

Dancing before a Really Big Audience

von Christoph Brammertz, Goethe-Institut, 4. September 2008

Dance-mad internet users from all over the world have until 1 October 2008 to take part in the fourth international internet dance festival SideBySide-net: visitors to the festival's website can vote for one of six videos of dance performances, each of them around four minutes long; the idea is to award the performers between one and five stars. The three performances with the most stars at the end of the festival will win prizes worth a total of 3,000 euros.

According to event organizer SidebySide Art Center e. V., more than 75,000 people in all took part in the first three festivals, which took place from 2005 to 2007. "Now that we are becoming better and better known in Germany, we want to take our concept to an international expert audience", explained Mario Alfonso, the festival's artistic director, in a press release.

As awareness of the virtual competition grows, so too does the interest shown by choreographers: around 150 applied to take part in this year's festival. For the jury, made up of choreographers and dance instructors, "it was not easy to make a fair and balanced selection reflecting the diversity of dance", continued Alfonso.

Six choreographers have now been nominated who, in the view of the jurors, "worked particularly innovatively and intelligently developed clear themes". Naturally, the dance itself is the most important thing, though the production – on stage and for the camera – was also taken into account in the jury's decisions, says press officer Stanley Vitte. The overriding objective is to "make dance interesting" – and in Vitte's estimation dance artistes are increasingly succeeding in achieving this, with the help of video and the internet.

Viewers can vote for video productions by Alexeider Abad Gonzales from Cuba, Anat Katz from Israel, Carolina Zimmermann from Argentina, Ilona Pászthy from Germany, Magali Sander Fett from Brazil and Shang Chi Sun from Taiwan. To mark the start of SideBySide-net, all six nominees were presented to a "live" audience on 28 August 2008 at the International Dance Fair NRW in Düsseldorf.

<http://www.goethe.de/kue/tut/thm/fes/en3658787.htm>