



## SEBASTIAN PRANTL

**Choreographer/Dancer, artistic director of Tanz Atelier Wien (TAW) and since 2009 of International ChoreoLab Austria (ICLA) at Danube University Krems**

Sebastian Prantl, son of the artists couple Karl Prantl, sculptor, and Uta Peyrer, painter, was born in Vienna. After finishing Rudolf Steiner school in Vienna and New York, where he moves with his family in 1977, he receives his performing arts education from 1978 to 1984 and takes part in the multi-layered spectrum of the American dance of the early eighties in New York:

He starts his artistic education at Dance Theatre of Harlem (Arthur Mitchell), over there in 152nd street, where most of the white Americans wouldn't go, he practises enthusiastically as the only "outsider" in his class Jazz, Afro, ballet and vocal performance. He then continues at Martha Graham School, where he becomes Martha Graham's personal "go for", due to Armgard von Bardeleben. In the context of a special season of Martha Graham Dance Company at the MET (amongst others with Rudolf Nurejew and Liza Minelli) he is present at all rehearsals and press appointments. Sebastian Prantl receives scholarships for the Juilliard School of the Performing Arts, where excellent pioneers of modern and classical dance such as Martha Hill, Hanja Holm, Lucas Hoving, Doris Rudko, Ruby Shang, Anna Sokolow, Genia Melikowa, Hector Zaraspe, Alfredo Corvino become his teachers. Thus his excellent education as a contemporary dancer is sealed.

After two years, he decides out of curiosity for a more progressive, theoretic conception of the contemporary dance and choreography, to continue his studies at Nikolais/Louis Dance Theatre Lab (Alwin Nikolais, Murray Louis, Claudia Gittelman), at Erick Hawkins School of Dance and at HB Studio (Herbert Berghof, Uta Hagen). At the same time he is more and more interested in the Manhattan downtown milieu that fascinates him with happenings, interdisciplinary workshops and free lance projects. Further on he is shaped by contacts to artists like Simone Forti, Elaine Summers, Trisha Brown, the first contact improvisation jams (Steve Paxton/Randy Warshaw, Bill T. Jones) and with the still young Butoh movement, that is promoted by Min Tanaka and Eiko & Koma in New York City.

Sebastian Prantl deepens his theoretic studies during a scholarship at the respected Whitney Independent Study Program under Ron Clarke and Yvonne Rainer. Here, he finds a vivid discourse on relevant choreographic and philosophic questions, dealing with interdisciplinary approaches by semiotic, post-structuralism, film theory and psychology in theory and practice. At the downtown loft of Whitney Program he also creates his first solo choreographies/performances and collaborations with other young artists.

The first audition for Pina Bausch's Tanztheater Wuppertal in America, where he prevails until last round, brings the geographic turn back to Europe. From 1984 to 86 he commutes between New York and Vienna and realises multimedia-based dance performances together with the Canadian film maker Kristin Lovejoy (Whitney Program) and actress Deborah Carmichael („Pierre Riviere“, „Niemandland“ at MAK, Vienna). He is significantly involved in setting up the theatre and dance quarter of Wiener Werkstätten- und Kulturhaus (WUK), where he finds a lodging with his first dance company „Motion Pictures“. Step by step, his early ensemble pieces follow („Earthrise“, „Gaia“, „Mouvement“ and „Fasce“ (Friedrich Cerha/Klangforum Wien) as well as guest performances in Europe.

As first jury member for dance at curatorship of the cultural department of Vienna (appointed by Ursula Pasterk) he is able to help the yet very new Austrian dance and performance facilities to an independent status and to a corresponding funding. Then also concrete measures for promoting education and network organizations in the Austrian free dance/theatre and performance scene begin to work (IG, Remise, T-junction...).

In 1988 Sebastian Prantl founded together with his wife, the pianist Cecilia Li, Tanz Atelier Wien. Choreographic research concerning music with an expanded space conception is his focus - projects, productions, symposia, concerts and art gatherings are produced regularly. Long term work contents are questioned by the international operating ensemble and generate new formats in each case. His choreographic work brings him around the world: Secession, Odeon, MAK, Semper Depot and WUK are the venues in Vienna, Krakow Opera House, Minzo-Gong Theatre Beijing, Calcutta Opera house abroad; festivals like Impulstanz, styriarte, New Music Festival Winnipeg follow...

Since 1988 Sebastian Prantl has realized more than fifty projects, that explored contemporary dance /choreography with regard to specific topics, for example Friedrich Kiesler's „Raumbühne“; William Shakespeare's „Hamlet“; Piet Mondrian's last painting „Boogie Woogie“; Sigmund Freud's „Traumdeutung“; conceptions like Eikon, Karthasis, Ikonostasis, Kairos... Music concepts contain classical, modern and contemporary compositions from Domenico Scarlatti, John Cage, Friedrich Cerha to David Lang.

Soon Sebastian Prantl became a key figure for independent dance enterprises in Austria – involving himself in cultural politics striving for general support of the independent Dance Scene. This finally culminated in establishing and positioning the Tanz Quartier Wien 2001.

In addition to several distinctions by the Austrian Federal Theatre Jury, Sebastian Prantl receives the European Cultural Award in 1996 and the first Austrian Dance Production award in 1997.

The already twenty years lasting symbiosis with pianist Cecilia Li is always questioning new approaches to musical material. Also, Sebastian Prantl's solo works are often part of an orchestral framework, for example: Estonian chamber orchestra, Musiktage Lockenhaus/Gidon Kremer, Colourscape/ Lawrence Casserley, Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra/Pat Carrabre, Hamburger Symphoniker/Andrey Boreyko, Lutoslawski Philharmonic/Ernst Kovacic. Sebastian Prantl's soloistic profile is communicative, philosophical and humorous.

Teaching: Amsterdam D Theater School, Dance Hogskolan Stockholm, Ballet school of the State Opera Vienna, Bratislava Conservatory, Brandon University Winnipeg Canada, Bratislava Conservatory, Taipei Opera and in schools and further educations institutes like St. Virgil/Salzburg, Kardinal König Haus/Vienna.

Specific teaching and community work is also part of Sebastian Prantl's practice-focused dance education. Thus there are a three year cooperation with the federal institute for education for hearing impaired people, a Generation Dance Lab and a Choreo Audio Lab within the Tanz Atelier Wien.

Since 2009 he is the artistic director of the *International ChoreoLab Austria* (ICLA) in cooperation with the Danube University Krems.