



ORDEN POUR LE MÉRITE
FÜR WISSENSCHAFTEN UND KÜNSTE

John NEUMEIER

Dancer and choreographer

Born on 24 February 1939 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA

Born in Milwaukee/Wisconsin in 1939, John Neumeier studied in his native city as well as in Chicago, Copenhagen and London. In 1963 John Cranko invited him to join Stuttgart Ballet, where he progressed to soloist and continued his choreographic development.

In 1969, Ulrich Erfurth appointed Mr. Neumeier Director of Ballet Frankfurt, where he soon caused a sensation with his new interpretations of such well-known ballets as “The Nutcracker” and “Romeo and Juliet”. In 1973, August Everding invited him to become Director and Chief Choreographer of the Hamburg Ballet. Under his direction, The Hamburg Ballet became one of the leading ballet companies in Germany. As a choreographer, Mr. Neumeier has continually focused on the preservation of ballet tradition, while giving his works a modern dramatic framework. His ballets range from new versions of full-length story ballets to musicals and to his symphonic ballets, especially those based on Gustav Mahler’s compositions, as well as his choreographies to sacred music. His latest creations for The Hamburg Ballet: “Dona Nobis Pacem” (2022), “The Sleeping Beauty” (new version, 2021), “Hamlet 21” (2021) and “Beethoven Project II” (2021).

In 1975, John Neumeier conceived the Hamburg Ballet Days as a climax and end to each season. In 1978, he founded the School of the Hamburg Ballet. In 1989 the school, together with the company, moved into its own Ballet Center provided by the city of Hamburg. Its facilities include nine studios and a boarding school for over 30 students. Today almost 80 % of the company’s dancers are graduates from the school.

John Neumeier has worked as guest choreographer with many companies, including The Royal Ballet in London; The Vienna, Munich and Dresden State Operas; The Stuttgart Ballet; The Royal Danish Ballet; The Ballet of the Paris Opera; The Tokyo Ballet; American Ballet Theatre in New York; San Francisco Ballet; Joffrey Ballet; The National Ballet of Canada; The Ballet of the Mariinsky Theater; Moscow Bolshoi and Stanislavsky Ballet; and The National Ballet of China, among others.

Mr. Neumeier holds the Dance Magazine Award (1983), Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany and French Order of Arts and Letters and the Legion of Honour. In 2007, he was made an honorary citizen of the city of Hamburg. In 2015, the Inamori Foundation presented Mr. Neumeier with the Kyoto Prize for his contributions to the Arts and Philosophy. In 2016 he received the renowned Prix Benois de la Danse for Lifetime Achievement, in 2017 the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Prix de Lausanne. In 2021, Queen Margrethe II of Denmark awarded John Neumeier the Medal of Honour “Ingenio et arti”.

John Neumeier established the John Neumeier Foundation in February 2006 with the aim of preserving and eventually making available to the public his collection of dance and

ballet-related objects. The Foundation will maintain and secure his repertoire and related materials for the city of Hamburg.

In 2011, John Neumeier founded Germany's National Youth Ballet. The young company of eight dancers is based at the Hamburg Ballet Center but finds its performing spaces away from the Hamburg Opera. In addition to international touring this creative young company dances in schools, retirement homes and various social projects..

Acceptance into the Order 2023



John Neumeier