**Schottelius, Renate (b. 8 December 1921, Flensburg, Germany; d. 27 September 1998, Buenos Aires, Argentina)**

**Summary**

German-born dancer and choreographer Renate Schottelius was a pioneer of modern dance in Argentina. Following early training in classical and modern dance in Berlin, she immigrated to Argentina in 1936, where she presented original work and in 1944 joined former Denishawn dancer Miriam Winslow’s company based in Buenos Aires. In 1953 Schottelius travelled to the United States, where she studied with Louis Horst, Doris Humphrey, Martha Graham, Agnes de Mille, José Limón, and Hanya Holm. Schottelius’s choreography synthesizes her roots in German *Ausdruckstanz* and the US modern dance tradition, reflecting not only her personal artistic biography, but also the confluence of modernist styles circulating through Argentina by the mid-twentieth century. In addition to her artistic contributions, Schottelius was at the forefront of initiatives to support modern dance production in Argentina, most notably the Friends of Dance Association (1962-1972). Over the course of her extensive performance and teaching career Schottelius also worked internationally at the Royal Swedish Opera, the Cullberg Ballet, and the Boston Conservatory of Music, Dance, and Theatre. A keen teacher of dance technique and composition, she mentored many influential Argentine modern dancers, including Oscar Araiz and Ana María Stekelman. Schottelius acted as Artistic Advisor to the Contemporary Ballet of the General San Martín Municipal Theatre until her death in Buenos Aires in 1998.

**Training**

Schottelius began her training in classical and modern dance in 1929 at the Berlin Municipal Opera, where she studied with Ruth Sorel-Abramovitsch and Alice Uhlen, former Mary Wigman dancers. Due to her mother’s Jewish heritage and the rise of the Nazi state in Germany, Schottelius immigrated to Buenos Aires in 1936. In the absence of modern dance opportunities, she studied ballet and Dalcroze-based eurythmics with German-born Annelene Michiels at the National Conservatory. Schottelius resumed her modern dance study when Austrian Otto Werberg arrived in Buenos Aires in 1939. In 1944, after former Denishawn dancer Miriam Winslow decided to base her work in Argentina following a successful tour to the country, Schottelius joined the newly founded Ballet Winslow.

Schottelius travelled to New York in 1953, where she studied technique with Martha Graham, Agnes de Mille, José Limón, and Hanya Holm as well as dance composition with Louis Horst and Doris Humphrey. Limón, de Mille, and Holm all expressed interest in contracting Schottelius as a dancer in their companies, but because she did not have a US work permit she returned to Argentina in 1954.

**Major Contributions to the Field and to Modernism**

Schottelius first began to teach and present her own choreography in Buenos Aires in the early 1940s. Debuting solos alongside occasional restagings of Winslow’s works, she quickly made a name for herself as a talented teacher and performer. Following her return from the US, a group of former students asked that she mentor and supervise their compositions, a project which evolved into her directorship of the Contemporary Dance Experimental Group. The group performed in Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina, and participated in the inaugural performance of the new General San Martín Municipal Theatre in 1961.

Driven by her career goal of fostering institutional support and audience development for modern dance in Buenos Aires, Schottelius played a foundational role in the conception and organization of the Friends of Dance Association (AADA, 1962-1972). A consortium of ballet and modern dancers and choreographers, the organization encouraged professionalization as well as sought to support the production of new choreographic work, augment pedagogical spaces for dance, and facilitate dialogue between classical and modern forms. Tamara Grigorieva (a former dancer with the Ballets Russes), Amalia Lozano, Ekatherina de Galanta, Roberto Giachero, and Schottelius—the only modern dancer—formed the founding directing committee of the Association. Following the committee’s selection of proposed dance works, AADA arranged rehearsal and performance space and production support, generally through the General San Martín Municipal Theatre. In addition to acting in an organizational capacity, Schottelius frequently premiered and re-staged works as part of AADA programming, including *Recordad: el amor* (*Remember: Love*, 1961) and *Galería humana* (*Human Gallery*, 1963). The press lauded *Recordad: el amor* for showcasing Schottelius’s technical capacity as a dancer and noted that *Galería Humana* crafted a dynamic choreographic relationship with Argentine composer Valdo Sciammarella’s score.

In 1966 Schottelius accepted an invitation to teach technique and composition at the Boston Conservatory of Music, Dance, and Theatre. Her tenure at the Conservatory lasted for more than eight years and she performed onstage there for the last time. In the early 1970s, while still working in Boston, she accepted another invitation to teach technique, composition, and pedagogy in Sweden at the Royal Swedish Opera and the Cullberg Ballet, where she continued to work through the early 1980s. During this time, Schottelius returned to Buenos Aires to give short seminars and performances and also travelled to Germany for several artistic engagements.

Schottelius embraced the opportunity to resettle in Buenos Aires in 1981 following an invitation from former student Ana María Stekelman, then director of the Contemporary Ballet of the General San Martín Municipal Theatre, to lead composition and technique classes through the theatre’s conservatory. Schottelius arrived in the waning years of a repressive military dictatorship (1976-1983), a period synonymous with the forced disappearance of an estimated 30,000 Argentine citizens. Responding to the current political climate through her past as a German refugee, Schottelius set a new work on the Contemporary Ballet entitled *Paisaje de gritos* (*Landscape of Screams*, 1981). The piece is titled after the Nelly Sachs poem depicting the horror of concentration camps and the score features Maurice Karkoff’s musical interpretation of the poem. The piece also includes a program note drawn from the *Diary of Anne Frank*. Choreographically, it melds a Graham-inspired sense of weight and line with the emotional intensity associated with German *Ausdruckstanz.* Scenographically, the piece employs two casts, with one performing and the other replicating the choreography behind a sheer curtain length screen, inviting interpretations around life/death, past/present, and presence/absence relative to replications of histories of political violence in Argentina and Germany.

Schottelius continued to teach in Buenos Aires through the 1990s. In 1990 Oscar Araiz, her former student and then director of the Contemporary Ballet of the General San Martín Theatre, named Schottelius Artistic Advisor, a position she held until her death in 1998. Schottelius’s legacy as a pioneer in the circulation and development of dance modernisms in Argentina and abroad is carried on by the many dancers and choreographers whom she taught and advised throughout her long career. Schottelius’s work lives on in the repertory of the Contemporary Ballet, and continues to attract international attention. In 2010, German choreographer Paula Rosolen created *Die Farce der Suche* (*The Farce of the Search*) based on her archival research on Schottelius’ life and work.

**Victoria Fortuna**

**Selected List of works**

*Coral* (1941)

*Children’s Corner* (1941)

*Aria* (1946)

*Preludio y Fuga* (*Prelude and Fugue* 1952)

*Estamos solos* (*We Are Alone* 1954)

*Concierto de Telemann* (*Telemann’s Concerto* 1954)

*La farsa de la búsqueda* (*The Farce of the Search* 1956)

*Mensaje* (*Message* 1956)

*Dos sueños de paseo* (*Two Dreams on a Journey* 1956)

*Le Renard* (*The Fox* 1958)

*Recordad: el amor* (*Remember: Love* 1961)

*Galería humana* (*Human Gallery* 1963)

*Credo* (*Creed* 1964)

*Children of Faith* (1972)

*Paisaje de gritos* (*Landscape of Screams* 1981)

*Caminantes* (*Wanderers* 1982)

**Interviews with Artist**

Macher, B. (1998) ‘Renate leaves home: Renate Schottelius recalls Argentina's past,’ *Ballett International-Tanz Aktuell* 3: 66-67.

Stoeckemann, P. (1998) ‘”Ich hatte keinen Pass, keine Staatsangehörigkeit, nichts”: Ein Gespräch mit Renate Schottelius,’ *Tanzdrama* 42: 14-15.

**References and Further Reading**

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Moyano, M. I. (2006) *La Danza Moderna Argentina Cuenta Su Historia*, Buenos Aires: Artes del Sur.

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**Film Documentation**

Falzone, J. (1979) *Renate Schottelius and Changuitos*, Consejo Argentino de la Danza.

Rosolen, P. (2010) *’Die Farce der Suche’—Ein Solo von und uber Renate Schottelius,* DigitalerAtlasTanz. Accessible at

<http://tanz1.tanzatlas-deutschland.de/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10886/135/DAT_Rosolen.html?sequence=4>

**Suggested Paratexts**

Renate Schottelius in Argentina, 1946, photographer: Ellen Auerbach

<https://search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?p=images+renate+schottelius&ei=UTF-8&hspart=mozilla&hsimp=yhs-003>

Renate Schottelius in New York City, 1953, photographer: Ellen Auerbach

<https://search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?p=images+renate+schottelius&ei=UTF-8&hspart=mozilla&hsimp=yhs-003>

Renate Schottelius, Documentation Center of the San Martin Theatre in Buenos Aires

<https://search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?p=images+renate+schottelius&ei=UTF-8&hspart=mozilla&hsimp=yhs-003>