



HARLEQUIN

## SPECIAL ON SCANDINAVIA

### Dance and Architecture



THE WORLD DANCES ON HARLEQUIN FLOORS®



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# Dance and architecture in Scandinavia

## A pas de deux between movements and spaces!

Movements and spaces. Modernity and tradition. The atypical synergy between architectural space and dance movements, between organic curves and geometric lines, amplifies the dynamics of ten decades of Scandinavian architectural tradition. Balanced between generosity and purity, two arts that complement each other and that define their electric power. Made by man for man, dance and architecture, here and beyond the polar circle, communication and connective strength based on the natural, on the human.

Harlequin was introduced for the first time in Scandinavia over two decades ago, when the new National Opera Ballet in Helsinki was built; the very first opera house in Scandinavia with modern architecture. Harlequin was there, on this historical occasion. All the halls have been equipped with Harlequin CASCADE™ dance floor, the most classical in the range, ideal for classical and contemporary dance and for theatre.

At present, ideas and projects in Scandinavia abound. New opera houses are being adapted into dance arenas; Scandinavia is proving to be rich in innovative projects that respect its architectural heritage.

In this Scandinavia Special, we suggest, as a first discovery, a visit to the National Opera in Helsinki, the architectural pioneer and the temple of dance in Helsinki. Kenneth Greve, its Artistic Director, demonstrates how the architectural and Finnish majesty rhymes with innovation and ingenuity. According to him, the “starved” Finnish dance will turn the modern opera into “a place of living art”, a standard of national identity.

Later, we will head over to Stockholm to meet Ingemar Carlsson, a technical consultant at the Swedish Royal Ballet. Afterwards, we will push the doors of Dansens Hus (The Dance’s House), and finally discover the “Danshögskolan”,

a unique institution of its kind in Sweden. The Swedish people indulge in its hybrid platforms, which juggle tradition and innovation.

In Norway, we visited Espen Giljane, the Artistic Director of the breathtaking Oslo Opera House, a majestic building standing by a fjord like a huge iceberg. We also met Karene Lyngholm of Dansens Hus in Oslo, whose generous and captivating method relies on innovation, participation and interdisciplinary interaction. Two contrasting institutions, each top-of-the-range, each relying on a passion for dance.

Scandinavia, open to the world, has always known how to combine gigantism of scope with depth of soul. The way they intimately complement one another is reflected in the original, authentic and natural dance, following the example of the natural elements that made Scandinavia famous: glass, wood, stones and light, which constitute all of the premises that house them.

This Scandinavian philosophy, which feeds on tradition and innovation, is also Harlequin’s philosophy, world leader in dance floors, which as the inventor of dance floors has been committed for the last 30 years to enhancing the quality of life and work for dancers by continuously developing ranges of better performing and more secure floors.



## “ Expressive, powerful and starved ”

For Kenneth Greve, Director of the Finnish National Opera Ballet, Finnish dance is “ expressive, powerful and starved ”. Located on the Töölönlahti Bay, the colossal National Opera is set in a generous architecture of space and light, sometimes poetic sometimes functional, but above all marked by a great thirst for integration in Finnish culture.

Inaugurated in 1993, the Opera provides a strong connection between the national identity and contemporary artistic expression. “ A place of living art ”, as Kenneth Greve calls it affectionately.

A combination of tradition and evolution, it is the architectural extension of the Alexander Theatre, which hosted the national dance company from 1918 until 1993. “ Because Finland is a young nation, we have a very strong relationship with dance... which goes from tango to other forms of artistic expression, such as tai chi, passing through classical ballet, with its strong Russian influence. But what we bring to modern dancing is more significant ”, emphasises Kenneth Greve.

### Temple of ingenious simplicity

Space and perspectives. The relationship between shapes, natural elements and man is characterised by this most natural flow. In the same ways as the Bauhaus style, the Opera glitters with all its simple shapes, such as squares and rectangles, and offers a pure and transparent spatial setting to the 78 dancers who come from 17 countries. They perform a hundred shows every year on a Harlequin LIBERTY™ floor, covered with Harlequin CASCADE™ floor, the perfect combination for classical and contemporary dance performances as well as for the theatre. Synonymous with gigantism, the imposing Opera presents



### Facts and numbers

- More than 300 annual performances
- 300,000 spectators
- 2 auditoriums: 1,350 seats and 200 to 500 seats
- 500m<sup>2</sup> of main stage



more than technological prowess. To give an example, the Opera's stage is equipped with a suspended metallic structure, which makes it possible to erect a stage, of nearly 300m<sup>2</sup>, with a Harlequin Liberty™ floor in less than 15 minutes, and to remove it in less than 8 minutes. Record breaking!

[www.operafin.fi](http://www.operafin.fi)



## 5 questions to

### Kenneth Greve

Director of the Finnish National Opera and Ballet

**1. What I appreciate most in my friends**

Positivity, zeal, honesty, desire to take action

**2. The word that I hate the most**

No

**3. My bedtime reading**

Usually next day's projects

**4. My favourite poet**

Victor Hugo

**5. What Harlequin evokes for me...**

What a dancer needs... a good base!



# “ Architecture and dance express the human soul ”

In Sweden, the tradition of dance and architecture is deeply anchored in the culture. Their relationship is very intimate, sometimes even spiritual. To speak the truth, architecture and dance occupy a fundamental place, according to Ingemar Carlsson, technical consultant at the Swedish Royal Ballet. They express “the human soul”, the Swedish soul.

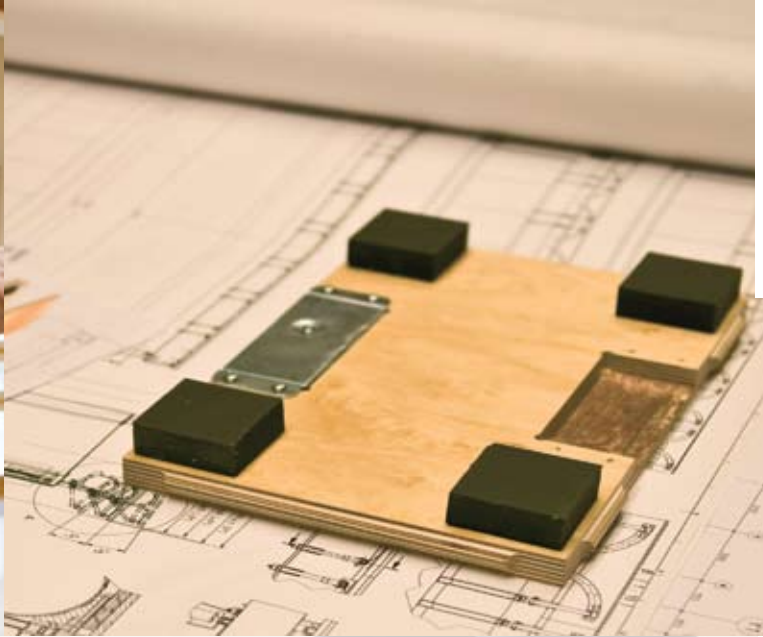
Dressed in its coat of red bricks, the Swedish Royal Ballet sits on a throne in the heart of Stockholm. This neo-classic, majestic building combines magic and elegance, past and present. Consulted on the renovation of the Swedish Royal Ballet stage, which will close its doors next year for renovation, Ingemar Carlsson is already working on elaborating the suspended metallic structure to accommodate the Harlequin Liberty™ dance floor that is anticipated for the stage.

### The heart of tradition

Equipped with Harlequin CASCADE™ and Harlequin STUDIO™ floors, the mother company of the Swedish National Ballet is characterised by its harmonious synergy, combining the most traditional architectural frame with exceptional acoustic equipment for top-level performances. “The National Ballet represents the heart of opera and ballet tradition in Sweden”, according to Ingemar Carlsson.

The national company’s ability to adapt and its taste for adventure will be tested next year, when the Opera’s dancers move, during renovation work, into an old gas factory, which will be refurbished especially for the occasion. A rehearsal room of 400m² will be equipped with a Harlequin LIBERTY™ sprung floor, with a Harlequin STUDIO™ vinyl floor. The multiform spectrum of Swedish dance is not only





represented by the Opera, but also in places that portray very different concepts.

Dansens Hus of Stockholm (The Dance House) - completely equipped with two Harlequin floors - Harlequin DUO™ and Harlequin CASCADE™ - revives the concept of European dance houses and relies on interdisciplinary interaction and a variety of visiting dancers and choreographers.

Always on the lookout for novelties, Sweden inaugurated in 2006 the "Danshögskolan", the only teaching institution for dance at university level and a vibrant platform for arts, education and sciences in Sweden. This school, located in a renovated building, expresses the thirst for modernity and Swedish innovation, based on reliable traditional values. With a total surface of 2,200m<sup>2</sup>, equipped with the sturdiest floors from the Harlequin range, Harlequin STANDFAST™, innovation and experience are the uncontested keywords here.

[www.operan.se](http://www.operan.se)



## 5 questions to

### Ingemar Carlsson

Technical consultant at the Swedish Royal Ballet

#### 1. What I appreciate most in my friends

Creativity, engagement and optimism concerning time

#### 2. My favourite dance show

Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake"

#### 3. My bedtime reading

Karin Boye, Rainer Maria Rilke, Johan Ludvig Runeberg

#### 4. My motto

Everything is possible, if you do not give up!

#### 5. What Harlequin evokes for me...

It is a beacon brand, representing the highest technology in dance floor covering.

## Harlequin LIBERTY™

Harlequin LIBERTY™ multipurpose floor is available in a portable version for your stage and in permanent version for your rehearsal studio.

You can install it yourself, or call on our team of professional fitters. It considerably reduces the risks of injuries, thanks to its dual density elastomer blocks and is modular for all requirements.



## Harlequin STUDIO™ floors

Harlequin STUDIO™ vinyl floor and Harlequin LIBERTY™ sprung floor compliment one another. Designed for ballet and contemporary dance, hip-hop or jazz, Harlequin STUDIO™ vinyl floor offers the dancers comfort, thanks to its cushioned foam backing.

Another greatly appreciated quality: it never loses its shape! For your information, it can be heat-welded to provide greater security.

*A very reassuring pair!*



Harlequin STUDIO™ floors



### Harlequin LIBERTY™ sprung floor panels

- 1 The panels can be easily hooked together, thanks to a tongue and groove system
- 2 The fastening bracket provides the optimum result
- 3 The latch is operated with a special key
- 4 The latch can be fixed with "1 key turn"

Thanks to its revolutionary latching system "1 key turn", installing Harlequin LIBERTY™ sprung floors is even faster, easier and more reliable. Moreover, its new 2m x 1m panels are even lighter and easier to handle.

Conforming to the standard DIN 18032, part II, the Harlequin LIBERTY™ sprung floor has always reassured dancers from all over the world. Together with Harlequin STUDIO™, the most comfortable floor, they make an ideal combination, which has been well received in Scandinavia.



*Water and light.  
Wood and stone.  
Tradition and openness.  
Dance and architecture.  
Pairs that succeed  
in Scandinavia.*





## “Catalyst for artistic and relational development”

In Denmark, design and architecture have always carried humanistic ethics whose origins go back to Lutheranism. Moreover, for Louise Seibaek, the Director of Dansescenen in Copenhagen, the primary vocation of the institution of which she is the manager is in perfect osmosis with this approach.

“Even though dance schools are rare in Denmark, dance has always shown a great permeability to foreign cultures”. In addition, it differs from other Scandinavian countries, according to the Director, by its ability to take an ironic look at itself.

“Classical ballet has a long tradition in Denmark, whereas modern dance is rather a niche discipline, which does not enjoy a traditional image with the public at large”, she observes. Loyal to her open-mindedness, Dansescenen in Copenhagen is positioned to be a “catalyst for new

development, as much on the artistic side as in the relationship with the audience”.

### The foundations of a tradition to come

It is precisely this respectful and intimate relationship between the public and its art, which leads to a spontaneous identification and intensifies the force of the choreography. Thus, the foundations of a tradition to come are created. The most significant example, according to Louise Seibaek, is the success story of Tim Rushton, one of the most famous and recognised Danish Artistic Directors. He has produced at Dansescenen, where he was a choreographer, two of his most important creations, and that was on Harlequin DUO™, the first dance floor in the Harlequin range, before directing them at the Danish Dance Theatre. To offer artists a place that accommodates creation in all its aspects shows a determination to mould new forms of expression, ensuring a future tradition.

Moreover, Dansescenen has not finished surprising us. In the summer, the institution will move along with the Dansens



The Dansescenen and the Dansens Hus are moving into the old premises of the Carlsberg Royal Brewery.



Hus of Copenhagen, a house created for the modern dance community, into the old premises of the Carlsberg Royal Brewery. Unusual, as much as wanted, this new platform for exchange will add to the eclectic and adventurous spirit of both institutions.

They will share three stages for “workshops” and seven dance studios, which will be equipped in the spring of 2009 with Harlequin LIBERTY™ portable sprung floors, covered with three vinyl floors, Harlequin STUDIO™, Harlequin DUO™ and Harlequin STANDFAST™, ideal solutions for temporary

installations and frequent use for all types of dance. With the same perspective of a future tradition, but on a different scale, operates the National Opera in Copenhagen, located in the quarter near the port. In 2004, Harlequin equipped the 800-m<sup>2</sup> studio of the gigantic Opera, financed by the billionaire ship owner Maersk McKinney Møller, with Harlequin STUDIO™ floors. It is another Scandinavian example where extravagance and modernity fit together.

[www.dansescenen.dk](http://www.dansescenen.dk)

## 5 questions to

### Louise Seibaek

Director of the Dansescenen

#### 1. What I appreciate the most in friends

Their ability to ask good questions

#### 2. My favourite dance show

A play by Tim Rushton or the Mute Company, or a classic such as “La Sylphide”

#### 3. My bedtime reading

Historical novels

#### 4. My motto

It is your will that makes you see the light!

#### 5. What Harlequin evokes for me...

Quality, stability and variety





## “ We will feel freer to create our own identity ”

To Espen Giljane, Director of the Norwegian National Ballet, excellence is the only possible standard, as well as 100% commitment. No compromises. Nevertheless, foremost are the joy of creation, the courage to be open and the pleasure of a multiform aesthetic that makes dancing electrical.

The antithesis of the Dansens Hus Oslo, for its size and architecture, happens to be the gigantic Norwegian National Opera. To Espen Giljane, artistic director of the National Ballet, the open spaces go hand in hand with the openness of dance. “Since the ballet tradition is much more recent in Norway than with our neighbours, Sweden and Denmark, we feel freer to create our own identity and tradition in the coming years. It is extremely stimulating to participate in this process”.

The program, both classical and mixed, such as “Worlds Beyond, an Evening with Jiri Kylián” or “Limb's Theorem” of William Forsythe, is highly appreciated by the Norwegians. Our atypical scheduling is the “talk of town”, explains Espen Giljane proudly. In concert with architectural prowess and the striking light shows, the various studios are equipped with Harlequin STUDIO™ and the main stage with a Harlequin LIBERTY™ portable sprung floor covered with Harlequin STUDIO™.



The Opera's removable stage is constructed of Harlequin LIBERTY™ sprung floor panels.



However, isn't the courage to diversify and be open rewarding? Diversity and the company's dancers seem to complement each other in the majestic lines and spaces of the Opera, a sanctuary of harmonious play between natural and organic material, such as glass, marble and wood. Water and light. Wood and stone. Tradition and openness. Dance and architecture. Pairs that suit Scandinavia well and in particular Norway.

[www.operaen.no](http://www.operaen.no)

## 5 questions to

### Espen Giljane

Artistic Director of the Norwegian National Ballet

**1. My main characteristic**

I think I have a certain sense of humour...

**2. What I appreciate the most in my friends**

True people

**3. My heroes**

My dancers and my team

**4. The word that I hate most**

NO

**5. What Harlequin evokes for me...**

Harlequin means QUALITY and I am at peace because I know my dancers are dancing on a floor that reduces the risk of injuries.





## “Giving birth to tomorrow’s dance”

“Welcome to the unexpected experiences, the stimulating looks and the challenges of tomorrow. Come and feel the palpitating heart of dance, and remember that you are alive! Come and help us create the Norwegian House of Dance”. This is how Karene Lyngholm, the artistic director of the Dansens Hus in Oslo, presents her House. The tone is given. Innovator, participant and vibrant!

“Just like the architecture, Norwegian dance is extremely connected to today’s life and art”. To Karene Lyngholm, the House of Dance is in itself a piece of art, open to everyone. “We hope to give birth to tomorrow’s dance for the future needs of society to come”.

An incubator for ideas, a laboratory for dance creation, where today’s shapes meet tomorrow’s structures, such are Karene Lyngholm definitions. All this in optimal work conditions for the dancers in the House of Dance, which is equipped with

Harlequin CASCADE™ and STUDIO™ vinyl floors on stage and in the studio.

### Interdisciplinary shapes and cultures

By inviting artists worldwide, Karene Lyngholm relies on the interdisciplinary interaction of shapes and cultures. Loyal to her Norwegian origins, she intends to “present, co-produce and distribute performances of Norwegian and foreign dances, respecting a top level of performing and a large variety of kinds and expressions”.

In 2008, the Norwegian House of Dance hosted famous choreographers such as Ana Teresa de Keersmaeker or the unclassifiable Akram Khan, who presented his “Bahok” performance, the product of collaboration with the Chinese National Ballet. Not to forget Sølvi Edvardsen or Ina Christel Johannessen. The latter is loyal to the house. “We have followed Christel Johannessen since our debut in 2004 and





we are extremely happy and proud of her international success". All the more remarkable success since dance has such a belated birth in Norway .

Since "Harlequin" to Karene Lyngholm rhymes with "support allowing take off and landing", we hope that many like Christel Johannessen will take off and land in beauty!

[www.dansenshus.com](http://www.dansenshus.com)



## 5 questions to

### Karene Lyngholm

Artistic Director of Dansens Hus

#### 1. My main characteristic

I remain calm when the storm hits hard

#### 2. What I appreciate the most in my friends

That they stay by me, even if I rarely see them

#### 3. My heroes

All these dancers, who put in body and soul to touch us

#### 4. My motto

Never to have one – or tomorrow is another day

#### 5. The word that I hate the most

Maybe



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