

## PRESS INFORMATION

# Thirty-five years of the new Palast, 100 years of stage history – Friedrichstadt-Palast Berlin to celebrate anniversary year

Berlin, 25 April 2019



The new Friedrichstadt-Palast opened its doors at Friedrichstraße 107 on 27 April 1984, but the 35-year-old building's stage history actually dates back to 1919. The Palast will celebrate its anniversary year with a whole host of events, including a free performance to thank the citizens of Berlin.

The Palast's 100-year history began on 29 November 1919 with opening of Max Reinhardt's Großes Schauspielhaus. During the National Socialist era, the theatre was known as the Theater des Volkes [Theatre of the People]; in 1947, it was then renamed the Friedrichstadt-Palast. At the time still located at Am Zirkus 1 on Schiffbauerdamm, the theatre witnessed the Weimar Republic, National Socialism, the German Democratic Republic, a relocation to Friedrichstraße 107, and German reunification.

From the 2019/20 season, the Palast will celebrate the theatre's unique and eventful 100-year history with a diverse series of events. To mark the centenary on Friday, 29 November 2019 – and as a special thank you to the citizens of Berliners – there will be a free performance of the VIVID Grand Show, followed by a birthday party. Special about this performance is that this time, no celebrities from the worlds of politics, culture or high society will be invited. All of those, who are normally always invited, will not be invited this time. Instead, we will invite all of those who have helped

### PRESS CONTACT:

Ghazal Weber  
Director of Communications

T +49 30 2326 2-201  
M +49 172 1587883

weber@palast.berlin  
www.palast.berlin

Friedrichstadt-Palast Berlin

Friedrichstraße 107  
D-10117 Berlin-Mitte

General Director:  
Dr. Berndt Schmidt

Chairman of the Supervisory Board:  
Dr. Klaus Lederer  
Senator for Culture and Europe



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to keep Berlin together for the past 100 years, through the good times and the bad: volunteers, municipal workers, local citizens who have supported the German capital with their work, people on a low income.

“With the Großes Schauspielhaus, Max Reinhardt wanted to open a theatre for the working masses, not the elite. Hence the theatre had 5,000 seats at the time, not 600 like most other theatres,” explains General Director Dr. Berndt Schmidt. “To mark the one hundredth stage anniversary, we are rolling out the red carpet for all of those for whom it is not rolled out otherwise – entirely in the spirit of Reinhardt.”

The event programme will also include a photo exhibition on women who have helped to shape the stage history, a panel discussion chaired by Georg Quander (the former director of the Berlin State Opera and current artistic director of Musikultur Rheinsberg) as well as an exhibition on 100 years of revue costumes. A children and youth festival is also planned for summer 2020.

During the centenary year, the Palast’s role as a theatre for the people during the National Socialist era will be examined, as will the post-war years from 1945 to 1961, which have barely been considered to date. The Palast has moreover commissioned two research projects to commemorate this occasion. The preliminary findings are due to be presented in 2020.

The individual events are being organised in cooperation with cultural institutions such as the Landesarchiv Berlin, Deutsche Kinemathek Foundation, Stadtmuseum Berlin Foundation, and Central and Regional Library Berlin (ZLB). Opportunities for performances in public urban spaces as well as for virtual and augmented reality on stage are already being developed at the Technische Universität Berlin together with students from the ‘Bühnenbild Szenischer Raum’ degree programme on set and scene design.

The Palast’s Administrative Director, Guido Herrmann, is responsible for organising the anniversary celebrations and has also been instrumental in development of the programme.

Information on the individual events in the anniversary programme will be available soon.

### Background information:

The Großes Schauspielhaus was opened in 1919 by the visionary theatremaker, Max Reinhardt. The modernist architect Hans Poelzig and his wife Marlene Moeschke-Poelzig were responsible for refurbishing the former circus arena. For his part, artistic

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director Erik Charell shaped the image of the 'Golden Twenties' – and thus also Berlin's global reputation – with his grand revue shows. Marlene Dietrich, Josephine Baker, Louis Armstrong and many other top acts performed on stage at the theatre with seating for 5,000 and later more than 3,200 guests.

In 1980, the old Palast had to be closed and demolished due to major subsidence and structural damage to the building. On 27 April 1984, the new Palast opened at Friedrichstraße 107 as the last major grand construction of the German Democratic Republic. It still impresses today with the world's biggest theatre stage. The new Friedrichstadt-Palast seats 1,900 guests, making it the largest theatre in Berlin. Today, the glamorous revue tradition lives on at the Palast in a highly modern format. With 700,000 guests every year, it is the most visited theatre in Berlin.

For more information on the theatre's history, see:

[www.palast.berlin/en/backstage/history](http://www.palast.berlin/en/backstage/history)

Logo: [www.palast.berlin/en/info/press/photos-logos/#logos](http://www.palast.berlin/en/info/press/photos-logos/#logos)

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