

History and Profile

The HAMBURG BALLETT – JOHN NEUMEIER is famous far beyond the city of Hamburg. International tours – most recently to Paris, Vienna and Italy, but also to the USA and other countries – have made it not only a fixture on the world's ballet scene, but also one of Germany's most important cultural ambassadors.

The heart of the company is Ballet Director and Chief Choreographer John Neumeier, who has been leading the HAMBURG BALLETT since 1973 and has also been its Artistic Director since 1996. His ballets form the core of the extensive and varied **repertory**: they range from his new versions of evening-length story ballets to musicals and to his symphonic ballets, especially those based on Gustav Mahler's compositions, as well as his choreographies to sacred music, such as Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's *Saint Matthew Passion* and *Christmas Oratorio* or Mozart's *Requiem*. Another focus has always been his adaption of world literature, including *The Seagull* after Chekhov, *Peer Gynt* after Ibsen, *Lady of the Camellias* after Dumas, *Death in Venice* after Mann, *Othello* after Shakespeare or *Parzival – Episodes and Echo* based on medieval texts about the myth of the holy grail. His very personal exploration of *Nijinsky*, the famous member of the Ballets Russes, and most recently *Le Pavillon d'Armide* were celebrated around the world. His most recent ballet *Orpheus* world premiered in Hamburg in December 2009. John Neumeier is a master at combining classical ballet tradition with contemporary forms in his works, all the while blazing his very own path. Renowned composers have created music for his ballets, including Alfred Schnittke for *Peer Gynt* and Lera Auerbach for *Préludes CV* as well as most recently *The Little Mermaid*. With regard to costume and set design, he has collaborated with designers such as Giorgio Armani, Jil Sander, Peter Schmidt and most recently Albert Kriemler of Akris. His choreographies are not only part of the Hamburg repertory, but are performed by companies all over the world. During the 2011-2012 season *The Little Mermaid* will be danced by the Stanislavsky Ballet, *Lady of the Camellias* by the Royal Danish Ballet as well as *A Streetcar Named Desire* by the Pittsburgh Ballet, among others. However, the HAMBURG BALLETT is not limited to John Neumeier's creations: apart from ballets by Mats Ek, Maurice Béjart, George Balanchine and others, the repertory comprises reconstructions of historical choreographies, for example Vaslav Nijinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps* reconstructed by Millicent Hodson. In season 2010-2011, two masterpieces by Jerome Robbins were added: *Dances at a Gathering* and *The Concert*.

A special feature of the HAMBURG BALLETT are John Neumeier's **Ballet Workshops**, which have taken place several times per season since 1973. During these matinees, the ballet director and his company explain the historical and technical background of dance, Neumeier gives audiences a glimpse into his creative process. At the same time company members have an opportunity to dance their dream roles. Since 1974 John Neumeier has also provided a forum for young choreographers from within the company to present their work and further their choreographic development as part of the series »**Young Choreographers**«. This season, the »Young Choreographers« perform at Hamburg's Deutsches Schauspielhaus.

Since 1975, the dance festival »**Hamburger Ballett-Tage**« has formed the climax and finale of every season. The festival traditionally opens with a premiere and ends with the *Nijinsky Gala*, featuring guest appearances by international stars of the dance scene. Apart from the repertory of the HAMBURG BALLETT, the festival also presents guest appearances by famous companies.

The HAMBURG BALLETT's home stage is the Hamburg State Opera. Its creative home, rehearsal venue and educational center, however, is the **Ballet Center Hamburg – John Neumeier** in Hamburg-Hamm. Since 1989, this is where Neumeier's choreographies have been developed and rehearsed in nine ballet studios. Since 2011, it has also been the home of the National Youth Ballet. At the same time, the Ballet School with its integrated boarding school trains the next generation of dancers. During the 2011-2012 season, more than 80% of the company are alumni of the HAMBURG BALLETT's Ballet School, founded in 1978, including current First Soloists Silvia Azzoni, Anna Laudere, Carsten Jung, Edvin Revazov, Alexandre Riabko and Ivan Urban.

Information and Contact: Press Office of the Hamburg Ballet – John Neumeier, Dr. Anna Schwan

Caspar-Voght-Strasse 54 | 20535 Hamburg | Germany

Tel. +49 (0)40 21 11 88 16 | Fax +49 (0)40 21 11 88 17 | presse@hamburgballett.de | www.hamburgballett.de