sasha waltz & guests

Sasha Waltz

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 structures. 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 1999–2004, 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 »Dialoge '99/II – Jüdisches Museum« in the new construction of the Jewish Museum in Berlin by Daniel Libeskind, »Dialoge 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 »Dialoge 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 »Dialoge 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 was awarded the Helmut Schmidt Prize; this award honours international personalities who, through their significant work, stand for democracy and the common good. For her performance »BACH CELLO DANCE« together with cellist Anastasia Kobekina she won the OPUS KLASSIK 2026 in the category innovative concert of the year.

Short version

Sasha Waltz is a choreographer, dancer and director. She studied dance and choreography in Amsterdam and New York. Together with Jochen Sandig she founded the company Sasha Waltz & Guests in 1993 and was co-founder of the Sophiensæle (1996) and the Radialsystem (2006), two spaces for performing arts in Berlin. From 1999 to 2004 she was a member of the artistic direction of the Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz. The development of innovative, interdisciplinary forms of

performance and creation is an important focus of her artistic work, which ranges from internationally renowned dance pieces such as the »Travelogue« trilogy (1993/1995) or »Körper« (2000) to choreographic operas (»Dido & Aeneas«, 2005) and exploratory dialogue projects (»Dialoge 09 – Neues Museum«). In her current choreographic work Waltz concentrates on the condensation of collaborative processes, such as the fusion of choreography and music (»SYMPHONIE MMXX«, 2022 or »Beethoven 7«, 2023). To mark the 300th anniversary of its world premiere, Sasha Waltz staged Johann Sebastian Bach's »St. John Passion« (BWV 245) as a timeless tale about the human search for truth and justice beyond its original religious implications (2024). At the same time Sasha Waltz is committed to the transfer of dance knowledge and dance as a medium of social and socio-political understanding. In 2021, Sasha Waltz created the choreography »In C« based on Terry Riley’s revolutionary and open score of 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. 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 appointed »Commandeur des Arts et Lettres« by the French Ministry of Culture, and in 2024 she received the German Dance Award. In May 2025, Sasha Waltz was awarded the Helmut Schmidt Prize; this award honours international personalities who, through their significant work, stand for democracy and the common good. For her performance »BACH CELLO DANCE« together with cellist Anastasia Kobekina she won the OPUS KLASSIK 2026 in the category innovative concert of the year.