



# Spicing up language and literature

The Austrian literary festival Sprachsalz presents international contemporary literature in a distinguished and intimate atmosphere.

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The name itself is a play on words. Meaning literally 'language salt', the literary festival Sprachsalz is annually held at Hall in Tyrol, the Austrian 'city of salt'. It was founded in 2003 as a festival organised by writers for other writers and takes place every September in the picturesque medieval town in Tyrol. Its goal is to bring selected and distinguished literature to a wide audience and to spice up literature festivals. Sprachsalz is an exquisite event, presenting international contemporary literature in an elegant setting. The prominent Austrian cultural magazine *Falter* wrote about Sprachsalz: "Possibly the best literary festival in the country is not in Vienna, it is in Hall in Tyrol: Sprachsalz."

All of the writers are staying in Hall's Parkhotel, which also provides the setting for the festival's events. Entrance to the festival is free of charge and lovers of literature get the chance to experience great writers not only during their readings but also to meet them at the hotel's bar. Heinz D. Heisl, one

of the festival's organisers, proudly explains that the authors enjoy the festival's intimate and special atmosphere very much. One of his personal favourite moments was meeting American author Frank McCourt in an Irish whisky bar in New York to plan his reading. McCourt claimed afterwards: "Did this writer love this festival? Ja!!! Danke, danke AND danke!"

Next to famous authors such as the Japanese Nobel Prize winner Kenzaburō Ōe, Sprachsalz also features writers who are yet to be discovered. "The newcomers are always given an enthusiastic welcome by the audience and most of the time they leave with a new fan base," states Heisl.

This year's festival will take place from 11 to 13 September. Guests will include John Giorno, the New Yorker who invented performance poetry, along with celebrated Israeli writer Lizzie Doron, who will read from her new novel about an ambivalent Israel-Palestinian friendship. French film

director and writer Delphine Coulin will also be there and Swiss-German writer Peter Bichsel will celebrate his 80th birthday with the Sprachsalz visitors. On Friday, the festival will attend to the melodic texts of Syrian poet Nouri al-Jarrah in a cooperation with the Tyrol festival for contemporary music *Klangspuren*. Internationality, variety and creativity, important spices that will make for a successful Sprachsalz festival 2015!

[www.sprachsalz.com](http://www.sprachsalz.com)

Main image: Parkhotel with Leseterrasse

Above: Frank and Ellen Mc Court together with actor Thomas Gassner in 2007

Sprachsalz organizers Elias Schneitter and Heinz D. Heisl at the Tennessee Williams Festival New Orleans together with head Paul J. Willis and Susan Larson

Below: The heart of the festival – team with pug: (from left) E. Schneitter, V. Besl, U. Aerni, Otto the pug, U. Woerner, H.D. Heisl, M. Kauz, M. Hafele

