



Dance as Cultural Heritage Project

Brief description of selected projects 2020

1. Die Rote Kapelle

The “Rote Kapelle”, or Red Orchestra, was one of the most important resistance networks during the Third Reich. Bern-based choreographer and choreologist Karin Hermes, in association with the Swiss Archive of the Performing Arts, the German Dance Archives and the Centre National de Danse in Paris, develops a historical fiction in which she places Swiss dance heritage in the context of the Second World War. Its starting point is the meeting between the artist Oda Schottmüller (1905–1943) and Vera Skoronel (1906–1932) in Ascona in 1928. Oda Schottmüller goes on to complete her dance training at the Trümpy school in Berlin, which is run until 1932 by the Swiss dancers Vera Skoronel and Berthe Trümpy (1895–1983). Schottmüller later joins the “Red Orchestra” resistance group, which is active in Switzerland and Germany. The story also covers some other facts of importance to Swiss dance history: the successful staging of Pia and Pino Mlakar’s “Der Teufel im Dorf” at the former Stadttheater Zürich in 1935, and Vaslav Nijinsky’s years in Swiss psychiatric clinics. One fictional element is a Morse code concealed in a dance score for the anti-Nazi resistance. A publication is planned, which will also serve as the basis for stage productions.

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2. Tour de Bal 2021–2022

“Tour de Bal” is a homage to various dance forms linked to the phenomenon that is the ball. It looks at the location, the dance forms and the community that comes together around it. Ball attendees don’t just dance: they drink, eat and behave in accordance with certain ethical, aesthetic and social codes. Dóra Kiss, who launched the “Cadanse” online metacatalogue of dance heritage in Switzerland in 2016, uses the sources it has assembled for this mediation project. Over the course of the 2021/22 season, professional dance, social and folk dance as well as dance research will form the subject for exhibitions, performances and conferences. Each of the wide range of events will take as its starting point a book, poster or other archival document. A travelling exhibition entitled “Impressions de Bal” is planned, along with a history of parties from the rural ball to the urban rave in the city, studios and workshops, a colloquium on leading figures in Swiss dance – Serge Lifar, Sigurd Leeder and Maurice Béjart – and a round-table discussion on urban dance. There will also be something for children, with a special range of activities, while to end the season everyone will come together for a “Tour de Bal” rave party in the Salle du Faubourg, Geneva.

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3. **Hybride Geschichte(n) – Publishing Swiss Oral Dance History**

The Swiss Archive of the Performing Arts (SAPA) is conceived as a living archive and combines collecting, archiving and publishing documents with a present-day artistic and curatorial practice. “Tanzspuren – eine Oral History der Schweizer Tanzgeschichte”, an award-winning Dance Heritage project in 2012, was followed in 2018 by “Tale(s) of Swiss Dance – Conversations with Ursula Pellaton”. As part of efforts to devise an appropriate form for publishing and mediating oral history in dance, there are now plans to develop a publication prototype based on the conversations with dance historian and journalist Ursula Pellaton. For SAPA, the aim of this project is to cement its pioneering role in digital archive mediation. The idea of hybrid publishing is to combine a print publication with a digital format which will be made freely accessible via the SAPA website. The book, which is published by rüffer & rub in Zurich, will include the conversations, divided up by topic, as well as two framing texts on the method of oral history and the context of Swiss dance history.

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4. **Contemporary choreographers at work!**

The project initiated by Mona De Weerd is devoted to key individuals in the current Swiss dance landscape and their various choreographic methods and approaches. A number of choreographers living and working in various parts of Switzerland will be accompanied through a creative process and asked about themselves and their working practices, while scenes from rehearsals will be filmed. Issues include: how do they structure their working processes? What methods, movement principles and choreographic procedures do they employ? How, and through what exercises, do they develop movement material? The results will be compiled into short individual film portraits. The idea is to offer insights into the everyday work of individual choreographers, document their methods, and shed light on creative and rehearsal processes that are normally hidden from public view.

The results will be made available on various channels for further use and research by, for example, universities, and will also appear on the websites of the artists portrayed, as well as national platforms such as the Swiss Archive of the Performing Arts (SAPA) and Reso – Dance Network Switzerland, as part of the Tanzfest dance festival or at other dance festivals.

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