

„Five Weeks of War and Peace“

A Film by Patrick Dempsey and Moritz Rossbach

About the genesis of a modern dance production

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1 Synopsis

This Documentary shows the inner workings behind a large scale modern dance evening comprising of four different pieces at the state opera house in Saarbrücken, Germany. The central figure is Marguerite Donlon – An Irish choreographer who we followed over five weeks as she rehearses and coordinates a four piece evening with the theme “War and Peace”.

Through following her and the key members of the various productions, the world of theatre and dance is shown “fly on the wall” style through interviews and behind the scene footage. In particular the difficulties of bringing political issues to the stage through ballet, live jazz, orchestral music, visuals and set design are highlighted to show the detailed work that goes into such a production.

The fact that Marguerite Donlon uses senior citizens with no stage experience in one of the pieces, makes the documentary all the more fascinating as she teaches them how to approach ballet on the big stage for the first time. Their stories of their war experiences , how Marguerite adapts these stories to the stage, and their first steps in the world of modern dance make for charming and absorbing viewing.



2 Background

This special ballet evening is made up of four pieces all related to “War and Peace” (not Tolstoy).

Footprints

In her new piece “Footprints” Marguerite Donlon undertakes a journey into the past. To this end she invited five senior citizens to share the stage with her dance company and to give their viewpoint and experiences from World War II. These experiences are seen in soft and dynamic movement underscored by recordings of the senior dancers as they describe their childhood experiences of the war. The contrast between the delicate nature of the older people on stage and the young powerful dancers strengthens the stories which are being described in words and dance. The music of the piece is “After the Rain” by the British composer Barry Guy, who also visited Saarbrücken during rehearsals.

Response.UN.ability

The present is presented to us by “Die Redner” or „The Speakers“ a performance group from Saarbrücken. They are known for their performances from live music, political speeches from well known politicians and film projections. In 2007 they won the German media art prize for their first piece “The JFK Show”. This time they have created a new piece with the title „**response.UN.ability**“ together with the ballet company and specially for this themed evening. This time the speeches come from Helmut Schmidt and an ex-doctor who served with the German UN troops serving in Afghanistan. The melody and rhythm of the speeches are then interpreted through live music while filmed choreography pieces are projected on large screens.

Über die Mauer 43.1

(Over the wall 43.1)

This is a piece from Marguerite Donlon which was played on national television on October 3rd for the anniversary of the Berlin wall (which was 43.1 km long) coming down. Marguerite Donlon interprets the building and destruction of the wall in dance.

The Green Table (1932)

by Kurt Jooss

This is one of the most important ballet pieces in German dance theatre. Lasting about 30 minutes and subtitled "A dance of death in eight scenes," *The Green Table* is a commentary on the futility of war and the horrors it causes. Its timelessness makes it a classic among the world of dance.

3 Treatment

The world of modern dance has never been afraid of showing its opinion of world politics but never has it been more important than today - trying to bring awareness by new methods to an extremely jaded public. Few have worked harder than Marguerite Donlon to shine a spotlight on political issues by using the stage. Marguerite Donlon has put together an evening with precisely this in mind: showing different aspects of "War and Peace" through the various mediums of ballet, orchestra, film, live jazz and recorded interviews on the stage of Saarbrücken's state theatre.

Our film will show this in action by exploring the background and rehearsals on a day to day basis over the course of five weeks, shot on location in the state theatre in Saarbrücken, Germany. It portrays the massive work that goes into such a production from conception to realisation and introduce the various pieces of the puzzle that make up such an evening. Over 100 people worked on this evening and we have selected some of the key players that revolve around Marguerite Donlon. Much of our interview questions and indeed filming investigates how politics can be transformed to the stage in a unique and new way using ballet and music as a medium.

The main thematic of the movie is between Marguerite Donlon and the dancers, technicians, stage hands, ballet instructors, lighting & stage designers and seniors dancing for the first time, orchestral musicians and the independent musicians involved in "ResponseUNability" on the same evening.

Marguerite Donlon has a unique relaxed irish humorous approach, taking the small and not so small everyday problems in her stride - all this with a young three year old child in tow.

Ultimately, we want the audience to feel that they have seen what really goes into such a production and the minute details that have to be paid attention to in the lead up to such a production. The audience is given a final product on the evening of the performance and are left with lasting impressions on what they take away from the evening. With Marguerite Donlon these lasting impressions are political epiphanies which are brought about by her attention to detail which goes into the ever evolving creative process that goes into the lead up to a premier.

The audience should understand that each minute section of the evening that they see has undergone changes throughout the rehearsal period and have been chosen to carefully to convey a message to the watcher.

Moreover we feel that the the viewers of our documentary don't have to have a background or even a large interest in ballet in order to enjoy or understand this documentary. The film focuses on teaching the audience in some way through showing them the learning curve and evolution of the various pieces as they are being prepared for the stage. This was made easier and more poignant by the fact that Marguerite Donlon

invited senior citizens to dance in “Footprints”. It is their stories from WW2, which Marguerite Donlon used as inspiration for the choreography.

The movie shows a fascinating collection of people that make up such a production and their various takes on this difficult theme that was chosen for the evening. Also included are interviews with one of the composers of one of the music pieces – Barry Guy as he candidly explains his views on the choreographed piece and how he wrote the unique piece of music “After the Rain” which is used in the production.

4 Budget (short – see Appendix for more)

1. Production Crew	22.200,00 €
2. Production Equipment	1.300,00 €
3. Production Consumables	135,00 €
4. Travel/ Food	1.390,00 €
Production Totals	25.025,00 €
5. Post Production Crew	4.200,00 €
6. Online Post Production Equipment	5.100,00 €
7. Post Production Consumables	108,00 €
8. Rights and Permissions	650,00 €
9. Insurance	435,00 €
10. Distribution	1.800,00 €
Post Production Totals	12.293,00 €
11. Contingency (10%)	3.731,80 €
Total production cost	41.049,80 €
12. Deferred Costs (Rückstellung)	26.798,00 €
13. Total Costs minus Deferred Costs	14.251,80 €



5 Cast and Crew

Marguerite Donlon,

Choreographer, director,
performer

Marguerite was born in Ireland. After a childhood of traditional Irish dance, she began her ballet studies at the late age of 16. She became a solo dancer and choreographer with the Deutsche Oper Berlin in



1990; before that she was a member of the English National Ballet under Peter Schaufuss. During this time she worked with and was coached by many world-renowned artists, including Natalia Makarova, Rudolf Nureyev, Sir Kenneth Mac Millan, and danced pieces from Maurice Béjart, William Forsythe, Bill T. Jones, Meg Stuart and Jirí Kylián. Since becoming ballet director and choreographer of the Saarländisches Staatstheater, otherwise known as Donlon Dance Company, in 2001, the company has established themselves with success in Saarbrücken and have also been invited to festivals in such places as Berlin, Luxembourg, Brussels, USA, Ireland and South Korea. She produced two dance films for ARTE.

In addition to her work in Saarbrücken, Marguerite Donlon has choreographed for many other companies around the world. She has created ballets for the Vienna State Ballet, Austria, Netherlands Dans Theater NDT II, Stuttgart Ballet, Germany, and the Komische Oper Berlin as well as two works for Hubbard Street Dance Company, Chicago, USA. The latter work was commissioned together with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Pinchas Zukerman and the Los Angeles Philharmonic conducted by Sir Andrew Davis, performed at the Hollywood Bowl, Los Angeles.

With her innovative style, her Irish humour and her use of different art forms, Marguerite Donlon has established herself and the company in the dance scene of Germany and abroad.

Barry Guy, Composer

Barry Guy is an innovative double bass player and composer whose creative diversity in the fields of Jazz improvisation, solo recitals, chamber and orchestral performance is the outcome both of an unusually varied training and a zest for experimentation,



underpinned by a dedication to the double bass and the ideal of musical communication. Between the early seventies and mid nineties, Barry Guy held principal bass position in various orchestras including The Orchestra of St. John's Smith Square, City of London Sinfonia, Monteverdi Orchestra, The Academy of Ancient Music, Kent Opera and The London Classical Players. During these years he was also active in the European improvised scene.

He is founder and Artistic Director of the London Jazz Composers Orchestra for which he has written several extended works with recordings of the following: Ode (Incus 1972 and re-released on Intakt 1996), Stringer (FMP 1980), Polyhymnia on ZURICH CONCERTS (Intakt 1988), Harnos (Intakt 1989), Double Trouble (Intakt 1990), Theoria (Intakt 1992) with the Swiss pianist Irène Schweizer as soloist, Portraits (Intakt 1994) and Three Pieces for Orchestra (Intakt 1997).

His piece of music „After the Rain“ is used in „Footprints“.



Die Redner - At the center of their work is their interpretation of speeches from prominent politicians and personalities which have given their opinions on political, historical, cultural

issues through their talks. „Die Redner“ have designed a performance incorporating live percussion and jazz and electronic music with an impressive backdrop of visuals which underline the speeches as they are broadcasted. The visuals in this piece feature the dancers of the Donlon Dance group filmed edited into a unique 3D backdrop on the large state theatre stage in Saarbrücken. The speeches for this piece deal with the topic of war and peace in a unique way, incorporating a speech from German politician Helmut Schmidt in 1977 on responsibility and a chilling eyewitness account of a suicide bombing by Heike Gross, a former doctor with the German peacekeeping force in Afghanistan.

Cecile Bouchier – stage designer from the Netherlands but currently residing in the Mojave Desert in the USA is responsible for the stage design.



Fred Pommerehn – from the USA is an internationally acclaimed lighting designer, who is a welcome guest at the state theater in Saarbrücken, where he designed the unique light show for this evening.



Christophe Hellmann conductor with the Saarland State Orchestra and musical arranger for the premiered pieces „Footprints“ and „ 43.1 Over the wall“

Donlon Dance Company

Based at the Saarländisches Staatstheater (State Theatre) in Saarbrücken, the Donlon Dance Company is a young, exciting, innovative company, which attracts dancers of the highest calibre. The fifteen dancers who will be part of the company in the next season come from all over the world –Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea, Spain, Portugal, England, Romania, France and the Philippines – to work with Marguerite Donlon, the dynamic Irishwoman who was appointed Ballet Director in 2001. At that time, the theatre was looking for a new, innovative choreographer and ballet director. Marguerite Donlon was the perfect candidate for this position. She possessed then, and is still driven by, a strong artistic concept, a new style, a clear vision and, more often than not, a fine sense of humour.



In the three years since Marguerite Donlon became its director, the Ballet Company of the Saarländisches Staatstheater has achieved a lot. The company, was selected as the German representative of contemporary dance for the Internationale Tanzmesse Düsseldorf in 2002. They have also been invited to festivals in Oldenburg, Berlin, Santa Barbara (USA), Seoul (Korea), Bruxelles (Belgium) and Luxembourg. Marguerite Donlon has created seven world-premieres with and for the company in Saarbrücken since 2001, as well as a collection of installations and a number of site-specific projects in Germany and the USA.

In autumn 2003, the company filmed a contemporary version of the classic tale of Carmen, but with a twist. This piece was created in 2003 for Ballet Saarbrücken and was selected by Canal "ARTE", the only European arts channel.

Marguerite Donlon's main productions of last season were "Sommernachtstraum" – a big stage and orchestra production - inspired by William Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "Beauty 3.0" which is the result of an on-going collaboration with Martino Mueller – an evening of three pieces, one in which features a solo from Mueller danced by Donlon herself.



Amateur Dancers

For the „Footprints“ piece Marguerite Donlon invited five senior citizens, all between the ages of 70 and 85 -with no previous dance experience- to join her group on stage for the first time. Beforehand, she did a series of interviews with them, where they recount their childhood experiences and memories from the war. These stories are then used as an inspiration for the choreography in „Footprints“.



Crew



Moritz Rossbach - freelance journalist and cameraman. Moritz is a graduate of Colorado State University where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts. While studying in America he worked for local TV Channel TV8-Vail in the heart of the Rocky Mountains. He has made films for the Symphony Orchestra of India and Saarländischer Rundfunk (Saarland State Television). After holding positions in Vail,

Stuttgart and Mumbai, Moritz returned home to Saarbrücken where he now produces a monthly music and current affairs show. He holds a Master's Degree from Saarland University in Anglophone Literatures and Cultures. Moritz has worked as a travel videographer on the popular television series' cruiseship MS Deutschland. 2010 sees Moritz embark on several new freelance projects and his first full length documentary, where he functions as director, director of photography and editor.

Patrick Dempsey – Patrick's travels have taken him from his home in Ireland to Bremen in 1992 to learn German. From here he went to Munich where he studied Comparative Literature. In 1996 he moved to America where he completed his studies at San Francisco State University. In 1998 he started holding large dance events in SF and continued this in 2000 when he returned to Ireland where he also enrolled in and completed a Sound Engineering and Music management diploma. Tiring of the small island possibilities Patrick moved to Saarbrücken, Germany in



2002 where he has lived since. Patrick has been involved with organizing some of the largest events in Saarbrücken including the cross border dance music festival „Electricity“ in Germany, Luxembourg & France. He DJs extensively around Europe and teaches English at Saarland University.

2009 marks the start of a new creative direction as Patrick returns to his earlier passion and studies of film and produces this documentary.

6 Summary

Schedule: Production: 28.12. - 31.1.2010

Postproduction: 1.2. - 31.4.2010

Format: HDV 1080p25

Camera: Sony HVR-Z5E

Script: In Development

Footage: rehearsals and performances, background footage, interviews

Editing: Apple Final Cut Pro on MacBook Pro

Needs: editorial support, financial support, post production, distribution, broadcasters.

7 Appendix

Saarländisches Staatstheater

SST, Schillerplatz 1, 66111 Saarbrücken T 0049-(0)681 3092-(0) F 0049-(0)681 3092- 317 273

Marguerite Donlon
Ballettdirektorin des Saarländischen Staatstheaters
tanz@theater-saarbruecken.de



Saarländisches Staatstheater Schillerplatz 1 66111 Saarbrücken

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,

Moritz Rossbach und Patrick Dempsey ("mr videoproduktion") sind mit der Idee an mich herangetreten, einen Film über den Entstehungsprozess unserer neuen Ballettproduktion „Krieg & Frieden“ zu drehen – eine Idee, die mich sofort begeistert hat.

mr videoproduktion begleiten nun schon seit ein paar Wochen unsere Proben und dank ihrer unaufdringlichen Art fangen sie ganz intime Momente des Entstehungsprozesses ein, ohne die Konzentration der Mitwirkenden zu stören. Sie haben dabei meine vollste Unterstützung sowie das Einverständnis des Ballettensembles und der Saarländischen Staatstheater GmbH.

Ich wünsche mr videoproduktion viel Glück und bin sehr gespannt, den fertigen Film zu sehen – hoffentlich bald auch im Fernsehen.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,

Marguerite Donlon

Five Weeks of War and Peace Proposed Budget

Moritz Rossbach

mr videoproduktion

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Estimated Time Frame:	<u>Days</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Preproduction	7	14. - 23. 12. 2009 28.12.09 –
Production	20	31.01.10
Postproduction	60	01.02.- 30.04.10
Total	87	

1. Production Crew	<u>Days</u>	<u>Cost/ Day</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>	<u>Summary</u>
Producer	87	100,00 €	8.700,00 €	
Director	87	100,00 €	8.700,00 €	
Production Assistant	20	60,00 €	1.200,00 €	
Postproduction Assistant	60	60,00 €	3.600,00 €	
sub total			22.200,00 €	22.200,00 €
2. Production Equipment	<u>Days</u>	<u>Cost/ Day</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>	
Digital camera and kit	20	30,00 €	600,00 €	
Sound Kit (rental)	20	30,00 €	600,00 €	
Lighting Kit (rental)	10	10,00 €	100,00 €	
sub total			1.300,00 €	1.300,00 €
3. Production Consumables	<u>Item</u>	<u>Cost/ Item</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>	
Mini DV Tapes	30	3,00 €	90,00 €	
Gaffer Tape	5	3,00 €	15,00 €	
Office Supplies/ Administration: Paper, Pens, Copies, Postage,...			30,00 €	
sub total			135,00 €	135,00 €
4. Travel/ Food	<u>Km or Days</u>	<u>Cost/ Km or Day</u>		
Gas, Travel	300	0,40 €	120,00 €	
Catering/food	254	5,00 €	1.270,00 €	
sub total			1.390,00 €	1.390,00 €
Production Totals				25.025,00 €

5. Post Production Crew		<u>Days</u>	<u>Cost/ Day</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>	
Online Editor	7	300,00 €	2.100,00 €		
Sound Engineer	7	300,00 €	2.100,00 €		
sub total			4.200,00 €	4.200,00 €	
6. Online Post Production Equipment		<u>Days</u>	<u>Cost/ Day</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>	
Editing Suite	7	300,00 €	2.100,00 €		
Additional Equipment: Monitors, Tape Deck, etc (rental)	60	50,00 €	3.000,00 €		
sub total			5.100,00 €	5.100,00 €	
7. Post Production Consumables		<u>Item</u>	<u>Cost/ Item</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>	
Mini DV tapes	10	3,00 €	30,00 €		
Blank CD's DVD's	30	0,60 €	18,00 €		
VHS Tapes	30	1,00 €	30,00 €		
Office Supplies/ Administration: Paper, Pens, Copies, Postage,...			30,00 €		
sub total			108,00 €	108,00 €	
8. Rights and Permissions					
Music			400,00 €		
Photos, Archival Footage			200,00 €		
Location Fees			50,00 €		
sub total			650,00 €	650,00 €	
9. Insurance		<u>Days</u>	<u>Cost/ Day</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>	
Insurance Equipment	87	5,00 €	435,00 €		
Insurance other					
sub total			435,00 €	435,00 €	
10. Distribution					
Festival Fees			1.000,00 €		
Preview Tapes			100,00 €		
Broadcast/ Festival Copies			400,00 €		
Publicity (EPKs)			200,00 €		
Postage/ Packaging/ Photocopies			100,00 €		
sub total			1.800,00 €	1.800,00 €	
Post Production Totals				12.293,00 €	
11. Contingency (10%)					3.731,80 €
Total production cost				41.049,80 €	
12. Deferred Costs (Rückstellung)					
1. Production Crew			22.200,00 €		
2. Production Equipment			1.300,00 €		
4. Travel/ Food			1.390,00 €		
7. Post Production Consumables			108,00 €		
10. Distribution			1.800,00 €		
sub total			26.798,00 €	26.798,00 €	
13. Total Costs minus Deferred Costs					14.251,80 €