



Press Release – Frankfurt Music Fair

(April 2 through 5, 2019)

Berlin, March 2019

The C. Bechstein Group will again be presenting excellent business figures to Musikmesse Frankfurt (Music Industry Trade Fair): the group's turnover in 2018 reached 43 million euros. Around 4,300 instruments were sold in 140 countries. This means sales of upright and grand pianos increased by approx. 15% in 2018.

C. Bechstein shaping the future

As part of extensive restructuring within the C. Bechstein Group, the production facility in Seifhennersdorf was spun off into an independent company, the C. Bechstein Pianofortemanufaktur GmbH. In the future C. Bechstein Pianoforte AG will focus on core tasks, such as group management, marketing, sales and distribution, administration, cultural management and holding of company shares.

The C. Bechstein Group has actively expanded the global distribution network in recent months, taking additional major steps to safeguard the future: in Asia, C. Bechstein acquired long-term partner Euro Piano Japan with a C. Bechstein Center in Tokyo and a distribution network of more than 15 independent piano dealers. In China, C. Bechstein Trading Shanghai Co. Ltd. was integrated into the C. Bechstein Group with C. Bechstein Center Beijing and a network of around 40 independent dealers.

The number of German C. Bechstein centers increased to nine at the beginning of 2019 with the acquisition of Klavierhaus Glück in Kempten (Allgäu). Austria's first C. Bechstein Center was opened in Linz as a continuation of the well-known Merta piano salon. Furthermore, from May 2019 the new C. Bechstein Center Prague will be offering C. Bechstein brands' upright and grand pianos, musical instruments with the company's long tradition and rich heritage, being then also available in the Czech capital.

The highly successful concept of a selective distribution network will continue. More locations might be added when suitable. The goal is to have a continually-increasing presence with modern and well-equipped stores in the relevant markets.



C. Bechstein Digital presents a new VARIO system

“Shaping the future” – is also the motto of C. Bechstein Digital. The subsidiary of C. Bechstein Pianoforte AG will introduce a completely new generation of the C. Bechstein VARIO system for upright and grand pianos at Musikmesse Frankfurt 2019. The new VARIO system goes far beyond the well-known concept of silent pianos.

The new VARIO *duet* represents the premium development stage of the C. Bechstein VARIO system. The comprehensive sound of the C. Bechstein Digital Grand - built in the exclusive sound module, adapted to the new 256-voice polyphonic DSP hardware, with more than 1 gigabyte and well over 1,000 individual samples - guarantees a unique digital sound. In addition, new recordings of popular keyboard instruments from e-piano to harpsichord were added, optimally adjusted to the interaction with the acoustic piano.

The completely redeveloped keyboard sensors register the finest nuances of touch. The contactless optical system and the precise rebound bar (stop bar) for muting the strings do not affect the original touch of the acoustic piano.

With Bluetooth LE, the C. Bechstein VARIO also allows for creative interaction with countless MIDI applications on all current mobile platforms – ideal for practicing, learning or composing. Using the VARIO app, the system can be extensively adapted to individual sound preferences and subsequently operate comfortably even without software. Moreover, the latest smartphones, tablets and notebooks can be plugged directly into the new VARIO via USB-C – and at the same time be supplied with power.

The new C. Bechstein VARIO system will be available from fall 2019 for all C. Bechstein brand lines.



C. Bechstein developing cultural activities

C. Bechstein is also shaping the future through consistent expansion of its cultural activities. The series of C. Bechstein piano recitals in the Konzerthaus Berlin and the St. Agnes Monastery in Prague have continued with great success. Saleem Ashkar will be starting a new series of five C. Bechstein piano recitals in Brucknerhaus Linz in October 2019, to be presented in detail at the press conference for the program on April 11, 2019.

C. Bechstein successful at academies and on the concert stage

C. Bechstein instruments are increasingly being played in music academies around the world. For example, C. Bechstein has had great success participating in tenders for Eastern European music academies in recent months. In addition, Sir András Schiff selected two C. Bechstein B 212 grand pianos for the new piano course at Kronberg Academy, whereas the Royal College in London had two new C. Bechstein C 234 grand pianos delivered in February 2019.

The Nohant Festival Chopin will exclusively cooperate for the second time with C. Bechstein in 2019. Last year, among others, Itamar Golan, Andrei Korobeinikov, Seong-Jin Cho, Michel Dalberto and super virtuoso Marc-André Hamelin performed at the illustrious French festival and - after performing - praised the “brilliant”, “wonderful” and “magnificent” C. Bechstein concert grand piano.

Yet it is not just classical pianists, such as Kit Armstrong, Saleem Ashkar or Cyprien Katsaris, regularly giving concerts and making recordings on C. Bechstein grand pianos, who appreciate the extraordinary and unique C. Bechstein sound. Pianists from different musical genres, such as Malakoff Kowalski and in particular Chilly Gonzales, also have a longing for “their” Bechstein. Chilly Gonzales, for example, is giving 16 concerts on C. Bechstein pianos in 2019, in prestigious halls such as Stuttgart Liederhalle, Leipzig Gewandhaus, the Berlin Philharmonic and Munich Residence.



C. BECHSTEIN

C. Bechstein is Partner at the International German Piano Award in Frankfurt on March 31 and April 1, 2019

The International German Piano Award will be handed out again this year with the opening of the International Frankfurt Musikmesse. C. Bechstein is an exclusive partner for this meeting of top-class pianists. The six nominees for 2019 are Sergey Belyavskiy, Lika Bibileishvili, Sahun Hong, Rodolfo Leone, Luka Okros and Jeung Beum Sohn, all of them already having some initial achievements to show (right up to winning the ARD Competition). They will line up for the semifinal in Literaturhaus Frankfurt on Sunday March 31, 2019. An outstanding, high-quality jury will select the two finalists, who will then give another recital in the Literaturhaus on the morning of April 1, before a Brahms or Rachmaninov piano concert is held in the Large Hall of the Alte Oper in the evening within the framework of a festive concert, in conjunction with the Baden-Baden Philharmonic Orchestra led by Justus Frantz. Both final rounds will then be considered in the decision on which of the two finalists will receive the 2019 International German Piano Award - worth 20,000 euros - after the official opening concert of Musikmesse Frankfurt.

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