



holland dance festival 20 jubileum editie

Holland Dance Festival 2026

20 Editions
of Movement,
Vision, and
Connection

The Netherlands' leading international
platform for dance since 1987

20 Editions in Numbers

Since 1987, Holland Dance Festival has grown into a cornerstone of Europe’s cultural landscape. Across 40 years in 20 editions, the festival has brought together more than 450 choreographers, 350 companies and independent artists, 400 productions, 1,700 performances, and over 1 million visitors – and with them, countless moments of movement, discovery, and connection.



Legacy & Future

Over its twenty editions, Holland Dance Festival has built a living archive of international dance. The Hague has hosted legends such as:

William Forsythe—Hans van Manen—Pina Bausch—New York City Ballet—Mikhail Baryshnikov—Jiří Kylián—Sylvie Guillem—Les Ballets de Monte Carlo—Rennie Harris PureMovement—the New Zealand Dance Company—Nederlands Dans Theater—Korzo Producties—Introdans—Scapino Ballet Rotterdam

Beyond its stages, HDF has pioneered social engagement: from work with older adults to dance in special education, the festival has demonstrated how movement is not only an artform but a tool for belonging and change.

Origins

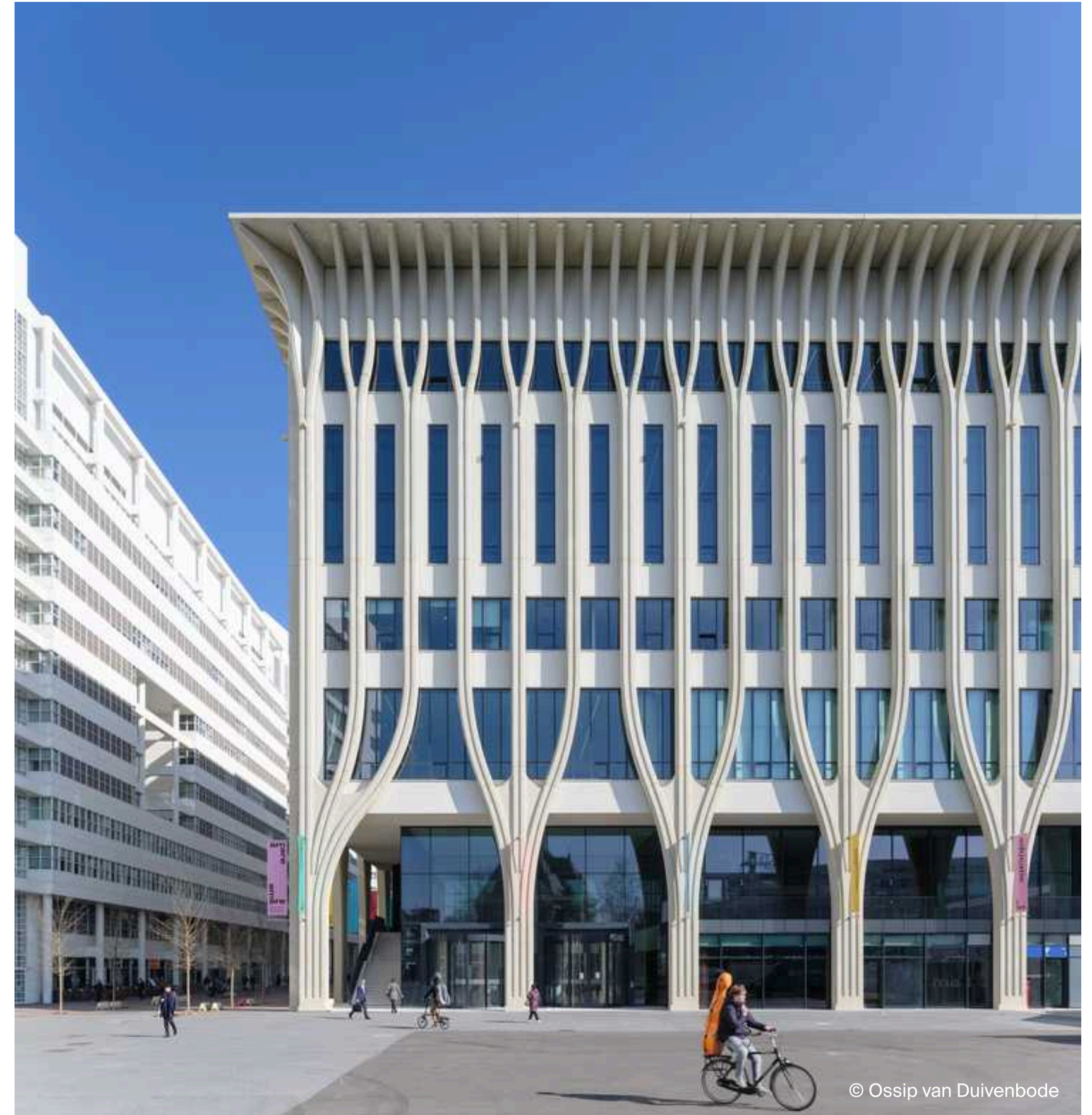
Holland Dance Festival was founded in 1987 by Nederlands Dans Theater. With the completion of NDT's new Rem Koolhaas-designed theatre, managing director Carel Birnie invited Marc Jonkers, then program director of dance at the Holland Festival, to imagine a new international biennial for dance.

The City of The Hague embraced the idea and supported the project. The Holland Festival produced the first two editions. In 1995 Holland Dance Festival became an independent foundation and moved fully to The Hague.

| 1987–1995: Marc Jonkers, Artistic Director

| Since 1995: Samuel Wuersten, Artistic
and later Executive Director

Today, from its home in Amare, the festival continues to grow as a space for innovation, excellence, and belonging.



WORLD PREMIERE

World Premiere Jan Martens

HDF 2026 opens with the world premiere by Jan Martens, his first creation for NDT 1. Martens, one of Europe's most distinctive choreographic voices, is known for bold, abstract works brimming with energy. His choreography is inseparable from music, and in his choices he resists the dominance of mainstream, male-driven repertoires, amplifying alternative and female voices instead.

Set to punk-infused compositions by Julia Wolfe (*Pretty*) and Hanna Kulenty (*GG Concerto*), the production is performed with live music by Het Balletorkest. The piece promises a visceral opening: a celebration of stamina, resistance, brilliance, and rebellion.





DUTCH PREMIERES

An Untitled Love A.I.M by Kyle Abraham

MacArthur Fellow Kyle Abraham, one of the defining voices of contemporary dance, brings his acclaimed masterpiece *An Untitled Love* to the Netherlands for the first time. Set to the music of Grammy Award-winning R&B legend D'Angelo, it celebrates community, intimacy, and cultural identity through social dance and storytelling. The Guardian praised it as “a touching homage to Black culture’s emotional bonds ... moments of deep beauty and subtle humour”.

Nominated for both the Olivier Award for Best New Dance Production and the Sadler’s Wells Rose Award, *An Untitled Love* has confirmed Abraham’s place among the most influential choreographers of his generation. The New York Times calls A.I.M “one of the most consistently excellent troupes working today,” noting the work’s balance of excellence and accessibility: “a theatrical love letter to social dance.”

DUTCH PREMIERES

Cycles Boy Blue

Led by Kenrick “H2O” Sandy and Michael “Mikey J” Asante, Boy Blue has redefined hip-hop in the theatre. Their new work *Cycles* — co-commissioned by the Barbican and Lincoln Center — explores renewal through rhythm, ritual, and pulsating choreography. A performance that merges street culture with theatre — engaging a new generation to experience dance.

The Guardian hailed their work as “dazzling hip-hop dance alchemy,” while The New York Times wrote: “Boy Blue’s command of rhythm and ritual makes street dance feel epic.” A company with an Olivier Award to its name (*Pied Piper*), Boy Blue embodies HDF’s mission to connect the excellent and the accessible.



More Cities, More Stages



Theatre of Dreams Hofesh Shechter

For the first time, Holland Dance Festival expands to Utrecht, presenting Hofesh Shechter's *Theatre of Dreams* at Stadsschouwburg Utrecht – a production recently named Best Dance Production by Tanznetz.de. Critics have called it “astonishingly beautiful, constantly inventive” (The Guardian) and “a contagious energy and the irresistible beauty which characterises Shechter’s work” (Le Figaro). The Dutch tour will bring this immersive dreamscape to Utrecht, Tilburg, and The Hague.



FireWorks Gauthier Dance

We also continue our partnerships with Schouwburg Tilburg and Luxor Rotterdam, presenting Gauthier Dance's jubilee spectacle *FireWorks*. With 30 dancers and 12 choreographers, the program unites new creations and iconic repertoire, culminating in Ravel's *Boléro*, choreographed by Andonis Foniadakis, performed on trampolines – a high-voltage celebration touring to The Hague, Tilburg, and Rotterdam.

Inclusion & Communities



Since the 1990s, Holland Dance Festival has been a frontrunner in opening contemporary dance to wider communities. From Shusaku Takeuchi's *Butterfly Project* to The Hague's city-wide *Dance Parade*, the festival has consistently blurred the line between the stage and the public square, between professionals and amateurs. It has championed projects with dancers aged 55+ and made inclusion and diversity core to its mission.

The 2026 edition marks the sixth *DanceAble Symposium*, curated by Irene van Zeeland and Kimberley Harvey, and moderated by Humberto Tan. This year's theme asks a vital question for cultural institutions across Europe: what does inclusion truly mean? Are we as open as we aspire to be — and what can we learn from each other?

New Talents

One of HDF's central missions is to nurture the next generation. In 2026 the festival celebrates *70 years of the Royal Conservatoire Dance* with a festive program that honours its legacy and invites alumni back to the stage alongside today's students.

At the same time, HDF launches a new season of *Talent On The Move*, the nationwide tour of Codarts Rotterdam's third-year students. Each spring, around 30 young dancers perform repertoire by leading international choreographers alongside new creations, preparing them for careers on the world stage. In 2025, the tour visited 32 cities and reached nearly 5,000 audience members, while offering workshops, Q&As, and exchanges with NDT, Scapino Ballet Rotterdam, and Ailey II.

TOTM 2026 continues this tradition: a pipeline for the "stars of tomorrow," rooted locally and connected internationally.



Co-Productions



Starting with the Limbs Annie Hanauer en L'Autre Maison

For the jubilee edition, HDF presents *Starting with the Limbs*, a co-production with Festival de Marseille and Europe Beyond Access. Created by Annie Hanauer with L'Autre Maison, the work draws on lived experience of disability to craft choreographic self-portraits. With sculptural wearables by Ghali Bensouda, it blurs the boundaries between body and terrain, challenging how we perceive movement and identity.



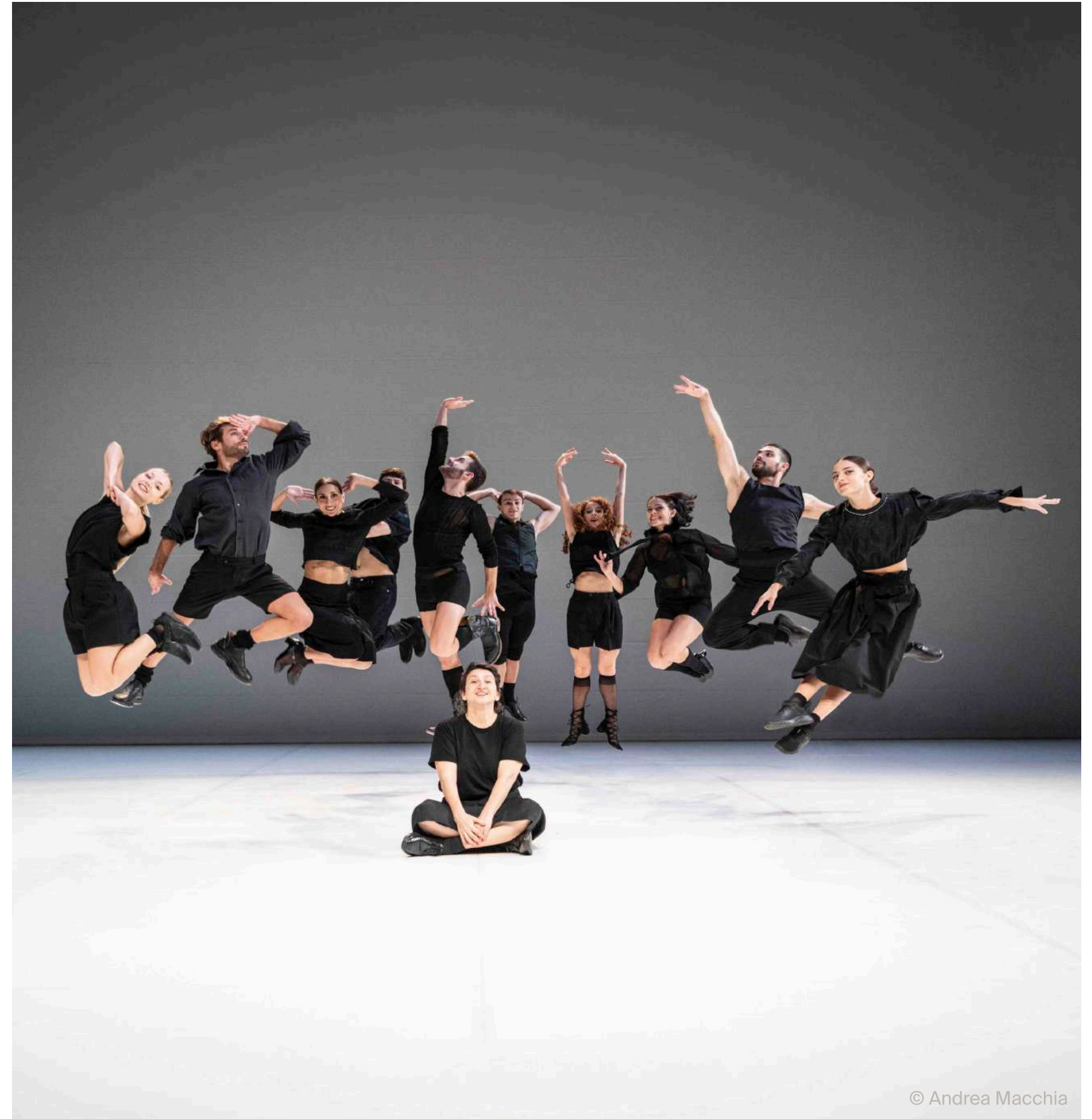
An Accident / A Life Marc Brew en Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui

Also touring is *An Accident / A Life*, HDF's 2024 co-production by Marc Brew and Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui. The work has been acclaimed as "a startling, unique, powerfully honest work ... remarkable dance theatre" (The Telegraph) and "sensitive, revelatory and cathartic" (The Guardian). It was nominated for two UK National Dance Awards: Outstanding Male Modern Performance and Best Modern Choreography.

Returning After Success

In the previous edition in 2024, HDF hosted the Dutch debut of Silvia Gribaudi, whose *Graces* charmed audiences with wit, warmth, and an irreverent take on beauty.

She returns in 2026 with *Grand Jeté*, a large-scale creation for MM Contemporary Dance Company. Deconstructing ballet's most iconic leap, Gribaudi transforms it into a metaphor for courage, joy, and renewal. Critics have described her as “fluid, irreverent, funny ... gliding lightly between dance, theatre, and circus,” and praised *Grand Jeté* as “a tour de force ... an exhilarating space of collective celebration, an invitation to free our bodies, our gestures and our minds.”



Samuel Wuersten

Executive and Artistic Director
Holland Dance Festival



Samuel Wuersten is the long-standing artistic and executive director of the Holland Dance Festival and one of Europe's most respected curators and educators in contemporary dance. Trained at the Hamburg Ballet School and Codarts Rotterdam, he went on to lead the dance programs at Codarts University of the Arts, where he also served as co-director and a member of the executive board. Today, he heads the Bachelor and Master dance programmes at the Zurich University of the Arts.

A bridge between creation, education, and international collaboration, Wuersten has fostered co-productions with artists such as Sylvie Guillem, Jiří Kylián, Hans van Manen, and Diana Vishneva – serving as international curator of Vishneva's CONTEXT Festival in Moscow from 2013 to 2018, as well as the Steps International Dance Festival in Switzerland. Under his direction, Holland Dance Festival has presented hundreds of international companies in the Netherlands and supported Dutch artists and ensembles touring abroad.

He is a frequent jury member and advisor for leading dance institutions, including the Prix de Lausanne, and is the co-initiator of the Droom en Daad Foundation's Dance House in Rotterdam. In recognition of his contribution to the arts, he was knighted both in the Dutch Order of Orange-Nassau and the French Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.