

PRESS RELEASE

## Bertelsmann Brings Roland Kaiser onto the “Blue Sofa Gütersloh”

- **Singer, entertainer and author Roland Kaiser talks about his autobiography “Sonnenseite” (Sunny Side) at Theater Gütersloh**
- **Ariane Binder of 3sat Kulturzeit will lead the discussion**
- **Tickets for the event on May 2, 2022 are available now**

Gütersloh, March 22, 2022 – The international media company Bertelsmann is bringing Roland Kaiser, one of Germany’s most successful and beloved artists, to Gütersloh. He will take a seat on the “Blue Sofa,” which is taking to the stage at Theater Gütersloh for the seventh time. Following in the footsteps of such bestselling authors as Hans-Josef Ortheil, Wladimir Kaminer, Dörte Hansen, and Elke Heidenreich, Roland Kaiser will present his autobiography, “Sonnenseite” (“Sunny Side”) as part of the literary event series. In it, he looks back on his life while also presenting an account of contemporary German history – so it is a book not only for his fans, but for anyone interested in music, politics, and the events of the post-war period in Germany. Ariane Binder, who hosts “Kulturzeit” on 3sat, will emcee the evening. Tickets are available now from the Theater Gütersloh website and from Gütersloh Marketing GmbH.

Karin Schlautmann, Head of Corporate Communications at Bertelsmann, says: “With around 90 million records sold and almost five decades of stage experience, Roland Kaiser is one of the greats of the German music business. His extensive efforts for charity are also remarkable. We are delighted that Mr. Kaiser has accepted our invitation to present his autobiography, published by Heyne, on the ‘Blue Sofa Gütersloh’. His appearance is sure to delight a large audience in Gütersloh as elsewhere. With this high-profile event, Bertelsmann once again contributes to cultural diversity and the joy of reading in the region.”

For many years, the international media, services, and education group has been engaged in a variety of cultural initiatives both in Germany and internationally. The Group’s “Culture@Bertelsmann” activities comprise exhibitions, readings and concerts, the “Blue Sofa” literary format, as well as a commitment to preserving Europe’s cultural heritage. “The Blue Sofa Gütersloh” is made possible by Bertelsmann as part of its cultural sponsorship activities in the city; the event is organized by the Theater in Gütersloh e.V. patrons’ association.

Thorsten Wagner-Conert, Chairman of Theater in Gütersloh e.V., explains: “We are delighted that Bertelsmann is continuing the ‘Blue Sofa Gütersloh’ with us as organizers even after the cultural hiatus due to Corona. In Roland Kaiser, we are delighted to welcome a guest with multigenerational appeal - and who is equally impressive for his clear stance on social issues.”

## **Roland Kaiser**

Roland Kaiser, born Ronald Keiler in 1952, has been celebrated on German stages for close to 50 years. He is considered THE hit artist of German “Schlager” pop; his fan base spans three generations. Hits like “*Santa Maria*,” “*Joana*,” “*Dich zu lieben*” or “*Warum hast du nicht nein gesagt*” made him famous; he has sold more than 90 million records. The concerts of his annual “*Kaisermania*” event in Dresden are always sold out within minutes.

The artist supports numerous charitable initiatives and projects, all of which are closely linked to his biography: Having grown up an orphan himself, he is involved in many institutions for children and socially underserved people. He is a member of the board of the Solidarfonds Stiftung NRW, an ambassador for the Albert Schweitzer Kinderdörfer und Familienwerke e.V., the Kinderhospiz Mitteldeutschland, and Kinderlachen e.V..

After overcoming COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), Roland Kaiser became an ambassador for charitable initiatives with the AtemWeg Foundation, the German Foundation for Organ Transplantation (DSO) / Stiftung Fürs Leben, and the Rudolf Pichlmayr Foundation.

This wide-ranging commitment to social causes and his artistic merits has earned Roland Kaiser numerous awards, including the Order of Merit of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, the Golden Hen for Lifetime Achievement, the Albert Schweitzer Award of the Children’s Villages and Family Works, the ECHO for Social Commitment, the Federal Cross of Merit with Ribbon, the Medal of Honor of the State Capital Dresden and the Annemarie Renger Award.

## **Sabine Eichhorst** (co-author of “*Sonnenseite*”)

Sabine Eichhorst studied German and sociology, worked for many years as a journalist for various ARD radio programs and has won the CIVIS Media Prize and the Herbert Quandt Media Prize for her reportages. She has also been writing books since 1993 and published, among others, the SPIEGEL bestseller “*Ein Tagwerk Leben - Erinnerungen einer Magd*” (Workaday Life – Memoirs of a Maidservant). Her most recent nonfiction books are “*Der Himmel so weit*” (2015; Heaven So Far) and “*Der Mann im Wald*” (2016; The Man in the Woods), as well as the novel “*Die Liebe meines Vaters*” (2016; My Father’s Love).

## **About the book “Sonnenseite. Die Autobiographie”, Heyne publishing house**

In “Sonnenseite” (Sunny Side), Roland Kaiser looks back – and recounts not only his own life, but also German contemporary history:

Born in Berlin in 1952, he was given up for adoption by his biological mother. Ronald Keiler, as he was called then, grew up with a foster mother, a simple and warm-hearted woman whose lived values guide him to this day: decency, honesty, constancy. He witnessed the building of the Berlin Wall, heard Willy Brandt’s speech in front of Schöneberg City Hall in 1961, and John F. Kennedy’s in 1963, with his famous utterance “I am a Berliner.” By chance, he was invited to the legendary Hansa recording studio at the age of 21, sang “In the Ghetto” - and immediately got a recording contract. Ronald Keiler became Roland Kaiser. In 1976 he had his first success with “*Verde*,” and in 1980 his big breakthrough with “*Santa Maria*.”

In the nearly five decades since he began his musical career, Roland Kaiser has witnessed how Germany has changed. And he himself has changed, too, of course. In 2000, he was diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease COPD – only a transplant saved his life. The fact that this second life also led to a second career (his duet with Maité Kelly, “*Warum hast du nicht nein gesagt*” was viewed over 130 million times on YouTube and shipped platinum) filled him with gratitude and humility. He is involved in numerous foundations and social institutions to give back to society; the importance of solidarity and justice was a lesson he already learned as a child in Berlin’s Wedding district.

### **Ariane Binder** (moderator)

Ariane Binder studied literature and cultural studies at Humboldt University in Berlin and theater studies at the University of Vienna, after which she worked as a trainee at SWR. For four years she was in front of the camera for the program “Landesart.” She has also served as senior duty editor and author for the 3sat magazine show “Kulturzeit” since 2006. Since September 2018, she has hosted the culture magazine “Kunscht!”

### **The Event at a Glance**

The “Blue Sofa Gütersloh” with Roland Kaiser

Monday, May 2, 2022, 7:30 PM  
Theater Gütersloh, Auditorium  
Barkeystraße 15, 33330 Gütersloh  
Phone: +49 5241 864 244

Tickets available from March 22, 2022 at [www.theater-gt.de](http://www.theater-gt.de)  
and at Gütersloh Marketing GmbH  
Berliner Strasse 63, 33330 Gütersloh  
Phone: +49 5241 211360  
Admission: €14 (for Förderverein members: €12)

### **About Bertelsmann**

Bertelsmann is a media, services and education company that operates in about 50 countries around the world. It includes the entertainment group RTL Group, the trade book publisher Penguin Random House, 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 around 130,000 employees and generated revenues of €17.3 billion in the 2020 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. Bertelsmann aspires to achieve climate neutrality by 2030.

### **About the Blue Sofa**

The Blue Sofa is the authors' forum jointly hosted by Bertelsmann, ZDF, Deutschlandfunk Kultur, and 3sat. In over two decades, it has become an institution at the book fairs in Frankfurt and Leipzig. Since the Leipzig Book Fair in 2000, more than 3,100 author talks have taken place on the Blue Sofa – on site and livestreamed or broadcast on TV and radio. In 2005, the Blue Sofa celebrated its premiere in Berlin, and in 2011, Frankfurt's Open Books reading festival opened with a Blue Sofa authors' gala for the first time. Guests to date have included authors from across all genres with their latest books, including Nobel Prize laureates Svetlana Alexievich, Mikhail Gorbachev, Günter Grass, Herta Müller, Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard, Orhan Pamuk, Joseph Stiglitz, Olga Tokarczuk, Mario Vargas Llosa, and Mo Yan. The Blue Sofa has also made regular appearances 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.

### **Bertelsmann im Netz**



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