



Fest der Freude (Festival of Joy) – 8th May 2015 – 70th Anniversary of the liberation – Free concert by the Vienna Symphony Orchestra

May 8th 2015 is the **70th anniversary** of the unconditional surrender of the German Wehrmacht. This marked the end of the Nazi regime and their criminal war of aggression and destruction. The allied troops had already liberated extermination and concentration camps, such as Auschwitz-Birkenau on 27th January 1945 and Mauthausen on 5th May 1945. The 8th of May is therefore a **day of liberation** and joy!

The Austrian Mauthausen Committee (MKÖ) is working in cooperation with the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance, the Jewish Community Vienna and GEDENKDIENTST, as well as the Austrian government and the City of Vienna, to hold a free concert of the Vienna Symphony Orchestra on

May 8th 2015, from 7.30pm at Heldenplatz (Heroes' Square), Vienna.

The **Vienna Symphony Orchestra** will play Ludwig van Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*, conducted by **Philippe Jordan** and featuring the outstanding soloists **Michaela Kaune, Anke Vondung, Burkhard Fritz** and **Gábor Bretz** and accompanied by the **Wiener Singverein**. The concert by the Vienna Symphony Orchestra will be framed by addresses given by **resistance fighter Helga Emperger, Austrian President Dr. Heinz Fischer, Austrian Chancellor Werner Faymann, Vice-Chancellor Dr. Reinhold Mitterlehner, Mayor of Vienna Dr. Michael Häupl, Vice-Mayor of Vienna Mag. Maria Vassilakou** and **Chair of the Austrian Mauthausen Committee Willi Mernyi**. The event will be moderated by **Katharina Stemberger**.

The *Festival of Joy* is both a celebration of the liberation from Nazism and a memorial event for the millions of people who were persecuted and murdered by the Nazis. We remember everybody who lost their lives in the fight against the National Socialist regime.

The victims and those who offered resistance should be honoured on this day, 8th May 2015, at the deeply symbolic Heldenplatz, and the liberators celebrated.

Until very recently, Heldenplatz was used on the 8th May each year as a meeting place for far-Right student fraternities who – under the guise of commemoration – mourned the end of the National Socialist regime. The *Festival of Joy* was established in 2013 in order to ensure the proper commemoration of the day of liberation. The first *Festival of Joy* had 10,000 people in attendance; in 2014, 12,000 people came to show their support for a worthy commemoration of May 8th.

The free concert will take place at Heldenplatz regardless of the weather. Formal seating is limited and priority is given to the elderly and those who need it most. It is not possible to reserve seating in advance. The event will be broadcast live on ORF III Culture and Information.

For further information, please contact the organiser, The Austrian Mauthausen Committee (www.mkoe.at) on +43 1 212 83 33 or via info@mkoe.at.

Further information is available online at www.festderfreude.at.