

Zürcher Theater Spektakel

Organized by Stadt Zürich Kultur

Press office Landiwiese
Tel +41 (0)44 488 18 80
presse@theaterspektakel.ch

www.theaterspektakel.ch

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Zürcher Theater Spektakel 2012: Interim final report

Successful finale despite extreme weather conditions

The festival opened at scorching 32°C with «Nil» by the Swiss troupe Cie 7273 and ended at autumnal 14°C with «Pororoca» by the Brazilian Companhia de Danças. The 33rd Zürcher Theater Spektakel was characterized by extremes in every respect: 50 productions from 30 countries, venues holding 6 to 600 spectators, 161 performances and a programme ranging from the Nouveau Cirque blockbuster by Zimmermann & de Perrot at the Werft to the irritating video gem by the South Korean artist Geumhyung Jeong, from Béla Pintér's scathing political farce «Miststück» at the Gessnerallee to the humorous impromptu theatre by Ueli Bichsel and Anna Frey at the Haus am See. The festival audiences entered the game of oppositions and formats with curiosity and openness: The slight increase in attendance accounted for in 2011 could be maintained this year despite the great number of small productions with limited admission capacity (Short Pieces). Again a total of 26 000 spectators attended one of the performances subject to charge. Every fourth performance sold out completely, the percentage of seats sold of the 161 performances complies with the budgeted 75%. Around 120 000 visitors enjoyed the programme and the festival atmosphere this year. For the fifth time, the managing team Werner Hegglin, Cornelia Howald and Sandro Lunin conclude the festival with a positive record.

Programme

East Europe: The programme focal point on East Europe attracted great public interest: The Polish musician Marta Górnicka presented her powerful female choir project twice to a full house; Constanza Macras and her ensemble of East European Roma, dancers and musicians thrilled the audiences with the vivacious and fast-paced show «Open for Everything»; and the Hungarian director Béla Pintér beautifully demonstrated with his farce «Miststück» how witty and powerful contemporary political theatre can be.

Oppositions: A series of productions presented the creative dialogue between different artists, traditions and values and challenged the spectators to question their prejudices, images and notions: Zurich company Mass & Fieber and Iranian troupe Don Quixote presented their «mythical exchange» project «Tell / Zahhak», Brett Bailey his mis-en-scène of an African «medEia» spiced with pop references, Pichet Klunchun the choreography «Black und White», in which he takes the traditional Thai khon dance to another level. Touching, irritating and stirring were «Gegenüberstellung» by Zurich company mercimax, in which eight spectators were lined up with eight performers and confronted with true or fictitious life

stories, the acrobatic vocal performance duel between the brothers Jakob and Pieter Ampe, the soft-voiced and well-mannered Thai boxers from the Rotterdam suburbs presented by Dutch director Jetse Batelaan in «Variété Bodybuilders» or Jérôme Bel's «Disabled Theater», a collaboration with the mentally handicapped actors of Theater Hora. We credit the good instinct of the festival's artistic direction as well as the openness of the audience with the fact that some of those rather unusual and unwieldy productions were amongst the best-selling shows of this year's festival.

Nouveau Cirque: The festival's longstanding relationship to exponents of this genre made for two extraordinary highlights this year: The Swiss German premier of «Hans was Heiri» by Zimmermann & de Perrot at the Werft and the two small but mighty solos by the French duo Lefevre & André, which they presented on a minuscule stage at the Haus am See. As expected, the two productions turned out to be crowd favorites and sold out within only six hours in the advance booking. The third Nouveau Cirque production equally caught on with the audiences: The Finnish artist Jani Nuutinen presented his highly unique and archaic show «Cirque plus juste» in a self-made small tent.

Short Pieces: Another focal point of this year's festival was dedicated to small formats. Eleven of those intimate, mostly half-hour Short Pieces by young dancers and performers from Asia, Africa and South America were presented during the second weekend creating a small festival within the festival itself. The programme and entrance fees were designed so that the audience could combine three to four such pieces to an individual exploration of the performance world of the Southern hemisphere. Despite considerable extra efforts and expenses, the experiences with the Short Pieces were encouraging. Numerous interested and tendentially young spectators seized the opportunity to see several of those artistic gems and «pilgrimated» curiously from one venue to the next. This new programme segment was accentuated further by the fact that all Short Pieces were nominated for the ZKB Patronage Prize unless the artists had not previously won either the ZKB Patronage or the ZKB Acknowledgement Prize.

ZKB Acknowledgement and ZKB Patronage Prize: On the occasion of the Zürcher Theater Spektakel 2012, the ZKB Patronage Prize and the ZKB Acknowledgment Prize were awarded for the 17th time. The ZKB Patronage Prize of 30 000 Swiss Francs went to the Cambodian dance company Amrita Performing Arts for the production «Crack», which was created in collaboration with the Belgium-based choreographer Arno Renz. The ZKB Acknowledgment Prize of 5000 Swiss Francs went to the Germany-based Japanese performance artist Naoko Tanaka for her Short Piece «Die Scheinwerferin».

A stage for street art: Jugglers, fire-eaters, contortionists, clowns and magicians delighting the audiences with their performances have always contributed to the specific atmosphere on the festival site. For the first time this year, the street artists could present their shows as part of a curated programme on an proper stage. The daily line-up was complemented by singular acts such as those by Cirque de Loin, Club 111 and the Zurich newcomer Hengst Produktion. The open-air stage, equipped with a bar and a info desk for street artists, soon turned into a popular festival hub. The approval and

feedback of the audiences were highly encouraging and positive. The street art project, set to run for three years, will continue in 2013.

Facts & Figures 2012

Programme: The programme included over 50 productions (2011: 40) of companies and solo artists from four continents and 30 countries.

Performances: 161 performances were subject to charge (2011: 110). One performance (Lia Rodrigues Companhia de Danças on the lakeside stage) had to be cancelled due to bad weather. Apart from the performance of the Japanese artist Kiguchi Noriyuki and the installations by the ZhdK on the festival site, there were several free events on offer each day (Ueli Bichsel & Anna Frey: B & F Discount, street art and the night programme on the open-air stage, post-performance talks).

Ticket sales: A total of 26 000 spectators attended one of the shows subject to charge (2011: 26 000).

Percentage of seats sold: The average percentage of seats sold of the 161 performances complies with the budgeted 75% (2011: 77%). 60% of the performances exceeded the 75% margin. 45 performances sold out completely.

Advance booking: The number of tickets sold in the advance booking increased slightly this year:

Almost 70% of all tickets were purchased before the beginning of the festival.

With 45%, the internet proved the most important channel of sales.

Box office: Due to the break in the weather, the ticket sales at the box office took a tumble towards the end of the festival. Therefore the number of around 3600 tickets purchased spontaneously on the festival site this year is slightly lower than in 2011.

Bars & Restaurants

The new premises Lido Paradiso, Minimum-Bar and Zentral-Bar were well received and frequented by the public. Nevertheless, the massive cold spell towards the end and the scorching heat at the beginning of the festival affected the revenue of the gastronomic establishments. The figures so far show that the targeted figure will be narrowly missed this year.

Theater Spektakel – a sustainable event

The Theater Spektakel, with the support of its main partners Swiss Re and the ZKB as well as the onsite restaurants, has again undertaken efforts to create a more environmentally friendly and sustainable event. Energy efficiency and waste reduction were at the center of our endeavours. Three manually operated cinemas informed festival visitors in a playful and humorous way on three successful measures in the areas of energy consumption, mobility and waste.

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. Migros-Kulturprozent and the Ernst Göhner Stiftung have engaged

themselves as further partners with a substantial 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 funded the festival (budget 3,9 million Swiss Francs): The SDC, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Avina Stiftung, Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia, Familien-Vontobel-Stiftung, Landis & Gyr Foundation and Japan Foundation. Contributors of substantial in-kind sponsoring are KIBAG AG, Mercedes-Benz Schweiz AG, Starticket and Zürichsee Schifffahrtsgesellschaft. The festival direction would like to thank all of them.

Zürcher Theater Spektakel 2013

The 34th Zürcher Theater Spektakel takes place from THU 15 August to SUN 1 September 2013.