

Rider for an evening program in contemporary dance

This Rider is for all those who are confronted with the task of developing and producing an evening program (also called evening sheet, or evening program booklet, or Playbill) for a dance piece - choreographers, dramaturges, curators, mediators, staff in public relations departments. The focus here is exclusively on evening programs in contemporary dance in the freelance scene, although many suggestions and ideas can also be applied to other genres as well as to institutions such as state and municipal theaters.

PROLOG

An evening program is a personal gift from the choreographer and their artistic team to the audience.

The evening program is not an advertising tool, but a welcoming gesture - after all, the guests have already shown up and are ready to see the dance piece they probably already found out about when they bought their ticket.

To make sure that the audience actually receives additional information with the evening program, this guide might be helpful.

1)

The evening program can be considered an art work in addition to the art work/dance piece on stage.

It is possible that dance artists may choose to let the dance piece speak for itself and not create an evening program. If this is the case, consider - together with the venue staff - what an alternative welcoming gesture might look like.

2)

If the choreographer decides to create an evening program, they should decide at the beginning of the artistic process (i.e. beginning of the research, beginning of the rehearsal phase) which medium should take over the function of the evening program. The spectrum ranges from printed/copied booklet to web-based content to audio or video contributions as well as combinations of all these media.

The concept or/and medium of the evening program may change as the artistic process progresses. In that case, the further procedure should be discussed together with all collaborators as well as with those responsible in the venues.

3)

The decision on the form and medium of the evening program must be made together with those responsible for the venue in which the dance piece will be presented. Often the production of the evening program is located in the public relations department of the venue. In this case, the choreographer must make sure that their concept for the evening program is not used as an advertising tool, but rather as an instrument of mediation.

4)

The development of the content of the evening program (in whatever medium it is realized) must happen continuously during the artistic process.

Personal information about the artistic process is of utmost value for an - even non-dance-related - audience.

When writing and selecting texts, it is helpful to imagine an addressee with no affinity for dance. As an aid, the writing of a letter can be considered in order to create space for the moment of the personal.

Ideally, the processual nature of dance as an art form should be mirrored in the evening program.

5)

Factual information about the piece (funders/sponsors, contributors, etc) that is already available online with the start of the public relations process can, but does not necessarily have to, be included in the evening program. Instead, QR codes can be used to inspire the audience to

read further. If the hard facts are to find their way into the evening program, then a form should be found for this that goes beyond the naming.

6)

If an evening program is printed, but developed in a hybrid, rhizome-like structure (e.g. printed texts are provided with QR codes that lead to in-depth information to be read online), it should be ensured that the information that is important to the choreographer can be perceived on the evening of the performance without a connection to the Internet.

The printed evening program should be made available online as a .pdf on the day of the public presentation.

7)

There should be clear rules for the biographies of the collaborators - worked out together in the team at the beginning of the artistic process. Here, too, it is important to imagine what information would be helpful for a non-dance-savvy addressee. For example, artistic statements and the formulation of values are more interesting for the audience than mentioning names that have been important in the artistic career of the artist. A character count and a playful approach (e.g., writing not one's own biography but that of a collaborator in the piece) are helpful for writing biographies.

Biographies of all collaborators on and off stage should be published.

8)

If the evening program is designed as a printed booklet, the primary language is German. Additionally, content can be published in English or other languages, either in the program itself or online via QR code.

9)

In whatever form or medium the evening program is published, the aspect of accessibility should play an essential role. For example, in the case of a printed evening program, it should be ensured that visually impaired guests can have the evening program read to them via a link to an accessible website. All texts in the printed evening program could also be written in easy language, for example, to welcome guests with learning disabilities or those whose native language is not German.

EPILOG

Dear choreographers!

Don't panic! There will never be an ideal evening program for everyone.

However, keep in mind that you are not making the evening program for you, but for your guests.

Try to welcome them as openly as possible and break down as many barriers as possible on the way to seeing your work. The evening program can be a help in this.

The creation of this rider was supported by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and Media within the framework of the initiative NEUSTART KULTUR, assistance program DIS-TANZEN of the German Dance Association.