

internationales literaturfestival berlin

AUTHORS' REACTIONS 2002

I enjoyed the Festival. It was very important to discuss the state of the world on the first day. It makes the event more meaningful. ... I also think that the international dimension of the festival is very important. I'm delighted to hear that the novels of the Saudi novelist Abderehman Munif are being translated by Diederich. He was stripped of his Saudi nationality for writing these novels...

Tariq Ali (UK)

Thanks to all of you. ... I would like to be invited back next year but will understand if you decide against. My thanks and admiration of Uli Schreiber and to everyone of the staff and volunteers, you could not have been more polite and helpful.

Alan Duff (New Zealand)

Your Berlin Literature Festival was not only thrilling, delectably exhausting, and electrically charged, but it was historically important. It drew well-known major writers and young talents across all the borders of politics, culture, and language, and let them mix in that petri dish of the Berliner Ensemble and in malls and theatres and rooms all around the city. Writers who would never ordinarily meet each other or meet the splendid audiences that swarmed the readings, fell together speaking in Arabic, Hebrew, Chinese, Russian, German, Swedish, a swirl of languages, and mime when no common language could be found. They broke bread together over the word, and fresh ideas, new friendships, collaborations, and the beginnings of new works were generated in the intimacy and intensity of those engagements. It was a splendid, exemplary gathering. The entire staff was so helpful, so honestly friendly and compassionately interested, I bend my head in thanks to all of you and send a collective and strong embrace.

Forrest Gander (USA)

Here in Buenos Aires, I wish you to know that my time in Berlin was wonderful: I enjoyed very much the city and all the events, Alejandra López, clever and enthusiastic, made everything easy for me, and I think that the Festival deserves our support and encouragement. Thank you very much and the best wishes for all of you.

Liliana Heker (Argentina)

Thank you so much for inviting me to the festival. It was a lovely experience. I thought the festival was very well organized. I have attended many festivals in various parts of the world and the Berlin Festival compared more than favourably with others that have been in existence for much longer. The tent was a very good idea. It is so important for writers to meet in a place where they can relax and engage in conversation. I was most impressed with the fact that you had provided interpreters for those of us who did not speak German. Everything, as far as I was concerned, was well organized and everyone was very kind, especially Martin who was very generous with his time. I enjoyed my readings and found the audiences interested and responsive – they had so many questions about South Africa. I must say I enjoyed Berlin tremendously too. I'd forgotten what an interesting city it is. It was a wonderful venue for such a festival. A very valuable addition are the two anthologies we received from the festival. It is something that I will treasure. I wish you lots of luck and success with the next festival. I will always have many fond memories of my time there.

Farida Karodia (South Africa)

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I spent a wonderful time in Berlin and I am grateful to all of you because of that. Everything there was perfect and perhaps I will write something about the Festival and publish here at the Albanian newspapers. Thank you for being so precise, noble and careful; thank you about your hospitality and the quality of the activity. I believe everybody of us is proud of being a participant of the Festival.

Luljeta Lleshanaku (Albania)

I want to say thank you! I was very glad to be invited by your festival. Your team was efficient and competent. I pray for you so that this festival continues. It is very important for the writers of the whole World as I saw this year... Congratulations!

Alain Mabanckou (USA)

I have the best memories and impressions of the activities I took part in, during the Berlin literaturfestival. Both the readings with children at the school and at the library were great, the actress that read my texts was very good, the reading by the actors at the Berliner Ensemble was excellent. Besides, everything was well organized at the hotel, etc.

Ana Maria Machado (Brazil)

Just a note to thank you and your wonderful team of volunteers for the splendid time in Berlin and the very successful festival! I hope I can assist you in preparing the one for 2003.

Alberto Manguel (France/Canada)

I just want to thank you for my wonderful visit to Berlin. For me it was the first time in your exciting and beautiful city. It was a great pleasure for me to meet other international writers but somehow it was very special personally that the festival took place at the Berliner Ensemble. In fact, it was quite overwhelming for me as Brecht was one of my major influences and I believe that he would have loved the festival and that, somehow, his spirit was guarding it. I send you all the best wishes for the next festival. I thought that the organisation was excellent and cannot think of any improvements. Any time that you invite me again, I shall be there and will also recommend it to my fellow writers. Congratulations and best wishes

Pauline Melville (UK)

Thank you for including me in your all-embracing literary/cultural festival. It was especially poignant and important to be there during 9/11 2002 & get a sense of other individual reactions & concerns from other parts of the world. Americans are too insular! (Not me (of course!)) But we need to take messages from these other worlds back home. It was often personal conversations in the "tent" that were the most useful...

Anne Waldman (USA)