

Zürcher Theater Spektakel

Promoted by Stadt Zürich Kultur

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Zürcher Theater Spektakel 2015: Interim final report

Success despite rescheduling

Due to the renovation of the Quaibrücke, the Zürcher Theater Spektakel took place one week earlier this year. With 10 out of 18 festival days during the school holidays, it was to be seen how this would effect the festival, the advance booking and the number of spectators. Yet, venturing into the new and unknown is a central element of the 36-year success story of the Theater Spektakel. With 120 000 visitors, 26 750 spectators attending one of the shows and an average capacity of 86% this year's edition clearly shows: The crucial factors for success are not the date but the programme and the weather

The programme 2015 focussed on «power and body» and displayed a great artistic variety and a number of cross-genre productions which were positively received by the audience and the critics. The programme ranged from «The Dark Ages», the second part of the Europa trilogy by Milo Rau, undoubtedly one of Europe's most important contemporary directors, to the young Philippine performer Eisa Jocson, who, following her short solos, presented her first full-length piece at the festival.

Eight solos by up-and-coming performers from Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, the Mideast and Canada presented during the fourth edition of «Short Pieces» promised an esthetically and artistically varied and interesting journey of discovery. This festival within the festival, also popular with a younger audience, has established itself as an attractive, high-quality platform for the international performance scene.

The festival audience has again confirmed its openness: Popular were not only the circus shows «Hallo» by Martin Zimmermann and «Matamore» by Cirque Trottola & Petit Théâtre Baraque and the concerts by Aziza Brahim, Otto Lechner & Wiener Zieharmonikern and the young fado singer Gisela João on the lakeside stage but also shows by artists visiting Zurich for the first time: «We Love Arabs» by the Israeli choreographer Hillel Kogan, showing how political dance can be, the freak cabaret of the Ukrainian theatre band Dakh Daughters or the dance piece «Suave» by the young Brazilian choreographer Alice Ripoll. As well as the challenging, unconventional show «Employee of the Year» by the Brooklyn-based company 600 HIGHWAYMEN, winner of the ZKB patronage prize 2015.

Four premieres, two European premieres and a series of shows opening shortly before the beginning of the festival illustrate the festival directors' readiness to walk off the beaten track and to take risks. We are pleased to note that the audience followed with curiosity. Performances such as «The Last Attitude» by the South African choreographers Mamela Nyamza & Nelisiwe Xaba, Amir Reza Koohestani's latest production «Hearing» or «Das Bauchrednertreffen», staged by the French director Gisèle Vienna and the Puppentheater Halle, were very well received.

This positive reception demonstrates the status of the Zürcher Theater Spektakel as a platform for international productions. Where else in Zurich would one get to see a company such as the captivating Chilean Teatro La Re-sentida with its intelligent and provocative political farce «La imaginación del futuro» or the choreographic phantasms of an artist such as Marlene Monteiro Freitas from the Cape Verde Islands?

Due to the preponement of the festival the offer for families and children was expanded. This included the installation by Judith Nab, the shows by Sgaramusch and Schtärneföifi, the presentations of street artists on the festival site as well as the carefully curated programme on the Zentral Stage, the actual linchpin of the festival.

The weather posed several challenges this year: With very hot days of up to 35 C and consequently heated up venues, a temperature drop of 20 degrees followed by squalls and torrential rain, the weather was as varied as the festival programme.

Facts & Figures 2015

Programme: The programme included 46 productions of companies and solo artists from 30 countries in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America and Latin America.

Performances: 148 performances were subject to charge. No performance had to be cancelled.

Ticket: A total of 27 650 spectators attended one of the shows subject to charge (2014: 24 800).

Average of capacity utilisation: The average percentage of capacity utilisation of all performances is 86 % and exceeds the budgeted 75 % (2014: 84 %). 80 % of the performances exceeded the budgeted margin.

Advance booking: 70 % of the tickets were purchased before the beginning of the festival. Around 60 % of all tickets were again purchased online (2014: 60 %).

Box office: Around 5200 tickets were purchased at the Landiwiese box office.

ZKB Patronage and ZKB Acknowledgement Prize 2015

With «Employee of the Year» by the Brooklyn-based company 600 HIGHWAYMEN and the committed Short Piece «Thoda Dhyān Se (Be careful)» by the Indian performer and actress Mallika Taneja the jury awarded two convincing, artistically unique productions which reflect some central aspects of this year's programme. Abigail Browde and Michael Silverstone of 600 HIGHWAYMEN demonstrate the artistic potential and power of straight theatre with the haunting performance of five girls. The short solo of Mallika Taneja is representative of a whole series of young artists who tackle political and social topics with courage, humour and no fear of taboos.

Theater Spektakel – an inclusive event

Inclusion is a matter of course at the Theater Spektakel. Thanks to the support of the foundation Denk an mich and in collaboration with Procap and the radio school klipp+klang, the festival programme was made accessible for people with special needs. We are pleased that the offer was again well received. The shows were attended by distinctly more wheelchair users this year. The performances with audio descriptions proved popular for people with visual impairment.

Bars & Restaurant

The gastronomic innovations, especially the new restaurant Patata, were very well received by the festival audience. The exceptionally hot days at the beginning of the festival followed by cold spells in the middle and a rainy weekend again demonstrate how weather-dependent the turnover of the restaurants is and the risks the gastronomic establishments are faced with every year. Therefore it is all the more gratifying that the contribution of the bars and restaurants will be within budget.

Partners

The Theater Spektakel is an event organized by the Stadt Zürich Kultur and is generously funded by its main partners Zürcher Kantonalbank and Swiss Re, the Canton of Zurich and our media partner Tages-Anzeiger. The directorate of the SDC, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Migros-Kulturprozent have engaged themselves as further partners with a substantial contribution. The Patrons of the Festival (Gönnerverein für das Zürcher Theater Spektakel) have again made a considerable contribution. The increased activities of the new board resulted in a 10% membership increase and in-kind sponsoring by new company patrons. The following institutions have funded the festival (budget 4,5 million Swiss Francs): Ars Rhenia, Avina Stiftung, Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia, Institut Français (Afrique et Caraïbes en créations) and Reso Tanznetzwerk Schweiz.

Contributors of substantial in-kind sponsoring are KIBAG AG, MerbagRetail – Mercedes-Benz Nutzfahrzeug-Zentrum Schlieren, Zürichsee Schifffahrtsgesellschaft and Verkehrsbetriebe Zürich. The festival direction would like to thank all of them.

Zürcher Theater Spektakel 2016

The 37th Zürcher Theater Spektakel will take place from Thursday 18 August to Sunday 4 September 2016. The advance booking begins on Wednesday 6 July 2016.