

## **The Festival Centre Becomes Reality**

### **Dr. Hans-Peter Wild Enables the Construction of a Glass Pavilion and Event Location on Herbert-von-Karajan-Platz**



Donor Dr. Hans-Peter Wild (2nd from right) with the Board of Directors: Lukas Crepaz, Executive Director; Festival President Kristina Hammer, Artistic Director Markus Hinterhäuser (left to right)

“Thanks to the largest donation from a private patron in the history of the Salzburg Festival, we will create a new and vibrant space for encounters amidst the historical heart of our city. A place where a transparent pavilion allows insights into the Festival’s inner workings throughout the year, and where daily life and a space for the arts forge an entirely natural alliance,” says **Festival President Kristina Hammer**.

#### **A Message from Dr. Hans-Peter Wild: Launching the new Festival Centre**

It is a great honour for me to give the signal launching the construction of the new Festival Centre today! I look forward to supporting this project over the coming three years with up to 12 million Euros, for I have felt a strong connection with Salzburg since the days of my youth.



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My parents attended the Festival regularly and often took me along to Salzburg. To this day, I try to visit the Festival every year. In the meantime, as you may know, I have also purchased the two hotels Schloss Mönchstein and Goldener Hirsch in Salzburg, so my relationship with this city has become even closer.

The major project “Festival District 2030” was born as part of the celebrations marking the Salzburg Festival’s centenary. The fact that today’s ceremony marks the launch for building the Festival Centre grew from many conversations with Kristina Hammer and her team, and is surely a milestone for the City of Salzburg as well.

The redesign and expansion of the entire Festival District moves the Festival into its second century, preparing and equipping it for future challenges.

The high esteem which the arts are held in here in Salzburg can be preserved and even extended by this monumental undertaking. I am convinced that it will contribute to the long-term attractiveness of this city. The beautiful space around the historical Horse-Well will receive an upgrade, and guests from Austria and abroad will be able to access it in its original form.

To me, supporting the arts is very important. Unlike business, they cannot pursue only efficiency and profit. Rather, their role is to raise enthusiasm and offer inspiration through creativity and emotions. The arts need free space – in reality and mentally – to unfold their full potential. The new Festival Centre aims to contribute to this. It is intended as a place of encounters and exchange.

I am delighted that the Centre will be open year-round in the future, and it is my wish that it can be used for meetings and events outside of the Festival season, throughout the year. This is one of the potential uses of the hall envisioned for its basement floor. I wish all those involved the greatest success in implementing the new Festival Centre.



Rendering of the design by Marte.Marte Architects



“Approaching the Festival Centre, the massive entrance gates are visible from afar, shimmering in brass hues, marking the transition into the world of the ‘Salzburg Festival’ like pillars. Visitors enter the new ‘Festival room’, which presents as an abstract composition of individual sculptural elements, flanked by ‘wall panelling’ reminiscent of a living room and complemented by the reopened gate in the back wall. In its midst, a glass pavilion welcomes not only visitors to the Salzburg Festival, but all those traversing the beautiful historical city centre of Salzburg in search of discoveries,” says **Stefan Marte of Marte.Marte Architects**.

### **The History of the Herbert von Karajan-Platz From Vision to Implementation of the Festival Centre**

In 1640, invalids sought help at the hospital on Spitalplatz; later, scholars crossed Studentenplatz, heading for the university of the Benedictines; then farmers weighed their harvest on Heuwaagplatz, until the square was renamed Siegmundsplatz, in honour of Prince-Archbishop Sigismund III. Since 1991, the citizens of Salzburg have known it as Herbert von Karajan-Platz.

Directly adjacent to the Festspielhaus and Felsenreitschule, during the Festival weeks, thousands of arts lovers from all over the world congregate here – for the rest of the year, however, little is felt of these jostling crowds.

One reason is that outside its own events, the Salzburg Festival has never had a place which would invite visitors to pass the time, enabling intense exchange.

Therefore, it has long been a cherished goal of the Salzburg Festival to turn this once-so-central square immediately outside our performance venues into a vibrant meeting point available year-round to all the inhabitants and visitors to our city, by building a new Festival Centre.

On the occasion of its centenary, the Salzburg Festival therefore initiated an international competition to implement such a building. The winning design, chosen by the jury and created by Marte.Marte Architects, was presented to the public by Helga Rabl-Stadler, the Festival’s President at the time, in early 2020, shortly before the pandemic struck. It foresaw “revolving gates with a brass shimmer” leading into the inner courtyard between the Pferdeschwemme (Horse-Well) and the Schüttkasten, where “a rectangular glass pavilion” would house a modern information centre, while a café open to the street on summer days would create a low-threshold interface between daily life and high culture.

These plans met with great enthusiasm. However, even at the time it was clear that a new Festival Centre would never be able to be financed from the existing budget. “It is my greatest goal to finance this building through private funding. After all, we urgently need our public funding for the imminent general overhaul of our Festival theatres,” Rabl-Stadler explained.

In early 2020, it did not seem unrealistic to hope that the centenary celebrations might encourage sufficient patrons of the arts to enable such a “great gift to all the Festival’s visitors”. Therefore, project planning was tackled, with substantial support – not only of the financial kind – from the Association of Friends and Supporters of the Festival, and Marte.Marte Architects, the team of Executive Director Lukas Crepaz and the Project Manager Michael Brandauer worked assiduously to obtain a building permit. Even during the pandemic, after the consent of the Federal Landmark Commission and the Expert Commission on the Preservation of the Historical City Centre had been secured, the Building Authority granted the building permit in the autumn of 2020.

However, the pandemic and its attendant insecurities dampened the ambitious financing goals of the Salzburg Festival.

In early 2022, Kristina Hammer took over the position of President. With her background in business, where relationships and encounters with customers, guests and audiences are an equally important issue, she was immediately convinced that this project offered a unique chance for the Festival to attain the even broader opening she had envisioned from the start.

“We consider it an opportunity to create a space for encounters with the Festival for all citizens and visitors to this city, a space that is open all year round,” says Hammer. “A place where daily life and space for the arts combine in an entirely natural way, and where we can bring our programmes and values even to those who have not yet been in contact with the Festival.”



Rendering of the design by Marte.Marte Architects

On the basis of the existing concept, the Directorate refined the possible usage of the Festival Centre once more. The result is an open suite of spaces with flexible functionality, inviting discovery and equally able to host encounters as well as events, lectures, multimedia presentations, receptions, panel discussions and readings.

With this concept in hand, the President once again went in search of sponsors or donors. And found one who wished to share this vision. On 19 May, Kristina Hammer is able to make this public announcement, on behalf of the Directorate: "We will build this Festival Centre."

At the same time, she presents the man who makes this endeavour possible: Hans-Peter Wild, a Swiss entrepreneur with German roots, has been attending the Festival since his childhood and has long been one of its important donors.

Hans-Peter Wild will provide a sum of 12 million Euros in total for the construction of the new Festival Centre – the largest donation from a private patron in the history of the Festival so far.

The Directorate of the Salzburg Festival thanks Dr. Hans-Peter Wild for his generous contribution, which it considers a gift not only to the Festival, but to the city as a whole.



from left: Festival President Kristina Hammer; Donor Dr. Hans-Peter Wild; Artistic Director Markus Hinterhäuser; Executive Director Lukas Crepaz

"The arts and culture are fundamental; they are essential for our lives. This essentiality goes far beyond the parameters of daily life. In an unprecedented manner, we are confronted with the phenomenon that proximity can only be created through distance. We need the arts and culture more than ever, more urgently than ever. They are what make human beings human. With the new Festival Centre, we wish to invite visitors to experience what we have to share all year round. People don't want to be picked up, they want to be invited, and thanks to Hans-

Peter Wild's generous donation, this place becomes a new space for encounters," says **Artistic Director Markus Hinterhäuser**.

"Our heartfelt thanks to Dr. Hans-Peter Wild for making it possible to build the Festival Centre we began planning during our centenary with his extremely generous donation. This will upgrade the entire district, both in terms of function and urban design. Once construction begins after the 2024 Salzburg Festival, this will be a brilliant start for our major project 'Festival District 2030'," says **Lukas Crepaz, Executive Director of the Salzburg Festival**.

The Salzburg Festival thanks all its supporters and sponsors, the Association of Friends and the public authorities for their long-term, continuous funding, enabling both the presentation of the artistic programme and the extraordinary investments of the project Festival District 2030.



Donor Dr. Hans-Peter Wild © Photo: private

### **Dr. Hans-Peter Wild: Curriculum Vitae**

The Swiss entrepreneur Dr. Hans-Peter Wild first studied law at the universities in Munich, Tübingen and Heidelberg, graduating with distinction. He then studied economics at the Mannheim University. Wild completed a doctoral thesis at the law faculty of the Mannheim University on "The Market-Dominant Company under French Law" and was awarded the title Dr. iur. in consequence.

### **The Entrepreneur**

After completing his studies, Dr. Hans-Peter Wild first gathered external experience before joining his father's company in 1974, when this was essentially manufacturing basic materials and machines as well as machinery for the German beverage industry.



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Dr. Wild expanded the business in basic materials by acquiring F&C International in Cincinnati, turning the brand Wild Flavors GmbH, headquartered in Zug, Switzerland, into one of the world's leading manufacturers of natural flavourings for the food industry. In addition, he expanded the worldwide business with Capri-Sonne.

The fruit juice products branded as Capri-Sonne, or Capri-Sun today, have been produced in Eppelheim since 1969, and have a presence in more than 100 countries today under various licensing agreements. Wild owns 100% of the company.

His Family Office in Zug is currently responsible for asset management as well as direct investments in established companies and start-ups, especially in the biotechnology and technology sector. This also includes Tokomak Energy, the first company in the world to generate a plasma temperature of 100 million degrees on 22 February 2022, corresponding to approximately six times the temperature of the sun's inner core.

### **Social Responsibility**

Dr. Hans-Peter Wild feels responsible not only for his companies, but also to society – both regionally and globally. Therefore, Dr. Wild is the chairman of the charitable foundation Leonie-Wild-Stiftung, which he founded together with his mother in 1997. In June 2006, the city of Eppelheim appointed him an honorary citizen for his achievements as a businessman and his regional social philanthropy.

In gratitude and acknowledgment of the liberation of Germany from the Nazis in 1945, Dr. Wild donated 16 million dollars to the US Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation, enabling about 300 children of Marines to pursue university studies.

Dr. Wild continues to provide significant long-term support for projects at the universities in Heidelberg and Mannheim. He helps both universities attract top scientists, thereby further increasing their international standing. In 1996, Dr. Hans-Peter Wild was named an honorary senator of the Ruprecht Karl University of Heidelberg; in 2021, he was honoured in the same way by the Mannheim University. In Switzerland, Dr. Wild supports mainly medical projects at the Zurich University, as he does at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in the USA.

Dr. Wild also offers support to multiple cultural projects. The spectrum ranges from support for highly talented young musicians to projects with a global effect – such as the construction of the Salzburg Festival Centre.

Photographs from the press conference are available here:

<https://www.salzburgerfestspiele.at/en/photos/press-conference-the-festival-centre-becomes-reality>