

ASSEMBLÉE INTERNATIONALE 2009

Palucca Schule Dresden



During the 1920s the dancer Gret Palucca was appearing on stages everywhere. She was a star, admired by the most important artists of her time. Visual artists such as Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky, and László Moholy-Nagy saw her dance, communicated with her and impressed her. On 29th April, 1927, she performed at the Bauhaus in Dessau. Moholy-Nagy wrote about Ms. Palucca, "The room condenses around her person and she gives it structure. The room expands, sinks and hovers – fluctuates in all directions."

Even early on, she was not satisfied with simply appearing on the stage and dancing. She was a rebellious young woman with an energy which she wanted to transmit to her generation. In 1925, she founded her own school in Dresden. She gave lessons first in her private quarters and, later, in rented rooms.

During the period of National Socialism, she was no longer allowed to teach free dance. The reason was her Jewish ancestry. Her school was closed in 1939, but she was permitted to continue dancing and even appeared in the Olympic Games of 1936 in Berlin.

Shortly after the end of the war, in July 1945, Ms. Palucca reopened her school in Dresden. Her school became nationalised in 1949 and was granted the status of "College for Artistic Dance". Ms. Palucca invented the study subject of "New Artistic Dance", so that modern dance could remain a part of her class curriculum. This subject, which she developed and taught herself, was closely connected to an individualised concept of improvisation both as the methodology and as content of teaching.

During this period, the Russian style of ballet dominated the training. Between 1952 and 1955 a new building was erected, and the move into the newly built school building of the Palucca School at Basteiplatz, southeast of the Great Garden in Dresden occurred in 1955.

Starting in 1961, children from the age of ten years were being accepted for the seven-year dance training programme. In 1977, the training programme was extended to eight years. The number of students continued to expand. In 1982, an extension with five new ballet studios was added. Ms. Palucca taught here until shortly before her death in 1993.

At the beginning of the 1990's, the search for a contemporary educational image based on a tradition rooted in modern dance was undertaken. In 1991, Paul Melis, the Belgian dancer and choreographer, took over the artistic management of the school. In 1993, the Palucca School

Dresden was designated as an art college in its own right. The foundations for a unique dance training programme, with equal emphasis on modern and classical dance, and in which improvisation was also highly valued, were thus laid. Former Palucca School student Hanne Wandtke became the director of the "Academy for Artistic Dance." Between 1994 and 1997, Peter Jarchow, longtime pianist in Palucca's lessons, directed the academy. From 1997 to July 2006, Enno Markwart, also a former Palucca School student, ran the college. The school was restructured under his tenure and, in 1997, became the only independent college for dance in Germany. Subsequent to the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Palucca School in 2000, and Gret Palucca's 100th birthday, planning for the renovation and new construction of the campus was undertaken in 2002. Canadian-born Jason Beechey has been the rector of the college since August 2006.

www.palucca.eu/en/palucca_school.html

Professor Jason Beechey

Rector, Palucca Schule Dresden



Professor Jason Beechey is the Rector of the Palucca Schule Dresden – Hochschule für Tanz.

A graduate of Canada's National Ballet School, he completed his training at the Vaganova Ballet Academy in St. Petersburg and under Stanley Williams at the School of American Ballet in New York.

Beginning his career as a soloist with the London City Ballet, he went on to work for fifteen years at Charleroi/Danses in Belgium, where alongside an extensive exploration of improvisation and interdisciplinary work with Frédéric Flamand, he was also the Training Director of the National Choreographic Centre and founded and ran his own studio, The Loft.

With a vision for dance training based upon ballet, contemporary and improvisation, where the individual stands at the centre point, he developed and co-ordinated the D.A.N.C.E. Programme in close collaboration with William Forsythe, Wayne McGregor, Frédéric Flamand and Angelin Preljocaj.

Rector of the Palucca Schule since 2006, he has worked to bring his vision to the School, building upon the similar ideology of Palucca and to create new opportunities for the School through strengthened ties between the Dresden based institutions and international partners. This has led to the creation of an Apprentice Programme with the Dresden SemperOper Ballett and together with both the Semperoper and the European Centre for the Arts Hellerau, the creation of Tanzplan Dresden.

As a guest teacher he works regularly with the Ballet National de Marseille, Ballet Preljocaj and as Jury Member for the Youth America Grand Prix.
