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PRESS RELEASE

Grand Dance Gala 2026: German Dance Award presents programme

The German Dance Association invites you to a glittering dance gala on Saturday, 28 February 2026 at 6 p.m. at the Aalto Theatre in Essen.

This year's programme once again showcases the great diversity of dance: guests include the Staatsballett Berlin, the MiR Dance Company Gelsenkirchen, choreographer and dancer Thomas A. Bradley, and the Urban Dance Department & Friends.

As part of the dance gala, the German Dance Award 2026 will be presented to choreographer Christian Spuck. Honours will go to dance scholar Prof. Dr. Gabriele Brandstetter and Butoh dancer Tadashi Endo (posthumously).

Advance tickets are already on sale at www.theater-essen.de/tickets!

Dance Gala & Award Ceremony

Visitors can look forward to an exciting and varied gala programme:

WATER is a powerful opening act in which the **Urban Dance Department & Friends** bring the essence of urban dance to the stage. With 13 local and international dancers, **Souhail Jalti's** choreography combines hip hop, popping and break-dancing with contemporary urban expression.

The world premiere of **NOT BUTOH SOLO** by choreographer and dancer **Thomas A. Bradley is** both a reference to Gabriele Brandstetter and Tadashi Endo and a reflection on the artist's enduring fascination with Japanese butoh.

The **Staatsballett Berlin** will perform three pieces by choreographer and this year's award winner **Christian Spuck**: With **Beethoven**, Spuck captures the mood of the second movement, "Adagio un poco mosso", of Piano Concerto No. 5.

Nocturne, with its fusion of classical and contemporary elements, represents Christian Spuck's choreographic signature in a special way.

Christian Spuck premiered the ballet *Romeo and Juliet* in Zurich in 2012. His interpretation of the balcony scene, the **balcony pas de deux from Romeo and Juliet**, is one of the most moving moments in the piece.

The **MiR Dance Company Gelsenkirchen** presents excerpts from **Sita Ostheimer's** thrilling two-part work **Hasard & Boléro** with music by Yehezkel Raz and Maurice Ravel, as well as an excerpt from **Millennials** by choreographer **Marcos Morau**. Millennials explores how the internet and social networks have changed the core of society in the era of the digital revolution.

The dance gala will be opened with a welcome address by **Wolfram Weimer, Minister of State for Culture at the Federal Chancellery**.

The evening will be hosted by **Vivian Perkovic**, known for her work on the 3sat magazine programme Kulturzeit, among other things.

The dance gala will be offered with **translation into German Sign Language (DGS)**.

Dance Award Cultural Salon

On the eve of the Dance Gala, Friday, 27 February 2026, the German Dance Association is inviting to the Dance Award Cultural Salon at PACT Zollverein.

In a salon-like atmosphere, moderated discussions, performative interventions by performance artist Ruth Geiersberger, culinary accompaniment and music will combine to create an evening of shared memories.

The evening invites you to immerse yourself in an exciting dialogue between award winner, honouree, the jury and the audience!

INFORMATION AND CONTACT

The patron of the German Dance Award is **Prof. Dr Norbert Lammert**, former President of the Bundestag.

The German Dance Award is sponsored by the City of Essen, the Ministry of Culture and Science of North Rhine-Westphalia, the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, the Essen Cultural Foundation and the Norbert Lammert Foundation, as well as other donors and sponsors.

Tickets for the dance gala are available by telephone directly from the ticket centre of the Aalto Theatre Essen or via the online shop: Tel.: 0201 / 81 22 200, www.theater-essen.de/tickets

Further information can be found at: www.deutschertanzpreis.de and in the press section: [German Dance Award: Press contact / Accreditation](#)

Press photos can be downloaded directly [here](#).

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