

# NEXT STEPS

**Career support for choreographers – a pilot project of Migros Culture Percentage Dance Festival Steps, Bern Ballett and St.Gallen Dance Company**

## What is NEXT STEPS?

NEXT STEPS is a pilot project of Migros Culture Percentage Dance Festival Steps, Bern Ballett and St.Gallen Dance Company.

The partners have set themselves the goal of advancing the careers of Switzerland-based choreographers from within institutional dance companies.

NEXT STEPS recognises the challenges that choreographers face in the transition from an active stage career to creation. The network project supports the artists in their careers by providing resources and know-how and through joint programming.

## What does NEXT STEPS promote?

The project initiated by Migros Culture Percentage supports artists who are looking for a path into choreography after a dance career. It promotes the development of sustainable structures that enable them to work professionally with larger ensembles.

The programme closes a gap in Swiss career support for choreographers.

## Why NEXT STEPS?

In Switzerland, dancers with long-standing careers in institutional ensembles, embarking on a choreographic career, have limited opportunities to gain practical experience. The companies of some large municipal theatres offer platforms for “young choreographers” or other small formats. However, offering larger productions to young talents is associated with pressure and risks, and therefore happens rarely.

Alternatively, aspiring choreographers can found their own company, but this option involves a great deal of organizational effort and financial risk for the artists. For budgetary reasons, these companies always consist of a small number of dancers who are usually employed on a project basis. Under these circumstances, the potential of the choreographers cannot unfold optimally.

There is a need for a sustainable offer for aspiring choreographers that gives them the opportunity to develop their choreographic language with perspective under professional production conditions with larger ensembles.

## How does NEXT STEPS promote the participants?

The project partners select participants in a consensus selection process. The selected participants are then given the opportunity to choreograph commissioned works for the partner theatres on a rotating basis for three to four years.

The necessary resources are provided by the project partners. The Migros Culture Percentage Dance Festival Steps finances the wages of the sponsored artists and contributes to the costs of the creative teams involved: lighting and sound design, stage design, costumes. The theatres make their in-house resources available: dramaturgy, production management, technical support and implementation, rehearsal assistance, rehearsal rooms, and of course, the dancers.

In addition, Migros Culture Percentage offers participants the opportunity to participate in its **“DoubleTanz”** coaching programme.

The artists work as guests in several theatres, collaborating with well-established teams in their infrastructure. They will gain an insight into theatre-specific production processes and learn how to work in a professional theatre environment.

The creations - be they parts of a triple or double bill or full-length productions - are shown several times as part of the theatres' dance programme in subscription series and performance series.

Creations by the artists are programmed by the Migros Culture Percentage Dance Festival Steps and tour Switzerland within the scope of the festival.

## What are the goals of NEXT STEPS?

The participants establish themselves as choreographers and receive commissions from independent companies and theatres with dance ensembles.

They have the expertise needed to obtain support for their projects from funding institutions - using meaningful portfolios and video material from the project period.

## How are the participants selected?

The selection of artists is based on several criteria. It is made on a consensus basis by the project partners. Criteria for selection:

- **Artistic value:** the quality of previous work, creative vision and potential for growth and development.
- **Consideration of the audience:** the ability to engage with the various audiences of a city.
- **Collaboration and adaptability:** willingness and ability to work with others, flexibility in different working environments and openness to feedback.