

## **Simmerdeis 2017 – 2020**

### **Theatre and Music Festival Drachten**

#### **What is Simmerdeis?**

Simmerdeis is a professional producing arts festival held in a public park in Drachten (main venue) and various other venues in Drachten and the surrounding villages. Our stage is everywhere: in Slingepark, in the centre of Drachten, in the villages and at special indoor and outdoor venues.

The programme includes a surprising, challenging and accessible mix of theatre, circus, dance, music and visual/digital art.

#### **Simmerdeis for everyone**

As many of the events on the programme are free or cost a nominal fee, there are few barriers to public participation. When developing the programme, we always consider different target groups: in terms of age (from 4+ to 80) or education (from low literacy to high potential). It's very diverse audience is what makes Simmerdeis unique.

Our prime concern is to develop a professional programme of events by interesting producers who hold a critical or joyful mirror to us, the viewer. The performances have the theme of 'sustainability' in common. In this sense, sustainable does not just mean 'green' but above all being open to your surroundings.

#### **Rooted in the Community, Sustainability and Talent Development,**

It is no coincidence that Simmerdeis is held in Drachten and the outlying area. Drachten is a creative modern working city where anything is possible. Simmerdeis makes abundant use of this by, on the one hand, developing an exciting and challenging programme (good for the economy and recreation/tourism) and, on the other, commissioning or producing acts that create connections between the various target groups (community, welfare and health care) in Drachten and its surroundings. We have firm roots in the community and therefore participate in other initiatives and developments: we work with cultural institutions, the Innovation Cluster Drachten, sporting and other events, and more.

In both cases, Simmerdeis has an effect on the community in Drachten because it fosters social cohesion and a sense of belonging. The by-products of the festival are talent development, cultural education (acquiring 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills) and creative innovation by daring to experiment.

We devote particular attention to growth (the growing city of Drachten) and decline (the ever more sparsely populated hinterlands) and its associated effects: reduced accessibility and services.

And we are green. We consider how we can do all that we do as sustainably as possible. This could mean our energy and water consumption, using regional products, reusing old materials and so on.

#### **We bring awareness to all that we do**

But above all Simmerdeis is about the intrinsic value of art. The programme is always special. People who know this come again, and people who do not yet know this soon find out. By producing or co-producing the events we remain in close contact with the company and bring our audience along with us in the creative process. We therefore teach the audience to be an audience. We explain our programme. We listen to people's opinions and respond too. Although this may sound patronizing, one should not forget that not everyone in Drachten will have been exposed to culture in their upbringing.

Simmerdeis is firmly rooted in the ambitions of De Lawei Theatre. Given the timing of the arts festivals Oerol on Terschelling and StraatFestival and Explore the North in Leeuwarden, Simmerdeis plays an important role in the broad arts festivals in Fryslân.