

Summary of the plan of action for dance.

The remit

On 20 November 2003 the Swedish government gave the National Council for Cultural Affairs a remit to prepare a proposal for a plan of action for professional dance in Sweden. The plan of action, which is to encompass all areas of dance, and will also include other matters such as the arts, education and the labour market, is to be produced in consultation with the core players in the world of dance. The remit includes suggesting objectives for dance policy initiatives in the short and long term. The National Council for Cultural Affairs can also make proposals for concrete measures to be taken in various policy areas. Special attention must be paid to the allotment of roles and responsibility in dance-related issues between the government, county and municipal authorities.

Proposed plan of action

In drawing up this proposal, the following principal areas have been identified as crucial for the promotion of professional dance in Sweden.

Dance development. Favourable conditions must be created both in the short and long term for dancers to develop their art. Choice must be increased and labour market conditions must be improved. There is also a need to strengthen research and higher education, to encourage other arts to work together with dance, and to lobby for further development of international cultural exchange.

Dance infrastructure. There must be a wider choice of dance performance venues. The performing arts institutions should be encouraged to take greater responsibility for arranging dance performances. More venues around the country should be equipped to stage dance performances. However, this will require appropriate technology and

familiarity with dance requirements. Other important initiatives should centre on extending dance networks, financial support for organisers and tours, and ongoing investment in dance consultancy activities.

Increased demand for dance as a performance art. There should be extra investment to improve the opportunities for children and young people to attend dance performances and to practise dance themselves. To this end, well planned investments in education, marketing and information are necessary, but it is also important to make use of and develop the commitment of the voluntary sector around the country.

Proposed measures

In order to provide independent dance groups and dance ensembles with a better basis for planning and work, financial resources should be increased, as should the interaction between independent and institutional dance ensembles. Premises for day-to-day training and rehearsals are an important resource for independent dance groups and choreographers, in addition to opportunities to work in dance residence schemes around the entire country.

In order to improve employment conditions in the independent dance sector, public funding must be allocated with regard to contractual salary levels, and to pensions and insurance provisions. With labour market funding, it should be possible to set up a Dance Alliance, along the same lines as the existing Theatre Alliance. Danscentrum Sverige ("Dance Centre Sweden") should also be given additional funding to develop its role in the provision of employment.

In order to improve the opportunities for dancers to take part in international cultural exchange, marketing of Swedish dance must be improved, partly through the establishment of an coordinating body to provide information about dance in Sweden. Dansens Hus, the centre for contemporary dance in Stockholm, must also be provided with opportunities to develop its work with national and international guest performances.

In order to improve access to national and international dance there should, by 2008 at the latest, be at least one venue suitable for guest dance performances and dance residence schemes in each Swedish county/region. At least four technology pools should be established. This can be achieved through collaboration between the National Council for Cultural Affairs, Riksteatern (Sweden's Nationwide Theatre), the counties/regions and municipalities. The diversity of dance on offer around the country can increase through ongoing government support for festivals and a more developed touring functions, etc. In addition, the general public should be given greater access to classical ballet through increasing the touring capacity of the Royal Swedish Ballet.

In order to develop dance as a performance art for children and young people, the staging of performances for this target group should be encouraged. One way in which this can be achieved is by setting up a national dance task force to this end. Efforts to promote dance in schools should also be developed in cooperation with all the authorities concerned.

The plan of action is also intended to strengthen research and development within the field of dance, to make artistic training for professional dancers more relevant to current needs in the world of dance and to set up a special action programme for documentation, especially in respect of modern and contemporary dance.

Finance

The cost of the proposals presented in the action programme is estimated to be at least MSEK 45 in state investment over a three year period. In addition, significant financial investments will be required of the counties/regions and municipalities.