SHALOM-MUSIK·KOELN

presseinformation

“There should be something like this more often!" Enthusiastic reactions greeted the successful festival **premiere of SHALOM-MUSIK.KOELN**. For one week, visitors were able to experience Jewish music throughout Cologne. The new festival focuses on versatility and building bridges between different musical styles - from classical music to klezmer and urban DJ sounds.

- **More than 8000 attendees at over 63 events at 23 venues**
- **Packed concert halls and plentiful enthusiasm at the "Long Day of Jewish Music”**
- **International guest stars in Cologne**
- **Israeli club night with acts from Berlin and Tel Aviv in cooperation with c/o pop**
- **Final concert held in the Cologne Synagogue**

"Great performers and arrangements," "surprised by the fantastic variety of Jewish music," "entertaining, and also a bit ‘Cologne’" -- enthusiastic comments like these could be often heard all over the city last week, coupled with the question, "When will there be another event like this?" Long lines in front of the venues, concerts filled to capacity, and happy artists and audience members speak for themselves. The launch of the new music festival SHALOM-MUSIK.KOELN under the patronage of NRW Minister President Hendrik Wüst was a resounding success. Between August 4 and 11, visitors had the opportunity to meet Jewish and non-Jewish musicians at locations throughout the city and embark on an extraordinary musical journey of discovery. The diverse musical offerings ranged from medieval synagogal music, to classical and folk, all the way to three world premieres of compositional avant-garde. In his welcoming address, the festival’s patron, NRW Minister President Hendrik Wüst, summed up: "The city of Cologne and the state of North Rhine-Westphalia stand for diversity and cosmopolitanism. We are proud of this. Let us work together to ensure that Jewish life is seen for what it is: a vibrant and visible part of our society and a formative part of our culture."

Musical highlights, big names and touching stories

The cultural association "Kölner Forum für Kultur im Dialog e.V." (KFKD) and the Synagogue Community of Cologne partnered to launch the new format, planned to be repeated every two years in Cologne in the future. "Our concept worked,” festival director and KFKD board chair Claudia Hessel was pleased to say. "We managed to attract a great number of people who experienced Jewish music live in the middle of the city. Some even heard it for the first time. The festival’s success proves we’re on the right track -- and we’ll continue to move ahead!" Abraham Lehrer, board member of the Cologne Synagogue Community, was also thrilled with the positive response: "We are very happy about this great success, because we were able to reach many people and bring them closer to a part of our Jewish culture."

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The theme of the first edition was "Faith," and encompassed Jewish motifs of both mourning and joy. The diverse program offered plenty of musical highlights, big names and touching stories, starting with the opening concert, with the participation of the Minister for Federal and European Affairs, International Affairs and Media and Head of the State Chancellery of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia Nathanael Liminski, and the performance by trumpeter Avishai Cohen's world-famous jazz quartet in the Cologne Flora, which was sold out to the last seat. All other events, which included internationally renowned stars such as baritone Dietrich Henschel, vocalist Sharon Brauner, Cologne opera singer Dalia Schaechter and the theater magician Adrian Schvarzstein, could be attended free of charge - an offer that guests from Cologne and throughout North Rhine-Westphalia gladly took advantage of. In particular, the "Long Day of Jewish Music" with its 17 programs, in which almost 70 Jewish and non-Jewish artists participated, attracted more than 5,000 people.

Israeli electro-pop, music theater in the streetcar and Klezmer star as surprise guest

In an unusual format developed in cooperation with c/o pop and also very well attended was the Israeli club night in Cologne-Ehrenfeld offered electro-pop from Berlin and Tel Aviv with Ryskinder and The White Screen. With their unique mix of modern sounds and Hebrew vocals, the young musicians represent the current trends in Israeli-Jewish pop culture. A very special musical theater performance was presented by street theater magician Adrian Schvarzstein and the "Camerata dei Folli" from Vilnius. Dressed in clothes from the 1930s, they surprised the passengers in the KVB "Schalömchen-Bahn" with music, dance, and song. The musical journey through time lasted as far as Frechen and ended with a surprise concert in front of the former synagogue.
An acclaimed performance of Jewish tango was presented by the trio Picon, who brought Germany's top klezmer clarinetist, Helmut Eisel, as a surprise guest.
Needless to say, the conclusion of this diverse festival was also something special. In the finale of SHALOM-MUSIK.KOELN in the Cologne Synagogue, the ensemble La Morra, led by harpsichordist and flutist Corina Marti, went in search of traces of early Jewish music from the 15th and 16th centuries in Spain, Italy, Germany, and Poland. In attendance were, among others, André Kuper, President of the North Rhine-Westphalia State Parliament, Cologne's Lord Mayor Henriette Reker and Anne Henk-Hollstein, Chairperson of the Rhineland Regional Assembly.
Ulrike Neukamm and Thomas Höft, who were responsible for the program, were delighted with the "unbelievably enriching encounters with the audience and musicians, and about the many positive responses."
Norbert Oberhaus, head of c/o pop, agrees: "The success of the Israeli club night at the SHALOM-MUSIK.KOELN festival proved that the fusion of the most diverse cultural influences between Tel-Aviv and Berlin not only works, but also resonates with the Cologne festival audience.

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"Enthusiasm for Jewish music is the best protection against anti-Semitism"

Cologne's Lord Mayor Henriette Reker was also enthusiastic about the festival and is looking forward to the next edition in two years: "Cologne has once again shown what a diverse and open city it is. I am proud that so many citizens enjoyed attending this Jewish music festival. It was clearly the right decision to support the Cologne Forum for Culture in Dialogue and provide an opportunity for exchange following the Jewish festival year. Because enthusiasm for Jewish culture is the best protection against anti-Semitism. The festival confirms once again that Jewish culture belongs to Cologne. It deserves a prominent place in the cultural calendar of this city."

In a very emotional email, an American who has lived in Cologne for more than 30 years thanked the festival organizers from the bottom of her heart for this "healing moment" in her life: "I have lived here all these years with mixed feelings. But on Sunday, when I heard Jewish music filling the air all over the streets and concert halls of Cologne, played and sung by Jewish people, it felt like Jews were reclaiming their place in this city. And Cologne was welcoming them! That opened something in my heart."

Also, the expert panel discussion entitled "What is Jewish Music?" organized by the Cologne Forum for Culture in Dialogue, with musicologist and pianist Prof. Jascha Nemtsov, among others, was broadcast by WDR 3 and reached many listeners throughout NRW. You can read about it and listen to it at www.shalom-musik. koeln.

An academic conference addressing the topics of Jewish music and Jewish composers is also planned for the fall.

New music festival for Cologne and North Rhine-Westphalia

Funded by the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, the city of Cologne and the LVR, the Cologne Forum for Culture in Dialog e. V. will organize a music festival in the coming years that will bring Jewish and non-Jewish people together. The Cologne cultural association has set itself the goal of facilitating dialogue and an exchange on socially relevant topics in cooperation with public and private partners.

SHALOM-MUSIK.KOELN is supported by the Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, the City of Cologne and the LVR. Cultural partner is WDR3.

PHOTOLINKS

https://www.dropbox.com/s/z99evr6kgs42r9f/Shalom-Musik.Koeln_Fotos_PM_Abschuss.zip?dl=0

More information at www.Shalom-Musik.koeln and at

https://www.facebook.com/forumkulturdialog.koeln

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