



Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

TAO Dance Theater 16 & 18

ImpulsTanz Festival, 24.07.2026 [ENA]

TAO Dance Theater's 16 & 18 in frames of the ImpulsTanz Festival is a striking demonstration of how minimalist form can generate extraordinary theatrical voltage. Tao Ye's work has long explored the body as an abstract yet deeply human system, and this evening distills that inquiry into two pieces that feel conceptually rigorous, visually lucid, and physically exacting.

What emerges is not minimalism in the sense of reduction, but a heightened state of attention, where every shift of weight, angle, and rhythm carries dramatic consequence. 16 draws on the imagery of the Chinese dragon dance, but Tao Ye does not illustrate folklore in any literal way. Instead, he converts the dragon into an unfolding kinetic principle: sixteen black-clad dancers surge through coloured light, coalescing and dispersing as if one mythic creature were constantly remaking itself. The ensemble work is breathtaking in its precision. Bodies appear to ripple across the stage in waves, then snap into tight formations, then dissolve again into a kind of ecstatic turbulence.

The result is both ceremonial and contemporary, a choreography of collective energy that feels at once ancient and urgently present. The world premiere of 18 pushes this method further into the realm of pure motion. Here, Tao Ye seems fascinated by the mathematics of expansion: how movement can suggest infinity, how pattern can open into spatial imagination without ever losing structure. The dancers negotiate a field that seems larger than the stage itself, as if the choreography were testing the limits of visible space. Repetition becomes transformation, and even the smallest adjustment in timing or direction alters the whole perceptual field.

It is dance as thought in motion, but also dance as endurance, with the performers meeting formidable physical demands through disciplined clarity rather than display. What makes the evening so compelling is the way Tao Ye's conceptual economy never drains emotion from the stage. On the contrary, the restraint allows intensity to accumulate. The dragon in 16 and the boundless space of 18 become metaphors for survival, continuity, and the human desire to exceed limitation. In Tao Ye's hands, structure is never a prison; it is a vessel for freedom. This is choreography of rare intelligence and sweep, made all the more memorable by its refusal to shout.

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Annette-Kolb-Str. 16
D-85055 Ingolstadt
Telefon: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.660
Telefax: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.661
Email: contact@european-news-agency.com
Internet: european-news-agency.com

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V.i.S.d.P. und gem. § 6 MDStV: Dr. Nadejda Komendantova

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European News Agency**

Annette-Kolb-Str. 16
D-85055 Ingolstadt
Telefon: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.660
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