

Summary

3rd Conference of the Speakers and Representatives of German Ballet, Dance and Dance Theater Companies.

Monday, October 22nd 2018, 10.30am - 6.00pm

For the 3rd conference, the speakers are guided to participate in the day's conversations with a solution orientated and problem-solving approach. The aim is to progress beyond only presenting problems and issues within individual companies, in order to find common ground within the group and agree together on what they would like the future of the art form to look like and what actions the network can initiate to help to achieve that future. The important points of discussion and goals formed during this conference are supported by the 45 ensemble speakers representing 28 state and city theaters that are participating in and contributing to this day.

The group is introduced to the official platform for our network *dancersconnect*, which has become more established since *The Federal German Dance Council (Bundesdeutscher Tanzvorstand)* was elected at the last conference. The group is asked to continue to engage with *dancersconnect* after this event, online via the website and facebook page. It is also made known how members of the board are continuously engaged in discussions with partner and related organizations as well as attending important conferences and events in the name of *dancersconnect* as representatives of the interests of dancers.

One main part of the conference is Rivca Rubin's presentation on positive forms of language and communication, also guiding the participants on how they can implement these in different formats and group settings. This aims to provide ensemble speakers with the necessary tools for communication and problem solving to have confidence when approaching their superiors and when creating solutions for their inner-company issues. The second part is to present a detailed outline of *dancersconnect*'s 8-Point-Plan of intention, discuss each point and agree on it as a united group.

During the conference, it also becomes clear that one of the most important tasks for the future of *dancersconnect* is finding a way to finance and stabilize the organization.



November 14th, 2018

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Tanzvorstand**

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Part 1: The Optimism Approach with Rivca Rubin

Goals and Outcomes:

Rubin leads the group through an imagination exercise in order for everyone to realize their individual ideas about an ideal utopian future for dance as an art form and what is involved in the path to getting there. Afterward, Rubin suggests to form five groups so that the speakers can work together to collate their ideas for that *future* and *how to get there* on separate posters. When all the groups have presented their posters, it becomes clear that the whole conference is in sync and has very similar ideas about the goals for the future.

Common points for the ideal utopian *future*:

- Better healthcare regulations for dancers, this includes free access to physical and mental therapies, properly designed working spaces (sprung floors, heating, etc) and access to pool, sauna and gym facilities.
- Support for dancers' career transition, including education, coaching and financial support.
- Dancers are entitled to reconciliation of interest, this includes having a say in working structures, more communication, receiving regular and constructive feedback and having respect and transparency within the workplace.
- Having a balance between work life and personal life, including having more regular free days, holidays and the constructive organization and use of working hours.
- More money, for dancers, for theaters, for creating art in general.

Common points for *how to get there*:

- More communication, between dancers, with superiors and directors, with organizations and people with political influence.
- More education, including easy access to information, availability of translations, workshops and courses.
- Unification of dancers voices, including speaking up, having respect for each other and teamwork.
- Persistence and determination, which involves dancers overcoming fear, pressure and oppression in order to self-education, ask for help and take positive actions.
- The creation of a new labour contract *NV Tanz* for all dancers.

Language and Upwording:

Rubin introduces her *Uptimism* approach to the group and how *Upwording* involves making small changes in the way we speak that can lead to a more positive form of communicated and increased success in finding common ground with our partners in dialogue.

The group learns how to change keywords or key phrases when making statements, expressing personal opinions or asking questions. The idea is that language affects our thinking and that using Upwording creates more space for other people's opinions and perspective. This form of communication could allow for more positive conversations and

relationships with yourself, with the people around you and for the purpose of this conference with your direction or superiors within the workplace.

GROW Formula and Problem Solving:

Rubin introduces the GROW formula as a way of positive problem-solving. GROW stands for:

- **G**oal- how would you like it to be?
- **R**eality- what have you done so far? What is already in place?
- **O**ptions- what else could you do? What would someone you highly respect suggest?
- **W**ill- what will you do? How committed are you to this solution?

The group engages in solo and partner tasks in order to learn and practice how to use the GROW formula to find effective solutions for a problem. Also how to help others to find their own solutions without interfering with their process by giving your own opinion on what you find to be best for the situation, even if it appears in the form of advice.

Part 2: Open Discussion on General and Company Specific Issues

During an open floor discussion, speakers in attendance present issues specific to their own companies. There are negative examples of issues given but also some positive examples of solutions. It is interesting that the group moves on from only discussing things that are not working, to sharing positive solutions and knowledge with each other about making things better inside individual theaters with ways that have already been proven to work.

It also becomes clear that many of the issues presented are similar to those that have been addressed at the previous conferences and that there are many common problems within the group as a whole.

In general, there continues to be a lack of knowledge about the rules of the NV Bühne contract, inner-company regulations and where to seek advice and help within your own theater and also from external organizations.

The network recognizes that there needs to be a long-term solution in order to increase information, knowledge and solutions for these topics. There is support within the group for one possible solution of creating a *dancersconnect* workshop to bring into individual companies. This idea may act as an effective way to increase knowledge, start open discussions and create awareness and participation in the actions of our network with more dancers across Germany.

Part 3: The 8-Point-Plan of Intention

The *Bundesdeutscher Tanzvorstand* in co-operation with experts developed the 8-Point-Plan as a clear outline of the major points of intention for the network, based on the outcome of previous conferences. It deals with a basic approach and specific plans for change on the levels of law including and above our labour contracts.

Read a full copy of the 8-Point-Plan in the attachment.

At the conference, this plan is successfully presented to the group and there follows a detailed discussion about possible improvements on details and wording. The group unanimously agrees upon all eight points as being important actions for change within the structures of professional dance institutions in Germany.

With this plan, it is vital that *dancersconnect* as an entire group becomes involved with the political discussion and that we can be clear on our common goals. As the network moves forward with actions to support the 8-Point-Plan, the *Bundesdeutscher Tanzvorstand* can be confident that they are supported by the voice of every speaker in attendance and the company of dancers that they represent.

Dancersconnect's 3rd Conference

October 22nd, 2018 in Berlin



8-point plan of intention - draft to be discussed

- 1) Wir möchten, dass Arbeitsverträge sowie der Tarifvertrag NV Bühne auch in englischer Sprache vorliegen. Beide Dokumente sollten den Tänzer*innen bei jeder Neuanstellung ausgehändigt werden.

We would like employment contracts including the collective agreement 'NV Bühne' (German Stage Act) also being available in English. Both documents must be handed over to the dancers when they are hired.
- 2) Befristete Verträge und Angst vor Nichtverlängerung verhindern einen offenen Dialog mit Vorgesetzten und beeinträchtigen angestellte Tänzer*innen maßgeblich in ihrem Recht auf Mitgestaltung am Arbeitsplatz. Unbefristete Verträge, das Erschweren der Nichtverlängerung und andere mögliche Lösungsansätze müssen diskutiert werden.

Temporary contracts and fear of non-renewal prevent an open dialogue with superiors, and significantly impair the right of employed dancers to participate in discussion about the workplace. Permanent contracts, the restriction of non-renewal and other possible solutions must be discussed.
- 3) Das berufliche Anforderungsprofil von Bühnentänzer*innen beinhaltet neben der Kunst hohe physische und psychische Belastungen (körperliche Schwerarbeit bei gleichzeitiger mentaler Beanspruchung). Um eine volle Entfaltung des künstlerischen Potentials der Sparte zu gewährleisten, drängen wir darauf, dass die BBTK und der Bühnenverein dies zur Grundvoraussetzung bei der Gestaltung der Bedingungen erklärt, unter denen Tanzkunst in Deutschland gemacht wird.

The professional requirement profile of stage dancers in addition to art involves high physical and psychological stress (physically demanding work with high mental strain). In order to ensure the full development of artistic potential, we ask the 'Bühnenverein' (Federal German Stage Association) and the 'BBTK' (Federal German Ballet and Dance Theatre Directors Conference) to declare this as a foundational idea behind the design of the conditions under which dance is performed in Germany.
- 4) In Zusammenarbeit mit den Tarifpartnern soll ein neuer NV Bühne Tanz verhandelt werden. Dabei sollten auch Repräsentant*innen von *dancersconnect* wie auf Wunsch seiner Mitglieder als politische Fürsprecher*innen und gemeinsame Vertretung von Tänzer*innen hinzuzogen werden.

A new 'NV Bühne Tanz' (German Stage Act: Dance) should be negotiated in cooperation with the trade unions. *Dancersconnect* should also be involved as a political advocacy and as the collective voice of dancers as requested by its members.

 - a) Es muss dem Interesse der Tänzer*innen an individueller Zeitsouveränität, der Vereinbarkeit von Beruf und Privatleben sowie dem

The interest of the dancers' 'individual time sovereignty', the compatibility of work and private life as well as health protection at

Gesundheitsschutz auf tariflicher Ebene weit- aus mehr Sorge getragen werden. Eine überbetriebliche Spezifizierung von Arbeits-, Proben- und Ruhezeit sowie freier Tage ist möglich, ohne die individuellen Ansprüche der einzelnen Häuser an Flexibilität, Praktikabilität und somit deren Wettbewerbs- fähigkeit zu beeinträchtigen.

- b) Ebenso ist mit Rücksicht auf die Anforderungen des Berufes und die kurze Karriere für eine gerechte Bezahlung zu sorgen.
- 5) Berufliche Transition ist Teil der Bühnen- tanzkarriere. Die Arbeitgeberseite hat eine aktive Mitverantwortung. Im Sinne der Ausarbeitung einer klaren Strategie soll die Thematik samt Weiterbildungs- und Umschu- lungsprozess sowie die Finanzierung auf den kommenden Konferenzen vertieft diskutiert werden.
- 6) Der Austausch zwischen Ensemble sowie Betriebsrat, Personalrat und Gewerkschaft ist notwendig, gesetzlich vorgeschrieben und darf nicht behindert werden. Dies ist besonders aufgrund der geringen Altersstruk- tur und der sehr unterschiedlichen nationalen sowie gesellschaftlichen Herkunft erforderlich und fördert letztendlich die künstlerische Leistung.
- 7) Betriebs- und Personalräte als auch Gewerk- schaften sollen die Tänzer*innen bei der Gründung und den wiederkehrenden Wahlen eines Tanzensemblevorstandes für die gesamte Compagnie unterstützen, der die Rechte und Aufgaben des Tanzgruppen- vorstandes nach §§ 48 ff. NV Bühne wahrnimmt.
- 8) Um das Vertrauensverhältnis zu begüns- tigen, sollen gegenüber den Ensemble- sprecher*innen während deren Amtszeit sowie dem darauffolgenden Jahr Nicht- verlängerungen entfallen.

the collective bargaining level must be taken into account and respected. An inter- company specification of working, rehearsal and rest periods as well as free days is possible without impairing the individual demands of different houses for flexibility, practicability and thus their competitiveness.

Equally, fair payment must be ensured regarding the requirements of the profession and short career.

Professional transition is part of the stage dance career. The employer has an active share of responsibility. This topic is necessary to be discussed further in general and in greater detail on the next conferences to be able to formulate a clear strategy.

The exchange between ensemble, works council, staff council and trade union is necessary, required by law and must not be obstructed. This is particularly necessary due to the short career length and wide range of national and social origins, and ultimately promotes artistic achievement.

Work and staff councils as well as trade unions should support every company in the establishment and recurring elections of a 'Tanzensemblevorstand' (dance ensemble council) responsible for the entire ensemble, which exercises the rights and duties of the 'Tanzgruppenvorstand' (corps dancers' council) according to §§ 48 ff. of the NV Bühne (German Stage Act).

In order to promote a relationship of trust, non-renewals of the ensemble speakers during their term of office and the year after should be forbidden.