



GERMAN DANCE AWARD 2023

Malou Airaud, Josephine Ann Endicott, Lutz Förster und Dominique Mercy

Biography – Dominique Mercy

Dominique Mercy is born in 1950 in Mauzac, France. From the age of six, he has his first dance lessons with Mme Dupradeau in Talence. He studies for three more years with Mme Germaine Lalande and becomes a member of the Grand-Théâtre de Bordeaux in 1965. In 1968 he moves to Amiens to join the newly founded Ballet Théâtre Contemporain under the direction of Jean-Albert Cartier and Françoise Adret, who sought cooperation involving choreographers, painters and composers. Mercy performs in pieces by Adret, Félix Blaska, Jean Bailée, John Butler, Michel Descombey and George Skibine, among others. Manuel Alum from the Paul Sanasardo Dance Company comes to New York as a guest teacher and invites Mercy to the Saratoga Summer Festival in 1972. Here he meets Pina Bausch for the first time, where she presents her choreography "Philips 836885 D.S.Y." and teaches at the Festival. He recognizes himself in her movements and feels that he has finally found his artistic home. Therefore in 1973 when Pina Pausch invites him and Malou Airaud to join her new company in Wuppertal, he is understandably thrilled.

Wuppertal: Coming and Going

Pina Bausch works according to the motto: What is important is not only what is already art, but above all, what is not yet art. When Mercy suffers from a coughing fit during the rehearsals for the first Wuppertal choreography "Fritz", she develops an idiosyncratic cough dance with him. He quickly becomes an important protagonist in this new Tanztheater, taking on leading roles in the two Gluck operas "Iphigenie auf Tauris" and "Orpheus und Eurydike. When Pina Bausch begins to experiment with her creative process by asking her dancers questions, he follows her with great sense of naturalness. Nevertheless, he leaves the company in 1975 and 1978, founding the ensemble La Main together with Malou Airaud, Héléna Pikon, Jacques Patarozzi and Dana Sapiro. He also works with Carolyn Carlson at the Paris Opera in the productions "Wind-Water-Sand" and "The Architects". And yet every time he returns to Wuppertal, he has more conviction than ever.

Ideal Collaboration

Over time, an ideal collaboration develops between Pina Bausch and Mercy. Both love the small, quick disturbances. Whoever sees his fidgeting Kasper in "Two Cigarettes in the Dark", for example, encounters not only a comic figure, but at the same time a person in great need. His solos are almost always ambivalent tightrope walks. He particularly appreciates figures with a little quirk or imperfection. "Sad little guys," as he says himself, and irritating weird birds are his specialty – and repeated roles *en travestie*. In this way, he rises to be one of the most outstanding soloists in the company. Nonetheless, he still finds time for other activities. From 1988 to 2009 he teaches at the Folkwang University of the Arts in Essen. In 1999 he develops the duo "Petit psaume du Matin" with Josef Nadj. In 2003 Régis Obadia makes a documentary film about him, *Dominique Mercy danse Pina Bausch*.

When Pina Bausch dies in 2009, he takes over the artistic direction of the Tanztheater Wuppertal together with Robert Sturm until 2013, thus ensuring the continuity of her artistic legacy. To this day, he still assists in rehearsals of new productions of repertory pieces. He has been honored for his

work with the Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres, the Bessie Award, the Légion d'honneur and since 2022, the Officier des Arts et des Lettres, among others.

Text by Norbert Servos

Translated by Dyane Neiman

World premieres with the Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch

- Season 1973/74 Fritz
- Season 1973/74 Iphigenie auf Tauris
- Season 1974/75 Adagio – Fünf Lieder von Gustav Mahler
- Season 1974/75 Ich bring dich um die Ecke...
- Season 1974/75 Orpheus und Eurydike
- Season 1977/78 Renate wandert aus
- Season 1977/78 Er nimmt sie an der Hand und führt sie in das Schloß, die anderen folgen
- Season 1977/78 Café Müller
- Season 1979/80 Keuschheitslegende
- Season 1980/81 Bandoneon
- Season 1982/83 Nelken
- Season 1983/84 Auf dem Gebirge hat man ein Geschrei gehört
- Season 1984/85 Two Cigarettes in the Dark
- Season 1986/87 Ahnen
- Season 1989/90 Palermo Palermo
- Season 1990/91 Tanzabend II
- Season 1992/93 Das Stück mit dem Schiff
- Season 1993/94 Ein Trauerspiel
- Season 1994/95 Danzón
- Season 1995/96 Nur Du
- Season 1996/97 Der Fensterputzer
- Season 1997/98 Masurca Fogo
- Season 1997/98 Herzog Blaubarts Burg
- Season 1999/2000 Wiesenland
- Season 2000/01 Água
- Season 2001/02 Für die Kinder von gestern, heute und morgen
- Season 2003/04 Ten Chi
- Season 2005/06 Vollmond
- Season 2008/09 "... como el mosquito en la piedra, ay si, si, si ..." (Wie das Moos auf dem Stein)

Took over roles in the following pieces by Pina Bausch

- Das Frühlingsopfer
- Blaubart. Beim Anhören einer Tonbandaufnahme von Béla Bartóks Oper »Herzog Blaubarts Burg«

- Komm tanz mit mir
- Kontakthof
- Arien
- 1980 – Ein Stück von Pina Bausch

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Further information about Malou Airaudó:

https://www.pinabausch.org/person/malou_airaudó

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