

BTB

BALLETTSCHULE THEATER BASEL

What you will find in this package:

What you will find in this package:	1
General Information	2
Our Team	3
Curriculum	7
Academic Education	9
Admission Process Senior Professional School	9
Housing	9
Visa requirements	10
Living in Switzerland – facts and figures	11
Cost	12
Contact	13

General Information

The Ballettschule Theater Basel is the largest professional school for dance in the tri-country area of Switzerland, Germany and France and is recognized worldwide as one of the leading professional schools in Europe. Our Junior School provides children and teenagers with high quality classes and our Senior School trains talented students who aspire to a career as a professional dancer. Graduates have joined renown companies throughout the world.

The school is closely linked to the city of Basel and the ballet company in Basel. The close association with Ballett Theater Basel and its director, Richard Wherlock, allows students to experience the daily artistic life of a professional theatre and enables selected students to participate in the company's performances and projects. Scholarships are awarded to exceptionally talented and committed students as required.

We work together with regionally, nationally and internationally successful teachers, guest teachers and pianists. In addition to being exposed to the creative process by working with present day choreographers such as Richard Wherlock and Heinz Spoerli, students have performed works of Kenneth McMillian and George Balanchine, two of the greatest choreographers of the 20th Century. BTB is a Prix de Lausanne Partner School. The Prix only recognizes schools in the world that have an exceptionally high level of dance education. The school aspires to meet this standard every day.

All professional students have the opportunity to receive an academic education and graduate with a "Diploma of Professional Dance" (EFZ) that is recognized by the Swiss Federal Government.

All students and members of staff are fully committed to achieving the highest standards of excellence. At the same time, our philosophy places the physical and emotional wellbeing as well as the personal development of our students at its core.

Our Team



Richard Wherlock – Director Ballett Basel

Director Ballett Theater Basel

Born in Bristol, Great Britain, Richard Wherlock studied at the renowned Ballet Rambert Academy and went on to dance with the Ballet Rambert Company and Tanz Forum Köln. In 1991 Richard Wherlock became the Ballet Director at Theater Hagen, and beginning in 1996 directed the Ballet Company at Theater Lucerne for three seasons. He was then invited to become the Artistic Director and Choreographer of the Berlin Ballett, Komische Oper Berlin. In 2001 Richard Wherlock took over the position of Director and Choreographer of the Ballett Basel, where he remains today. He was additionally the Artistic Director of the 'Basel tanzt' Festival from 2004-2009.

His guest engagements include works choreographed for the following companies: New English Contemporary Ballet, Tanzforum Köln, Scapino Ballet, Rotterdam, Finnish Dance Theatre, Helsinki, Ballett Staatstheater Braunschweig, Rumanian National Ballett, The Icelandic Ballet, Ballet National de Nancy et de Lorraine, Ballet National de Marseille, Ballet de l'Opéra de Nice, Aalto Balletto, Theater Essen, Europa Danse (UNESCO), Ballett der Deutschen Oper am Rhein Düsseldorf Duisburg, Singapore Dance Theatre, Ballett der Vereinigten Bühnen Graz, Introdans in Arnheim, Holland, Ballett des Badischen Staatstheaters Karlsruhe, Phoenix Dance Theatre, Leeds und Ballet Contemporaneo del Teatro San Martín/Argentinien. In addition, he has created works for Les Étoiles de l'Opéra National de Paris.

His choreography for film and television includes a collaboration with Claude Lelouch on the film «Hasards ou Coïncidences» which premiered at the Biennale in Venice and was presented at the Film Festivals in Montreal and Chicago.

His choreography for the Swiss television dance film «Passengers», produced by SF DRS, RM Associates and 3SAT, was awarded the Prix Italia in 2000. His second TV film collaboration with SF DRS, «One bullet left», received the «Rose d'On» at the International Festival for Television- Entertainment in 2003. In 1999 Richard Wherlock was nominated for the «Benois de la Danse» Prize.

His particular interest lies in the artistic nurturing of the younger generation.

Artistic Direction

Amanda Bennett – Director Ballettschule Theater Basel



Born in Amarillo Texas, USA, Amanda Bennett studied at the School of American Ballet in New York. Her first engagement was at the Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève under the Artistic Direction of George Balanchine. From 1978 to 1989 she was engaged as Principal Dancer with the Basler Ballett under the direction of Heinz Spoerli, and during the 1989-90 season performed with Pennsylvania Ballet. Amanda Bennett has worked as Ballet Mistress, Rehearsal Director and Choreographic Assistant for among others, The Feld Ballet in New York, Ballet du Grand Theatre de Genève, Luzerner Ballett, Bern Ballett and Ballett Freiburg Pretty Ugly. Ms. Bennett is an Affiliate Teacher of the American Ballet Theatre National Curriculum, member of the ABT NTC Artistic Board of Examiners and co-founder of the Ballettschule Theater Basel, where she has been Director since 2001. During this time, she was instrumental in bringing the Swiss Federal Diploma for Dance to Basel. In 2015 Ms. Bennett was awarded the Heinz Spoerli Foundation Prize for her outstanding work as Director of the Ballettschule Theater Basel.

From 2012 to 2016 Amanda Bennett was the Artistic Director of the Prix de Lausanne. She is a respected Expert and Jury Member and at many international competitions and dance events.

Julie Christie Wherlock - Director Junior Professional School



Born in Farnborough, Great Britain, Julie Christie Wherlock received her education at The Royal Ballet School London, where she was awarded the Royal Academy of Dancing Solo Seal. In 1977 she started her career as a Soloist with the Hessisches Staatstheater Wiesbaden before becoming Principal Dancer at the Tanz Forum Köln from 1981-1991. Ms. Wherlock is an American Ballet Theatre National Curriculum Affiliate Teacher and member of the ABT NTC Artistic Board of Examiners. She has worked as a guest company and school teacher as well as being a respected jury member at many international competitions.

Ms Christie Wherlock is a cofounder of BTB and has directed the BTB junior school since 2001.

François Petit – Assistant Director



Born in Royan, France, François Petit received his training at the Conservatoire Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris with Attilio Labis. Upon graduation he received the « premier prix a inimitié ». Over the course of his career he was awarded numerous international prizes including the first Prize at the Varna Competition in 1990. The same year he received the prize as Best Young Dancer at the Paris Competition and in 1991 was given a Special Recognition Prize at the Osaka Competition.

His first engagement was as a Soloist with The Royal Ballet of Flanders in Antwerp. He was then invited by Heinz Spoerli to join the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf, where he created the role of Puck in Mr. Spoerli's new version of "A Midsummer Nights Dream". Mr. Petit was subsequently engaged as Principal Dancer by Heinz Spoerli at the Züricher Ballett, where he danced all the major classical and neo classical roles and toured more than 45 countries.

In 2001 Mr. Petit took over responsibility for the Junior Ballet of the Zürich Opera House. In 2006 the Direction of the Zürich Opera House appointed him to the position of Ballet Master where he remained until 2016. In 2016 he joined Ballettschule Theater Basel as Principal Teacher of Classical Ballet and Pas de deux. He is a regular Guest Teacher for the Royal Ballet London, the Scala di Milano and at the Ballet de Monte Carlo. In 2019 he became the Assistant Director of BTB.

Principal Teacher

Cinthia Labaronne – Principal Teacher



Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Cinthia Labaronne trained at the Colon Theatre Institute of Art in Buenos Aires. At the age of sixteen she was engaged by the Colon Theatre Ballet Company and continued her notable career with Ballett Argentino, Jeune Ballet de France and as a Principal Dancer with Ballet de Nancy under the Direction of Pierre Lacotte and Ballett Basel under the Direction of Richard Wherlock. In 1993 Rudolf Nureyev invited Ms. Labaronne to perform in his final stage appearances on the "Nurejew Farewell Tour ". Ms. Labaronne won first place at both the "First Latino American Ballet Contest" and the "First Ballet and Choreography Contest of Rio de Janeiro". In 1990 received the Varna Competition Revelation Award. Ms. Labaronne danced all the major classical roles, toured extensively in Europe, South America and Cuba and performed in the world's most renowned theatres including Theatre du Colon and

The Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. She has interpreted works created by Lacotte, Bournonville, Petipa, Spada, Nurejew, Balanchine, Fokine, Kylian, Wherlock, Delente, Duboc, Pietragalla, Malandain, Redha, Brumachon, Cachulianau, Prejlocaj and Flamand. Ms. Labaronne has been a Principal Teacher at Ballettschule Theater Basel since 2013.

Administrative Direction

Simone Merkli – Executive Director



Born in Basel, Switzerland, Simone Merkli received her professional dance education at the Ballettschule Theater Basel and completed her Matura / Baccalaureate through the Sports Classes at the Gymnasium Bäumlhof, Basel. Ms. Merkli was engaged as a dancer at the Friedrichstadt-Palast in Berlin before successfully completing a Bachelor Degree in Sport and Media Science. After a Sports Management internship in Lucerne, Ms. Merkli returned to the Friedrichstadt-Palast in Berlin where she worked in the press department. In 2013 she received a contract from the Sports Department in Bern as Project Manager and Specialist for Sports Development. Three years later Ms. Merki moved to the Sports Department of Baseland where she worked in Sports Development and Communication. During this time, she successfully completed an MBA in Sports Management from the University of Bayreuth. In February 2018 Ms. Merkli became the Administrative Director of the Ballettschule Theater Basel.

Housing

Monika Linge – Head of Student Housing



Born in Germany, Monika Linge successfully completed her studies in industrial commerce and went on to work for the Technische Textilien Lörrach AG, Vittrashop Weil / Rhein, Wybert GmbH Lörrach, Dr. Osypka GmbH Rheinfelden-Herten and Tex4Tec Lörrach GmbH Lörrach-Brombach. Ms Linge has been Head of Student Housing since February 2013.

Curriculum

Senior Professional Division - Admission by Audition only

The Ballettschule Theater Basel offers a full-time professional program for students ages 13 – 19 who wish to pursue dance as a career. A solid foundation in classical ballet is required.

Our goal is to prepare talented young dancers to meet the multifaceted demands of the major professional companies of today. In addition to an excellent classical ballet education, students are exposed to many different styles of contemporary dance as well as the work of some of today's greatest choreographers. Great value is placed on the personal development of our students. Small classes insure optimal individual attention. The close relationship to Ballett Basel insures a professional working atmosphere, provides students with a source of inspiration and sets the standard for professional excellence. Our atmosphere and philosophy encourage young dancers to respect the art form of dance, to develop their curiosity and openness to new ideals, to work independently and to learn the importance of discipline and taking responsibility. All qualities which allow our students to blossom into cultivated adults as well as highly proficient dancers.

- **Teachers**

Our staff comprises teachers and artists of the highest international quality. Main teachers for the Senior Professional Division are **Amanda Bennett, Cinthia Labaronne and Francois Petit**. Students also work with guest teachers such as Stefanie Arndt, David Peden, Ethan Stiefel, Michael Langeneckert and Sara Lourenco.

- **Curriculum**

Classical ballet technique, pointe, variations, pas de deux, modern / contemporary, music theory and history, dance history, anatomy, Pilates and yoga. In the last year of study, students who demonstrate sufficient maturity and technical ability are selected to take class with Ballett Basel.

- **Assessments**

Students are given an assessment 4 times a year. Exams are conducted at the end of the school year. Advancement to the next level is granted to students who have achieved the required technical demands for their level, who have worked in a disciplined, enthusiastic manner throughout the year and have demonstrated [maturity appropriate to their age](#).

- **Performance Opportunities**

As dance is a live, performing art form, stage time is a critical part of our students training. All students participate in BTB's annual performance of "The Nutcracker" as well as the "Summer Gala". At the Summer Gala students present traditional classical ballets, works of well know choreographers as well as new creations. Students have additional opportunities to perform in the Theater Basel's annual "Advent Calendar", lecture demonstrations, productions of Ballett Basel as well as productions of the Theater Basel. Performances take place on the big stage of the Basel Theater as well as on tour.

- **Medical Supervision**

The Ballettschule Theater Basel works with a team of doctors and therapists who specialize in the specific needs of dancers. This same group of medical specialists works with Ballett Basel. Students have immediate access to a qualified orthopaedic surgeon, physical therapists and general practitioners.

- **Career Planning**

The final of study year is devoted to refining technique and the preparation necessary to audition for professional companies. Students learn how to present themselves, how to prepare a Curriculum vita and how to judge which photos should be included. Students are additionally made aware of the size and styles of different companies, as well as the type of dancer suited to the individual choreographers and are assisted in choosing auditions appropriate to their talents.

- **Professional Placements**

Students of Ballettschule Theater Basel have received contracts in the following companies: American Ballet Theater Studio Company, St. Louis Ballett U.S.A, San Francisco Ballet Trainee Program, Los Angeles Ballet, Tokyo Ballet, Danish National Ballet, Finnish National Ballet, Dutch National Ballet Trainee Program, Scapino Ballet, Latvian National Opera Ballet, Bucharest National Opera House, Croatian National Ballet, Ballett Semper Oper Dresden, Deutsche Oper am Rhein, Düsseldorf, Ballet National de Marseille, Ballett Nürnberg, Ballet of the Opera House Graz, Ballet Junior Geneva, Zürich Junior Ballett and Ballett Basel.

Academic Education

All students are encouraged to complete their academic education. At BTB we offer the following possibility:

Professional Stage Dance Training in Classical Dance (EFZ), (Duration: 3 years with an option for a 4th year of specialization)

Upon passing their written and practical examinations, students completing the Professional Stage Dance Programme (EFZ) will be awarded a federally recognized national diploma. To be eligible for this state-recognised qualification, candidates must have attended the entire three-year course.

Admission Process Senior Professional School

Candidates aged 13 to 16 should submit their applications to:
btb@theater-basel.ch

Requirements:

- Physical aptitude for classical ballet
- Professional basis in classical ballet
- Fundamentals of modern dance
- Advanced knowledge of German or English

Housing

Boarding House

Students outside the region of Basel between the ages of 13 and 16 live in the school's boarding house. The house is located 10 minutes from the theater and offers 24-hour supervision as well as a cozy, family like atmosphere for our younger students. Our staff prepares nutritious meals and takes care of the daily needs of the students.

Shared Apartments

Older students share houses that are within walking distance of the theater. The student house for the boys and the student house for the girls are under the supervision of our staff who are always ready to help students with problems or questions. Additionally, at the house of the girls there is always a member of the staff present overnight. The houses are furnished, have laundry facilities, fully equipped kitchens and internet connection.

Visa requirements

1. Copy of passport
2. A letter signed by the parents stating that they will be financially responsible for the student during their stay in Basel.
3. An income declaration or tax return of the parents.
4. For students under 18, a signed copy of the release form stating that the parents agree that Amanda Bennett – the director of the school – will be responsible for the student in case of emergency.
5. Certificate from an orthopaedic doctor stating that the student is in good health and can physically persevere their studies in dance.

Living in Switzerland – facts and figures

- Name: Switzerland (officially: Swiss Confederation)
- Total area: 41 285 square kilometres more than two thirds of the country's territory are occupied by the Alps
- Location: Switzerland is situated in the heart of Europe and borders on France, Germany, Austria, the Principality of Liechtenstein (FL), and Italy
- Time zone: CET (UTC+1)
- Currency: Swiss franc (CHF)
- Population: 8 million (2012), including approximately 23% resident foreigners More than two-thirds of the population live in urban areas
- Capital: Bern
- Major cities: Zurich (377 000), Geneva (188 000), Basel (165 000), Bern (126 000), Lausanne (129 000)
- Languages: 64% German (predominantly Swiss German), 20% French, 6.5% Italian, 0.5% Romansh, 9% other English is widely spoken
- Education: 20% of a year group earn an academic baccalaureate (maturity certificate) and approximately 13% a vocational baccalaureate The remaining two thirds as a rule complete their basic professional training with a federal certificate of proficiency
- Universities: 12 doctoral/research universities, 9 universities of applied sciences and arts, 14 universities of teacher education
- Students: 213 000 (2011), including approximately 25% international students.
- Political system: Switzerland is a federal, democratic state. Each of the 26 cantons has its own constitution, parliament, government, and judicial system
- Economy: The main sectors include microtechnology, high-tech, biotechnology and pharmaceuticals, banking and insurance, tourism and international organisations. The service sector employs the largest number of people The country has a flexible job market and the unemployment rate is low

Useful Links

Information About Switzerland - Student's FAQ about Switzerland

http://www.about.ch/faq/students_faq.html

Moving to Basel - <http://www.basel.ch/en/leben/umziehen-1.htm>

Cost

For EFZ-students

Administrative-Fees:

Administrative fee per year	CHF 600.-
Or in 4 instalments à	CHF 150.-

Housing-Fees:

Boarding House

At the boarding house accommodation, 24 hour supervision through our staff, food and internet are included.

Cost per year:	CHF 13'200.-
Payable in 4 installment à	CHF 3'300.-
Deposit	CHF 3'000.-

Apartment

All apartments are partially furnished, have laundry facilities and internet connection.

Cost per year:	CHF 6'240.-
Or in 4 instalments à	CHF 1'610.-
Deposit:	CHF 1'000.-

Other costs

Household insurance	CHF 150.-
Key deposit	CHF 100.-

The key deposit must be paid in cash upon receipt of the house key and we will be refunded at the end of the training and only upon return of the key.

You will incur additional cost for performance tights (CHF 150.-) Practice Tutus (CHF 250.-) or Dance belts (CHF 150.-) and School Uniform (CHF 250.-) and Yoga material (100.-) These items will be billed on your first invoice.

For non-EFZ-students

Tuition fee	CHF 4000.-
Or in 4 instalments à	CHF 1000.-

Invoices are issued by BTB's Office. Upon enrolment, families are responsible for the full year's tuition and fees as outlined on the invoice. If a student withdraws during the year, any balance due will still be collected and no refunds of payments to-date will be made.

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Contact

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