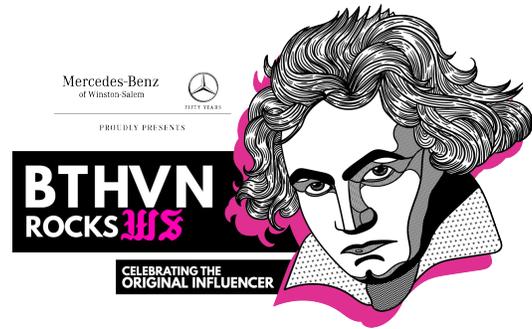


PRESS RELEASE

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Winston-Salem Arts Organizations Announce Communitywide Celebration of Beethoven in 2020

Winston-Salem, N.C., January 9, 2020 – About 30 arts organization in Winston-Salem are coming together this year in an unusual collaboration to celebrate the 250th birthday of Ludwig van Beethoven.

Beethoven Rocks Winston-Salem is part of a worldwide effort to recognize the contributions of Beethoven to music and art in its many forms. The efforts are led by the city of Bonn, Germany, which has a 365-day program of Beethoven-related events on its cultural calendar.

The Winston-Salem events series was officially announced this morning at a press conference at the Milton Rhodes Center for the Arts. Winston-Salem is believed to be the first North Carolina city to announce a series of major events to celebrate Beethoven.

“This collaboration is a grassroots effort that brings people together who are involved in every aspect of the arts in our community, including music, film, dance and literature,” said Mary Beth Johnson, one of the organizers of the effort and chief operating officer for the Winston-Salem Symphony.

“We’re still hearing from groups, and even businesses, that have heard about our plans and want to get involved,” Johnson said.

To help publicize the series, Mercedes-Benz of Winston-Salem has stepped in as the presenting sponsor. In addition to being the 250th anniversary of Beethoven’s birth, 2020 also is the 50th anniversary of Mercedes-Benz of Winston-Salem. David Neill, president of the company, said he was looking for a project that would benefit the community as a way to celebrate that milestone.

“The arts are an important part of our city’s history, and we are excited to see so many different arts organizations getting involved in this collaboration,” Neill said. “We’re helping by pulling all of these events under one umbrella and boosting their exposure to help reach a wider audience. This collaboration could be a new model for how arts programming is delivered in our city.”

The first event, *Beethoven’s Liederabend*, will be held January 16 at Wake Forest University. It will feature Steven Scheschareg, a classical artist from Vienna, Austria, and Peter Kairoff, chair and professor from the Wake Forest University Department of Music.

Organizations in addition to Wake Forest University that have events planned in 2020 include a/perture cinema, Arts Based School, Arts Council of Winston-Salem & Forsyth County, Authoring Action, Bookmarks, Camel City Jazz Orchestra, Centenary United Methodist Church, Mitchell's Piano Gallery, Moravian Music Foundation, Music Carolina, North Carolina Brass Band, Piedmont Music Center, Piedmont Opera, Piedmont Wind Symphony, Reynolda House Museum of American Art, RiverRun International Film Festival, Salem Band, Salem College, Sawtooth School for Visual Art, SECCA, Secret Artists Series, Terpsicorps Theatre of Dance, University of North Carolina School of the Arts, Wake Forest

University Department of Music, Wake Forest University Lifelong Learning Programs, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, City of Winston-Salem Recreation and Parks Department, Winston-Salem State University, the Winston-Salem Symphony and the Winston-Salem Youth Chorus.

Plans call for at least one event to be scheduled each month of 2020, said James Allbritten, the director of Piedmont Opera.

“As arts organizations, we often find ourselves competing for attention and audiences,” he said. “But Beethoven Rocks Winston-Salem brings us all together to share our admiration for Beethoven and to recognize his enduring legacy.”

For a list of upcoming events, go to <http://MBWSPresents.org>.

About Beethoven Rocks Winston-Salem 2020

Beethoven Rocks Winston-Salem is a year-long, citywide festival that brings together about 30 arts organization to recognize Ludwig van Beethoven’s contributions to music. For more information and a schedule of events, visit <http://MBWSPresents.org>.

About Mercedes-Benz of Winston-Salem

Founded in 1970, Mercedes-Benz of Winston-Salem is a J.D Powers Dealer of Excellence serving the greater Winston-Salem area. Recognized among the Best of the Best Mercedes-Benz dealers in the country, Mercedes-Benz of Winston-Salem is celebrating the 50th anniversary of its founding by serving as the presenting sponsor of Beethoven Rocks Winston-Salem. For more information about Mercedes-Benz of Winston-Salem, visit <http://www.mbwinstonsalem.com>.

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