

PRESS INFORMATION

Friedrichstadt-Palast Berlin breaks its own records in 2019 anniversary year

Berlin, 13 January 2020

In the past business year, the Palast achieved the best results in its 100 years of stage history, with 545,000 guests and ticket revenue totalling €27.2 million. The VIVID Grand Show is well on its way to becoming the theatre's most successful production yet. All performances of René Pollesch's 'Glauben an die Möglichkeit der völligen Erneuerung der Welt' have sold out and proven a real hit among guests and media alike. Virtually all seats for the new Young Show 'Im Labyrinth der Bücher' also sold out within just two weeks of the premiere.

New records were set in the 2019 financial year: a total of 545,000 paying guests (excluding free tickets) attended performances at Friedrichstraße 107. Compared to 2013, which was the Palast's most successful year until recently, this means 26,320 more guests (+5 percent) and a €1.3 million increase in ticket sales (+4.9 percent). The annual fill capacity for the 1,900-seat theatre was 91 percent. In addition to the in-house events, a further 200,000 people attended the Berlinale film festival and guest performances at the Palast. In terms of the number of guests, the Palast thus remains the #1 theatre in Berlin by a long way.

In 2018, the ticket revenue lay at €21 million and there were 422,755 paying guests. While the comparison with the previous year may seem impressive at first glance, the two-year show cycle means it is misleading: in odd years (such as 2019), there are around 40 show performances more than in even years (such as 2018). This is due to the production change during the summer, which means that the theatre remains closed for longer. Hence records are really only possible in odd years (the figures for 2020 will also be lower than those for 2019 as a new show will premiere this autumn).

In 2019, the Palast celebrated 100 years of stage history: Prof. Dr. Max Reinhardt opened the predecessor to the Friedrichstadt-Palast Berlin, the *Großes Schauspielhaus*, on 29 November 1919. General Director Dr. Berndt Schmidt said of this landmark occasion: "New records in our anniversary year – what a wonderful gift from our guests! Yesterday's successes are no protection for the future though. As in any happy relationship, we too must earn our guests' devotion, year after year with our passion and commitment."

By the last scheduled performance on 11 July 2020, the VIVID Grand Show could well have become the theatre's most successful production to date. 671,152 tickets

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have been sold for the show since its premiere in October 2018, generating €38.5 million in ticket revenue. As of 8 January 2020, this is 16,000 tickets and €1.4 million more than the previous record-breaking production, THE ONE Grand Show.

With the theatre evenings 'Glauben an die Möglichkeit der völligen Erneuerung der Welt' by René Pollesch and starring Fabian Hinrichs, the entertainment theatre has also opened up to e-culture. This bold experiment has been a huge success. All five scheduled performances sold out within just two days of the premiere. The tickets for six additional dates also sold out within a very short time, hence yet another additional performance has now been added to the programme on 5 March 2020. Berlin's Zitty city magazine has named this unlikely cooperation the "Berlin Performance of the Year", rbb24 Kultur includes it in its "Top 5 Best Theatre Evenings in 2019", SWR2 calls it the "Production of the Year".

The Young Ensemble's shows have always enjoyed great popularity. Indeed, almost all of the 87,000 seats available for the Young Show 'Im Labyrinth der Bücher' ['In the Labyrinth of Books'] sold out within two weeks of the premiere in November. In November and December 2019, 55,084 paying guests aged 5 and over came to see the Young Show to achieve a fill capacity of almost 97 percent (the remaining tickets were 100 percent free). In January, around 30,000 paying children and adults will visit the theatre. 'Im Labyrinth der Bücher' will return to the programme in November 2020. Due to high demand, advance ticket sales have already begun.

The Berliner Morgenpost daily newspaper has just named the Palast's General Director Berndt Schmidt the 'Berliner of the Year'. Every year since 2004, readers have nominated 50 personalities and a jury chaired by the newspaper's editor-in-chief then reached a final decision. Among others, the jury justified its decision with Berndt Schmidt's modernisation of the revue art form, his political and social commitment, and the courage to dare something new in the arts.

Despite the necessary pursuit of economic success, the Palast never loses sight of its social responsibility. Thus the theatre provided social facilities and support institutions with 20,742 charity tickets in 2019, for example. What's more, thanks to the #PalastFürAlle initiative, people unable to afford the regular ticket prices are admitted for just €5. Based entirely on trust, no proof of need must be provided (www.palast.berlin/fueralle). With its #KartenGegenTaten initiative, the theatre continues to support victims of hate crimes, racism, sexism, discrimination, homophobia or anti-Semitism (www.palast.berlin/kartengegentaten). Almost 3,000 tickets were issued through these two initiatives last year.

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