



Informations – Festival of Joy 2017

"I went – as far as I can remember – on my own to Heldenplatz. (...) And I was stood there and heard the screams and shouts and cries: Heil! Heil! Heil! I knew I didn't belong there. (...)

(Lucia Heilman on Heldenplatz on 12th March 1938 as Hitler invaded Austria)

On 8th May 2017 at 7.30pm at Vienna's Heldenplatz, the Austrian Mauthausen Committee (MKÖ), in cooperation with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, will hold the 5th Festival of Joy to commemorate and celebrate the 72nd anniversary of the liberation from National Socialism.

The festival will begin with a video message from the ambassadors of the liberating nations, the Austrian Jewish Community, the Verein GEDENKDIENT and the Documentation Centre of the Austrian Resistance.

The Wiener Symphoniker will once again perform a free concert, this year conducted by **Ádám Fischer**. The programme features **Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy's** *Violin Concerto*, interpreted by the young, award-winning violinist **Emmanuel Tjeknavorian**, as well as works by **Ludwig van Beethoven**, including the Egmont and Leonore Overtures and the concert aria "Ah Perfido" for soprano and orchestra with the Finnish singer, **Camilla Nylund**. At the end of the concert, "Ode to Joy" from Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* will be played. The concert will begin with the world premiere of a new work by the Austrian composer, **Kurt Schwertisk**, specially composed for the Festival of Joy, called "Here and Now".

This year's Festival will also feature prominent speakers, including Chancellor **Christian Kern**, Vice Chancellor **Reinhold Mitterlehner**, Vienna's Deputy Mayor **Maria Vassilakou**, Councilor **Andreas Mailath-Pokorny**, MKÖ Chair **Willi Mernyi** and survivor **Lucia Heilman**.

Lucia Heilman survived the Nazi regime together with her mother thanks to the help of a friend of her father who hid her from the Nazis. In 1938 she was on Heldenplatz when Adolf Hitler invaded Austria. She found the atmosphere there threatening, and knew that she no longer belonged. Lucia and her mother were put into a "Sammellager" (collection camp) in Vienna by the National Socialists, from where they were due to be deported. Their rescuer, Reinhold Duschka, hid them until the end of the war. In 1991, he was declared a "Righteous Amongst Nations" by the Israeli Holocaust Memorial Yad Vashem. In 2017, Lucia Heilman will once more stand on Heldenplatz, but this time as part of the the Festival of Joy, celebrating the day of liberation from the National Socialist terror regime. **Katharina Stemberger** will act as presenter for the event.

In the past four years, around 50,000 visitors have participated in the Festival of Joy, and sent a strong signal, that the 8th May deserves to be marked appropriately as a day of liberation.

ORF III will broadcast the Festival of Joy live and the ÖBB and Rail Tours will also cooperate to offer special tickets for people to attend. This year that will be an internet campaign "**Foto mit Freude**". Join us in sending a strong message of celebration on the day of liberation at foto.festderfreude.at.

For more information please contact the organisers, the Austrian Mauthausen Committee (www.mkoe.at) by telephone on +43 (0)1/212 83 33 or per email at bauer@mkoe.at.