

Press Release
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BMW M GmbH and Hans Zimmer co-develop the emotionally engaging drive system sound for electrified BMW M models.

Ongoing expansion of the range of sounds for electric vehicles. BMW IconicSounds Electric enriches electric mobility with a fascinating and unmistakable sonic experience. Collaboration with the Academy Award winner produces a new, characteristic drive system sound for the BMW i4, the M version of the BMW i4 and the BMW iX.

Munich. The future of driving pleasure is electric, locally emission-free – and characterised by a typically BMW sporting flair expressed not only in dynamic talent, but also through an emotionally rich aural experience. BMW IconicSounds Electric brings an unmistakable sound portfolio to BMW models powered by a fully electric or plug-in hybrid drive system. The collaboration between composer and curator Hans Zimmer and Renzo Vitale, Creative Director Sound at the BMW Group, has produced a distinctive drive soundtrack which customers will soon be able to experience in a version developed specially for electric BMW M cars. “Every BMW has its own character, which is reflected in the sound it makes,” says film music creator and Academy Award winner Zimmer. “So for the electrically driven BMW M models we have developed a drive system sound which accentuates their emotional driving experience particularly vividly and ensures their performance can be felt with even greater intensity.”

Hans Zimmer had previously been involved in the development of an inspiring ready-to-drive sound for electrically powered BMWs which instils a sense of excitement at the prospect of electric driving when the Start/Stop button is pressed. The latest chapter in this collaboration covers drive sounds for the BMW iX and BMW i4, including a differentiated sound for the M-specification version of the BMW i4.

While the hush of electric driving offers an unprecedented level of comfort, the driving experience loses a degree of emotionality. This is where BMW IconicSounds Electric steps in to put smiles on the faces of customers keen to experience Sheer Driving Pleasure with all the senses. In the future, electric driving pleasure will be enhanced by acoustic feedback to every movement of the accelerator. Like the on-board driving modes selectable at the touch of a button, the drive system sound also takes its cues from the driving situation at hand and the driver’s personal preferences. In the basic setting, BMW IconicSounds Electric

employs a strikingly transparent timbre with spherical components to convey the basic character of an electrically driven BMW brand model. An immersive and pleasant atmosphere is created initially in the BMW i4 in COMFORT mode. But when the driver steps on the accelerator, the direct relationship between how the car is being driven and the sounds it makes is immediately revealed: the sound experience deepens as load and speed increase. In SPORT mode, in particular, the car's aural spectrum is more dominant and powerful, the sound providing a constant commentary on the driving situation. Drive system processes are registered within milliseconds and acceleration, load changes or recuperation given a suitable acoustic accompaniment. Only when the vehicle is travelling in ECO PRO mode is the acoustic feedback reduced to nothing. Here, the silence of the drive system underscores the driver's decision to adopt an ultra-efficient driving style.

In the version developed specifically for electrified BMW M models, the drive sound of the BMW i4 is charged with extra energy. Added to which, the differentiation between COMFORT and SPORT mode is especially strong. Overall, the drive system note displays a less harmonious but engagingly rousing and technical sonic profile. Acceleration sparks a rich intensification of the soundtrack's development, authentically reflecting the car's performance character. "When you press the pedal of an M car, you suddenly get goosebumps all over your body," says sound designer Renzo Vitale. "We translated this feeling into a drive sound that expresses a fusion of superior power and flowing energy."

Hans Zimmer and Renzo Vitale had already co-developed the drive system sound for the BMW Vision M NEXT revealed in 2019 and the BMW Concept i4 presented the following year. Numerous learnings from this creative process have now been channelled into the design of the sound for future series-produced vehicles.

The new drive sounds developed as part of the collaboration with Hans Zimmer are expected to feature in the BMW i4 and BMW iX over the course of 2022. IconicSounds Electric comes as standard in the BMW iX and can be specified as an option for the BMW i4. In cars with earlier build dates, the new sounds can be imported retrospectively via Remote Software Upgrade, should the customer wish. The new spectrum includes one ready-to-drive sound and one stop sound, plus a

drive system sound which will be made available in the relevant version for BMW models and BMW M cars with electrified drive system.

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The BMW Group

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In 2020, the BMW Group sold over 2.3 million passenger vehicles and more than 169,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2020 was € 5.222 billion on revenues amounting to € 98.990 billion. As of 31 December 2020, the BMW Group had a workforce of 120,726 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company set the course for the future at an early stage and consistently makes sustainability and efficient resource management central to its strategic direction, from the supply chain through production to the end of the use phase of all products.

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