

# KICK OFF! Network Meeting for the independent dance scene Leipzig

12.04.2024 / 14 p.m. LOFFT-DAS THEATER



## Meeting notes

### 1. Introduction of the attendees

Around 40 freelance artists from various genres were present.

#### Initiators:

- Katja Grohmann / IceLab Leipzig (<https://icelab-leipzig.de/>) / Representative Performing Arts at Leipzig Plus Kultur (<http://www.leipzigpluskultur.de>)
- Mandy Unger / M.over (<https://m-over.de/>) / HEIZHAUS Leipzig
- Vasiliki Bara (absent) (<https://www.instagram.com/vasi.liki.bara/>)
- Jule Grebe, Clara Sjölin, Niko Jakobi (absent), Charlie Fouchier / 4fT-Tanzplattform Leipzig (<https://www.tanzplattform-leipzig.de/>)

All initiators are freelance dancers/choreographers.

#### Aim of the initiative:

Transparent needs analysis for a dance platform (cf. Tanznetz Dresden) in Leipzig

#### Introduction of the guest Cindy Hammer:

Cindy Hammer, choreographer and dancer from Dresden (go plastic company / <https://www.goplasticcompany.de>), introduces the network and the TanzNetzDresden association as a board member

#### Introduction TanzNetzDresden (<https://tanznetzdresden.de>):

TanzNetzDresden (TNDD) has existed for 14 years and during this time has established itself as an important authority both locally, regionally and throughout Germany. It not only

acts as a hub for the dance scene in Dresden, but also as an important cultural-political voice and contact point for various networks, dance offices and associations. The work of the TNDD covers various areas, including structural work, the representation of interests as a spokesperson and the promotion and support of artistic projects. Exchange and cooperation with other networks and independent scenes are of crucial importance to the TNDD. One of the main aims is to support local artists and promote their work and supra-regional networking.

### Introducing Leipzig Plus Kultur e.V.

Katja is the spokesperson for the performing arts at Leipzig plus Kultur

→ Association for the representation of the interests of the independent cultural scene in Leipzig (before politics), i.e. specifically vis-à-vis the Cultural Office and other political bodies)

→ Objective: collects (cultural policy) needs, questions and problems and addresses them in a bundled manner

→ encompasses all performing arts (including dance, theater, performance, puppetry, cabaret, musical theater, contemporary circus...)

### → Info about advisory board election/regulars' table on 13.5:

**On 13th of May** a new person will be elected to the advisory board. Members of this advisory board are responsible for reading all applications for project funding in the field of performing arts at the Leipzig Cultural Office and deciding on their eligibility for funding in a fair discussion. They then pass on their recommendations to the Department of Culture. Leipzig Plus Kultur fought hard to be allowed to elect one person to this advisory board in order to achieve a certain rotation of board members. This advisory board member is elected for 3 years. The role is voluntary and strong German skills are necessary..

It is an advantage if the new advisory board member is familiar with the dance scene, among other things. At the same time, however, decisions are made on all performing arts submissions, which requires a fundamental interest in and overview of the performing arts in the city.

***Everyone who feels they belong to Leipzig's independent performing arts community is invited to vote.***

### 2nd: Interview with Cindy Hammer from TNDD

Moderation: Mandy Unger

### What were the needs when the platform was founded?

- The first meetings took place in 2010
- Common positioning/wishes/topics: Being active in cultural policy / defining ourselves as a scene / being transparent / consensus / eye level / grassroots democracy

- The occasion was the beginning cooperation of the independent scene with Dresden Hellerau
- A corresponding project application was approved
- This led to the founding of "Linie 8", which provided a stage in Hellerau from 2011-2017 as a loose association of people from the independent scene (monthly)
- Visibility for the actors of the Dresden dance scene and thus the foundation stone for the establishment of the network
- Necessary professionalization, initially via a cultural office as a legal form
- 2017 Change of directorship in Hellerau → Line 8 is dropped
- resulting in a reorganization: what do we want from now on? Needs analysis: learning from each other, artistically and organizationally, purely practically, connecting, but also creating a political voice and offering professional training
- Contact with the scene is important: What is important to you? Why do you need a network? Answer: to learn from each other / stay in contact
- Foundation of the association in 2019
- Board and members form vd. Working groups, each dealing with specific topics
- In 2013, Villa Wigman was founded as a production center for independent performing arts with 3 studios and offices from the "Spaces" working group

#### Today

- 6 people on the board / no chair, is represented by the association
- approx. 60 members
- Institutionally funded since 2014, but always dependent on other funding/applications
- Structural and institutional funding necessary

#### By whom and for whom? Boundaries of a network

- freelance dance makers / producers are particularly active (this creates the target group and the topics that are introduced)
- not dependent on dance style
- Current status: Network distribution list (newsletter, currently approx. 150 people, through which the invitation to the network meetings is published)
- Question about the representation of people in training is open

→ Association members pay an annual membership fee of €40

→ Benefits of membership: cheaper training and the right to vote in board elections

→ The number of people actually active in the network is around 10-20

#### Benefit of the TNDD for the scene

##### Personal perspective Cindy:

- Networking and catchment area for new people
- Knowledge transfer, advice on issues, e.g. drawing up a cost and financing plan
- Formats: Professional training, Pop Up / Pop Up Exchange, Round Table → Formats keep the network together

→ Initiatives reach a broad consensus, but what next?

→ Cooperation with independent venues

→ Art funding prize → Institutional funding → 3 years of concept funding in Saxony

→ Dachverband Tanz important partner for nationwide support

→ Other possible sponsors: NPN, umbrella organization for dance

Funding for: Cooperation, rooms, material cooperation stage design, external fees for public relations, documentation, lecturers, organization of professional training (2 people), studio sound, meeting formats.

### **3rd: Fishbowl / exchange round:**

Format: a group of 3 to 5 people discuss specific topics. Those present listen. Anyone who would like to make a contribution can take a free chair and join in the discussion. After a maximum speaking time, the seat must be vacated again.

*[This part of the minutes has been preserved in slightly abridged form as it was noted. The examples given could not be checked in detail for completeness. If there are any major errors in the content, please contact us immediately].*

*Tino Tsakalidis* (Dance Center):

Proposal for a solo evening format / performance evenings → each person/group gets 10 min → approx. 3h evenings → using Zurich as an example

*Cindy Hammer* (TNDD):

no curated program, but designed by the scene brought the end to Linie 8 because no to far too little fee was possible.

*Gesa Volland* (Flugfisch):

Already existed in Leipzig / everyone could take part / all styles of performing arts were welcome / organization was purely unpaid work / ran into nothing as a result / needs support from the houses

*Tino:*

Another example not only for dance: At Lake Constance 200th Splinter Night

*Dirk Förster:*

Visibility as a problem in Leipzig? no public interest?

There is a lack of representation of interests vis-à-vis local politics to improve transparency / no transparency in Leipzig as to who receives funding ("individual"?) / Where are the older players in the Leipzig dance scene today?

Example festival in Mannheim.

*Tino:*

Example Irina Pauls: fights and gets no money / good to show yourself bundled together.

We need more lobbying

→ Agreement

*Dirk:*

the problem is not small production, but larger structures that are a certain size and don't get enough money.

*Katja Grohmann* (IceLab Leipzig):

This is exactly what the Netzwerk-AG and Leipzig Plus Kultur are there for / L+K represents the bridge between the independent (performing) arts community and cultural policy / Everyone who wants to feel heard with their needs can participate in Leipzig plus Kultur / Some things take many years of consistent work before they are implemented

*Cindy:*

A lot of time goes into discussions with authorities, it works best as a group / Recommendation to work decentralized -> not everything in one place / Create an overview of Leipzig's rehearsal spaces with conditions and availability

*Alma:*

It needs a structural basis, there were open stages, funding was there, structures and visibility are there, just no more money.

*Charlie:*

Dance platform funded by Tanzpakt 2021-23 / funding expired June 2023 / Charlie, Jule and Niko have taken over since October. Orga runs completely on a voluntary basis. Income from activities (trainings etc.) only covers the running costs.

Plan: Submit applications for TanzPakt and institutional funding this year. Workshop Festival for fall 2024 has been applied for, feedback expected in June. The aim is more networking, doing more for the independent scene, more art, fewer fundraising measures such as studio rental

*Cindy:*

Pop up format: people who wanted to be on stage had to organize themselves / framework is set with assistance / very important in volunteer work to work with people you like to spend time with / volunteer allowance can be applied for at the Bürgerstiftung Sachsen (40€/person/month) / TNDD is open for advice and questions

*Charlie:*

happy to cooperate with Twixx, IceLab, Remise24, for residency formats or other, if funding is there

*Eva:*

Twiks is barrier-free

*Lilian:*

Rooms too expensive, or too many conditions / poor transparency

*Cindy:*

AG rooms, overview was recorded, plus need to go to the offices with it as well

*Dirk:*

Needs analysis rooms Dakü, cross-disciplinary (order to Leipzig plus Culture)

*Denis:*

People from other movement disciplines should be specifically addressed and invited to the next network meeting (contact impro scene + acro circus etc.)

### Mandy: Summary and outlook:

- Where do we stand? A lot has already happened, but where do we go from here?
- Create a network/visibility of the dance scene for funding → Set up or use advocacy groups
- Leipzig plus culture = bridge to the city
- Problem in politics, e.g. regarding the availability and accessibility of rehearsal rooms
- Set up working groups to discuss issues and take action
- Occasions for synergies and mobilization

### Other information for the dance scene

(Ildiko): the state association of independent theaters in Saxony (<http://freie-theater-sachsen.de/>) offers regional and supra-regional networking  
→ this year, a stand will be jointly organized at the Düsseldorf Dance Fair in August → artists from Saxony can be at the association's stand (with limited own funds) → if interested, write to Josefine Bock (Chair of LFTS)

### **What happens next!**

Next step: Evaluation and formation of working groups, with all people who have capacities at the start at the next meeting.

If you would like to participate, please contact [netzwerk@tanzplattform-leipzig.de](mailto:netzwerk@tanzplattform-leipzig.de).

A new joint date is currently being sought in order to get to work quickly (May).

**THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO MADE THIS KICK-OFF SO VALUABLE AND  
FORWARD-LOOKING!**

