

PRESS RELEASE

Gay glamour: Berlin celebrates its first CSD GALA at Friedrichstadt-Palast

Berlin, June 17, 2011

To date, more than 400,000 tickets have been sold for 'Yma,' the current show at Friedrichstadt-Palast. This evening guests could experience a special, one-time version of the show: Under the motto 'CSD meets Yma,' 1,900 guests celebrated the first Berlin CSD GALA, which marked the start of the annual gay and lesbian pride festival.

Special stage guests – big names on the scene – had been invited, including Cassandra Steen, Volkan Baydar, Gabi Decker and the homoerotic "pas de deux" dance team 2MEN. Together with the more than 100-person show ensemble surrounding long-legged Yma, they emphatically spoke out against homophobia. That it still exists today, also in professional sports, is something that was made clear by the discussion round moderated by ZDF sports anchor, Wolf-Dieter Poschmann. The world champion in épée fencing, Imke Duplitzer, critically commented: "In professional sports, 100 fans can holler out 'gay bastard' and no sanctions are imposed." Tanja Walther-Ahrens, a former professional soccer player, also confirmed that more awareness is needed: "Officials, fans and people in general need to be better informed and made more aware of this issue." Journalist Ronny Blaschke said that sports talk needs to change: "It needs to be factual and serious."

But, as this special evening at Friedrichstadt-Palast showed, the task of serious awareness-raising can also be a glamorous undertaking. In the auditorium and thereafter in the foyer, many celebrities celebrated gay glamour and were totally thrilled by the idea of promoting greater tolerance through this special homosexualized performance of 'Yma.' That at the end of the show, one of the ten-meter-high LED panels derailed, making it impossible to perform the finale "This is My Life," by no means put an end to the high spirits in the auditorium.

Rosa von Praunheim was also totally impressed: "That's the best show I've ever seen. The first time I saw something here in Friedrichstadt-Palast was in 1996 and afterwards I offered the theater a gay show. But the idea was turned down, since the audience wasn't yet ready for one. So I was all the more happier that today, 15 years later, a show like this made it to Friedrichstadt-Palast."

State Secretary of Culture André Schmitz hopes that events like this will make an impact: "Good culture has always sought to improve the world. Tonight's organizers did a great job in doing exactly that."

Ulrike Frank, actress, takes a similar view: "Events like this evening's can do a lot to promote tolerance. Firstly, because it's basically a great show and secondly you always accomplish something when you address the public. We unfortunately still need awareness-raising events like this one, but I hope that thanks to such events, we, at some point, won't need them anymore."

Jorge Gonzales, model and catwalk trainer, also thinks that events like the first Berlin CSD GALA are important: "There should be more events like this. Each individual needs to be judged for his or her performance. To stick with sports: a goal is a goal – regardless of who kicks it."

Note to media representatives: A selection of royalty-free images of our stage guests can be found at www.show-palace.eu/presse. Photos of the red carpet will be available there as of tomorrow.



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