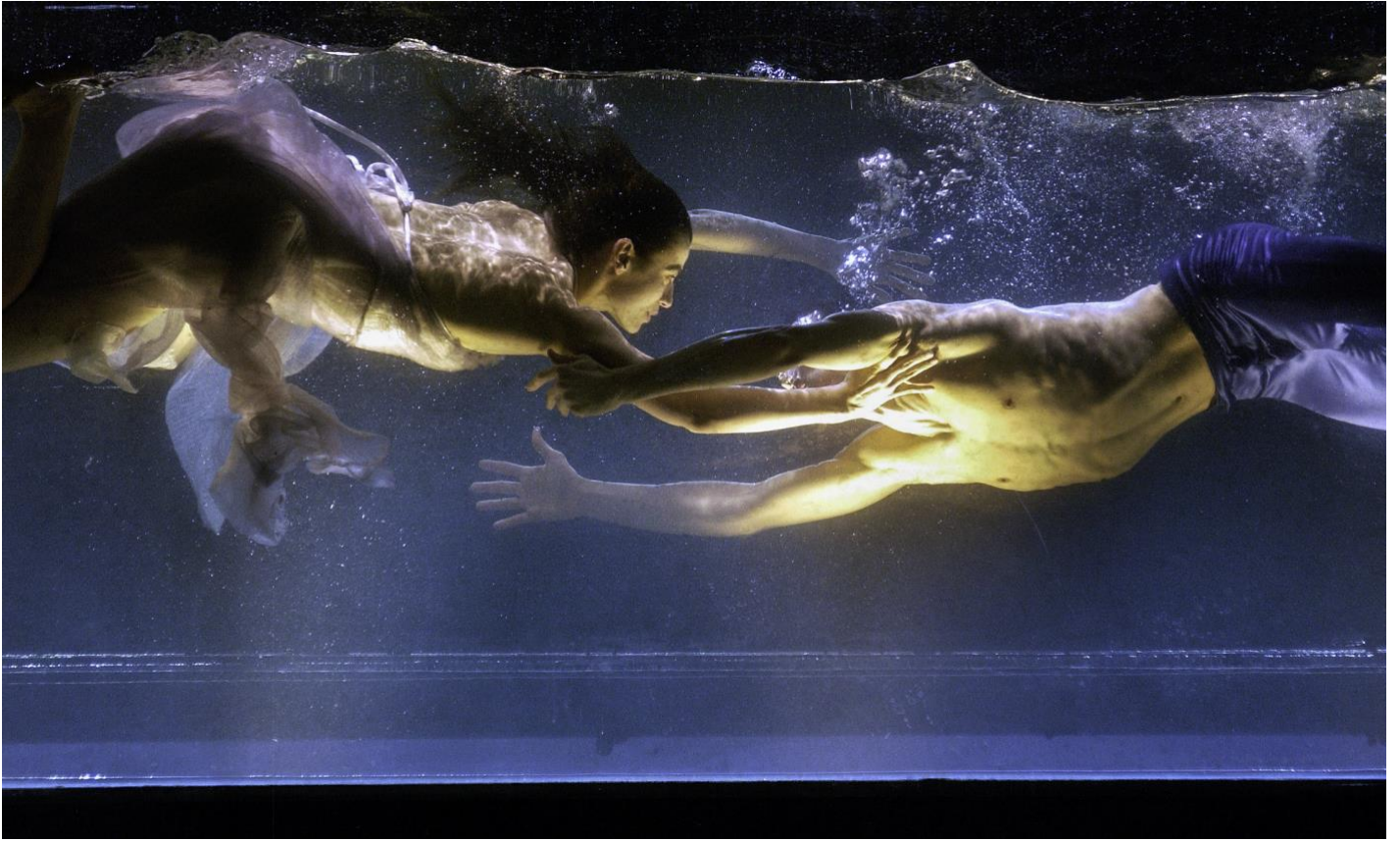


sasha waltz & guests



»Dido & Aeneas« ©Sebastian Bolesch

Dido & Aeneas

Opera in a prologue and three acts

Libretto by Nahum Tate

Based on book VI of Virgil's Aeneid

Choreography by Sasha Waltz

World premiere

Grand Théâtre de Luxembourg

29.01.2005

Inhalt

Cast

About »Dido & Aeneas«

CV's

Dido & Aeneas

Opera in three acts and one prologue

Text by Nahum Tate

Based on book VI of Virgil's Aeneid

Music by Henry Purcell

Choreography by Sasha Waltz

Choreography / Direction

Sasha Waltz

Musical production**Reconstruction**

Attilio Cremonesi

Musical direction

Christopher Moulds

Stage

Thomas Schenk

Sasha Waltz

Costumes

Christine Birkle

Light

Thilo Reuther

Dramaturgy

Jochen Sandig

Yoreme Waltz

Soloists***Dance/Choreography****Dido**

Natalia Skrycka*

Michal Mualem

Clémentine Deluy

Aeneas

Gyula Orendt*

Virgis Puodziunas

Train of Aeneas

Jaan Männima

Pablo von Sternenfels

Belinda

Aphrodite Patoulidou

Sasa Queliz

Second Woman

Jingjing Xu*

Zaratiana Randrianantenaina

Narrator

Peggy Grelat-Dupont

Sorceress

Hanseong Yun*

László Sandig

Gyung Moo Kim

First witch

A sailor

Junho Hwang*

Takako Suzuki

Second witch

A spirit

Álvaro Diana*

Jiří Bartovaneč

Ascanius

Luna Mualem de Filippis

Vocalconsort Berlin

Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin

A production of Sasha Waltz & Guests and the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin in coproduction with Staatsoper Unter den Linden Berlin, Grand Théâtre de la Ville de Luxembourg and Opéra National de Montpellier.

sasha waltz & guests **V**_B**O**_E**C**_R**A**_L**C**_L**O**_N**S****O**_I**R**_N**T**

**AKADEMIE FÜR
ALTE MUSIK
BERLIN** ■

About »Dido & Aeneas«

»Dido & Aeneas« to the music of Henry Purcell is considered the oldest love story in English opera. The production marks a turning point in the work of Sasha Waltz; with it began the development of the »choreographic opera«. Together with 12 dancers from her ensemble as well as 51 musicians, choristers, and soloists, Sasha Waltz developed the opera »Dido & Aeneas«. The complex emotional world of this only fully composed opera by Purcell forms the thematic foundation of the choreographic work. The project »Dido & Aeneas« focuses on the choreographic realization and the expansion of the means of musical theater through theatrical elements of dance. In recent years, Sasha Waltz's work has concentrated on the interweaving of various genres and forms. This has resulted in diverse projects such as »Dialogue'99« at the Jewish Museum, »17-25/4« around the Mendelssohn Building at Lehniner Platz, and the choreographic installation »insideout«. With the Schubert adaptation »Impromptus«, which premiered in April 2005, the ensemble turned toward classical music and began a new creative phase. The staging of an opera is thus a logical step in Sasha Waltz's artistic biography. With »Dido & Aeneas«, Sasha Waltz achieves a novel fusion of dance, singing, and music for opera. Singers and choristers become part of a comprehensive choreography that detaches all participants from their original functions. In the lament of the final chorus for Dido, it is no longer clear who is a singer, dancer, chorister, or soloist. Together with the impressive ensemble, Sasha Waltz in her opera choreography goes far beyond mere illustration of the action. The opera »Dido & Aeneas«, centered on the myth of flight, displacement, and love in times of war, was celebrated worldwide in countless guest performances after its 2005 premiere.

»Sasha Waltz is accustomed to crossing boundaries. Her life – with extended stays in New York, Amsterdam, and many other places – is proof of that.

Now that Berlin is her home, the world comes to her \[...]. Her ensemble reflects this internationality: Germany, Australia, Japan, Portugal, Israel, Canada, and many other nationalities are represented at Sasha Waltz & Guests. Like every great choreographer, Sasha Waltz celebrates the fact that her language – dance – knows no nations, skin colors, or religions. She delights in exploring the boundaries of this language. Dance theatre has a rich history in Germany. Today, however, the term is often used for anything that breaks old choreographic rules, incorporates speech and gesture – or simply entertains. Sasha Waltz's interpretation of this form is precise: her dance is resolute, often athletic, and always inventive. Her theatre – or better: her idea of it (since she herself would never call herself a theatre director per se) – is idiosyncratic, ironic, and fascinating.

Anyone who has seen her trilogy »Körper«, »S«, »noBody« will remember the overwhelming blend of epic imagery and intimate human relationships. To call her a magician is not an exaggeration: her visual imagination shapes the spaces in which she works – whether on stage, in an unused building, or in a church under renovation. She creates scenic jokes, tableaux, and trompe l'oeil images that are unforgettable: in »Körper«, individuals convey the secrets of anatomy – or play with them: in one of my favorite moments, stacked plates transform into freely moving discs of a human spine. In »S«, we witness dancers separating and reconnecting, evoking the impression that life is emerging from primordial sludge. In the same production, Sasha Waltz presents an illustration of the Kama Sutra that is both carefree and irresistibly sensual. In »noBody«, the performers struggle between heaven and earth with a massive cloud threatening to crush them as it rolls across the stage. A stunningly beautiful image, which, when performed in the courtyard of the Pope's Palace in Avignon in 2002, gained an added sense of risk: would the Mistral carry the cloud away? It wouldn't have mattered. Waltz's dancers know how to handle uncertainty, and controlled danger is part of her work. Sasha Waltz is a researcher: her field is the body – and the body in space. At the Schaubühne, she focused on its material composition, on what we are made of. Her work posed the question: can you see our body system – to use her term – can you comprehend it? The result of her intellectual inquiry in the trilogy resembled a scientific study.

At the same time, Sasha Waltz is concerned with architecture, with the materiality of space. She wants to create a human reflection of space. How does a space change when ten living bodies inhabit it? How does inert matter respond to a person and to specific movements? These questions were fundamental when Sasha Waltz worked in the then still empty Jewish Museum in 1998. The result of that work is »Körper«:

»The work has a historical aspect; it is inevitably tied to German-Jewish history. This aspect found its way into »Körper«. The five weeks in the museum had a strong influence on the piece. You cannot be German without engaging with this part of history in some way.«

Sasha Waltz breaks rules, embarks on journeys of discovery, and explores history – but she also tells stories that she finds directly in the people she works with: her dancers. In her most radical piece to date, »insideout« (Graz/Berlin 2003), she encouraged 19 of her dancers to look inside themselves, to speak about themselves, and to express themselves. »There are so many cultures represented in this ensemble,« she said at the time, »that I came up with the idea of working with biographies. »Insideout« is based on the dancers' different generations, their environments, and their individual, isolated stories.«

In a walk-through stage set, the audience had the freedom to »choose« their scene, their story: a woman walked back and forth across the stage while delivering a monologue to a photograph of an ancestor. Another, her face covered in band-aids, told how much she liked pretending to be an animal – and did just that.

That was what I saw. Other viewers will remember a myriad of other images – and that was exactly the genius of »insideout«: its brilliant multiplicity – a kind of choreographic cubism.

Her latest Schaubühne piece, »Impromptus«, is quieter, more painterly, focused on the physical surface of things. For the first time, Sasha Waltz uses a classical score in this production, from which she and her seven dancers craft a measured, lyrical dance sculpture. And yet, there is always a subversive wit present: squeaking rubber boots, mud baths, body painting... A similar humor can be found in »Dido«. As much as staging Schubert was preparation for »Dido«, choreographing an opera also marks the beginning of something entirely new. Historically, it makes perfect sense to present »Dido« with dance elements, as most operas created before the Romantic era thrived on dance

as much as on arias. Fittingly, »Dido« was indeed first performed in 1689 by a dancer and choreographer, Josias Priest – in what was then still the small village of Chelsea.

Still, an English composer of the late 17th century could never have imagined, even in his wildest dreams, that his stately drama would one day be revitalized in the 21st century by a sparkling German choreographer, whose dancers defy traditional gendered clothing rules, scream, writhe, and play with the vibrant self-awareness so characteristic of contemporary dance – and especially of Sasha Waltz. Why not? For one of Europe's most innovative choreographers, working on a venerable opera like »Dido & Aeneas« is truly a conquest of rich, new artistic territory.

CV's

Sasha Waltz & Guests

The dance company Sasha Waltz & Guests was founded by Sasha Waltz and Jochen Sandig in Berlin in 1993 and in 2023 celebrated its 30th anniversary. To date, numerous artists and ensembles from the fields of architecture, visual arts, choreography, film, design, literature, fashion and music from more than 60 countries have collaborated as »Guests« on over 100 productions, »Dialogue« projects and films. Sasha Waltz & Guests works in a constantly evolving international and national network of production and guest performance partners, and since its foundation in 1993 has performed at over 300 venues and festivals in more than 50 countries and 180 cities. Today, the company is showing its current repertoire of 12 active pieces in about 80 performances each year. In Berlin, the company cooperates with a wide range of municipal theatres, opera houses and museums and has contributed to establishing new cultural institutions, such as Sophiensæle (1996), St. Elisabeth-Kirche (2004) and Radialsystem (2006). In 2013, the company was named »European Cultural Ambassador« by the European Union. In 2014, Sasha Waltz & Guests was awarded the »Tabori Ehrenpreis« by the Fonds Darstellende Künste. Apart from Berlin stagings, national and international guest performances and the continual work on the repertoire, Sasha Waltz & Guests has been increasingly committed to educational and social projects. In 2007, the »Kindertanzcompany« (Children's Dance Company) was founded and since 2016 the interdisciplinary and open exchange platform titled »ZUHÖREN« has served as a »third space for art and politics«. Alongside these initiatives, the company continues to propose diverse offers in the field of knowledge transfer. With the work »In C«, based on Terry Riley's open composition of the same name, a system with an internationally growing community has been developing since spring 2021: the choreographic material was recorded in video tutorials to enable the easy transfer of knowledge. As a result, participatory, diverse, international and sustainable »In C« projects, workshop formats and ever-new structures have emerged worldwide. Sasha Waltz & Guests is funded by the Senate Department for Social Cohesion.

Sasha Waltz (Choreography/Direction/Stage)

Sasha Waltz is a choreographer, dancer and director. After her initial studies at the School for New Dance Development in Amsterdam, she joined the postmodern-oriented dance scene in New York City that worked interdisciplinarily with other arts. In 1986 and 1987, she danced in the New York-based companies of Pooh Kaye, Yoshiko Chuma & School of Hard Knocks and Lisa Kraus & Dancers. Following her return to Europe in 1988, she began an intensive phase of collaboration with choreographers, artists and musicians. In 1992, she came to Berlin with a grant by the Künstlerhaus Bethanien, where she developed the improvisational format »Dialogue« driven by the spirit of her interdisciplinary and international work. She chose the young German capital as the center of her activities, where she practiced new choreographic approaches in self-developed infrastructures. Together with Jochen Sandig, she founded the dance company Sasha Waltz & Guests in 1993, and in 1996 the Sophiensæle as a venue for dance and more – today it is a center for the independent dance and theatre scene not only in Germany. From 2000–2004, she was one of the directors of the Schaubühne at Lehniner Platz. For the season 2019–2020, Sasha Waltz was director of Staatsballett Berlin together with Johannes Öhman.

During her first decade in Berlin, Sasha Waltz created internationally renowned and influential dance pieces, such as the »Travelogue« and »Körper« trilogies, as well as the immersive dance installation »insideout«. In the following years, she applied the language and strategies of contemporary dance to vitalise and explore historical and new operas and ballets. With »Dido & Aeneas« (2005), »Medea« (2007) and »Matsukaze« (2011), she realized three pieces about women and at the same time established the genre of the choreographic opera. In 2007, she directed »Roméo et Juliette«, interpreting the dramatic symphony of Hector Berlioz, for the Opéra national de Paris. After this followed »Sacre« in 2013, which was set to the music of Igor Stravinsky and commissioned by the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, and in 2014 »Tannhäuser« at the Staatsoper Unter den Linden in Berlin, which was conducted by Daniel Barenboim. Simultaneously, Sasha Waltz has been pursuing the sharing and teaching of dance knowledge and promoting dance as a medium of social and sociopolitical communication. As part of this endeavour, she founded the Berlin based »Kindertanzcompany« (Children's Dance

Company) in 2007 and, following an invitation from the Berlin Philharmoniker, developed a choreography with over 100 pupils to dance Rodion Shchedrin's »Carmen Suite«. In 2016, she founded the event format »ZUHÖREN« with which she opened a »third space for art and politics«. She expanded the »Dialogue« concept to incorporate danced responses to architecture wherein the audience is invited to act as an equal part of the choreographic happening. Examples of this are »Dialogue '99/II – Jüdisches Museum« in the new construction of the Jewish Museum in Berlin by Daniel Libeskind, »Dialogue 09 – Neues Museum« performed in the still-vacant interior of the Neues Museum in Berlin after the renovation by David Chipperfield (2009) and the choreographic installation »Figure Humaine« for the inauguration of the Hamburg Elbphilharmonie (2017). In her present choreographic work, Sasha Waltz is focusing on the intensification of collaborative processes, such as the synchronic development of choreography and music. In collaboration with Soundwalk Collective and the costume designer Iris van Herpen (among others), she created the choreography »Kreatur« (2017) followed by »ΕΞΟΔΟΣ / EXODOS« (2018), both premiered at Radialsystem in Berlin. In early 2019, the project »rauschen« received its world premiere at the Volksbühne Berlin. In March 2022, »SYM-PHONIE MMXX«, a piece for dance, light and orchestra by Sasha Waltz and Georg Friedrich Haas, received its world premiere at Staatsoper Unter den Linden in Berlin, followed by »Beethoven 7« at Radialsystem, Berlin in March 2023. To mark the 300th anniversary of its world premiere, Sasha Waltz staged Johann Sebastian Bach's »St. John Passion« (BWV 245) in spring 2024 as a timeless tale about the human search for truth and justice beyond its original religious implications. The production of the Opéra de Dijon in co-production with Sasha Waltz & Guests and the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées opened the Salzburg Easter Festival on 22 March, 2024, before it celebrated its French premiere in Dijon on 30 March.

In 2020, Sasha Waltz reacted to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic with different projects on- and offline. From March to June 2020, she published an online »dance diary«, in August developed the open-air project »Dialogue 2020 – Relevante Systeme«, premiering a choreography to Maurice Ravel's »Boléro« as well as solos to Georg Friedrich Haas's »I can't breathe« and in December streamed a series of improvisations with the title »Dialogue 2020 – Relevante Systeme II« live from the Radialsystem in Berlin. In 2021, Sasha Waltz created the choreography »In C« based on Terry Riley's revolutionary and open score by the same name, which has since not only been successfully performed nationally and internationally but has also developed into its own system with a growing community. The work consists of 53 choreographic figures that were recorded as video tutorials to facilitate the transfer of knowledge. Participatory, diverse, international and sustainable »In C« projects, workshop formats and ever-new structures have developed and continue to develop from the material worldwide. In June 2021, a choreography by Sasha Waltz to Ludwig van Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 received its world premiere in the frame of the Franco-German television channel ARTE's Beethoven Day, broadcast live from the ancient Apollo temple in Delphi together with musicAeterna under the baton of Teodor Currentzis.

In 2011, Sasha Waltz was awarded the Bundesverdienstkreuz am Bande for her special services to the cultural field. Since 2013, she is a member of the Akademie der Künste Berlin. In 2021, Sasha Waltz was awarded a »Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres« by France, and in 2024 she received the German Dance Award. In May 2025, Sasha Waltz will be awarded the Helmut Schmidt Prize; this award honours international personalities who, through their significant work, stand for democracy and the common good.

Sasha Waltz & Guests is supported by the Senate Department for Culture and Social Cohesion.



Head of Press, Online Communication & Stephanie Bender
sbender@sashawaltz.de
+49 30 24 62 80 70

Head of Visual Communication, Publication Sibah Pomplun
spomplun@sashawaltz.de
+49 30 24 62 80 24

Assistance Communication & Mar Kira Schmitz
kschmitz@sashawaltz.de
+49 30 24 62 80 25

Social Media Management
Jasmin Falk
jfalk@sashawaltz.de
Mika Albrink
malbrink@sashawaltz.de