



Mr. Bertram Mueller

tanzhaus nrw  
<http://tanzhaus-nrw.de/>



## Presenter Interview プレゼンター・インタビュー

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The programs and mission of tanzhaus nrw,  
at the forefront of German dance

ドイツのダンス発信地  
タンツハウスnrwの取り組み

Based in a renovated building that was formerly Germany's oldest streetcar depot, tanzhaus nrw is one of Europe's foremost dance centers, engaging in a wide variety of dance workshops and performance events. It is an organization with roots that go back to 1973, when artists active in Dusseldorf including Robert Salomon and Chris Parker gathered with an empty factory to hold courses and involve in various artistic projects. After a short hiatus, the group re-gathered in 1978 to form what they called a "The Workshop (*Die Werkstatt*) for dance, painting, craft and sculpture." At the age of 65, Bertram Mueller continues to lead what is now tanzhaus nrw as its director, while also serving as chairman of the European Tanzhaus Network. We spoke with him about the center's history and programs conducted currently at its base since its 1997 re-naming as tanzhaus nrw.

(Interviewer: Akiko Yamashita)

The year 1973 was when Pina Bausch was appointed artistic director of the Wuppertal Ballet. I hear that in the same year artists were gathering in Dusseldorf to engage in activities that would become the forerunner of today's tanzhaus nrw. Would you tell us something about what kind of times those were? I believe it was an era of violent student demonstrations when the so-called generation of 1968 was gaining a public voice. Did the start of your activities (tanzhaus) have any connection to this? Could you explain to us how tanzhaus was started and the social context within which it was born?

The ideals of the student movement definitely were part of the background that gave birth to tanzhaus. It was also a time when people were beginning to recognize anew the miraculous recovery [West] Germany had made from World War II. The motto "Let's dare more democracy" of West Germany's first chancellor from the Social Democratic party, Willy Brandt, led to the birth of the ideal of daring for more creativity in the arts. There was increasing criticism and debate directed at the establishment by the students and artists of the existing universities and arts organizations.

For example Joseph Beuys was at the Dusseldorf Arts Academy (\*1). In 1973 Pina Bausch was appointed artistic director of the Wuppertal Municipal Theater. However, since she was not well known yet, there were a lot of problems between her and the theater. Nonetheless, Beuys and Pina Bausch were working in those established organizations. But tanzhaus was a different type of group from these public facili-

\*1 Joseph Beuys

German contemporary artist and social activist. After studying at the Dusseldorf Arts Academy, he became a professor of sculpture in 1961 but soon came into conflict with the university for his belief that it should open its doors to everyone. He was dismissed from his teaching position in 1972 but won a suit against the university in 1978. He then established his own "Free International University" using his former classroom facilities.

## Presenter Interview

The programs and mission of tanzhaus nrw,  
at the forefront of German dance

ドイツのダンス発信地  
タンツハウスnrwの取り組み

ties. We were what you might call off-off-theater. In other words, we weren't public in nature. We weren't something that someone created or established. And of course, tanzhaus wasn't something that I created.

**In other words, you mean that tanzhaus was a kind of movement for which you had no intention of institutionalizing?**

It would probably best to say that tanzhaus just started moving by itself. We took over a vacant factory that they were starting to tear down in 1973 and started basing our activities there. Dusseldorf had an arts academy and it also had free theater groups. There were also dancers who were performing with Pina Bausch and dancers who didn't belong to any particular company. So, what we decided to do was to invite artists, musicians, actors and dancers who wanted to leave the institutions and pursue their art more freely and have them come as instructors to teach their art to people from the general public. We wanted to bring the artists out of the "ivory tower" of their universities or arts facilities and get them to meet the average laborers and office workers.

My own idea was that we needed great artists in order to attract ordinary people to the arts and get them absorbed in them. That is why rather than using dance instructors, I got dancers who were actually contemporary performers on the stage to come and teach as our instructors. The aim wasn't to teach dance steps but to teach people from the general public what it meant to live as an artist. I wanted them to learn not the techniques need for art but, through the artists, to learn the way to create one's own consciousness and how to open up the door to a new, self-determined way of living. Whether it is fine art, theater or dance, the aim was to help people find the medium that would let them do the experiments and efforts needed to develop creative individuality. This is what caused tanzhaus to spread gradually among the people.

**In other words, you wanted encounters with active professional artists to change people's consciousness?**

That's right. A freelance dancer doesn't have the funds necessary to create a dance work. So, we gave them the opportunity to earn the money to create a work by teaching at tanzhaus. Then on the weekend the students would begin to go to performances to see the works their tanzhaus teachers had created. This became an important experience for the students.

**Was dance the central medium at tanzhaus from the beginning?**

It is true that dance was one of the main focuses. But when reopened in 1978, we called it a "The Workshop for dance, painting, craft and sculpture." We wanted to respond seriously to people's desire to engage in the arts by providing studio or workshop space. Some people painted, some did theater, others did movement or dance, all with the aim of expressing their own creativity. Entering the 1980s the theater section went independent, painters returned to their own studios and taught from there. The world music section became active under the name zakk (Zentrum für Aktion, Kunst und Kommunikation). From the various activities a number of principles were born. One of those was that we become a center that introduces foreign culture and

## Presenter Interview

The programs and mission of tanzhaus nrw,  
at the forefront of German dance

ドイツのダンス発信地  
タンツハウスnrwの取り組み

arts that previously had been little known in Germany. That is how a number of arts like dance from the Africa and India and Butoh from Japan came to be presented by us for the first time [in Germany]. Another principle was to present experimental work.

Would you tell us something now about your personal history and how you became involved in tanzhaus?

My background was in philosophy and theology. I majored in theology and philosophy at Heidelberg and in Berlin, after which I studied psychology at Bonn and then clinical psychology in America and Europe for eight years and worked training therapists at medical institutions. As a result I ended up getting a background in a rather wide range of philosophical and cultural areas. Also, from my work experience I saw the types of insecurities and difficulties people have in contemporary society and was able to understand the therapeutic effect and potential the arts could have.

Contemporary society is changing at unbelievable speed. And German culture is very individualistic. That means that in the process of creating and developing humanness and expanding its breadth, there will be times when human beings collide with the collective and friction occurs. That causes people to become frustrated and disillusioned at times. To avoid losing heart in this way, the lives of artists can often serve as guides and inspiration. As people who have created their own lifestyles and walk their own paths, while still being connected to the collective, artists become models for character building for people in contemporary society. My realization of this is what made me want to create a place where ordinary people could meet artists and find role models in the artists' lives to help them build their humanity and find freedom of expression. And that is why I began working at tanzhaus in my spare time.

Do you have any experience as a dancer or in choreography?

If I had had experience in dance, I think I would probably have created a school that taught technical skills like those of classic ballet, or I would have been doing only contemporary dance. I believe that my studies in philosophy made me want to approach things from an educational standpoint, and my studies in psychology and clinical psychology made me interested in approaching things from the standpoint of character building and character development.

I believe that since the time you were involved in re-starting the current tanzhaus as a "The Workshop (*Die Werkstatt*) for dance, painting, craft and sculpture" (hereafter "The Workshop") in 1978 up until the present, there must have been many twists and turns in the road you have followed.

When we first began our activities, German arts and culture were primarily financed by the regional governments. That remains largely true today as well. In short, that means most of the money goes to municipal arts facilities. So, we chose to be a non-profit organization that sought public funding rather than being a private-sector organization, and that is how we have developed until now. At the time, this approach was the exception rather than the rule in Germany. After continuing our activities for ten years we finally began to get public funding. Without public funding, most organizations eventually break up. The fact that we were able to survive was a bit of a miracle.

## Presenter Interview

The programs and mission of tanzhaus nrw,  
at the forefront of German dance

ドイツのダンス発信地  
タンツハウスnrwの取り組み

Did the other groups of your original Workshop go independent for those financial reasons?

Besides The Workshop, the theater group had many other studios around Dusseldorf. The reason that the dance group stayed on as the main group of tanzhaus is that they had no other studio locations besides ours. The Workshop was the first place in Germany that presented African dance Oriental dance and hip hop and the first place where people could take lessons in them. Another reason why we were able to continue offering dance was that it brought in more income from lessons than the other arts. One day I looked in on a flamenco lesson and saw that about half of the students were Japanese. Because young people want to show themselves as being strong, a lot of popularity has come to focus on caá puéra as well. People who want to express themselves with the great freedom come to the contemporary dance lessons. People who come to the ballet lessons are those who are seeking discipline. In this way, different people seek different methods of self-expression, so we tried to offer as broad a selection of dance as possible to answer the diverse needs of more people and this approach has won wide acceptance in the society, but it took 25 years. I believe that tanzhaus has probably been successful because we didn't try to concentrate on a single type of dance but a very wide assortment of dance types that offered options for people of all ages.

Going back to what we were talking about in the beginning, our priority has always been to direct the income we earn to the artists who need it most. The most important thing was to help maintain the quality of the artists who participate in our programs as instructors by ensuring that they had sufficient income. Because we invested in the quality of our artists in this way we get lots of students coming to learn from them. Our belief was that this results in a state where you can pay your own rent for the first time and get enough income to support the organization. To do that we got rid of the copy machine and only kept one telephone, we made our own posters and went around the city on bicycles hanging them up. Having worked through that pioneering period, the city finally began to give us financial support.

At first you just occupied a factory, but how did you get to the point where you were able to move to your present facility?

The factory provided us with a big space. But it didn't have any heating and was not really a good environment to work in. Later the factory was torn down and we moved to a number of buildings. Early in the 1980s we moved to a building near the city center on an agreement that the city would pay the rent for us, but as the rent went up, it was decided that we would renovate the old streetcar depot and use it as our base. We were very fortunate in this.

It was a project to renovate Germany's oldest streetcar depot, wasn't it? Where did the budget come from for that project?

The renovation of the old streetcar depot cost 1.6 million marks in all and North Rhine-Westfalen State paid 80% of it. The city of Dusseldorf paid only 15% and we paid the remaining amount. At the time in the Ruhr region there was a large-scale state project to turn old factories and industrial facilities into culture and arts facilities. Although

## Presenter Interview

The programs and mission of tanzhaus nrw, at the forefront of German dance

ドイツのダンス発信地  
タンツハウスnrwの取り組み



Dusseldorf is not in the Ruhr region the movement to turn Germany's oldest streetcar depot into a cultural facility instead of tearing it down was in line with the policy of that project, and that is why money could be allocated from the state of North Rhine –Westfalen. About the time that the renovation work began on the old streetcar depot, The Workshop changed its name to tanzhaus nrw (Note: nrw is the abbreviation for North Rhine –Westfalen). In the mid-1970s there was a large social-cultural center named The Factory in Hamburg. In line with Willy Brandt's policies of "Let's dare more democracy" and "promote culture and the arts" there were many culture centers born in cities like Nurnberg and other places. And The Workshop was also one of these culture and arts centers.

More than 30 years have passed since The Workshop was started and later changed to tanzhaus. During this period there have been big social changes. Have these changes had an effect on the principles and ideals of tanzhaus?

Of course, tanzhaus has lived in the midst of social change. One of the most notable changes has been that foreigners from many countries have come to live in Germany for a variety of reasons. At the time The Factory was started there were few institutions that dealt seriously with the cultures that these immigrants brought with them as their cultural backgrounds, but we were one of them. Today people from countries all over the world live in Dusseldorf. It is important that these people maintain their cultural identity as they assimilate into German society. You will find many African shops in the vicinity of tanzhaus today, and tanzhaus is the reason they have congregated here. When we started doing courses and festivals on African dance, many Africans began to come here, and eventually that came to live here. The same thing can be said about the city's Latin American community. They came to find a cultural home at tanzhaus. Germany now has a very large immigrant population. It is no longer possible to answer the diverse cultural needs of this country with a homogenous culture. That is why tanzhaus has come to offer such a wide range of programs and activities. I believe it is important that we offer arts and culture that reflects the realities of today's society here in Germany.

From the beginning of The Workshop we set as one of our objectives to serve as a bridge between society and the arts. We wanted to change the kind of situation where people just went to watch a performance and the experience ended there. We wanted to bring together in one place the arts education, stage performances, creation of works and discussion about the works, which until that time had all been conducted separately. Particularly in the case of contemporary dance it is important that after seeing a performance people have a chance to gather and talk about their reactions. We prohibit people getting together to dance at our facility after hearing a performance of African drum music. That is because African drum music comes from a cultural background that has many diverse and complex rhythms not found in German music and we want people to learn about this background.

Another social change that has taken place is the growing need to spread the arts among young people. Compared to 30 years ago, there are ten times the number of cultural and arts events today. However, only 5% of the population goes to events at arts facilities regularly. About 45% go a few times a year, while 50% never go at all. If you go to an opera performance you will find only the graying elite in the audience.

## Presenter Interview

The programs and mission of tanzhaus nrw,  
at the forefront of German dance

ドイツのダンス発信地  
タンツハウスnrwの取り組み

We have to bring the nutrition of arts to people who are less fortunate, culturally and socially, and especially children. We have to get parents to understand that providing a cultural life for their children is very important and will eventually help them in their future working life. Learning dance gives children more self-consciousness, deepens their ability to concentrate, their creativity and discipline. Our programs at tanzhaus are planned with the importance of this very point in mind.

Next I would like to ask you about the current state of tanzhaus, what facilities you have and what kinds of programs you engage in.

The facility we operate has a total floor space of 4,000 m<sup>2</sup>. We have eight studio spaces where some 250 courses are conducted weekly, taught by 40 instructors and with an attendance of about 2,500 students. Some 800 of those are children. In the mornings we have classes for professional dancers in ballet, modern and contemporary dance in five of our studios. In the afternoons we have classes for children of ages 2-3 and their parents. From 5:00 in the evening and on weekends we have classes for adults.

Besides these studios we have a large and small stage performance space with seating for 350 and 90 respectively, where we present performances of dance works from around the world as well as dance works from our own North Rhine-Westfalen region. For creating new works we have a residency program. We also have a restaurant and a foyer. The foyer is a space for discussions and post-performance talks after performances, as well as being a space for holding seminars and research.

Another program we have is called "Take Off," as in the take-off of an aircraft. This is for children of two years and older. Recently we also started a Take Off program for infants of 2 to 3 months. This new program is run by a woman who formerly worked as a dramaturge with William Forsythe. She started it after her own child was born. There are also a number of projects within the Take Off program for creating new works. One of these is the tanzhaus youth ensemble JET (Junges Ensemble am tanzhaus nrw). This is a program where talented young children attend lessons and rehearsals three times a week and create a work to perform. This program is gear toward children who will eventually be taking exams to enter dance departments at the university level.

The second project is "Chance Tanz." This is a project for young people from difficult family environments with drug addictions or aggressive personalities that make them unfit for normal school or workplace environments, and it has them participate in creating a work to perform. This project was started three years ago and it aims to help young people who have been rejected by schools or workplaces to regain connections to society through dance. Everyone thought this would be impossible at first but it became possible. We are very serious about making this project work because we believe in the power of dance to restore discipline, develop communication skills and help make people socially functional again.

Take Off also has an outreach project where tanzhaus goes to schools. This tanzhaus program is being conducted in 26 classes in the morning as a regular class, just like mathematics or science. Before we got to this point there was naturally a lot of resistance from the establishment. But we were supported greatly by the parents,

## Presenter Interview

The programs and mission of tanzhaus nrw,  
at the forefront of German dance

ドイツのダンス発信地  
タンツハウスnrwの取り組み

especially parents with immigrant backgrounds. These dance classes where language is of less importance give the immigrant children an opportunity to feel more comfortable in school. Now there is increased recognition of the benefits of dance as a means to build social skills and requests from schools for these programs are growing stronger. This “Take Off” model in which tanzhaus and the schools work together closely has now spread beyond Dusseldorf to other communities throughout North Rhine-Westfalen State and we are now asking the federal government for financial support for the program.

It is important that after long years of effort we have succeeded in creating today’s tanzhaus as an organization with unique characteristics and strengths. What I often tell politicians is that the cities have theaters and concert halls and opera houses, so why don’t they have dance houses. Dance is a separate art and it needs its own buildings. You can find the uniqueness of tanzhaus in the way it not only presents world dance but also supports local freelance dance artists and brings foreign dance and contemporary dance to the people with a variety of educational concepts, investigates the background behind social problems and conducts community dance programs that seek to deal with these problems.

The unique German system where theater-affiliated ensembles create works to perform at their theaters is a difficult one because it tends to be self-complete and closed in nature. German theaters don’t have the kind of system they have in France where there are centers that specialize in creating works and the theaters then purchase those works to present to the public. There are only a few places in Germany that present international dance works or dance works by freelance artists. Some the representative ones are HAU in Berlin, Mousonturm in Frankfurt, Kampnagel in Hamburg and our tanzhaus, but the country need more places like these to support free artists.

Would you tell us about iDAS (International Dance Artist Service), which tanzhaus cooperates in?

There are about 50 [dance] companies in North Rhine-Westfalen State. Of them about 20 free choreographers or are active in other states around the country. iDAS is an organization to assist these companies and it operates in close cooperation with tanzhaus. It offers detailed support when artists want to create works or tour overseas.

When you add programs like iDAS, tanzhaus truly has a wide range of activities. Could you tell us about the operating structure? And where your operating budget comes from?

Our dance courses are paid for by the income from participation fees. Seventy percent of that income goes to pay for the operating costs of the courses themselves, while the remaining 30% is use to support creation of new works and pay the administrative costs. Support funding [public funding] is limited to use for inviting international companies for guest performances. The tanzhaus financial model is actually the focus of much interest internationally and we get many visits from overseas municipal government officials on study tours. Lately we have had visits from officials from Toulouse, Tilburg and Oslo. A total of about 180,000 people come to tanzhaus

## Presenter Interview

The programs and mission of tanzhaus nrw,  
at the forefront of German dance

ドイツのダンス発信地  
タンツハウスnrwの取り組み

every year. If you divide the funding we get from the city of Dusseldorf by that number it comes to about 10 to 15 euro per person. In contrast the funding the city gives to the Municipal Theater comes to about 120 euro for every ticket sold, while the Opera House get about 150 euro per ticket and the Ballet company about 160 euro per ticket of public funding. Even with this little amount of funding, tanzhaus is able to offer performances by internationally famous companies like Saburo Teshigawara's. Also, some individual projects like Take Off have sponsors. For example, the Chance Tanz program I mentioned earlier is supported by the Rotary Club.

You also hold a variety of festivals.

We have one festival every two months. Every year we hold an Oriental dance festival, a flamenco festival, and Afro-Latin festival and a children's dance festival. We also have series that have a different theme each year. This year we had a Global Dance Alliance series, and next March Teshigawara will come for this series. This series brings together internationally renowned companies or choreographers to work together with unknown young dance artists on a work. Because we have to do things to nurture the next generation of artists. But, for Teshigawara's performance it will not be a new work but the German premiere of his *Mirror and Music*, so it won't be done in collaboration with young artists. We also plan to have it tour Europe beyond Dusseldorf, so we have contacted theaters in Amsterdam and Paris as well.

Who are some of the choreographers active in Dusseldorf? It appears that Ben J. Riepe has recently won the Dusseldorf Award of Merit.

Ben J. Riepe is one of the artists we nurtured at tanzhaus. It took ten years for him to reach this point. To name some others there are the Opera House's Martin Schläpfer, Neuer Tanz and VA Wölfl, and there is Raimund Hoghe who is active mostly in Paris now. Of the younger generation there is Ben J. Riepe, whom we've just mentioned, and there is Silke Z./resistance and Stephanie Tyrsh to name a few. Until a few years ago we also had Rodolfo Leoni. He is presently a professor of choreography at Folkwang University of the Arts. All of these people have been to Japan too.

With regard to the general dance scene in Germany, I would like to ask you about Tanzplan Deutschland. This was a five-year plan that ran through 2010 for the support of dance projects in nine cities around Germany. Your tanzhaus was one of the bases for this project I believe, so could you tell us what it involved?

Take Off was one of the programs supported by Tanzplan. Although Tanzplan itself ended in 2010, it has been decided that the program will continue in Hamburg, Berlin and Dusseldorf. It will also continue in Munich on a smaller scale. It isn't decided yet whether it will continue in Essen. The condition for continued funding support is that each of the cities must fund 50% of it. I believe that the reason Take Off has continued to receive funding under this project as an important part of the tanzhaus programs is that the city of Dusseldorf has recognized the importance of dance in youth development.

As you look back on the five years of the Tanzplan, do you think there are things that were accomplished and things that it was not able to accomplish? What is your per-

## Presenter Interview

The programs and mission of tanzhaus nrw,  
at the forefront of German dance

ドイツのダンス発信地  
タンツハウスnrwの取り組み

### sonal assessment of Tanzplan?

The name Tanzplan can be misunderstood. It isn't a plan, it is a project. As I said earlier, arts and culture activities in Germany are financed by the regional governments, not by the federal [national] government. The only things that the federal government can finance are things that are important for the entire country or international culture and arts programs. The Bayreuth Festival, Documenta in Cassel and Theaterreffen in Berlin are examples of these activities. There was an idea contest to see if we could come up with a nationwide dance project that met this requirement. The result was the project to build dance infrastructure over five years in nine cities. The things this project accomplished were a new consciousness among politicians that more efforts should be channeled into dance, the responsibility of the federal government in the field of dance and the fact that a cooperative relationship was established between representatives of the dance community and minister of Culture and Media [Bernd] Neumann. It has been decided that the Ministry of Culture and Media will support three important projects, one to revive important historical dance works in cooperation with public theaters, collaborative projects between famous choreographers or companies and youth groups to create new works and the establishment of a company of young dancers to be led by [John] Neumeier of the Hamburg Ballet Company. Also, the German Dance Federation of dance organizations nationwide has formed a lobby to promote support for dance *messe* (exhibitions) and dance platforms around the country.

I would like to ask you next about collaborative projects with foreign artists. The dance critic Arnd Wesemann wrote an article for the Goethe-Institut titled "tanzhaus nrw – Europe's Dance Policies Made in Düsseldorf." It may be a bit of an exaggeration, but I'd like to know what you think when you hear that. Also, you are the chairman of the European Dancehouse Network. Would you tell us something about this network? I understand it to be a very ambitious program that has involved establishing an international agent's position at tanzhaus nrw. Would you tell us about some of the specific results it has brought up until now?

Unfortunately I haven't read Mr. Wesemann's article. The title does sound a bit exaggerated, but it still makes me happy to hear. Tanzhaus is not a political institution. However, with the lack of funding at tanzhaus, I do believe that we know more than most of dance houses the need to cooperate with other European dance houses and create a network in order for tanzhaus to survive. We now had over 40 [network] partners, mostly in Europe. And, I was probably the first to ask the European Union for funding for a project in Europe. It is important to have the know-how for getting funding from the European Union, but it is also important to have reliable partners.

The European Dancehouse Network (EDN) is an organization born of tanzhaus' cooperative activities with partners around Europe. I believe that EDN is the strongest and clearest organization that is active internationally as a dance house network. For example, one of EDN's projects is "Module Dance," which is led by a [EDN member] dance house in Barcelona. It is a project that provides support for artists over a period of several years that takes them through a four-stage program beginning with research and residency and then proceeding to creation of a work and performances. Not all of the dance houses in EDN have a theater of their own, but member dance houses that only have studio spaces can still participate in the research and residency

## Presenter Interview

The programs and mission of tanzhaus nrw,  
at the forefront of German dance

ドイツのダンス発信地  
タンツハウスnrwの取り組み

stages of the project. For the work creation and performance stages we need dance houses that have stage technicians and stage facilities. One of the most successful projects to come out of Module Dance was the project of Japanese dance and choreographer Kaori Ito. The secret to the success of Module Dance is that it functions by making skillful use of the different characteristics of the EDN member dance houses.

In addition to tanzhaus nrw's position as a central base of dance houses in Europe, I believe you have also served as a portal for programs with Asia. What is happening in that direction? I hear that you have exchange programs with China and South Korea, are these ongoing programs?

In addition to Module Dance, the European dance houses cooperated in roughly month-long project called "Kore-A moves" that presented Korean contemporary dance at locations around Europe in 2010. In 2012 we will hold the second Kore-A moves project. This is truly a program of performances that makes positive use of Europe's dance house network. In November of 2012 we want to introduce artists from the Korean dance scene. It only takes one phone call to line up a schedule of performances in Estonia, Ireland, the UK, Portugal and Sweden. In this exchange project with South Korea, it is a system where the Korean side provides the airfare to get the artists to Europe and the European side provides the local costs while they are here.

For the "Chin-A moves" exchange project we did in 2008, the European side provided the funds for everything. It was a large-scale project that involved exchanges between European and Chinese independent dancers and choreographer in cities around Europe and three cities in China. It began with performances of a work titled "bahok" (meaning carrier in Bengali) created by Akram Khan using three dancers from the China National Ballet Company and five dancers from his own company. Then in May of 2008 five European choreographers went to China and did workshops with Chinese choreographers and companies. In autumn of that same year works of the European choreographers that had visited China were performed in festivals in Beijing, Shanghai and Kunming. Also works by the Chinese choreographers were performed at dance houses around Europe. In this way we were able to shine a light on works of free artists from the Chinese contemporary dance scene that had rarely been introduced in Europe previously.

It was indeed a large-scale project. How large was the budget for it all?

The budget provided by the European side was 180,000 euro. That is a very small amount of money for such a large-scale project. The workshops and performances in China cost almost nothing. As for the performances in Europe, we already had use of the theaters and infrastructure. That is why we were able to do such a large exchange project on such a small budget. This exchange project with China has been praised in Europe as a model for international exchange projects.

Is this project still ongoing?

Unfortunately, we were unable to get continued funding for it on the European side. However there are some exchange projects that we are involved in now. Also, plans call for 2012 and 2013 to be "China Years in Germany" and within this context we

## Presenter Interview

The programs and mission of tanzhaus nrw,  
at the forefront of German dance

ドイツのダンス発信地  
タンツハウスnrwの取り組み

plan to have more dance exchanges between China and Germany. As the China exchange project has shown, we have built up a system that can achieve big results on a very small budget.

Do you have any projects with Japanese choreographers and dancers like the exchanges you have had with South Korea and China?

Most of the exchanges with Japan are on a one-time basis. There aren't any exchange projects that use the European network in that way. Two years ago we invited several Japanese dance groups for performances at tanzhaus. Kaori Ito, whom we just mentioned, was one of the artists we invited to tanzhaus. Also, there are performances planned for Kentaro!!, who was introduced in the latest December issue of the magazine *Tanz* in an article titled "Kentaro!! the New Hope." For February of next year we have scheduled performances by Hiroaki Umeda jointly with HAU in Berlin. And, in a joint project with the Japan Foundation for March we will present performances of Saburo Teshigawara.

What do you see as the reason why these exchanges with Japan only happen on a one-time basis?

It is not a problem of the artists but an organizational problem. One reason, I believe, is that there are no theaters in Japan that could host these kinds of exchange projects. Japan has many excellent theaters and I would love to choose three of them and organize an exchange project with European theaters, but Japanese theaters don't have budgets for that kind of project. Another problem is the difference in the fiscal budgeting periods between Japan and Europe. When a prospect suddenly arises in Europe, the Japanese budgets are usually already set for the period in question. Also, the reverse is sometimes true. We have the same problem of yearly budgeting schedules when dealing with South Korea as well. I would like to state for certain that Japan has many outstanding artists and we have a lot of interest in them. Unfortunately, however, it is difficult to invite these artists to Europe and network because of the two reasons I have just cited.

Returning the subject to tanzhaus, as far as I know, Etsuko Akiya (currently teaching at Folkwang University of the Arts), Maya Sakamoto (currently teaching at Shikoku Gakuin University) are two Japanese artists who have taught at tanzhaus and created works there. Among ensembles that were born at tanzhaus there is E-Motion with Takao Baba. And, Naoko Tanaka was also involved with tanzhaus. Would you tell us about the Japanese artists that you have worked with up until now?

Ms. Akiya was a member of Rodolfo Leoni's company who taught professional dancers here at tanzhaus while creating works with Leoni. Ms. Sakamoto also taught ballet for us and created works for the youth ensembles that are part of the Take Off project. Baba Takao of E-Motion and Naoko Tanaka were artists who were supported by the iDAS program we mentioned earlier.

Finally, I would like to ask you about your personal involvement with Japan.

My father was a minister of the Confessing Church that resisted the Nazi regime. Af-

\*2 Kansai Seminar House

A research and residence facility established in Kyoto in 1967 by the Nippon Christian Academy as the Kansai regional base for the "Hanashiai" academy movement that originated in Germany.

## Presenter Interview

The programs and mission of tanzhaus nrw,  
at the forefront of German dance

ドイツのダンス発信地  
タンツハウスnrwの取り組み

ter the War, German churches established educational facilities in various regions as a form of repentance for the Nazi period. My father was given the mission of founding one of these facilities in Kyoto, the Kansai Seminar House (\*2). Also, my older brother had close relationships with numerous Japanese firms as a technician and as a lawyer. In other words, the family in which I was raised had deep ties with Japan in the areas of theology, economics and in culture and the arts.

We would like to thank you for your generosity in giving us this long interview.