



Press release

19 November

PLENTY OF INTEREST IN POLITICAL THEATRE MORE THAN 3,500 GUESTS HAVE ALREADY VISITED THE 7TH “POLITIK IM FREIEN THEAT- ER” FESTIVAL

It's half-time at ECHT!, and the “Politik im Freien Theater” festival has successfully set up shop in Cologne. The German Federal Agency for Civic Education/bpb, the festival organiser, has said it's very satisfied with the first five days. “We're very happy about the curious and open attitude Cologne's residents have displayed so far, as well as all of the positive feedback” said festival director Milena Mushak. “It shows that political theatre really is able to inspire.”

The biggest hit with the public up until now has been a work entitled “Nothing Company”. Two evening performances and one matinee performed for classes from local schools were completely sold out. The story of a firm that sells “nothing” - eventually causing the world economy to crash after it goes public - has acquired an unexpected relevance in light of the current financial crisis. “When we began developing the piece two years ago, it was still just a future scenario,” said Anja Dirks, the dramatic advisor for Swiss group “Far A Day Cage”, “but we have been overtaken by reality.”

After its fantastic performance of “Hell on Earth” on the opening night of the festival, the ensemble Constanza Macras I DorkyPark was greeted with what can only be described as a storm of approval by 800 young people at a matinee performance of the piece in the Schauspielhaus Köln theatre.

The unusual approach to the Holocaust presented by Dutch company Hotel Modern has also attracted a lot of attention. In “Camp”, the group depicts the machinery of death and torture by means of a small-scale model of a concentration camp inhabited by 3,000 miniature figures representing both perpetrators and victims. In a quiet and concentrated atmosphere, the public is introduced to the details of the everyday horrors that took place there by three respectful ‘commentators’, who use tiny cameras to take snapshots of details that are then projected onto a large screen. “We wanted to materialise the memories through replication in a model,” said Hotel Modern's Pauline Kalker.

Other festival events have also been well-received, including the public debate led by sociologist and social psychologist Harald Welzer and filmmaker Romuald Karmakar on Monday evening over portrayal of the Holocaust. Around 50 people also came to the podium discussion “Culture in Exile/Exile of Culture” that provided a follow-up to “Hell on Earth”. And in the audience discussion following several of the performances, many visitors took part in the animated debate about the work, society and politics.

Festival events will be continuing until Sunday evening. Guests can drop by the video installation “Serie Deutschland – Etappe Köln/Bonn” (Germany Series – Cologne/Bonn Stage) at its venue at Untergrund in der Maastrichter, or also visit the “Büro für LauteR Kölner Wünsche” (Nothing BUT Cologne Wishes). Tickets are still available for most performances, although matthaei & konsorten's theatrical city tour (“Kurz nachdem ich tot war – von häusern und menschen”) and “Der Kölner Norden – Reise in die raue Stadt” are sold out.

The riddle surrounding the production “Rockplastik XXL” has also been solved. The band “One-hit Wonder” appeared under the name “Maiden Monsters” for six weeks on stage in Cologne, making the bar Permission to Rock its headquarters. From there, band members sallied forth into the city for a series of performing acts, and held castings and rehearsals for the formation of the world's largest fe-

male band – everyone was invited to take part. At the end of the festival, the “Maiden Monsters XXL” will give their first and only concert in the Live Music Hall. That will be followed by the awards ceremony, with the presentation of festival prizes presented by the bpb and the Goethe Institute.

Other festival dates:

GREEK NATIONAL THEATER ATHENS: “STALIN – A DISCUSSION ON (GREEK) THEATRE”
WED. 19/11, 7:30 P.M. (German, English, Greek // followed by audience discussion) 12 € / 8 €

**MASS & FIEBER: “DIE SCHWARZE KAMMER” (THE BLACK CHAMBER)
A GHOSTLY MUSICAL COMEDY FROM THE CIVIL WAR**
WED. 19/11, 7:30 P.M.// THURS. 20/11, 7:30 P.M.// FRI. 21.11, 7:30 P.M.
BÜRGERHAUS STOLLWERCK (followed by audience discussion on Wed. & Thurs.) 12 € / 8 €

THEATERHAUS JENA: “DER REPORT DER MAGD” (THE HANDMAID’S TALE)
based on the book by Margaret Atwood
FRI 21/11, 8:00 P.M. // SA 22.11, 8:00 P.M.
ALTE FEUERWACHE (followed by audience discussion on Saturday) 12 € / 8 €

ARJUN RAINA: “A TERRIBLE BEAUTY IS BORN”
FRI. 21.11, 8:00 P.M. // SAT. 22.11, 8:00 P.M. // SUN. 23.11, 6:00 P.M.
ORANGERIE THEATER IM VOLKSGARTEN
(English with German sub-titles // followed by audience discussion on Friday) 12 € / 8 €

DORIS UHLICH: “UND” (AND)
SAT. 22/11, 6:00 P.M. // SUN 23/11, 4:00 P.M.
THEATERHAUS KÖLN (followed by audience discussion on Sunday) 12 € / 8 €

DRAMA KÖLN: “LAUTER KÖLNER WÜNSCHE” (ADMISSION FREE)
18/11/08 // Daily throughout the city: Wünsche werden laut!
19/11/08 // 7:00 P.M. // Ritual II for LauteR Kölner // Wishing fountain
20/11/08 // 7:00 P.M. // Ritual III for LauteR Kölner // Wish images with light
22/11/08 // 7:00 P.M. // Ritual IV for LauteR Kölner // Collective reading of all wishes
23/11/08 // 3:00 P.M. // Ritual V for LauteR Kölner // Swinging wishes
The meeting point for Rituals I – V is the BÜRO für LauteR Kölner Wünsche, where a performance also takes place every day at 6:00 p.m. (Bismarckstr. 44, Telephone: 0221/95 27 9775, open daily from 2:00-6:00 p.m.).

HOFMANN & LINDHOLM: SERIE DEUTSCHLAND – ETAPPE KÖLN/BONN (GERMANY SERIES – COLOGNE/BONN STAGE)
DAILY FROM 3:00-9:00 P.M. (ADMISSION FREE)
UNTERGRUND IN DER MAASTRICHTER, Maastrichter Str. 49

ROCKPLASTIK XXL
SUN 23/11, 7:30 P.M. // LIVE MUSIC HALL 12 € / 8 €
FOLLOWED BY AWARDS CEREMONY

For more information on the festival or to download the programme, please visit www.bpb.de/politikim-freientheater

Tickets can be purchased at www.koelnticket.de (Tel. 0221-28 01), as well as at all standard ticketing agencies. Reservations are required for many performances.