

internationales literaturfestival berlin

Writers' Responses 2003

I had a very enjoyable time at the Literature Festival. It was very exciting because it gave me the opportunity to meet and hear authors who I admire greatly, as well as many interesting people. The events I participated in were quite interesting, and the students, in particular, were most engaging and interested. I was very glad to see this level of interest among these students. The staff was great, I got to know some of them personally and enjoyed my time with them. I admire the degree of work and effort that every one in the organization put in. I hope that you will be able to continue to have this festival again next year – I think it's a great idea and opportunity, and I very much hope that you will have the resources to do this again.

Samhita Arni, India

This festival is really a great moment of dialogue and emotions in our world of international crisis. The different voices, sensibilities and visions coming from five continents, had their meeting between them and with a very sensible public. Your work is our light.

Mohammed Bennis, Morocco

I appreciated very much to be able to participate at the international literature festival in Berlin 2003. I think we in the Scrittura Giovani project were taken care of in a very professional way and that the arrangements of the festival were interesting. I hope you continue cooperating with the SG-project in the future, because it is a very important opportunity for young European writers.

Bjarte Breiteig, Norway

I think the team, from organizers down to volunteers, did an excellent job of running a large, sprawling festival in Berlin, giving the writers a chance to meet their readers and, in my case, audiences for their films. The efforts made by such people to make the festival a success are to me the most memorable part of my experience.

Anita Desai, India

I sense here an extraordinary energy in conversations with the audiences as well as between the authors themselves.

Nuruddin Farah, Somalia/South Africa

From my point of view the Berlin Festival was a total success. Not only did I enjoy giving readings from my work [especially to the children], and performing with the jazz group "Art de Fakt", and discussing my work in public, but I particularly enjoy meeting writers from so many different countries – writers with whom I am sure I will stay in contact. I thought your staff did a superb job in handling so many people. I congratulate them. I don't know about the other writers but the hotel where I stayed – the Brandenburger Hof – made my stay even more enjoyable. It's a beautiful hotel, and the staff took good care of me. I also appreciated the company of my guardian angel – Nina Jackle – talking with her as we attended various readings and wandered in various places in Berlin gave me a good idea not only of her own work but of what is going on

in German literature at this time. She even introduced me to her literary agent who is now my agent in Berlin. So you see, I greatly profited from this festival. And I do hope you will invite me again.

Raymond Federman, USA

All I can say about the festival is that I'm happy I was part of it. The different discussions I had about my book were quite enriching.

Fatou Keita, Ivory Coast

I've had a great time at your festival. The staff was the nicest and friendliest I've ever encountered. And the parties were great too. Thanks for letting me be part of this great festival.

Etgar Keret, Israel

It was a fairytale moment which allowed me to get to know wonderful people, all the staff, international writers. Thank you and thank your super team. We wish you lots of success and luck with the next festival.

Leila Marouane, France

I miss Berlin so much! Thanks for EVERYTHING. IT WAS SO PERFECT THANKS TO YOUR EFFORTS.

Verónica Murguía, Mexico

I have been to many art festivals in my life but Berlin International Literature Festival 2003 was quite simply one of the best cultural events I have participated in. Big not just in scale but also in quality: multifaceted, well thought-out and well executed. To re-write a famous song: "I left my heart in Berlin!"

Lewis Nkosi, South Africa

First of all, I was most impressed to learn that the Berlin Festival was started by one person who loves literature and that it has grown into such a large Festival despite being held only three times. It has made me realize how deeply the German people revere literature.

I have had two opportunities to read from my works at the Festival: once for the main program and once for a side program at the Mori Ogai Memorial Hall in Berlin. I was delighted that the audiences on both occasions were avid listeners. As the audiences seemed to accept me as an individual author, Yoko Ogawa, rather than as a stereotypical "Japanese writer," their questions were quite serious and interesting. These experiences reassured me that my works were truly reaching and affecting German readers. It was wonderful to know that there are many young people who support these events as volunteers, and their attitude was cheerful and lively. Mr. Gernot Wolfram, who took care of me at these events, had read all my works in German, and scheduled me in places that I would find interesting and with people I would enjoy meeting. This made my stay in Germany a significant experience for me, and I was most grateful that I could establish one-to-one relationships with other people who love literature. I sincerely hope that the Festival will continue to develop and grow in the future.

Yoko Ogawa, Japan

Greetings! Once again I would like to tell you how much I enjoyed Berlin, as well as how great the festival was. I am still amazed at the level of organization, and am constantly describing it to others here. I want to thank you for how well the presentation ran, the reading, simply everything.

Jose Prieto, Cuba/Mexico

It was very nice to be here with you at the festival, thank you very much, I had a magnificent few days. There was hardly anything to criticise, and besides, who would want a perfect festival anyway?

Tilman Rammstedt, Germany

Berlin is privileged to hold such a literary conference.

Alberto Ruy Sanchez, Mexico

The Berlin Literary Festival promotes an atmosphere of intellectual freedom and respect for the book that's becoming increasingly rare in the market driven bazaar of modern publishing. Now I want to move to Berlin.

Susan Swan, Canada

One festival speaks more than a thousand isolated authors.

Eugene Trivizas, Greece

Uli Schreiber is our Kofi Annan.

Eliot Weinberger, USA