

Media Information
24 June 2019

The sound of the vehicles of the future: Hans Zimmer and BMW Group work together on sound design for electric mobility.

Pioneering work for the electric driving experience.
Sound for the BMW Vision M NEXT jointly developed.

Munich. Hans Zimmer is known worldwide for his film music. He has composed countless soundtracks for Hollywood and won numerous awards. Now Hans Zimmer, together with Renzo Vitale, acoustic engineer and sound designer at the BMW Group, has composed the sound for the BMW Vision M NEXT. The Vision M NEXT celebrates its world premiere on June 25th 2019 at #NEXTGen. Hans Zimmer: "I have always been a BMW enthusiast. As a kid I used to recognise my mother coming home by the sound of her BMW. I am thrilled to get the chance to design the sound of future electric BMW's and create emotion for the future electric driving experience."

Hans Zimmer and Renzo Vitale composed the drive sounds and sound signs for the BMW Vision M NEXT together in Zimmer's studios in London and Los Angeles. Vitale: "We envision sounds that celebrate the beauty and complexity of our vehicles and that are able to move people. I see designing people's future acoustic environment both as a privilege and as a responsibility. Working on this together with Hans Zimmer is a special honor for me – both as an acoustic engineer and as a musician."

Kickoff for BMW IconicSounds Electric

The silence of driving electrically is often cited as a major advantage of electric mobility. However, as the range of electrified models increases, a gap in the emotionality of the driving experience arises in the driver's seat. Under the brand name "BMW IconicSounds Electric" a visionary sound offer will be created for future electrified vehicles from BMW. "We want to get BMW IconicSounds Electric in position for customers who value emotional sound. With BMW IconicSounds Electric they will be able to experience the joy of driving with all their senses", said Jens Thiemer, Senior Vice President BMW Brand.

The sound of the BMW Vision M NEXT gives a glimpse into the future of BMW IconicSounds Electric.

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Sound inspired by art

The BMW Vision M NEXT is a statement for the driver – and so is its sound. When driving electrically, the driver who is used to the familiar sound of a combustion engine experiences the paradigm shift of powertrain technology. For some, this may lead to an alienation between driver and vehicle. The sound of the Vision M NEXT aims to create harmony between the driver and the electrically driven vehicle. This is achieved through the inspiration of art. Vitale: “The development and composition for the sound of the Vision M NEXT was mainly inspired by light installations from James Turrell and Ólafur Elíasson. In particular, Turrell realized works known for the illusion of an infinite space, which creates a magical experience for the spectator. The idea behind the Vision M NEXT is to recreate this sense of wonder through sound.”

Hans Zimmer: “When the driver interacts with the accelerator pedal it is not only a mechanical touchpoint but also a performative element. Accelerating becomes an experience during which the driver moves through a series of gradually morphing sound textures.”

BMW Group has been developing sound for electric mobility for around ten years now

In 2009, with the introduction of the MINI E test fleet, acoustic engineers from the BMW Group were already working on artificially generated sound, which was intended to contribute to the better perceptibility of vehicles with barely audible drivetrains. Since the launch of the BMW i3, customers have therefore been able to choose acoustic pedestrian protection as optional equipment.

The sound of the acoustic pedestrian protection has since been further developed in line with new legislative requirements and is now gradually being rolled out as standard in all plug-in hybrids and all-electric vehicles from BMW (requirements for acoustic pedestrian protection as well as operating times vary worldwide). The aim in the development was to fulfil the important warning function without disturbing pedestrians. At the same time, the customer should continue to enjoy a high level of acoustic comfort in the vehicle.

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With its four brands BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. The BMW Group production network comprises 31 production and assembly facilities in 15 countries; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2018, the BMW Group sold over 2,490,000 passenger vehicles and more than 165,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2018 was € 9.815 billion on revenues amounting to € 97.480 billion. As of 31 December 2018, the BMW Group had a workforce of 134,682 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy.

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