

## LAUDATIO LILLIAN STILLWELL

Award in the category Dance from the Society of Music and Theater Friends of Münster and the Münsterland, e.V., 2026

Every artistic journey is a search for one's own voice. Lillian Stillwell has succeeded in developing a distinctive artistic style out of her background, training and experience that endures far beyond the moment.

Her choreographies are less concerned with external plot than with the hidden emotional forces from which human action springs. Therein lies her unique artistic independence.

In the double bill AMOR/ABSICHT, Lillian Stillwell addressed a theme [in LAND OF LAKES] that has always moved humanity: the tension between the power of emotions and the freedom of conscious decision-making. Here, love appears not as mere passion, but as an existential force that can both shape and challenge human beings. With a keen sense of psychological nuances, she brought emotion and reason, devotion and self-assertion into a choreographic dialogue that extended far beyond the specific subject matter.

The piece THE SWANS offers a reinterpretation of a familiar subject that is as poetic as it is profound. The swan motif has been freed from its Romantic tradition and transformed into a symbol of human existence: of belonging and alienation, vulnerability and strength, the desire for transformation, and the hope for freedom. Hardly any other choreography reveals so powerfully its ability to translate classical imagery into contemporary experience and imbue it with new meaning.

Lillian Stillwell's artistic merit, however, extends far beyond the quality of individual productions. Under her leadership, an ensemble has flourished in Münster that impresses with its expressiveness, versatility, and extraordinary cohesion. At the same time, a Dance Department has emerged that has established itself as a place of artistic curiosity, intellectual openness, and cultural relevance.

We wish Lillian Stillwell all the best for the future and look forward to more exciting productions.

Münster, July 2026  
Chair of the Society  
Dr. Wolfgang Weickert