

PRESS INFORMATION

Friedrichstadt-Palast: Third record-setting year in a row and the highest one to date

€23.41 million total earned revenue (an increase of €0.88 million) – attendance rose to 84 percent capacity – 2012 will probably close with lower revenues

Berlin, January 5, 2012

In the past financial year, optimal factors – that aren't likely to come together again in 2012 – converged, bringing record figures to Friedrichstadt-Palast for the third consecutive year.

Earned revenues (meaning total earnings from ticket sales, food and beverage sales, guest performances and events, excluding subsidies from the state of Berlin) increased by 3.9 percent from €22.53 million in 2010 to €23.41 million. The portion attributed to ticket sales was €20.61 million (€19.12 million in the previous year). The percentage of seats sold improved and went from 81.81 percent to 83.73 percent, an increase of 1.92 percentage points.

Since the low-point during the 2007 crisis, earnings have increased by 68 percent. Dr. Berndt Schmidt, artistic director of Friedrichstadt-Palast, comments: "We are now at a revenue level, where things can't always just increase. The record year of 2011 is the result of an ideal combination of factors which we don't quite have in 2012. Even though we expect our earnings to be lower than the previous year, 2012 still promises to be a good year financially – provided our new mega-production 'Show:Me' is the hit we expect it to be."

The success of the previous financial year was due to the two most successful productions in the theater's history: "Yma," which was planned as a long-running, two-year show, and the seasonal show "berlin ILLUMINATED." "Yma" recently greeted its half-millionth guest and ticket sales have already exceeded the last hit show "Qi" by over €4 million – and the show is still running until July 21. With the theater's capacity at 100 percent and record sales for the month of December, the seasonal show "berlin ILLUMINATED" also exceeded all previous highs. The third success factor was that not much time was needed to rebuild the set for the Christmas show, which meant that far fewer shows fell to the wayside than do for shows that run for several years and require major set construction work.

The transition time to put up the new mega-production "Show:Me" (premiering October 18) lasted about three times as long as for "berlin ILLUMINATED." For this reason, there are about 20 shows less during the peak season in the fall/winter. This leads to a revenue shortfall compared to 2011, which cannot be recouped even if the "Show:Me" premiere is a huge success. In addition, the European Football Championship will have a significant adverse effect on sales in June.

For this reason, since late last summer, the theater, in its financial planning which it is required to do for the Berlin Parliament, has assumed that its actual income will be less than in 2011. The earned revenue for the current financial year is likely to fall somewhere between the successful years of 2009 and 2010.

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With the new mega-production “Show:Me,” the show palace is planning to follow on the success of “Yma.” The production budget will again see a major increase – in order to provide guests with an exceptional, state-of-the-art show experience. For the new children’s show (premiering November 11), the artistic director also promises to once again present the most elaborate show in Europe: “As providers of cultural education, our Youth Ensemble is also funded by the Senate. This support is justified by the enormous success of the children’s shows which are consistently sold-out.”

Due to the transition time between “Yma” and the seasonal show “berlin ILLUMINATED” last November, the theater was forced to forego 12 children’s performances, which would otherwise have been presented in this time and have been sold out. For this reason, attendance figures (excluding guest performances and free tickets) compared to the previous year showed a slight decrease of 2,161 guests to a total of 446,978 guests (449,139 in the previous year). Including major events such as the Berlinale, guest performances and special performances such as the German Film Prize, attendance at 107 Friedrichstrasse is 700,000 annually. This puts Friedrichstadt-Palast at the top of all German theaters.

Even if with slightly fewer guests (- 0.48 percent), the theater would clearly have higher revenues, Friedrichstadt-Palast finds it very important to offer a socially conscious pricing structure. The least expensive ticket is still €18.90 (including fees). With the Berlin Senate’s ‘BerlinPass,’ socially disadvantaged persons can even see the shows for as little as €3 per ticket.

Despite all the success, we also kept both feet planted firmly on the ground last year. These exceptional figures were also used to make an early €600,000 payment towards our €3.5 million Senate loan. In 2011, a total of €1.088 million in interest and principal was paid on this loan to the state of Berlin.

The state of Berlin is the sole owner of Friedrichstadt-Palast. In 2011, the theater received €6.457 million of government support. With these funds, the state supports the theater’s own Youth Ensemble with over 250 children between the ages of 6 and 16, as well as the continuation and further development of the revue art form. The largest theater stage in the world requires productions that correspond to its size, that feature more than 100 artists in the biggest long-running shows in the world and that cannot be completely financed by market prices. With such productions, however, Friedrichstadt-Palast attracts well over a quarter million tourists each year, who according to the results of a study conducted in 2009 by visitBerlin and the Berlin Office of Culture, spend almost €180 million in the capital city. Approximately 40 percent of all visitors are from Berlin.

The average age of a guest has decreased since 2007 (50+ years old) to 38.9 years old. This has been achieved by expanding appeal to younger target groups without losing the interest of the older guests. As a community theater in the best possible sense, the theater’s adult-oriented shows appeal to guests between 18 and 80. Children’s shows are recommended for those five years and older.

Please note the new officially registered spelling for **Friedrichstadt-Palast** (formerly Friedrichstadtpalast). Friedrichstadt-Palast was also the original spelling, which it had ever since it was renamed on November 1, 1947 and which it used until the 1980s.

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