 pm

Following the Festival of Lights, various contemporary locations in the inner city open their doors to show exhibitions and provide other activities for visitors.



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Jürgen Meier: “Leipzig and Danzig are also connected by a shared mindset.”

Jürgen Meier, Artistic Director of Leipzig’s Festival of Lights, and Jürgen Wolf, Cantor of the St. Nicholas Church and Musical Director of the Festival of Lights, are shaping the 9 October in a visual and musical way.

What can the people of Leipzig and visitors to the city expect of the Festival of Lights on 9 October?

Jürgen Meier: “On the Augustusplatz in Leipzig we will be showing a film with historical and current material from both cities – Danzig and Leipzig in the 80’s and today. We’ll present images, some of which have never been shown here. I would like to say that the depth of the material that will be projected at the Festival of Lights has never been so great; never before have we made so much information available. We’ll project an impressive sequence of images on to the façade of Leipzig’s opera house – set to live music from Danzig. Parallels and differences between both cities will be made visible, for example in respect of the potential for violence at that time. In Danzig, on the other hand, visitors will hear the music live and see the images from Leipzig’s Augustusplatz. A shared remembrance in acoustic and visual respects.”

In what way will the music on this evening build a virtual bridge between the cities?

Jürgen Wolf: “In the course of the concert at the Polish Baltic Philharmonic Danzig works by German and Polish composers will be performed. With Bach and Brahms, Górecki and Penderecki we’ll not only bridge the distance between the countries, but also between the old and more modern.”



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We've also been able to engage soloists from Poland and Germany. Music is one of the best means of transcending borders – and this is what the Peaceful Revolution was really all about. By transmitting the Danzig concert to the Augustusplatz and integrating it with Jürgen Meier's projected images we'll also overcome the physical borders between the cities.

How do the images and the music work together?

Jürgen Meier: "They strengthen and complete each other. At the start I was sceptical about the choice of music. The works seemed to me to be, in part, very romantic, so that I found it difficult to connect them with the visual material. When put the images to various pieces of music it was then that I noticed that Brahms, for example, fits beautifully. The music is dynamic, it takes leaps, is multi-layered, gives and takes."

What is your experience of working together [with Danzig] and what are your expectations?

Jürgen Meier: "I'm really excited about it. I know Prof. Roman Perucki, Director of the Philharmonic, and felt from the first conversation that we could make this happen together. Over there they were completely open to the idea and really put everything into it. We have a great selection of music for 9 October, starting the evening off, for example, with Krzysztof Penderecki's 'Prelude for Peace'. He is one of Poland's most important living composers – and it is as if the piece were just made for our theme."

Jürgen Meier: "In working with the images it became clear to me that Leipzig and Danzig have an interconnected past and that today, for example in their self confidence as European cities, they are very similar. Both cities also have a common mindset, which among other things, has meant that we have worked together incredibly well."



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Introducing the Partners Involved

In organising Leipzig's Festival of Lights, Leipzig Tourism and Marketing (LTM) GmbH has worked together with numerous parties. The firm team for Leipzig's activities is made up of the LTM GmbH, the City of Leipzig and the initiative "Day of the Peaceful Revolution – Leipzig 9 October 1989". For 2011, the LTM GmbH would like to thank the project partners who have made the events in Danzig possible.

The Polish Institute in Leipzig

The Polish Institute is a facility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland. The Institute's task is one of cultural diplomacy in Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, and Thuringia. Its programme encompasses literature, art, film and music, educational projects, as well as discussions about historical and current socio-political topics. The German-Polish dialogue is often conducted in a European context and carried out multilaterally. The beginnings of the Institute go back to 1969, when the Polish Information and Cultural Centre on Brühl was opened under socialist rule. The Polish Institute in Leipzig is happy that Germany and Poland can together celebrate the Peaceful Revolution in Leipzig – 22 years on in a united Europe and simultaneously in Leipzig and Danzig.

The City of Danzig

With the August 1980 strikes, which, led by Lech Walesa, reached their peak in the docks of Danzig, and the emergence of the influential people's movement Solidarnosc, the City of Danzig (Gdańsk) was one of the main proponents in the history of Europe's unparalleled Peaceful Revolution. Every year Danzig celebrates and remembers 1980 with the "Festival of Liberty". Regularly recurring cultural events, like the "Solidarity of Arts Festival" or the "All about Freedom Festival", tie in with the themes of liberty and solidarity.

The City of Danzig has described Leipzig's invitation to celebrate together the Festival of Lights 2011, and in doing so the fight for liberty of its citizens, as "an honour and a pleasure".



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Voivodeship Pomerania

A "Voivodeship" is a large administrative district, along the lines of a German State. The Voivodeship Pomerania, with the capital city of Danzig, is one of Poland's 16 administrative districts. This district is run by Roman Zaborowski. He is the Voivodeship's central government representative and was named as such by the Polish Prime Minister. As Marshall, Mieczyslaw Struk heads the Executive of the Self-government of Voivodeship Pomerania.

Mieczyslaw Struk is patron of the Festival of Lights in Danzig and, alongside Mayor Paweł Adamowicz, will deliver the salutation in the Polish Baltic Philharmonic Danzig.

Polish Baltic Philharmonic Danzig

The Polish Baltic Philharmonic Danzig is the largest music institution in northern Poland. The Philharmonic Orchestra is today one of the leading orchestras in the country, and the Polish Baltic Philharmonic is a dynamic music centre of international standing. The musical stature of the orchestra has been influenced over the years by numerous renowned directors. Today, General Director Prof. Roman Perucki and Artistic Director Kai Bumann lead the body of skilled musicians. Notable ensembles, conductors and soloists have already performed in the Baltic Philharmonic, and the Danzig Symphony Orchestra has played worldwide and taken part in European festivals.

European Solidarnosc Centre (ECS)

The ECS came into being in 2007 in Danzig as an interdisciplinary institution. With a museum on trade unions, a central archive and a multimedia library it fulfils the functions of a scientific and cultural institute, as well as undertaking educational work. The Centre has two main goals: to retain the legacy of the Solidarnosc movement; and to keep the message alive in the public conscience. The ECS is also a scientific institute, concerned with the modern history of Poland and Europe as well as the history of democracy, liberty movements, justice and human rights.

German Consulate General in Danzig

The Consulate General offers a great deal for Polish citizens who are seeking information about Germany, as well as for Germans who are living in Poland, or travelling through, and have consular or legal questions. Physically the Consulate covers the administrative districts of Pomerania, Western Pomerania, Kuyavia-Pomerania, Warmia-Masuria and the northern areas of the Wielkopolska region. Alongside its consular business the Consulate is particularly active in matters concerning the economy, science and culture. Currently Joachim Bleicker is Consul General. This year the Consulate will postpone its annual celebrations for the Day of German Unity (3 October) until 9 October, when a concert and official reception will take place.



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GPEC

GPEC is the largest business venture of the Stadtwerke Leipzig Group in Poland and among the leading companies in the district heating business in the country. Together with other companies in the group, GPEC has, over recent years, become one of the largest investors in Pomerania.

GPEC is, like the Stadtwerke Leipzig, a business that closely cooperates with cities and local partners for the development of the social environment. Events that support the local economy and culture are organised as part of this cooperation. This year events are once again planned, in particular with a focus on the relationship between both countries. Among the largest of these is Leipzig's Festival of Lights, which for the first time will take place simultaneously in Danzig. In doing so, it will make clear the commonalities and potential of both cities.

EU Council Presidency

The Presidency of the Council of the European Union rotates for a fixed period: every six months the Presidency changes and is taken up by one of the EU Member States. Since 1 July 2011, the Council has been meeting under the Presidency of the Republic of Poland, when the cabinet members led by Prime Minister Donald Tusk took over the Presidency from Hungary.

Leipzig's Festival of Lights will take place under the patronage of the Polish EU Presidency and has been honoured with the use of their logo. The logo was created by renowned graphic designer Jerzy Janiszewski. He is also the 'father' of the well-known Solidarnosc logo, which the opposition strike movement used from 1980.

Initiative "Day of the Peaceful Revolution – Leipzig 9 October 1989"

The initiative "Day of the Peaceful Revolution – Leipzig 9 October 1989" belongs above all to the Leipzig citizens, organisations, institutions, museums and other groups, all of which have a direct connection to the events of autumn '89. The initiative is supported by the City of Leipzig and Leipzig Tourism and Marketing GmbH.

The initiative is committed to the remembrance of the Peaceful Revolution and in particular the role Leipzig played in this. As such the organisation is the determining force behind an active remembrance of 1989/90 as a decisive period in Germany's national history which has international significance.

Drawing on the then "Day of the decision", the initiative seeks to turn to the current challenges facing our society and send out brave signals for the shaping of the future.



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The firm Wiedenmann, and Norbert Meissner

While walking along the Grimmaische Straße into the inner city on 9 October, visitors will encounter two regular Festival of Lights participants. In 2009 the firm Wiedenmann became heavily involved in the citizen-based project. This year the business will enable the façade of their ice cream café, San Remo, which featured in the 2009 festival with a video installation, to be dealt with artistically by Norbert Meissner. His projection will take as its theme the people's fight for liberty against the communist rule of force in Danzig, Budapest, Prague and Leipzig. To do this, Norbert Meissner and Jörg Pfeiffer will bring the dates 1953, 1956, 1968, 1981 and 1989 to life and use film material that has, to date, seldom been shown. In sequences on the façade facing the Nikolaistraße, women who took part in the uprisings in Danzig will report on their experiences and perceptions of that historical time of change.



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Polish Baltic Philharmonic Danzig



European Solidarnosc Centre (ECS)



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