

Video documentation for dance in Berlin

Guidelines for creating and submitting video documentations to the Media Library for Dance and Theatre

In brief

- Submission of video documentations (on productions, rehearsals, discussions, performances, etc.) can be arranged individually with the Media Library
- Possible video formats: MXF (AVC/XAVC/DNx) or ProRes, but also H264/mp4 or H265/HEVC
- Provide information about the productions (e.g. evening programme)

Video documentation for dance and the Media Library for Dance and Theatre

Since the early 1990s, the project 'Video Documentation of Dance' has been carried out, initially by the Mime Centrum Berlin (now the Media Library for Dance and Theatre (MTT)), then by Tanzforum Berlin, collecting many of the dance productions performed on Berlin stages since then. This programme, funded by the Berlin Culture Senate, will not be continued after 2025. Viewing copies of all recordings from more than 30 years of documentation can be found at the MTT at the International Theatre Institute¹. In order to continue this unique, freely accessible collection of Berlin's dance scene, the documentation and collection now need to be reorganised.

The MTT is putting together a guideline to help you prepare video documents in a technically and legally secure manner so that they can be made available in the media library, enabling the artists in your institutions to be visible as part of the development of the Berlin dance scene. Please feel free to contact us so that we can discuss with you how we can make the recording of existing and new video material as straightforward as possible for you. Our aim is to continue to enable the preservation and visibility of the Berlin dance scene in video form – in cooperation with you, the venues and artists of the scene.

¹ The MTT is the successor organisation to the Mime Centrum Berlin. It houses one of the largest publicly accessible audiovisual collections of performing arts in Germany. Videos can be viewed on site free of charge after registration. Information about the videos is available online and can thus be found internationally. Master tapes from the period when the Mime Centrum documented dance as part of its video documentation project are located at the MTT. The master tapes of the video documentation carried out by Tanzforum Berlin are located at the University of the Arts. In addition to the MTT, further viewing copies of the video documentation carried out by Tanzforum Berlin can be accessed at the UdK and in the HZT library.

Technical requirements for video documentation

We know that not all video recordings can be made with expensive equipment or a lot of preparation time and effort. This brief technical guide is for you if you want to make a recording as easily as possible during productions without supervision. If you have professional video recordings or want to make them, these are of course also welcome for transfer to the media library. As a rule, a recording made with a smartphone is better than no recording at all. However, below you will find some tips on how to preserve the material as comprehensively as possible for posterity.

Tips for recording:

You don't need professional cameras or professional editing to create documentaries that can be stored in the media library (especially if you're doing a one-shot with a camera). Not only recordings of premieres, but also rehearsal recordings, further performances, etc. can be submitted to the media library. Most cameras and even some smartphones deliver good recordings these days. Unless you have other objectives, we recommend choosing a section that shows as much of the (stage) action as possible in the video (e.g. the entire stage).

If possible, and especially if sound plays an important role in the production, use an additional microphone or record the sound from the mixing desk.

Formats

The best formats for recording are MXF (AVC/XAVC/DNx) or ProRes. However, the quality of H264/mp4 or H265/HEVC may also be sufficient, depending on which recording devices you use and which formats they can output. As far as possible, select the largest recording format (or the format with the highest bit rate) in your camera. You can use the data from your camera directly (without further conversion) for transfer. If you want to transfer an edited version of your video to the media library, select formats with as little compression as possible when exporting from the editing software.

Editing the videos

You do not need to produce opening or closing credits for the videos. The videos do not need to be edited. If you produce video material as a full recording of a production that you actually want to use for a trailer, please feel free to submit both the trailer and the full material to the media library.

Information about the videos for the record

In order to catalogue and save the videos, we require a few minimum details. It would be helpful if you could provide the following information directly or – even easier – send us a PDF of the **evening programme**.

Important information

- Title
- Participants and their roles (e.g. choreography, dramaturgy, performers, etc.)
- Performance date
- Performance venue
- Length

Optional information

- Description
- Language
- Premiere date and venue

Contact

Please feel free to contact us to arrange collaboration. If you have any questions about technical requirements, procedures or other topics, please do not hesitate to contact us:

mediathek@iti-germany.de

mediathek-tanz-theater.de