

BUNDESKUNSTHALLE

BEETHOVEN

World.Citizen.Music

17 December 2019 to 26 April 2020

Ludwig van Beethoven's 250th birthday in 2020 provides an occasion to celebrate and remember him with a major exhibition in Bonn, the city of his birth. The exhibition will introduce Beethoven's life, work and influence to a broad audience and scrutinise the many clichés and myths that have grown around the composer over the course of the last 200 years.

Although the key works by Beethoven are known all over the world, the public perception of the historical figure of the composer (1770–1827) remains strangely diffuse and lifeless. Featuring some 250 exhibits, the exhibition sets out to counter this and to present Beethoven 'in the round' by placing him in the context and against the backdrop of his period. This historical perspective shows just how much he was ahead of his time and allows us draw connections with the present.

The interdisciplinary exhibition is titled *Beethoven. World.Citizen.Music*.

World references Beethoven's global significance today. At the same time, the exhibition sheds light on the political and historical context of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century and the different social spheres in that period of transition on the threshold of the modern bourgeois era.

Citizen references Beethoven's position in the historical context of a society undergoing fundamental change as it gradually came to be shaped by civic and bourgeois values. In the nineteenth century, music broke out the exclusive salons of an aristocratic elite and took up residence in the new social context of glittering opera houses and concert halls, where it became a leading medium of communication. The exhibition presents these novel spaces (including coffeehouses and salons), where people met to hear music and exchange ideas.

Music references Beethoven's musical oeuvre as exemplified by key works, among them the Third Symphony, also known as the "Eroica", the "Piano Sonata No. 29", Op. 106 and the "Missa solemnis". These works do not so much mark

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the turning points in musical history in general as the watershed events within Beethoven's own life and work. At the same time, they bear witness to his artistic development, his ground-breaking style and the enormous impact of his compositions. Of particular interest here is Beethoven's working method, which can be reconstructed on the basis of the "Missa solemnis".

The exhibition presents a selection of original documents ranging from initial sketches and the original score to associated correspondence and different manuscript copies to the printing plates and the complete first edition of the work.

The exhibition is part of the events marking the anniversary year BTHVN 2020 under the patronage of Frank-Walter Steinmeier, President of the Federal Republic of Germany.

An exhibition of the Bundeskunsthalle in cooperation with the Beethoven Haus Bonn