

Zürich, Sunday 31 August 2014

Zürcher Theater Spektakel 2014: Interim Final Report

Success despite poor weather

The programme of the 35th Zürcher Theater Spektakel was received very positively by the audiences and the critics. Not only the blockbusters, such as Oliver Dubois' sensational choreography «Tragédie», Milo Rau's media-acclaimed «The Civil Wars» or «Super Sunday» by the Finnish artist troupe Race Horse Company, drew a great number of spectators. Fortunately, also small theatre productions managed to arouse a great deal of interest: Tina Satter's «House of Dance», Mariano Pensotti's «Cineastas», Christiane Jatahy's «What if they went to Moscow?», which brought Chekov to present-day, «Germinal», the «highly comical and frantically reflecting hymn to the wonder of theatre» (Alexandra Kedves) by Halory Goerger & Antoine Defoort or the works by the Swiss groups papst&co. and Lutz & Guggisberg. And finally «Shilpa – The Indian Singer App» by the Flinntheater, which was awarded the Patronage Prize 2014. All those productions were presented to nearly sold-out houses. This is even more remarkable as many of them were either Swiss or European premieres. The festival audience once again showed a great deal of openness, risk-taking and curiosity. This was also evident in the productions from the Middle East: Amir Reza Koohestani and his outstanding staging of Chekov's «Iwanow», Azade Shahmiri with her lecture-performance «Damascus» and Hamid Pourazari and his temperamental female show «Sâl Sânyie» provided interested audiences with an insight into the diversity and liveliness of the Iranian theatre scene.

The «Short Pieces», a showcase of solos and duos by up-and-coming performers met again with great public and professional interest. The three-day event has well established itself as a platform of the young international performance scene. In conjunction with the concurrent residential project «watch & talk» for young international artists and the successful network meeting «Shared Spaces», the Zürcher Theater Spektakel could made its mark as a platform for intercultural exchange and intercontinental collaboration.

Expressed in figures, the Theater Spektakel 2014 presents itself very successfully: 84 % of all seats sold – more than half of the performances sold out – four out of five performances exceeded the budgeted 75% – 25 000 tickets sold – international media attention.

Unfortunately, the weather was less glorious. The unseasonably cool evenings and frequent rain showers affected the number of visitors and the turnover of the gastronomic services. The bad weather also had a bearing on the street artists performing on the open air stage and on the on festival site, as less visitors also meant less money in the hat. Nevertheless, around 110 000 weather-proof visitors found their way to the festival site and, equipped with fleece jackets and cardigans, enjoyed the artistic and culinary offer. On certain days, the turnover of the bars and restaurants plummeted to a third of that

of the previous year! The few sunny days and mild evenings could not entirely compensate the loss in turnover. The contribution of the gastronomic services is expected to be 10% below budget this year.

With this edition of the Theater Spektakel our co-director Werner Hegglin bids goodbye. For over 30 years, he has poured his heart and soul into the festival. Since 1989 he has provided his skills, know-how and his wealth of experience as a member of the executive team of the Zürcher Theater Spektakel and has significantly contributed to the conception and appearance of the festival. Veit Kälin was appointed his successor. The 33-year-old event technician and light designer has toured internationally with companies such as Ecole Atelier Rudra Béjart, Flamencos en route or Zimmermann & de Perrot, and, as technical director of the Einsiedler Welttheater 2007 and 2013, has profound expertise with major events. Veit Kälin will start his new position in January 2015.

Facts & Figures 2014

Programme: The programme included 46 productions of companies and solo artists from 24 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America and Latin America.

Performances: 108 performances were subject to charge. No performance had to be cancelled.

Ticket sales: A total of 24 800 spectators attended one of the shows subject to charge (2013: 27 800). In 2013 this amount was higher because there was an additional venue (tent Cirque Aital).

Percentage of seats sold: The average percentage of seats sold of all performances is 84 % and exceeds the budgeted 75 % as well as the 80,4 % of the previous year.

More than half of the performances sold out.

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 bought online (2013: 50 %). For the first time, it was possible to purchase tickets online with a student card.

Box office: The number of tickets purchased spontaneously on the Landiwiese is around 6300 (2013: 3600). Word of mouth, positive resonance in the media and mostly dry albeit chilly evenings favoured the box office ticket sales.

Zürcher Kantonalbank Patronage and Acknowledgement Prize 2014

With the young German director Sophia Stepf of Flintheater (Patronage Prize) and the Korean performer Geumhyung Jeong (Acknowledgement Prize) two outstanding young artists were awarded for productions that marked central points of this year's programme: The captivating one-woman-show «Shilpa – The Indian Singer App» of Flintheater with the Indian performer MD Pallavi stands for contemporary innovative theatre that picks up on hot topics and is a fine example for intercontinental collaboration. Geumhyung Jeong and her solo «CPR Practice» stand for the artistic radicality and autonomy of the young Asian performance scene and was showcased as part of «Short Pieces».

Theater Spektakel – an inclusive event

The Theater Spektakel shall also be accessible for people with special needs. In 2013 the festival and the organisation Procap, with the support of our partners Zürcher Kantonalbank and Swiss Re, initiated a three-year pilot project. Apart from infrastructural improvements and a tactile model of the festival site, the accessibility of the festival programme was further enhanced, such as with the audio-description of a children's theatre and the simultaneous translation of a show into simple language for people with learning difficulties. According to Gerhard Protschka, project manager of Procap, the measures were again well received by the target groups. Especially the induction loops for the hearing-impaired installed in four venues proved very popular.

Bars & Restaurants

The predominantly cool and partly raw weather did not invite to linger at the festival site: Accordingly, the turnover of the gastronomic establishments were lower than last year. Their contribution to the festival is expected to be around 10% below 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, Migros-Kulturprozent and the Göhner Stiftung have engaged themselves as further partners with a substantial contribution. The Patrons of the Festival (Gönnerverein für das Zürcher Theater Spektakel) have again contributed around 50 000 Swiss Francs. The following institutions have funded the festival (budget 4,4 million Swiss Francs): Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia, Avina Stiftung, Familien-Vontobel-Stiftung, the Italian cultural institute Zurich as well as the Ambassade de France en Suisse. Contributors of substantial in-kind sponsoring are KIBAG AG, MerbagRetail - Mercedes-Benz Nutzfahrzeug-Zentrum Schlieren, Starticket, Zürichsee Schifffahrtsgesellschaft and Verkehrsbetriebe Zürich. The festival direction would like to thank all of them.

Zürcher Theater Spektakel 2015

Due to the renovation of the Quaibrücke and the resulting delay of the Street Parade, the 36th Zürcher Theater Spektakel will take place one week earlier than usual, that is from Thursday 6 to Sunday 23 August 2015.