

## RESEARCH PROFILE

### »Interdisciplinary Research Centre for the Newest Music Theatre. Sound and Movement«

#### The Experiment

While, according to the traditional understanding of theatre music, dance, speech and performance are regarded as clearly distinct categories of theatrical presentation, the experimental approaches in the Newest Music Theatre at once make it clear that these apparently different dramatic forms of expression can, in the present, no longer be understood as distinct dimensions of a theatrical event. They, much more, prove to be varying characteristics of a complex phenomenon which does not permit a hierarchy of different levels of performance, but rather constantly takes on new forms by switching between familiar patterns.

#### Sound and Movement

The key characteristic of this experimental music theatre lies in the interweaving of sound and movement. This can include, on the one hand, the immediate overlaying of sound structures, ranging from unspecific noises to concrete, tonal compositions, to on the other, individual patterns of movement. These patterns continuously reconfigure the space throughout the duration of the spectacle, both through the relative positioning of the onlooker and in the scenic performance. Consequently, the unity of sound and movement cannot be understood simply as a physical interpretation of musical forms, nor be reduced to sound produced by a body moving within a space. Sound and movement here, are, in fact, merged into an insoluble unit which determines, in its specific form, every point during the particular theatrical event – the scene, the space, the plot, the chronological sequence of moments.

#### The “central” idea

Since classical categories of description necessarily fail regarding experimental forms of the Newest Music Theatre, it is necessary to look for new, methodical means of access beyond disciplinary boundaries, in order to elucidate its *peculiar* structures. On the one hand, there are the research approaches within the Institute of Theatre Studies in Munich, which seeks to bring together all areas of research. On the other, there is the Munich theatre scene, which provides a tremendously wide spectrum of innovative theatrical productions, not only in theatres and opera houses, but also during numerous, internationally renowned festivals. Both elements offer, without doubt, an abundance of extremely exciting approaches and challenges. The aim of the research centre is, therefore, to develop new approaches to dealing with experimental forms of the Newest Music Theatre through new kinds of networking and specific continuation of current academic discourse from within Germany and abroad. Additionally, however, the goal is to create a network from the corporate work and experience of a whole range of scholars by means of annual, international symposia and individual theory discussions. These events will enable a totally differentiated view of aesthetic objects to develop out of the competencies of diverse disciplines and branches. Therefore, not only the experiments in present theatre themselves play a *central* role, but also the experimental nature of the aca-

demic approach, as well as, in view of aesthetic objects, of formulated, innovative questioning itself, is central.

### Absolutely in the present

For this reason, the research centre sees itself neither as a mere accessory accompanying the current theatre scene, neither as an archive of modern theatrical history. In dealing with the aesthetic and theoretical fundamentals of the newest works of art it rather seeks to discover the boundaries of the imagination by constantly asking new questions and, in this way, to continually relocate itself:

It is essential to be aware of the presentness of each moment – and to face anew the experiment of each moment head on.