

Aerowaves

Annual report 2010

Summary

Aerowaves is a European cross-border research and presentation network.

This was the first year in which the core costs of the network were funded by a small grant from the European Union. Established in 1996 as a group of experts who would seek out promising young dance artists, Aerowaves' presentational outcomes were initially limited to 10 invitations to The Place in London. However, occasional invitations to cities in other European countries accumulated with growing frequency, and in 2009 these were formalised for the first time as a pilot presentation project. 60 performance opportunities were offered in 20 cities, attracting 361 applications, representing some 1,800 artists.

With the development offered by the security of core funding, the number of applications increased to 582, representing some 3,000 artists. 100 performance opportunities were offered in 29 cities in 19 countries, and 257 artists from 14 countries travelled to them. Although the audience numbered only 10,000, around 500 attended 17 workshops, seminars and after-show talks.

None of these performances were at the cost of Aerowaves. The investment of €100,000 in the core costs of the network released an equal or greater sum from the budgets of those who agreed to present the works.

In order to reach a consensus on their 20 Priority Companies for the year, the Partners and Associate Presenters met in Moscow. With 34 countries represented amongst the 45 participants, the annual meeting offered a unique and concentrated opportunity for dialogue around issues effecting the development of the artform across Europe. Seeds for many informal cross-border projects were planted here.

The meeting was not at the cost of Aerowaves since those attending funded their own travel, and the host met all the costs including those of food, local travel and accommodation. Aerowaves activity thereby released a further €20,000.

Research: the annual meeting

The Aerowaves annual meeting was completed at the end of October as planned, hosted by the dance agency TSEH in Moscow. 40 Partners and Associate Presenters from 34 European countries attended together with 5 administrative staff. They assessed 582 DVD applications representing some 3,000 young dance artists and reached a consensus on 20 artists from 15 countries as Priority Companies for 2011. They reported on the success of their Aerowaves presentations in 2010, and announced commitments in principle for the following year. Partners welcomed the initiative to present a yearly Aerowaves festival called Spring Forward, beginning in Ljubljana in 2011.

Two local companies were able to promote their work through live performance. Those attending provided their own transport costs amounting to some €12,000, and the expenses of the meeting were met by the hosts at around €8,000. Partners planned locations for their meetings and Spring Forward festivals for the following three years, involving their travel as a group to six European countries.

Presentation: cross-border performance

257 artists from 14 countries travelled to give performances, visiting 29 different cities in 19 countries. Only through Aerowaves could radical young dance work from Italy, Germany and Spain tour to Helsinki, Oulo and Kuopio. The investment of around €100,000 in the core costs of the Aerowaves network led directly to the release of at least an equal sum from the budgets of the presenters.

Since Priority Companies are selected on artistic merit and promise alone, there is no guarantee that they will represent Europe's geographical and cultural diversity. But usually they do because of the strength of Partners' individual knowledge and support, and this year was no exception. When artists from three different countries share a bill in a fourth country, cultural exchange is central to the event. However, the greatest exchange was to be found at the bigger events like that at the Mousonturm in Frankfurt, where 33 artists from 10 countries were able to meet each other and see each other's work.

The total attendance for the performances was 10,126. Accompanying them, 17 events were offered in 7 countries – workshops, seminars and after-show talks. They were attended by 539 people but the most effective exchanges occurred between the performers, the audience, and the local artists in foyers, cafés and bars during the intervals and following the shows. This is possible because all Aerowaves venues are small enough to promote this informal interaction.

Dance is a language that communicates fluently across cultures, and many of its European artists now work in countries different from their own as a result of this dialogue. The complexity of Europe's integration is thus demonstrated to audiences as an essence of their work. Aerowaves opens such opportunities to artists at the early stages of their development.