

# IMPULSTANZ

## Vienna International Dance Festival

Press release / 9 April 2021

### A farewell to our friend Ismael Ivo

**Shocked and deeply saddened, we have to announce that ImPulsTanz co-founder and dance icon Ismael Ivo passed away on Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> April 2021 in São Paulo at the age of 66 from Covid-19. With him, we lose not only a unique friend but also an important voice at ImPulsTanz.**

Ismael Ivo studied dance and drama in São Paulo. In 1983, he met Alvin Ailey who invited him to New York, where he continued his work as a choreographer and dancer. He further developed his artistic expression in collaboration with the seminal Japanese Butoh dancer Ushio Amagatsu, among others. Ismael Ivo's distinctive and powerful style subsequently influenced not least the aesthetics of Johann Kresnik, the pioneer of German Dance Theatre. Furthermore, he worked with the likes of Heiner Müller, George Tabori, Marcia Haydée and Marina Abramović. With over fifty full-length pieces under his authorship touring the world, Ismael Ivo quickly became one of the most famous protagonists of Dance Theatre. He received numerous awards, including "Outstanding Performance of the Year" in London for his piece *The Maids* together with Yoshi Oida and Koffi Kôkô, the Medal of São Paulo, the Cross of Honour for Services to Brazilian Culture, the Decoration of Honour in Gold for Services to the State of Vienna, and the Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art.

In addition to his extensive artistic work, in 1984, he, together with Karl Regensburger, founded the Internationale Tanzwochen Wien, known since 1988 as ImPulsTanz – Vienna International Dance Festival, where he served as artistic advisor until recently. In addition, he made a significant mark on the international institutional landscape for dance: from 1997 to 2000, he was head choreographer at the German National Theatre in Weimar. From 2005 to 2012, he directed the dance section of the Biennale di Venezia and the International Festival of Contemporary Dance in Venice. There, he established the Golden Lion of the Biennale of Dance which he had the privilege of presenting to Pina Bausch, Jiří Kylián, Carolyn Carlson, William Forsythe and Sylvie Guillem. The development and strengthening of professional training programmes for dancers was his particular concern. In this spirit, he founded the Contemporary Dance Research Center Arsenale della Danza in Venice in 2009. From 2013 to 2017, he continued this project in Vienna and São Paulo under the title Biblioteca do Corpo. Charismatic and passionate about teaching, he was a visiting professor at the Max Reinhardt Seminar at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna in 2013, among other positions. From 2017 to 2020, he was director of the Balé da Cidade de São Paulo and co-directed the Teatro Municipal de São Paulo together with conductor Roberto Minczuk. In the autumn of 2020, he became artistic advisor for the Brazilian television station TV Cultura.

Ismael last appeared at ImPulsTanz in 2019 – with his workshops, with which he inspired generations of amateur and professional dancers over decades, and his company, the Balé da Cidade de São Paulo, with the acclaimed piece *Um Jeito de Corpo* (choreographed by Morena Nascimento) at Burgtheater. We were looking forward to welcoming him again in Vienna this summer, workshops and symposia were already arranged.

We would like to express our greatest admiration for his life's work and his strength, and we are grateful for his artistic contributions to ImPulsTanz and for his unwavering passion towards the festival and dance in general. It has been an honour to have Ismael at our side – what a wonderful and generous man!

Karl Regensburger & the ImPulsTanz team

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