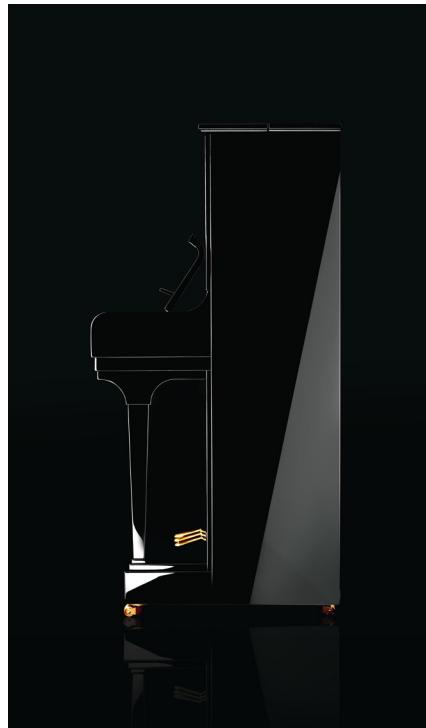


**C. BECHSTEIN**
Pianofortefabrik AG

*Press release on the occasion of the
Frankfurt Music Fair
(April 5 through 8, 2017)*

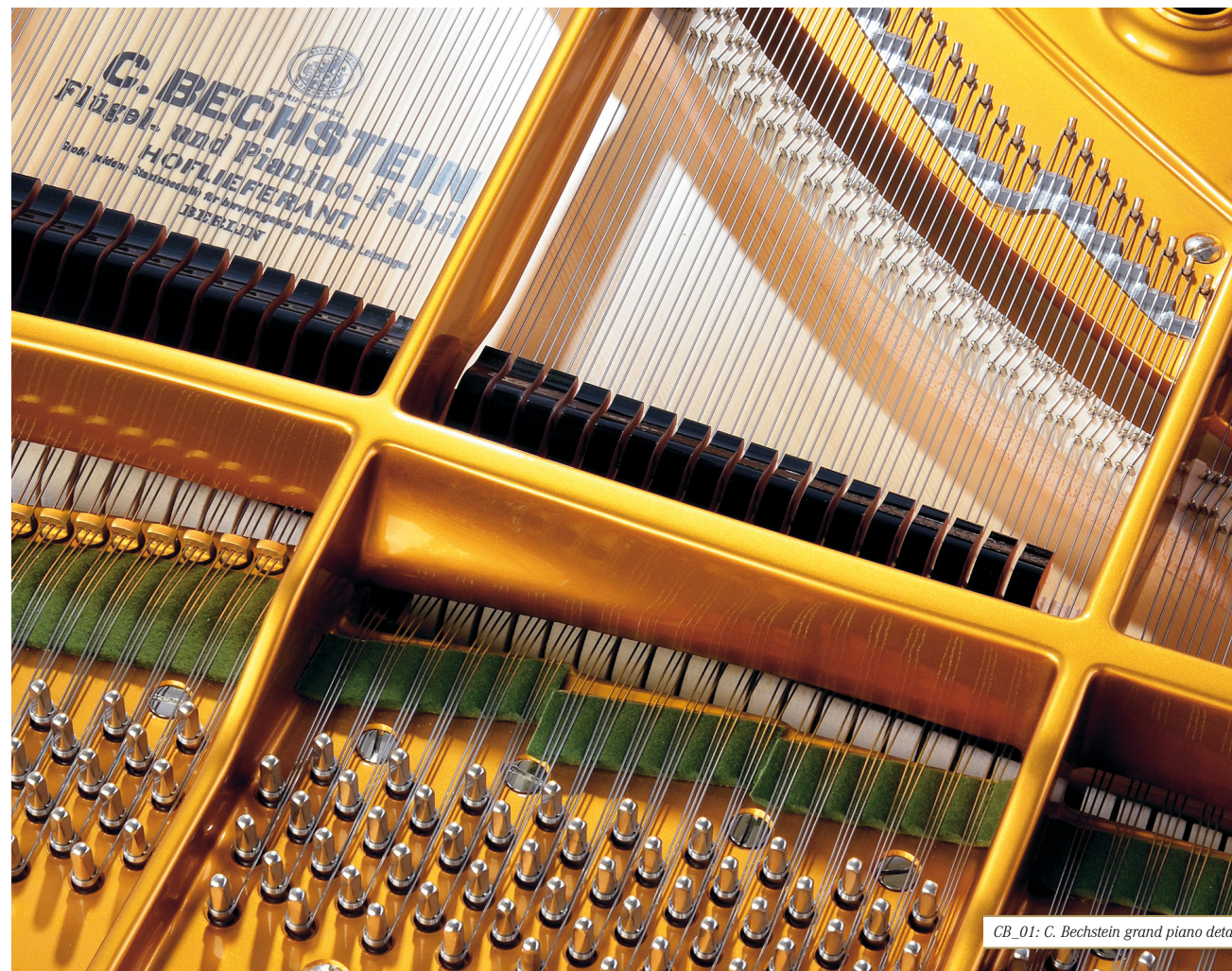
Berlin, March 2017



The C. Bechstein group announces excellent corporate figures.

The C. Bechstein group reports excellent operating figures on the occasion of the annual Frankfurt Music Fair. Sales rose by about ten percent with some six thousand instruments sold in 2016. The total number of upright and grand pianos was divided among the C. Bechstein and Bechstein brands “Made in Germany” (30%), the W.Hoffmann brand “Made by C. Bechstein Europe” (32%), and the Zimmermann brand “Designed by C. Bechstein, made in China”. The group sold approximately 2,500 instruments in China – including 500 of European manufacture – which confirms the importance of this market worldwide.

Particularly noteworthy is the 15% increase in grand piano sales over the previous year. In 2016, total group revenues reached €33m (compared to €29m in 2015), while return on sales after taxes reached 7.5%.



CB_01: C. Bechstein grand piano detail

Market position and investments

The excellent figures can be traced to the stable German market and a significant growth in exports, a positive trend that has continued into early 2017. With a market share of nearly 30% in Germany, the Berlin-based C. Bechstein group is one of the most successful piano manufacturers in Europe. Investments were made in 2016 to maintain this position: €1.1m was invested for the development of a hammerhead production facility, as well as renovation and expansion of the CNC-machinery and other technological improvements at the C. Bechstein manufactory in Seiffhennersdorf (Saxony). C. Bechstein Europe invested another €1.4m in remodeling and expanding the production site in Hradec Králové (Czech Republic), including the development of a new expertise center for finish and cast-iron frame processing for upright and grand pianos.



CB_02: Original C. Bechstein hammerheads



CB_03: C. Bechstein lacquering



CB_04: C. Bechstein iron frame processing

New management leading C. Bechstein group into the future

As of January 1, 2017, the group is headed up by new management: Stefan Freymuth has taken over as CEO of C. Bechstein Piano-
fabrik AG, replacing Karl Schulze who had led the group since 1986 and will stay on to advise the new CEO as general representative. Sales Director Ralf Dewor has joined the Board of Directors. Werner Albrecht, Technical Director, has also joined the board, replacing Leonard Duricic who is retiring after many years' service.

C. Bechstein refines its branding structure

The C. Bechstein group is well equipped for the future. A fine adjustment of its branding structure will be presented to dealers and associates on Thursday, April 6, 2017 during an event at the C. Bechstein Center in Frankfurt, and directly afterwards to the public.



CB_05: Chairman of the board Stefan Freymuth

C. Bechstein on ever more stages

The company successes are seen not only in the above-mentioned figures, but also in the increased presence of C. Bechstein pianos on concert stages. The Konzerthaus in Berlin is one of many institutions that acquired a C. Bechstein D 282 concert grand piano last year. From now on, the C. Bechstein concert series organized in Berlin will be staged at this venue, with Alexej Gorlatch performing exclusively works by Chopin on March 31, 2017. The six concerts scheduled this year will feature such artists as Haiou Zhang, Konstantin Lifschitz and the Silver-Garburg piano duo.

In 2016, Kit Armstrong chose a C. Bechstein D 282 concert grand for recording a Liszt CD (Sony Classical) and performing in Berlin (Konzerthaus), Stuttgart (Liederhalle), Düsseldorf (Tonhalle), Frankfurt (Alte Oper) and Rome (Auditorium Parco della Musica). Lucas Debargue chose the same piano model for recording his new CD, also published under the Sony Classical label. The Chinese pianist Haiou Zhang will give recitals in April 2017 in Berlin, Hamburg, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt and Hanover, presenting the pieces from the second CD he has recorded on a C. Bechstein grand for the Hänssler Classic label.

Also in 2016, the much acclaimed pianist Saleem Ashkar initiated his project to record all of Beethoven's piano sonatas for Decca Classics. The first CD in this series, recorded on C. Bechstein grands in Berlin, Prague, Osnabrück (Morgenland Festival) and in Israel, is scheduled for release in 2017. Ashkar undoubtedly echoed the thoughts of many pianists when he said, "C. Bechstein concert grands offer everything a pianist could possibly wish for: a crisp, richly colored sound, excellent dynamics and a singing voice that's second to none."

For more information, see:

www.bechstein.com/en/the-world-of-bechstein



CB_06: Kit Armstrong (© Neda Navae/C. Bechstein AG)



CB_07: Saleem Ashkar (© Liudmila Jeremies/C. Bechstein AG)

C. Bechstein, partner of the 7th International German Piano Award and the opening concert of the Frankfurt Music Fair

C. Bechstein Pianofortefabrik AG is a partner of this year's edition of the International German Piano Award, presented on April 4 and 5 in Frankfurt. The competition, consisting of three rounds, will be held at the Alte Oper and Dr. Hoch's Conservatory. Participants will be playing exclusively C. Bechstein D 282 concert grand pianos. Some one hundred pianists from around the world registered to compete for the award. The six selected for nomination – Zhenni Li, Eric Lu, Fabio Martino, Chen Moye, Jiayan Sun and Alexander Yakovlev – all have concert experience and have won other competitions. The grand finale, a contest between two pianists, will also be the opening concert of the Frankfurt Music Fair (April 5, 7:00 PM, Great Hall of Frankfurt's Alte Oper).

For more information, see:

www.bechstein.com/en/the-world-of-bechstein/news/c-bechstein-is-a-partner-of-the-7th-international-german-piano-award-in-frankfurt



C. Bechstein Technicians Academy – a success

The C. Bechstein Technicians Academy was established at the Seifhennersdorf factory as part of the group's continuing efforts to ensure that all C. Bechstein upright and grand pianos keep the same matchless voice over the years as on the first day. It has been successful from the outset, as more than one hundred piano technicians from all over the world participated in further training sessions in 2016. Developing their skills in tuning, voicing and regulating, the participants achieve such a level of excellence that they can provide excellent services as concert technicians. C. Bechstein invites C. Bechstein-associated piano technicians to sign up for a weekend seminar, June 16–18 or September 15–17, 2017.

For more information, see:

www.bechstein.com/en/service/the-c-bechstein-technicians-academy



CB_08: C. Bechstein Technicians Academy 1



CB_09: C. Bechstein Technicians Academy 2



CB_10: C. Bechstein Technicians Academy 3

C. Bechstein Pianofortefabrik Berlin / C. Bechstein Europe

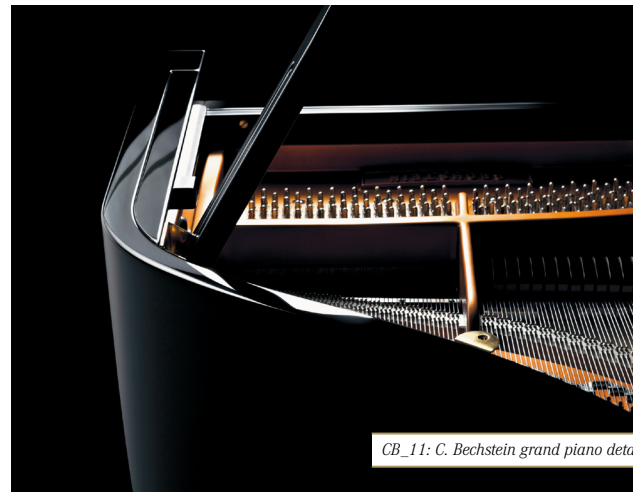
C. Bechstein is a brand that shines brightly again today. C. Bechstein Pianofortefabrik is a German manufacturer of high-quality acoustic upright and grand pianos. Established in Berlin in 1853, Bechstein provides artists, institutions and private music lovers with products to suit almost any budget. Its instruments are available through a global network of selected partners, as well as 14 C. Bechstein Centres in Germany.

C. Bechstein AG is based in Berlin and has a German factory and centre of excellence in Seifhennersdorf, Saxony, as well as a subsidiary, C. Bechstein Europe, based in Hradec Králové, Czech Republic, which is the manufacturing site for the W.Hoffmann ranges. With more than 350 employees, C. Bechstein AG is the leading manufacturer of upright and grand pianos in Europe.

Contact

Ralf Dewor (Sales Director, r.dewor@bechstein.de) and Gregor Willmes (Cultural Manager, willmes@bechstein.de) would be happy to answer questions from journalists.

To download all images (30 MB) please click [here](#).



CB_11: C. Bechstein grand piano detail



CB_12: C. Bechstein concert grand D282



CB_13: W. Hoffmann Professional upright



CB_14: C. Bechstein Concert 8