



PRESS RELEASE

April 27, 2023

Festival programme 2023
June 22 to July 2 in Hanover

Thirteen productions by artists from ten countries plus a festival center on Prinzenstraße and Deaf culture that is making waves

Festival director Anna Mülter and her team have announced this year's program for the Festival Theaterformen in Hannover today. Once again, international theater, dance, and performance will be presented for eleven days this June and July. This is Mülter's third time as director of the festival. The topical productions focus on burning issues in a time when bodies and identities are becoming fragile and violence and war are destroying lives. The artists find strength and intimacy in personal relationships as well as in communities of solidarity that emerge on the stage and beyond.

Mülter says about this year's festival in Hannover:

"Festival Theaterformen brings together artists with different personal styles who rely on their own experiences and memories to develop works and engage in a conversation with audiences. We also want to enable more communication through our focus on Deaf culture. For *A Sign For The Future*, we have invited artists who experiment with visual languages of forms and create new, vibrant spaces for art and interaction. This is also reflected in the slogan "Making Waves" for our festival center on Prinzenstraße, which will be transformed into an outdoor swimming pool that welcomes the start of the (theater) summer."

The 2023 festival program will be presented on the stages of the Staatstheater Hannover and on Prinzenstraße in front of the Schauspielhaus theater. We have invited thirteen productions, of which **two are world premieres** and **coproductions with the Schauspiel and the Staatsoper Hannover**. There will also be a discussion series called **Toolbox**, a **lab for Deaf artists, workshops**, and **silent discos**.



**Festival
Theaterformen**

**Niedersächsische Staatstheater
Hannover GmbH
Festival Theaterformen**
Ballhofplatz 5
30159 Hannover

Fon +49 (0)511 9999 2500
Fax +49 (0)511 9999 2989

**Staatstheater Braunschweig
Festival Theaterformen**
Am Theater
38100 Braunschweig

welcome@theaterformen.de
www.theaterformen.de

Falko Mohrs, Minister for Science and Culture of the State of Lower Saxony:

“Anna Mülter and her team will once again create an exceptional atmosphere of creativity in Hannover during the Festival Theaterformen. I am very pleased that she will demonstrate the exemplary role of the performing arts in a diverse, inclusive, and participatory urban society in the planned festival center on Prinzenstraße. I hope that many visitors will come together and experience a summer of experimental theater!”

Konstanze Beckedorf, Head of Cultural Affairs of the State Capital of Hannover:

“Festival Theaterformen is always a special event. For eleven days, we are hosting the world. Discovering artists from different countries—their engagement with current topics and their perspectives—is enormously enriching for our city’s society. I wish everyone good luck for all the events!”

Lavinia Francke, General Secretary of the Stiftung Niedersachsen (Lower Saxony Foundation):

“Festival Theaterformen is an annual microcosm of international theater, either in Braunschweig or Hannover. It always stays close to the issues that move our society. With her innovative mindset and clear focus on accessibility, the artistic director Anna Mülter successfully creates new approaches and shifts perspectives. The program for 2023 is an invitation to learn about the language of forms of Deaf theater makers and to engage in a conversation about a world that is defined by vision and touch. This is culture for a diverse society in the best sense!”

Sonja Anders, Artistic Director of the Schauspiel Hannover:

“Festival Theaterformen brings an abundance of international theater to the Schauspiel Hannover at the end of the season. This is the most wonderful way to conclude the season that we could think of. I am especially keen to see the new festival center on Prinzenstraße, and of course also our coproduction: Manuela Infante’s *Was ihr nicht sehen könnt* (What You Cannot See), which is a festival production that will afterward be integrated into the repertoire of the Schauspiel. In this way, the festival will live on in next season’s program.”

We begin by descending into the netherworld: Together with the ensemble of Schauspiel Hannover, Manuela Infante is inventing a vampire story

This year’s festival will open at the Schauspielhaus on June 22 with a coproduction of Festival Theaterformen and Schauspiel Hannover. The Chilean director **Manuela Infante** will address the myth of vampires and our fear of illness, which we would like to keep hidden from ourselves, in *Was ihr nicht sehen könnt – Eine Vampirgeschichte* (What You Cannot See: A Vampire Story).



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Infante is one of the most important voices in Latin American theater today and will be a guest at the Festival Theaterformen for the third time. In 2021, she presented her piece *How To Turn Stone* in Hannover.

The first inclusive musical theater production to collaborate with the opera:

ZER-BRECH-LICH (FRA-GI-LE)

The first joint production of the Staatsoper Hannover and the Festival Theaterformen since 2004 is a musical theater by the Swiss choreographer **Alessandro Schiattarella** called *ZER-BRECH-LICH* (the German word for “fragile”) that addresses the diversity of bodies. Three disabled performers explore their own and others’ identities and demonstrate how dealing with your own vulnerability can also become a political message. *ZER-BRECH-LICH* is suitable for kids 12 years and up and for school classes.

This is a coproduction of the Staatsoper Hannover and Schauspiel Hannover in cooperation with the Theaterakademie Hamburg. The preview for school classes is on June 21, and the premiere at the Festival Theaterformen on June 23.

A Sign For The Future: The German Federal Cultural Foundation and Klosterkammer support Deaf culture

In 2023, the Festival Theaterformen will be focusing on Deaf culture for the first time and will generate new artistic input regarding how we approach language, body, new technologies, and community. Our Deaf guest curator Rita Mazza will present performances by **Chisato Minamimura**, **Anna Seymour**, and **Daniel Kotowski**, who experiment with sign language and visual communication.

Deaf people are a minority with their own language and a culture that is heavily influenced by vision and touch. *A Sign For The Future* is intended to visualize the innovative potential of Deaf culture, while enabling people to interact on equal footing. To counteract the prevalent idea that the loss of hearing is something negative in a world that is dominated by hearing, Deaf scholars have established the idea of “Deaf Gain.” Deaf Gain means that both Deaf people and society as a whole can profit from the existence of Deaf culture and sign language.

In preparation for the collaboration with Deaf people, a part of the festival team took a year-long basic course in German sign language.

Festival center on Prinzenstraße: MAKING WAVES

Making waves, initiating change, and creating a stir is the aim of this year’s festival center, which will be designed by the British architecture collective The DisOrdinary Architecture Project. A platform for performances, get-togethers, parties, and conversations will evolve in front of the Schauspielhaus on Prinzenstraße. Based on the concepts of Deaf space and disability pride, a truly accessible space for human diversity and the variety of people’s lived realities will be established. The Deaf architecture experts Richard Dougherty and Chris



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Laing are putting a focus on the curved form of waves to express the performative and social dynamics of sign language and Deaf culture. The program includes, among other things, sound massages and **silent discos** in which music is played on headphones and is transmitted via vibrating bass belts. The Deaf artist Daniel Kotowski will also be present at the festival center as a **Feeler** who communicates with the festival visitors about emotions. The festival center will open every day one hour before events begin. Food and drink will also be available.

A performance with women and people from the LGBTQIA+ community from Hannover: *Resistencia*

For the Festival Theaterformen, the Chilean feminist collective LASTESIS has invited 30 women and people from the LGBTQIA+ community from Hannover to engage in a collective working process that will result in a one-time performance on July 1 at the festival center. *Resistencia* translates feminist theories from Judith Butler, Paul B. Preciado, and María Lugones into practices based on the experiences of participants. It is about defending the right to live a life without violence in the context of colonization and exploitation.

The final event: A contemporary circus from Morocco called *FIQ! (Wake Up!)*

The festival will conclude on July 1 and 2 at the Schauspielhaus with fifteen young artists from Morocco. The **Groupe Acrobatique de Tanger**, directed by **Maroussia Diaz Verbèke**, will perform traditional acrobatics, dance, and breakdance, as well as taekwondo and freestyle football—with Instagram videos and political rebellion added to the mix. On the stage will be 100 crates of Coca-Cola, a motorcycle, a human trampoline, and many footballs. *FIQ!* is an evening for the entire family, and a special discount will be offered to families of two or more people on Sunday, July 2.

A main concern will be more accessibility

Since 2021, the Festival Theaterformen has been working toward its goal to become more accessible. Disabled people can now enjoy the following offerings for certain performances:

- **Translation into German Sign Language (DGS)** for a Deaf audience
- **Audio description** and **tactile tours** for an audience with visual disabilities
- **Relaxed performances** for neurodivergent people (for example, people with autism), who for instance make noises or movements unintentionally or are excluded from attending by the strict conventions of performance spaces (remaining silent, being in a darkened room, and sitting still).
- Beanbags as **alternative seating**
- **Content notes** and information about **sensory stimuli**, so that people can decide for themselves whether a performance is accessible to them
- **A service to accompany people** in collaboration with the Kulturschlüssel Niedersachsen



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An **overview of the entire program**, further information, and **tickets** can be found at www.theaterformen.de. The **presale** of tickets starts on April 27, 2023. Ticket prices range from € 6 to € 28. Many events are free of charge.

The Festival Theaterformen 2023 is an event of the Lower Saxony State Theater Hanover GmbH and is funded by The Lower Saxony Ministry of Science and Culture, the State Capital Hanover and the Stiftung Niedersachsen.

A Sign For The Future is funded by the German Federal Cultural Foundation, funded by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media. Funded by the Klosterkammer Hannover.

Free images of the press conference and of the performances by the invited artists, this year's **program** as a PDF document, and other useful information can be found **here**.

Free images can also be found under **Press** on our website.

Head of Press and Public Relations

Frederieke Tambaur

Tel. +49 511 9999 2506

Mail presse@theaterformen.de



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