

PRESS RELEASE

More than 14 million visitors in 30 years: the new Friedrichstadt-Palast makes revue show history for the whole of Germany / celebrities offer their congratulations

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PRESS CONTACT

André Puchta  
Head of Press &  
Public Relations

T: +49 30 2326 2201  
F: +49 30 2326 2273  
M: +49 175 4319 092

E: puchta@show-palace.eu  
I: www.palast-berlin.eu



After Pravin Patel (left), the adjudicator from the Guinness World Records™ in London, officially confirmed the "longest line of doughnuts" in the world, actress Julia Richter and general director Dr. Berndt Schmidt opened the sugar-coated buffet. Photo: Sascha Radke

Thirty years ago today, all high-ranking GDR state officials attended the opening ceremony for the new Friedrichstadt-Palast building. Five years later the Wall came down, and for almost a quarter of a century, the largest and most contemporary Show Palace in Europe – located at Friedrichstrasse 107 in Berlin – has been making revue show history for the whole of Germany. Last Sunday, the "Palace of superlatives" achieved a Guinness World Record.

From the front at Friedrichstrasse it does not look like it, but this is a Palace of superlatives. Set back from the almost delicate front building is a towering concrete colossus. Occupying an entire block, it stands 80 metres wide, 100 metres long and 34 metres tall, with a volume of 195,000 cubic metres. It houses an auditorium with nearly 2,000 seats and the biggest theatre stage in the world. Who would have thought it? While the largest resident show in Las Vegas (KÀ by Cirque du Soleil) "only" puts 80 artists on stage every night, the Palast features more than 100 artists, including the longest chorus line in the world (with 32 classically trained dancers). Last year, the Palace saw over half a million visitors – a post-reunification record – and the highest ticket sales since the theatre was established in 1919.

Friedrichstadt-Palast  
Europe's Show Palace

Friedrichstrasse 107  
10117 Berlin-Mitte  
In the East End Theatre District

Theatre Director/General Director:  
Dr. Berndt Schmidt



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So what better way to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Friedrichstadt-Palast opening than to set another world record? A Guinness World Record. Made with 320 kg of yeast dough, 150 kg of fruity strawberry jam, 1,000 eggs, 40 kg of creamy sugar icing and 200 kg of flour, the Palace created the "longest line of doughnuts" (Berliner) in the world, reaching a length of 561 metres. The baked artwork, which was laid out in the foyer, comprised a total of 6,448 doughnuts (called "Pfannkuchen" in Berlin, which elsewhere in Germany are called "Berliners").

"This world record was a very special one for me, because it brings people in the city together with something very traditional. Pfannkuchen (doughnuts) are a regional speciality and the Palace shared them with its guests as a birthday present," said Pravin Patel, the Guinness World Records adjudicator, who travelled from London specially to oversee the attempt.

After the record was announced, theatre director Dr. Berndt Schmidt and the actress Julia Richter opened the gigantic sugar-coated buffet. "The Palace was a wonderful part of my childhood. And what a gift it was – I've made a profession out of 'acting' and 'dressing up'. The children's shows are magnificent, one-of-a-kind experiences for everyone on and in front of the stage," recalls Richter, who was born in Berlin, and began her acting career as a member of the Young Ensemble at the Palast. Julia Richter's face is a familiar one. People know her from various shows, including the TV detective show *Polizeiruf 110*, the crime series *Der Bulle von Tölz* and the early evening show on ARD, *Heiter bis tödlich*. With the German-Indian film *Raju*, Richter was nominated for an Oscar in 2012 in the Best Short Film category.

"95 years of stage history and 30 years on Friedrichstrasse. But as well as looking back on an eventful past, we can also look forward to a vibrant future. In recent years, we've shown that far from being a dusty relic of the 'Golden Twenties', revue can be an ultra-modern, attractive art form for the 21st century," notes theatre director Dr. Berndt Schmidt.

Among the many well-wishers offering their congratulations to the Palast is two-times Grammy winner Michael Bolton: "Happy 30th anniversary to the Palast." The actor Armin Mueller-Stahl wishes the Palast "a full house for the next thirty years," while Burkhard Kieker, managing director of visitBerlin, asks: "What would Berlin be without the Palast? It offers true cosmopolitan entertainment that otherwise you can only find in Las Vegas."

"You're the 'pretty pins' of Berlin and much more besides. Keep it up – and break a leg!" says actor and comedian Hape Kerkeling. Thomas Hermanns, founder of the Quatsch Comedy Club housed in the basement, says: "The Palast and I have a lot in common – we both love a good show."

Governing Mayor Klaus Wowereit also congratulated Berlin's most-visited theatre: "The Friedrichstadt-Palast is one of the world's leading revue theatres. The company's spectacular shows delight the people of Berlin just as much as our visitors from all over the world." Petra Hedorfer, Chief Executive Officer of the German National Tourist Board (GNTB), sees the Palast as a 'calling card' for the pulsating metropolis in the heart of Europe. Like no other theatre, it embodies Germany's great tradition of international entertainment at world-class level."

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### Facts and figures

The old Palast opened 95 years ago, in 1919, under the direction of Max Reinhardt. Initially called the *Großes Schauspielhaus* (Big Theatre), it staged the most elaborate revues of the Golden Twenties. Renamed *Theater des Volkes* (People's Theatre) under the Nazis, the building was abused as a platform for propaganda. The present-day name "Friedrichstadt-Palast" dates from 1947. Found to have structural weaknesses, the old Palast was shut down virtually overnight in 1980. The new Palast building opened 30 years ago, in 1984, at Friedrichstrasse 107. On its anniversary, the Friedrichstadt-Palast can boast some impressive figures: more than half a million visitors and around 110,000 incoming phone calls each year, 4,000 costumes on 320 m of clothes racks, 248 children and teenagers in the Young Ensemble, as well as dancers from 23 countries. All 14.2 million admission tickets sold since 1984 could form a line from Berlin-Mitte to Athens. The "total leg length" of the 32 chorus line dancers (all 64 legs added together) comes to 67.2 metres.

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