

1000 words about the mobility of contemporary dance in Iceland

- **Festivals**

The Reykjavík Dance Festival is the only permanent contemporary dance festival in Iceland. Started in 2002, by independent choreographers, the festival aims to inspire new innovations in dance and movement based works. It serves as a platform for new works by Icelandic choreographers and gives an opportunity for an international collaboration with other artists. The festival is not able to commission new works but will be responsible for shared costs such as publicity, marketing and venues. Works selected for the festival will also receive a small stipend to help finance their production. The festival is held end of August/ beginning of September each year.

The Reykjavík Arts Festival, held in May each year, has through the years, presented contemporary dance works, both by international companies and local companies.

A new performing arts festival, **Lokal**, just started in March 2008 in Reykjavík. One dance production was presented as part of the festival.

Iceland Dance company, has in co-operation with the Reykjavik Arts Festival, arranged a mini – festival three times, in 2000, 2005 and 2006 of Trans Dance Europe network productions.

- **Venues**

There is no venue in Iceland which is specifically for contemporary dance but the Association of dancers has put forward a proposal for a Dance house in Reykjavik.

Various venues, have hosted contemporary dance performances.

The Reykjavik City Theatre, is the residence of the Iceland Dance company where the company premieres the large majority of its productions. The theatre has, on ad hoc basis, been a presenter of dance productions, mainly large scale productions, such as by Pina Bausch and Merce Cunningham, which were done in co-operation with IDC, but also, on occasion, smaller productions.

The Reykjavik City Theatre houses, on regular bases performances of independent dance companies in Iceland, some of which, have been international co-productions.



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The National Theatre presents guest performances from abroad when able and when the opportunity arises. In recent years, it has presented dance productions from the Royal Danish Ballet in 2006, *Mysteries of love* by Erna Omarsdottir and two pantomime productions from the Czech Republic and France.

The Akureyri theatre company, in the north of Iceland, has on an ad hoc basis, hosted dance productions.

Association of Independent Theatres in Iceland, SL, runs a venue in central Reykjavik, Tjarnarbíó, which has on occasion hosted contemporary dance productions. The venue is recently renovated and is much better equipped and has a bigger stage for dance productions.

Some of the members of SL, run venues on an annual basis which hosted dance productions. **Gaflaraleikhúsið and Iðnó** are amongst the most active ones.

- **Agents**

There is no tradition of dance agents in Iceland. The Iceland Dance Company has for a number of years worked with international agents and some independent choreographers, such as Erna Omarsdottir, have a permanent relationship with agents.

- **Rehearsal spaces**

There is one permanent rehearsal space which can be rented or obtained for independent contemporary dance in Iceland: **Reykjavík Dance Atelier**. They have open morning classes, workshops and rent out space for rehearsals.

The Iceland Dance company is the only company in Iceland that has its own permanent rehearsal space in Reykjavik.

Independent dance companies often engage in co-operation with the above mentioned venues for rehearsal spaces or make agreements with different dance schools in Reykjavik.

- **Touring/mobility structures and networks in Iceland and funding possibilities**

There are no permanent touring or mobility structures and networks in Iceland.

All touring is based on the choreographers', dance companies' and venues' own initiatives and economy.



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As stated above, various venues have received national and international productions, through the years, but they do not have a separate budget for such activity. Private sponsorship is often used for funding of international productions travelling to Iceland.

Touring and funding of mobility of national companies abroad

A recently established fund by the city of Reykjavik and Icelandair, Glitni bank and various performing arts associations, **Talia - Loftbrú**, provides funding for independent dance companies to tour abroad. Funding is given on the basis of applications 4 times per year and comes in the form of airline ticket support together with cost of overweight and a fixed amount of ISK 12.500 (110€) per participant.

Companies which need further funding can apply to the Ministry of Culture for funding and/or to their own municipalities.

The **Iceland Dance Company** funds its touring through contracts with the respective receiving hosts but on occasion, it has received additional funding for special cases, such as China May 2007, from the Ministry of Culture and its main sponsor, the National bank of Iceland.

- **Residencies**

There are no permanent residencies available in Iceland but various venues, companies and independent artists work on a regular basis, in a residency structure model by making co-productions across companies, by commissioning international artists to create or work within a production and by making agreements with venues or owners of different spaces.

- **Co-production possibilities**

Co-production possibilities are limited in Iceland and are based on the venues' and producers' own initiative and economy.

- **Daily training**

Professional contemporary dancers have the opportunity to take free trial classes with the Iceland Dance company weekdays from 10.00 – 11.15 and at Reykjavík Dance Atelier

- **National features at present**

At present, contemporary dance in Iceland is undergoing a positive change.



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The Iceland Dance Company has for decades been the only dance company and institution working continuously and has been the focus point of development of contemporary dance in Iceland.

For the last decade, in particular since 2002, the independent sector has been slowly but surely strengthening and enlarging itself and more independent choreographers and companies have been established, many of which have worked internationally.

With the start up of dance department at the Iceland Academy of the Arts in 2006 Iceland has gained a whole new forum for dance and dance education.

However, it must be stated that the infrastructure of independent dance sector is immature and funding for projects is quite limited, thus making it difficult for the community to make strategic planning for the future.

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