

– PRESS RELEASE –
Göttingen, 17 March 2020

Göttingen International Handel Festival 2020 postponed **Statement Tobias Wolff, Managing Director**

“The Federal Government and the Ministry of Health of Lower Saxony have urgently recommended suspending all events until further notice. This is why, with a heavy heart, we have to postpone the Göttingen International Handel Festival 2020.

This decision hits us hard: our anniversary Festival, which we were all looking forward to and which Laurence Cummings, my Festival team and I have been working towards for years, will not take place in May 2020.

In full agreement with all the shareholders of the Festival company, I believe this preventive measure is the right one for based on current scientific knowledge, it can be assumed that the epidemic will not yet be over by May.

Every year, the Festival attracts thousands of people from all over the world. We are all proud of this. However, together with all those responsible, I do not consider it justifiable to expose artists, audiences and staff to the presumably still high risk of infection.

And I already know today: we can no longer carry out the scheduled programme as planned. Numerous artists are in cut-off areas, some of them may already have become infected themselves. We are with you in our thoughts.

For all artists, the coronavirus not only poses a high health risk but an immediate and real existential threat. All over the world, artists are facing enormous losses of income due to the many cancelled events and are in danger of sliding into poverty within a few weeks through no fault of their own.

Naturally, the Handel Festival would reimburse all entrance fees to our audience. However, not only in view of the existential threat to the artists, we appeal to you, dear audience: Please check whether you can do without a refund of the tickets you have already paid for! We would be happy to issue you with a donation receipt. We will use the funds thus gained to support the artists concerned.

Furthermore, the existence of the non-profit Festival company is also threatened. Since it has to manage with almost no reserves and its ongoing operations are also partly financed by entrance fees and third-party funds, there is the threat of considerable losses. If the Festival does not take place, sponsorship and foundation funds will probably also be lost.

I also ask you, dear sponsors and representatives of the foundations, to continue to support us if the agreed services are no longer provided. Through this gesture of solidarity, you will ensure the continued existence of the Festival beyond its centenary.

I am very confident that we will overcome this crisis with joint efforts. We are already in intensive talks with the public supporters.

A look back at the history of our Festival shows that it has already survived all kinds of crises. I am already looking forward to celebrating the next Göttingen International Handel Festival with our Artistic Director Laurence Cummings, with my team, with all our supporters and, last but not least, with you, dear audience, in health and exuberance.”