

PRESS RELEASE

Bertelsmann Hosts ‘Blue Sofa Gütersloh’ Featuring Elke Heidenreich

- **The author, literary critic, and librettist discusses her lifelong themes of music and literature at the Gütersloh Theater**
- **Marc-Aurel Floros to accompany her at the piano**
- **Tickets for the event on November 27, 2019 are now available**

Gütersloh, October 28, 2019 – The international media company Bertelsmann is once again bringing a luminary from the world of literature to Gütersloh: This time, the featured guest on the “Blue Sofa,” one of Germany’s most long-standing and successful literary formats, is Elke Heidenreich. The event marks the sixth time the Blue Sofa has been held at the theater in Gütersloh. After bestselling authors including Hans-Josef Ortheil, Wladimir Kaminer, and Dörte Hansen, the popular writer, literary critic, journalist, and opera librettist Elke Heidenreich is now taking a seat on the Blue Sofa in Gütersloh to discuss her great themes of music and literature. She will be reading from her latest work, “Lebensmelodien – Eine Hommage an Clara und Robert Schumann,” an audiobook published in September to mark the bicentenary of Clara Schumann’s birth.

Heidenreich says of the pianist and composer who was born in Leipzig on September 13, 1819: “It is interesting to see what this strong woman achieved. She supported the Schumann family, which had many children, from her work as a successful pianist, while her husband Robert was tormented by depression and self-doubt.”

The pianist and composer Marc-Aurel Floros, who musically “delves” into the madness of the ill Robert Schuman in the audiobook, will play the piano accompaniment to the program under the heading “Texte und Töne” (Texts and Sounds) at the Gütersloh Theater. Elke Heidenreich will also read texts about music from her earlier books “Passione,” “Ein Traum von Musik,” and “Katzenmusik und Katerstimmung.” The evening will be emceed by Hans-Dieter Heimendahl, Program Director of Deutschlandfunk Kultur.

Karin Schlautmann, Head of Corporate Communications at Bertelsmann, said: “The ‘Blue Sofa Gütersloh’ has become established as a cherished popular literary format in this region. We are delighted by its continuing popularity and are sure that in Elke Heidenreich we have once again won a very special guest. As an award-winning author and passionate literary critic, she has inspired more people to read books than almost anyone in Germany. She will also be demonstrating her love of music on the Blue Sofa. By hosting the literary-musical evening at the Gütersloh Theater, Bertelsmann is once again making a contribution to cultural diversity and the joy of reading in the region.”

For years, Bertelsmann has been engaged in a variety of cultural initiatives – locally, in Germany, and internationally. The Group’s “Culture@Bertelsmann” activities comprise exhibitions, readings and concerts, the “Blue Sofa” literature format created jointly with partners, as well as a commitment to preserving Europe’s cultural heritage.

Bertelsmann supports "The Blue Sofa Gütersloh" as part of its cultural sponsorship program in the city. The event is organized by the Theater in Gütersloh e.V. (Society of Friends of the Gütersloh Theater). Thorsten Wagner, Chairman of the Theater in Gütersloh e.V., said: "Elke Heidenreich is a wonderful communicator of culture. In Gütersloh she will combine literary texts and music in her own way with Marc-Aurel Floros. A dream lineup in our city of literature and books."

Elke Heidenreich is a true all-rounder. Her radio career began in 1972 as a presenter for Südwestfunk's "Literaturmagazin"; from 1976 to 1987 she explained the world as "Else Stratmann," a butcher's wife from Wanne-Eickel. She has presented countless TV and radio broadcasts and talk shows, and written radio and television plays, radio features, and columns. Her literary debut "Kolonien der Liebe" (Colonies of Love) was published in 1992, and almost all of her books and audiobooks since then have become bestsellers. With her literary TV program "Lesen!" (Read!) which ran from 2003 to 2008, and as a regular guest on Switzerland's "Literaturclub," Heidenreich became an influential ambassador for literature. From 2005 to 2006, Heidenreich edited an edition of 26 literary titles for the women's magazine "Brigitte." The series had a total print run of almost two million copies. From 2009 to 2013 she published the Edition Elke Heidenreich with C. Bertelsmann. It comprised some 40 novels and nonfiction books on the subject of music.

Marc-Aurel Floros is a composer, pianist and arranger. He composes music for large orchestras, chamber music ensembles, and solo instruments. His music is captivating for its profundity and seeks to speak directly to listeners. In his compositions he paints worlds of sound, landscapes of fascinating contrasts – his music tells stories. Floros has worked with Elke Heidenreich several times to bring literature and music together.

Hans-Dieter Heimendahl worked as a journalist for various broadcasting stations and newspapers, including the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Berliner Zeitung*, and *taz*, before completing a traineeship at the Sender Freies Berlin radio station, where he worked as a cultural editor and presenter, and at Radio Multikulti. In 1999, he moved to Radio Bremen, where he became Deputy Program Director in 2001. Since 2012, he has served as Head of Cultural Programming at Deutschlandradio Kultur and as Head of Programming since 2016.

The following works of Elke Heidenreich will be featured:

"Lebensmelodien – Eine Hommage an Clara und Robert Schumann," Random House Audio, 2019

"If you know more about the life of composers, you listen to their music differently. If you know what a difficult person Robert Schumann was, how his wife Clara had to fight for an independent life and work, how intimate their friendship with the young Johannes Brahms was – then you suddenly begin to feel all this in their music, too." The audiobook was published by Random House Audio in September 2019 to mark the bicentenary of Clara Schumann's birth.

"Katzenmusik und Katerstimmung. Tierisch-musikalische Geschichten," with illustrations by Rudi Hurzlmeier, btb, 2013

"What the devil is to the violin, the house cat seems to be to the piano," writes Bruno Aulich in "Mondscheinsonate und Katzenfuge" (Moonlight Sonata and Cat Fugue). Elke Heidenreich knows what he's talking about: her cat Nero loved to walk across the keys at night and wake everyone up with his avant-garde music. On spring nights too, there is much caterwauling connected with the love lives of cats and territorial catfights. In short, the field of cat music is wide. From crazy caterwauling and the cat-a-tonia of hangovers to other zoo-musical conditions, this collection of cheeky, funny, unusual, and melancholic stories has it all. Also available as audiobook download, read by Elke Heidenreich, Wladimir Kaminer, Harry Rowohlt, and Jan Weiler, among others.

“Passione. Eine Ode an die Oper” (Passione. An Ode to the Opera), Hanser Verlag, 2013
Elke Heidenreich discusses the music, characters on stage, and their passion, but above all, and again and again, about listening. “The two great themes spanning the centuries are: love and death,” says Heidenreich.

“Ein Traum von Musik” (A Dream of Music), audiobook download, Random House Audio, 2010

Love and music are inseparable in Elke Heidenreich’s life. Like a leitmotif, musicians run through her (love) life, and she talks about this in her captivating and humorous way. But the audiobook’s other authors also have a very special relationship to the world of sounds and harmonies. And they are astonishing, moving, adventurous, exciting, and amusing stories, told with great candor by such diverse people as Reinhard Mey, Roger Willemssen, Heiner Geißler, Axel Hacke, Volker Schlöndorff, Christian Brückner, Maren Kroymann, and Campino, as well as many others. Also available as eBook.

The Event at a Glance

The “Blue Sofa Gütersloh” with Elke Heidenreich and Marc-Aurel Floros

Wednesday, November 27, 2019, 7:30 p.m.
Theater Gütersloh, Hall
Barkeystrasse 15, 33330 Gütersloh, Germany
Phone: +49 5241 864 244

Tickets will be available from October 28, 2019 at www.theater-gt.de
and from Gütersloh Marketing GmbH
Berliner Strasse 63, 33330 Gütersloh, Germany
Phone: +49 5241 211360
Admission: €13 (for Friends of the Theater association members: €10)

About Bertelsmann

Bertelsmann is a media, services and education company that operates in about 50 countries around the world. It includes the broadcaster RTL Group, the trade book publisher Penguin Random House, the magazine publisher Gruner + Jahr, the music company BMG, the service provider Arvato, the Bertelsmann Printing Group, the Bertelsmann Education Group and Bertelsmann Investments, an international network of funds. The company has 117,000 employees and generated revenues of €17.7 billion in the 2018 financial year. Bertelsmann stands for creativity and entrepreneurship. This combination promotes first-class media content and innovative service solutions that inspire customers around the world.

About the Blue Sofa

The Blue Sofa is the author forum jointly hosted by Bertelsmann, ZDF, Deutschlandfunk Kultur and 3sat. It has become a fixture at the book fairs in Frankfurt and Leipzig. The Blue Sofa Berlin celebrated its premiere in 2005. In 2011, Frankfurt’s Open Books reading festival opened with a Blue Sofa author’s gala for the first time. Since the 2000 Leipzig Book Fair, almost 2,800 discussions with authors have taken place on the Blue Sofa, including with Nobel Prize laureates Olga Tokarczuk, Svetlana Alexievich, Mikhail Gorbachev, Günter Grass, Herta Müller, Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard, Orhan Pamuk, Joseph Stiglitz, Mario Vargas Llosa, and Mo Yan. Blue Sofa events have also taken place in Gütersloh since 2017

About the Theater in Gütersloh e.V. (Society of Friends of the Gütersloh Theater)

The Theater in Gütersloh e.V. played a major role in the construction of the new Gütersloh Theater. Since the theater opened, the association and its 400 members have been very active in supporting the Gütersloh Theater and its program, and getting a wide public excited about this architectural outlier in the German theater landscape. Civic engagement has a direct impact on the program through the Theater in Gütersloh e.V.

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