

# Zürcher Theater Spektakel

Organized and promoted by Stadt Zürich Kultur

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## Zürcher Theater Spektakel 2011: Final report

An exciting, artistically varied programme, two highly topical focal points, an interested, alert and large audience, dreamlike weather and a balanced budget – the Theater Spektakel 2011 was a success in every respect. This was also reflected in the media and public response. For the fourth time, the artistic directors Werner Hegglin, Cornelia Howald and Sandro Lunin are able to make up an artistically and financially positive balance.

### Programme

**Generations:** The festival ended with two highlights: The Israeli director Ofira Henig, who has just been dismissed as artistic director due to political reasons, presented her wonderfully sensual Arab-Hebrew narrative theatre to an almost full house. The latest work by the great Italian director Romeo Castellucci, a relentless as well as tender approach to old age and decrepitude, drew the series of productions revolving around inter-generational relationships to a grand close. Apparently, this topical focal point touched on a raw nerve. The audiences showed great interest in the formally very different shows from Germany (She She Pop), Argentina (Mariano Pensotti), Israel/Belgium (Ilay den Boer), England (Quarantine) and Italy (Societas Raffaello Sanzio), some of which united parents and children onstage – some of them related also in real life: She She Pops' highly acclaimed «Testament» as well as the poignant mother-son portrait «Susan & Darren» by Quarantine were absolute favourites and sold out completely.

**The Arts and Social Change:** The audience equally responded with great openness and interest to productions and themes that were not so easily digestible such as presented in the focal point «Art and Revolt». Apart from the visionary production by the great Tunisian theatre maker Fadhel Jaïbi, it featured a series of young, yet unknown artists who creatively and audaciously approach current social and political turmoils in very different ways: The grotesque theatre TV show by the Iraqi director and actor Mokhallad Rasem showed what it means to grow up in a war zone («Iraqi Ghosts»), the intelligent work by the Italian company Motus focussed on the recent youth revolts in Greece («Alexis. Una tragedia greca»), in her striking solo the Serbian performer Sanja Mitrovic mused on the lost ability to cry («A Short History of Crying») or the impressive images of «Sueur des Ombres» created by the Congolese choreographer Andréya Ouamba for a life in the shadows of a traumatic past.

**ZKB Patronage Prize:** Several of those newcomer productions were nominated for the ZKB Patronage Prize 2011. The jury was impressed with the artistic quality of all six productions nominated this year: «We have seen a young generation of theatre makers, who are passionately involved with an issue and have managed to find individual and original ways of artistic expression for their cause. Each of those works would have deserved the prize», the jury wrote in their final report. Nevertheless, the decisions for the awards were made unanimously: The ZKB Patronage Prize of 30 000 Swiss Francs went to the young Mexican trio Lagartijas tiradas al sol (in English: lizards lounging in the sun) for their production «El Rumor del Incendio». The trio approaches the Mexican guerilla movements of the sixties and the seventies in a courageous, personal yet playful and refreshing way.

The ZKB Acknowledgement Prize of 5000 Swiss Francs honoured the Egyptian artists Aly Sobhy and Omar Mostafa for their contribution to the much acclaimed production «Lessons in Revolting» by Laila Soliman & Ruud Gielens, a continuous project, in which the company seismographically responds to the current events in Egypt. Both artists were denied a travel permit to Zurich. The Theater Spektakel presented this work shortly after it premiered in Cairo as a European premiere.

As expected, the Finnish troupe Race Horse Company was the runaway favourite amongst the nominees. Their four shows presenting acrobatic peak performances in the dead-end ambience of a junkyard were the first to be sold out in advance booking.

**Dance:** The international contemporary dance scene was prominently represented with seven productions from four continents this year. The works influenced by street dance by young artists such as Vanilton Lakka from Brazil or Contact Gonzo from Japan presented at the Club, as well as the fully-fledged choreographies on the big stages – Guilherme Botelho & Alias at the Werft and the South African dance magician Gregory Maqoma and the vivacious Kosovo Ballet on the lakeside stage – found enthusiastic audiences.

**Music:** The festival started with a boisterous African party on the lakeside stage and ended with a captivating concert of Ethiopian soul in the Club: This year's music programme was full of highlights. The four big concerts on the lakeside stage were sold out: The Congolese cult band Staff Benda Bilili had the audience jump on their feet and dance, the Vegetable Orchestra enchanted with creative vegetable sounds, the Albanese singer Elina Duni and the young singer-songwriter Madjo gave two wonderful summer night concerts. On the occasion of his first European appearance, the eighty-year old Egyptian Sira interpreter Sayyed el-Dawwy proved that good weather is not everything. His captivating stage presence had the audiences forget all about the rain.

**Haus am See & Installationen:** The programming concept to present free installations and in-house productions on the festival site in order to give visitors the opportunity of a spontaneous encounter with performative installations and artworks has again turned out a success. People stopped, listened, watched and discovered, be it at the Webstube by Stini Arn, the «Ship o' Fools» by Cardiff & Miller or the sound installation by Hark!. The «Erinnerungsstube» by Rahel Hubacher & Heidy Ludewig turned out to

be a runaway success. Their homage to cuddly toys touched even the most jaded of visitors and became somewhat the emotional heart of the festival. Mathias Balzer's and Duri Bischoff's Sunday stroll in honour of Gerhard Meier received positive feedback throughout. They not only set an atmospheric monument to the great Swiss poet but also brought a moment of slow-down to the hectic hustle and bustle of the festival. Around 120 000 people visited the festival site in the course of 18 days.

## Facts & Figures 2011

**Programme:** The programme included 40 productions, installations (Landiwiese and Haus am See) and talks (2010: 45). 110 performances were subject to charge (2010: 107). One performance on the lakeside stage (Gegory Maqoma on 26 August) had to be cancelled due to bad weather.

In addition to the installations at the Haus am See and on the Landiwiese, several free events were on offer each day (public talks, Webstubete, Webstall Mini, special cuddly toy memorial).

**Ticket sales:** A total of 26 000 spectators attended one of the 110 performances subject to charge (2010: 27 500 spectators). This figure is to be interpreted in relation to the size of the venue and the respective performances. The total capacity of the performances this year was lower than in 2010. The Sunday strolls «Das Zentrum der Welt» by Balzer & Bischoff only admitted 30 people for each of the 18 performances, Quarantine only allowed 160 spectators for each of their three performances.

**Audience rate:** Over 60% of the performances reached the budgeted audience rate of 75%. With 77%, the average audience rate is slightly higher and is equal to last year's rate. 40 performances were sold out.

**Advance booking:** The advance booking went again very well: As last year, two out of three tickets were purchased before the beginning of the festival. With 45%, the internet turned out the biggest channel of sales.

**Evening box office:** Ticket sales at the evening box office have increased compared to last year and have again reached the level of 2009: Every sixth ticket was spontaneously purchased on the Landiwiese. This is undoubtedly due to the good weather.

### Bars & Restaurants

Due to the almost consistently good weather, some hot summer days and pleasantly mild evenings, the bars and restaurants on the festival site were well frequented. The sales figures so far show that the budgeted figure will be exceeded by 10%.

### Theater Spektakel – a sustainable event

The Theater Spektakel, with the support of Swiss Re and the ZKB as well as the onsite restaurants, has again undertaken efforts to create a more environmentally friendly and sustainable festival. Energy efficiency and waste reduction were at the center of our endeavours. The consumption of electricity was significantly reduced due to the use of energy saving and LED lamps outdoors as well as indoors. The implemented waste separation system and the use of reusable dishes and/or compostable containers helped to reduce the amount of combustible waste significantly. Detailed results of all measures taken for energy efficiency, waste reduction, sustainability and CO2 friendliness will be evaluated after the festival.

## **Partners**

The Theater Spektakel is an event organized by the Stadt Zürich Kultur and is generously funded by its long-standing main partners Zürcher Kantonalbank and Swiss Re, the Canton of Zurich and our media partner the Tages-Anzeiger. The Migros-Kulturprozent and – as part of their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary – the SDC, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, have engaged themselves as further partners with an increased contribution. Apart from the Patrons of the Festival (Gönnerverein für das Zürcher Theater Spektakel), who have contributed 50 000 Swiss Francs, the following institutions have substantially contributed to the financing of the festival (budget 3,9 million Swiss Francs): Avina Stiftung, Familien-Vontobel-Stiftung, Zuger Kulturstiftung Landis & Gyr, Axpo Kompogas AG, Japan Foundation, Dr. Adolf Streuli Stiftung and the Ambassade de France en Suisse. Contributors of substantial in-kind sponsoring are KIBAG AG, Mercedes-Benz Schweiz AG, e-advertising Winterthur, starticket and the Zürichsee Schifffahrtsgesellschaft. The festival direction would like to thank all of them.

## **Zürcher Theater Spektakel 2012**

The 33<sup>rd</sup> Zürcher Theater Spektakel takes place from THU 16 August to SUN 2 September 2012.