

Von Hella Immler

Ich hatte das Glück die Vorstellung „High Risk Body“ von Marcel Leemann in der Grossen Halle der Reitschule Bern besuchen zu können, in der 10 junge Tänzerinnen und Tänzer dem Publikum eine unglaubliche Energie vermittelten. Selten begegnet man auf der Bühne einer solch gebündelten Energie. Da spürt man den grossen Enthusiasmus und die Bereitschaft sich voll und ganz einem künstlerischen Prozess hinzugeben, welcher schlussendlich auf die Bühne kann. Das ist die grösste Erfüllung eines jeden Tänzers, der erst in den Startlöchern der Karriere steht. Welch ein Glück für diese jungen TänzerInnen, die an diesem Projekt beteiligt sein durften. Doch nur wenige haben diese Chance!!!

Frisch von der Ausbildung, und nun gilt es seinen Platz in der Welt professioneller TänzerInnen zu finden. Das ist keine einfache Aufgabe, da die meisten Arbeitsstellen eine mehrjährige Bühnenerfahrung als professionellen Tänzer voraussetzen. Doch dafür muss man erst mal die Möglichkeit bekommen diese irgendwo sammeln zu können.

Das Sprungbrett Format von Marcel Leemann, jungen TänzerInnen eine Plattform zu bieten um erste Erfahrungen als Professionelle in diesem Beruf sammeln zu können, knüpft genau da an. Dieses Format kann vielen jungen professionellen Tänzerinnen, die am Anfang ihrer Karriere stehen, den Einstieg in die Berufswelt schaffen, denn sie bekommen nicht nur die Möglichkeit Erfahrungen zu sammeln, sondern überhaupt gesehen zu werden... womöglich von ihrem zukünftigen Arbeitgeber...

Ich selbst habe als Tänzerin am Stadttheater St. Gallen vor etwa 10 Jahren in mehreren Tanzstücken von Marcel Leemann tanzen dürfen und kann ihn als Choreograf, als Mentor und Leiter nur wärmstens empfehlen, jemand der weiss, wie mit jungen Menschen umzugehen. Und die langjährige Erfahrung von Marcel Leemann mit unendlich vielen durchgeführten Projekten mit TänzerInnen allen Alters, spricht für sich.

Ich hoffe zutiefst, dass dieses Sprungbrett Format viele junge Tänzerinnen und Tänzer beflügeln wird und sie damit ihren Weg in die Berufswelt finden.

Hella Immler, Co-Gründerin und Leiterin der **ROTES VELO** Kompanie, [www.rotesvelo.ch](http://www.rotesvelo.ch)

## **HIGH RISK - HIGH ENERGY**

A large group of young performers, all newly qualified dancers, came together to create and rehearse, in an incredibly short space of time, and in lockdown, the high energy and utterly original production, HIGH RISK.

Marcel Leemann's direction consistently invites creative input from each individual, and he then skilfully moulds their multi talents, including some excellent singing and acting, as well as challenging physical theatre and dance movements, into a co-operative and dynamic whole, that leaves the audience breathless and overwhelmed by the ingenuity of this many layered and most powerful dance piece.

For these newly fledged and freshly trained dancers, it was their good fortune to experience the group creation of a professional performance that no-one who participated in it or who saw it will ever forget.

Marcel provides the perfect platform to launch the artistic performance careers of talented and eager young dancers.

Elayne Phillips

## High Risk Body

I had the pleasure of seeing High Risk Body this fall and was particularly curious about the embodied artistic reflection of a global predicament of our times: Covid-19. I was also enthusiastic to support a project which gives a platform for newly graduated performers to have a first professional chance at being on stage.

As a young movement artist, it's challenging enough to find paid, professional work in the best of times, but especially now as much of the world has come to a halt, it's particularly difficult, and all the more necessary to give opportunities to new graduates.

High Risk Body was relevant and provocative, taking the audience through the present-time experience of a pandemic and challenging them to question the choices and decisions which are being made for & by us, as well as presenting a hypothetical, doomsday future that could unfold in its wake.

I was excited about the energy and power of the performers and saw the show a second time- inviting two young adults to join me, who are visual and design artists. They were stimulated by the enthusiastic performance and the thought-provoking discussions that ensued from seeing the piece were a reflection of why creating platforms like this are so vital.

Supporting young artists couldn't be more important in these times- their voices are strong and need to be heard.

Tekeal Riley

[www.thetragermethod.com](http://www.thetragermethod.com)

Angela Demattè Dancer

I was lucky enough to be in the audience during the performances of "High Risk Body" last August at the Reithalle in Bern.

I find the opportunity for young dancers to be involved in a professional artistic process and perform, is an extremely important step into the professional world.

Marcel creates an atmosphere that is playful yet professional where the young dancers can explore, research and grow in many aspects.

It's an amazing opportunity that should be supported and be available for dancers who are starting their career as much as possible.

Especially in these hard times it is very difficult for already established realities to offer positions to young dancers. Lots of them are forced to survive artistically and financially in the freelance world. More and more dancers are freelancing nowadays, therefore the competition is very high and often positions in small projects are given to professionals and not to dancers without experience, so I believe projects like "High Risk Body" are a necessity now more than ever.

## Carolina Verra Dancer High Risk Body

My name is Carolina, I'm 23 years old and I was born in Italy. Just after my graduation at Codarts Rotterdam I had the great opportunity to be one among the ten dancers to create and perform in Bern the production "High Risk Body", by Marcel Leeman and Nicolas Streit. To be part of this project has been for me an extraordinary experience for my career as a dancer. I had the great luck to work together with an enthusiastic and curious group of other nine young dancers eager to dance, perform and share their voices and their stories with a wide audience. I believe that this common desire was the starting point that allowed to create a great connection between all of us from the beginning of the process and that, together with the support and the guidance of Marcel and Nicolas contributed to give shape to a powerful and touching performance. The performance represented for me a magical moment as it was the final result of an original and beautiful process developed around the simplicity of a small group of different people with their own stories and experiences.

Dancer High Risk Body Neil Höhener

First of all we had a great time during the creation of High Risk Body, the coming together of a diverse cast of young dancers was very inspiring and full of energy and drive. I enjoyed the freedom that we had, to create and put our own ideas into the choreography of the piece. As well to work with Marcel as a choreographer and Nicholas in dramaturgy was interesting, to see how the piece builded during its process. To have had the chance to perform in the amazing Reithalle was just a great and rich experience !

## Julia Canard Dancer High Risk Body

First of all, I would like to thank you for the wonderful opportunity you give to young dancers that just finished a formation, to have a job. It is not common at all, usually they are looking for experiences but "how can we get experiences if we should already have some to get somewhere?" is a tricky question! In anyway, I lived it as a great and beautiful experience for different reason. First I feel that I acquired technical experience, I have realised even more the importance of the essential parts in dance: how a simple movement maybe even an "everyday life" common movement, if done with intention could bring a lot more then all of the other extras we sometimes want to add. Like that, I tried to work on purifying my dance, getting rid of the unnecessary movements and to give a conscious intention to all of my movements (a work I still do from home now.) Moreover, I understood always more the way I want to borrow or at least the direction I want to follow in this large and rich world of "contemporary dance". Working with Nicolas too, using the voice and the theatrical part makes me realize how much I like it and want to pursue my way doing something similar. Then, it brought me also a lot because of the nice team we formed. I appreciate the familiarity we had with you and Nicolas that gives a nice and warm atmosphere in the studio and even out of it. And of course with my colleagues, everyone had something to bring. On top of that, the cultural differences and the 10 strong personalities opened even more the possibility of having a rich, strong and personalised conversation. This also helped me to reflect on myself and to give also to the other what I wanted to offer at the moment. By the way, I remember with nostalgia all the crazy moments we shared in the studio of mad, stupid, intense emotionally and free improvisation. This is also something I would like to pursue, working through group improvisation, that goes from one point to another without knowing in between where this is leading us, just feeling and going with the group. All of this different elements, I had missed in my last school. Sometimes I was a bit confuse because of the lot of information we received every day in a month, and wish I had some more time to elaborate even better the process of creating and performing. I felt like we had to through ourselves a bit too soon, with a bit of extra time we could have figure even better the essential parts of the all piece and have it clearer in our mind. But personally it didn't bother me so much, because I also like to throw my entire self in doing something I like. Furthermore, I really appreciated the rhythm of the days, beginning with a class (ballet, yoga or contemporary) to then pursue our work day by day, searching everyday something new to bring into the show. I really loved the yoga lessons with Hella Himmler and still doing with her lessons on Zoom, it brings me a good energy on this difficult time. Last but not least, I consider the period I spent dancing in "High risk body" as an important step in my carrier, the first one. Thanks to which I gained a lot of confidence. Crucial point to go on and to continue to believe in what we do. It gave me a lot of hopes for the future. Particularly important for me in this time of pandemic, having this experience in between two different confinements supported me a lot.

Julia Canard

## Lena Bagutti dancer high risk body

The production of High Risk Body began in September 2020, in a moment of uncertainty. When we started the project, we were not even sure we could go until the end because of covid-19. I think it was very courageous from Marcel Leemann to offer this opportunity of creation and performance in such a moment and to decide to take that risk.

One of the challenge of this production was the fact that the 10 dancers were coming from very different backgrounds and we mainly didn't know each other before starting our 4 weeks of rehearsal.

Still, Marcel gave each one of us a lot of space to create and to bring material from our own experiences. I really appreciated the curiosity he had in what we could bring to the work and how he encouraged us in that direction.

The way Marcel decided to direct the process of work gave each one of us a lot of freedom to explore our creativity while pushing us all to be very autonomous in the work. This process demanded on one side to be very creative in our improvisations, to make clear propositions, but also to take the responsibility to be very rigorous and precise. I think these are essential qualities that are needed in the professional field.

These four weeks of work concluded themselves with three energetic performances that we managed to do in the beautiful Reitschule in Bern, with an audience that was present, even though masked. I feel very lucky to have been able to participate in this process.



Mariana Romao Dncer High Risk Body

The experience I had in the month of September was one of the most enlightening experiences I could have had. Even in the times, we were going through I was able to meet people that made me push what I still had to learn. After finishing my internship I felt like I needed more to open my Horizontes in the dance world. Doing this project with Marcel Leeman in the Physical Dance Theatre did just that and more. With the time we had, I learned how to work fast, how to organize giving the space we how to use my improvisation skills.

I remember in one of the rehearsals there was a task for each one of us to say a text about a parallel world of the Covid 19 and while that person would say it the others would improvise and there was this one time where we saw and felt all of us connected that we completely forgot we were in a studio.

The most important part is that you could be yourself and explore possibilities, not only physically but mentally.

### Nadika Mohn Dancer High Risk Body

I really enjoyed the time with all these young, motivated and energetic dancers who were open for something experimental and liked to share their thoughts with Marcel, Nicolas and the other dancers. Amongst other things the morning classes and rehearsals were really well organized. I loved to have ballet, yoga or contemporary classes with different coaches who supported us in taking care of our own body and preparing us for the full day rehearsals. After many years of dance education I enjoyed working with an actor to put more focus on my voice and theatrical expression. Although what I missed at the end in our piece was that the dance wasn't so specific or that central in focus. Last but not least, I really appreciate that there was always offered some fruits, chocolate or coffee for free. So I never felt super overwhelmed or put upon as a dancer.

Performance High Risk Body  
Production Marcel Leemann Physical Dance Theater  
Location Reithalle Bern

High Risk body was a dance production which I had the great pleasure of seeing on stage. I was also involved in teaching Ballet class as warm up to the members of the company, and that gave me an extra inside perspective of the process of this fantastic group of young dancers who were transported on stage through an intense journey, into a topic that was, and is still very present in everyone's life. The work of Marcel Leemann and Nicolas Streit dug straight into the emotions and into the thoughts that everyone could relate to, from the most panicking moments, on the edge of hysteria, to the most silent and sensitive ones, the ones of reflections and introspection.

The physicality of the dancers was present and alert during the all piece and so were the spoken texts that were brought on stage in a very capturing way.

I work as a teacher since many years with dancers who are about to go out from a professional education, and I believe Sprungbrett being a great ideal place where dancers can start building themselves for the professional life. To keep on having a daily training for them is already very important to keep a structure, and mainly, the work of Marcel Leemann and Nicolas Streit, is a great way to start your career because they push dancers to go over their comfort zone.

They ask them to stay open, interactive, creative, to explore the use of voice, or sounds, to use their strengths and maybe find out even more strengths...to transform their weaknesses or to use them as they are. Especially in a dance world that has changed, where dancers will always be asked to deliver material, ideas, to work and create by themselves, to warm up by themselves etc...it is very important to have the possibility to break the ice within the dancer and him/herself and explore different layers from the very beginning. The group was full of life, joy, commitment, and a lot of talent..

They were very strong individually and they became even stronger together as a group.

To teach to them was an immense pleasure, and so it was to see them on stage.

I hope more will come in the future.

Pamela Monreale