

JUNIOR DANCE preparatory courses



Courses are focused on contemporary dance. They create an alternative to studying dance at conservatories and art schools with a similar focus. They are designed for youth from ages 10 to 16. The educational aim of these courses is to create a versatile and technically well-prepared dancer who is ready to accept and absorb new styles and trends of contemporary dance.

Applicants

Our dance preparatory courses accept talented and motivated youth. Children who are about 10 years old join the first class. Older children are placed in more advanced classes according to their abilities, mastered technique, and overall maturity. Thus it is never too late to join dance preparatory courses. Many students are recommended by teachers from our regular courses, but others who are interested also have the chance to be accepted. Due to the course demands, preference is given to children with good school results.

Curriculum

The five years of study concentrate on contemporary dance. The course also consists of classical ballet, which is an absolute must for acquiring a universal technique from which all other dance techniques originate. The students are taught contemporary dance techniques as well, which are derived from the modern dance of Martha Graham, José Limón, Merce Cunningham, etc. Contemporary dance technique builds on interpreting music, feelings, moods, and motional abstractions. It tells its audience a certain story or a message in which music can play an important or just a complementary part. From this the utilised technique develops – it is work with one's own

body as an instrument. The main characteristics of this style are movements out of axis, controlled falls, fast and slow movements, and floor work, as well as abstraction. In higher-level classes, the basics of jazz technique are added where dancers react to music in contrast with the contemporary dance. And it is through music that short stories are told or feelings expressed. In jazz, music is a determining element. Jazz can be defined by extreme dynamics, isolated movements of individual body parts, improvised sections, fast step variations, and jumps instantly responding to music.

In the first class students are taught the basics of classical ballet and so-called body conditioning, which is a preparation for the basics of contemporary dance techniques.

Students of **the second and third classes** continue learning the basics of classical ballet, and they begin to learn the basic techniques of contemporary dance, then develop them further. They also begin to learn solo and pair improvisation, and they start to prepare their own short choreographic etudes.

The fourth and fifth classes further develop dance techniques. The teaching is extended by jazz technique as a typical stage form which is strictly given and specific for this music genre. The teaching also focuses more on the dancer's own creativity. The students are taught to make contributions to the choreographer's or director's work through their own newly emerging style and invention. The teaching improves acquired abilities in such a way that students, upon graduating, are sufficiently prepared to join art groups focusing on contemporary dance or to pass entrance exams at conservatories and other colleges focusing on stage performance.

Time Scope of Teaching

The teaching is divided into two semesters like at other schools and it abides by school holidays. Each week the students attend 1.5 hour (90 minutes) of classical ballet and two 1.5 hours (180 minutes) of modern dance technique. Other workshops and seminars with external teachers (in higher classes and even with teachers from abroad) are added to the primary lessons.

Other Activities Connected with Teaching

Work on Dance Performances

Beyond regular lessons, the students take part in choreography preparations for various stage performances or dance com-



petitions. Experienced studio teachers or external teachers (choreography students or other dance group leaders) work as choreographers with individual classes. Such work supports dancers' creativity, enhances their more powerful expression, and enables the students to use their acquired experience in real life.

These activities do not form a part of the regular paid curricular activities. It is up to the students and their parents, together with the studio management, to agree on their extent. Such activities efficiently use students' efforts in lessons. The cost primarily includes costumes, competition fees, transportation to out of Prague performances, etc.

Summer Dance Camps

During the summer months, students take part in a summer dance camp which presents a very intensive form of teaching. In these courses students have the chance to get to know other teachers and their different teaching styles and approaches. The most advanced students get to work with the top teachers from abroad. The intensity of teaching is comparable with many weeks of regular lessons from which the students profit immensely.

Summer dance camps do not form a part of the regular curriculum either. Their dates change every year depending on the availability of interesting and suitable teachers.

Occasional Workshops

Weekend workshops and seminars under the supervision of Czech and foreign teachers unthinkably belong to the students' complex dance progress. Not only does it help them with dance techniques but it also gives them a general view and idea of the dance world in its wider relations and perspective. Foreign teachers often bring a very distinct approach to dance and its teaching. This is obviously because of their cultural



background and different professional experience. They pass their invaluable experience from workshops and seminars on to students, thus making the students think of dance and dance art in a new context.

Neither workshops nor seminars form a part of the regular curriculum. Their prices depend on each particular teacher. The prices are usually advantageous for preparatory dance course students because they are often organised in concordance with other commercial workshops or the teacher's long-term stay.

Conclusion

The lessons of dance preparatory courses are time-consuming and physically demanding for the children. However, the accomplished results prove that these courses create a high-quality dance education. Flexible classes follow classes and attendees' individual needs in the given semester. Their objective is to achieve their goals as effectively as possible. The main aim of teaching in Junior Dance preparatory courses is the preparation of a superb and versatile dancer who is aware of the wider cultural context and who can successfully compete with other dancers in the contemporary dance world.

Organisational Information

How to Apply

Talented and motivated youth are accepted by audition twice a year and admitted to the first class of Junior Dance. Older children are placed in more advanced classes according to their performance, technical abilities, and overall maturity.

The auditions always take place in Dance Perfect studio at the beginning of September and June. The current dates are to be found on the studio website.



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