

**BTB**

BALLETTSCHULE THEATER BASEL

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## 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 McMillan 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

Richard Wherlock has been director and head choreographer of Ballett Basel since the 2001/2002 season, and artistic director of the renowned festival «basel tanzt» since 2004.

Richard Wherlock was born in Bristol (GB). After studying at London's prestigious Ballet Rambert School, he joined their company as a dancer. Wherlock was Ballet Director of the Hagen Theatre in Germany from 1991 to 1996, then spent three seasons as director of the Lucerne Ballet before moving to the Komische Oper Berlin as artistic director and choreographer of BerlinBallett.

He worked as choreographer with, among others, the following companies: New English Contemporary Ballet, Tanzforum Köln, Scapino Ballet Rotterdam, Finnish Dance Theatre Helsinki, Ballett Staatstheater Braunschweig, Romanian National Ballet, The Icelandic Ballet, Ballet National de Nancy et de Lorraine, Ballet National de Marseille, Ballet de l'Opéra de Nice, aalto ballett theater essen, Europa Danse (UNESCO), Ballett der Deutschen Oper am Rhein Düsseldorf, Singapore Dance Theatre, Ballett der Vereinigten Bühnen Graz, Introdans in Arnheim/ Holland, Ballett des Badischen Staatstheaters Karlsruhe, Phoenix Dance Theatre Leeds and Ballet Contemporaneo del Teatro San Martín/ Argentina. Wherlock also created a full-length ballet for Les Étoiles de l'Opéra National de Paris.

His film and TV work includes the choreography for Claude Lelouch's cinema production «Hasards ou Coïncidences», presented in 1998 at the Venice Biennale and at the Montréal and Chicago festivals. In 2000, Wherlock received the Prix Italia for the award-winning dance film «Passengers», produced by the Swiss broadcasting company DRS, RM Associates and 3SAT. His most recent film success «One bullet left» – also produced by Swiss broadcasting company DRS – was awarded the Golden Rose of Montreux in 2003.

Richard Wherlock's particular interest lies in supporting talented up-and-coming dancers.

He serves on the juries of numerous international dance competitions.

## Artistic Direction

### **Amanda Bennett – Director Ballettschule Theater Basel**

Born: Texas, USA



Dance education: School of American Ballet, New York

Engagements:

- Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève / Directors Patricia Neary, George Balanchine
- 1978 – 1989 Principal Dancer Basler Ballett / Director Heinz Spoerli
- 1989 – 1990 Pennsylvania Ballet.

Ms. Bennett has worked as guest teacher, ballet mistress and choreographic assistant for, among others: The Feld Ballet N.Y., Ballet du Grand Theater de Genève, Luzerner Ballett, Bern Ballett and Ballet Freiburg Pretty Ugly. In July 2007 she was a member of the jury for the McDonalds Performing Arts Challenge, Sydney Australia and in 2009 she served as a member of the jury for the Prix de Lausanne.

From 2012 to 2017, Amanda Bennett was Artistic Director of the Prix de Lausanne. In June 2015, Amanda Bennett received the award from the Foundation Heinz Spoerli for her outstanding achievements as director of the ballet school Theater Basel. Ms. Bennett has been the director of the Ballettschule Theater Basel and teacher for Ballett Basel since 2001. She is an accredited teacher of the American Ballet Theater National Training Curriculum and was instrumental in bringing the EFZ Diploma to Basel.



### **Julie Christie Wherlock - Director Junior Professional School**

Born: Farnborough, Great Britain

Education: The Royal Ballet School, London

Achievements: The Royal Academy of Dancing Solo Seal

Engagements:

- Soloist with the Hessen State Theater Wiesbaden
- Principal Soloist with Tanz Forum Cologne

Ms. Christie Wherlock has worked as a company and school guest teacher for companies throughout Europe and has been a jury member of competitions worldwide. She graduated from the Royal Academy of Dancing teaching course and She is an accredited teacher of the American Ballet Theater National Training Curriculum.

Ms. Wherlock has been the director of the Junior School of the Ballettschule Theater Basel and teacher for Ballettschule Theater Basel since 2001.

## Principal Teachers

### **François Petit – Principal Teacher**



Born: France.

Education: Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris

Engagements:

- Principal Dancer Deutsche Oper am Rhein
- Principal Dancer Zurich Ballet

Prizewinner of the Varna Competition 1990, Paris Competition 1991 and Osaka Competition 1991-1993

2006 - 2016 Ballet Master Opernhaus, Zürich. One of the main Ballet Masters for the Zürich Ballet, assisting both Heinz Spoerli and later Christian Spuck in all their creations. He has worked with some of the most important Choreographers of today (Mac Gregor, Lee, Lightfoot, Kylian, etc...). Guest teacher for, among others, The Royal Ballet London and the Ballet de Monte Carlo.

Principle Teacher of BTB since 2016

### **Cinthia Labaronne – Principal Teacher**



Born: Buenos Aires, Argentina

Education: Colon Theatre Institute of Art in Buenos Aires

Engagements:

- Ballett Theater Basel
- Principal Dancer Ballet de Nancy
- Jeune Ballet de France (Director Robert Berthier)
- Colon Theatre Ballet Company

Prizewinner „Revelation Award“ Varna Wettbewerb 1990

In 1993, Miss Labaronne was invited by Rudolf Nureyev to join the "Nureyev Farewell Tour" - Nureyev's last tour before leaving the stage. "Every now and then but not very often, a young ballerina breaks into the stage just to remind us that audiences have to be appealed to" (Rudolf Nureyev, 1992 Australia Farewell Tour)

Principle Teacher der BTB since 2013

## Administrative Direction

### **Simone Merkli – Executive Director**



Born: Basel, Switzerland

Education:

- Ballettschule Theater Basel
  - Bachelor's degree in Sport- and Media Sciences, University of Basel
  - Master's degree in Sports management, University of Bayreuth
- Engagements and previous positions
- Project management, Sports Department of Basel and Bern
  - Communication Department, Friedrichstadt-Palast Berlin
  - Dancer at Friedrichstadt-Palast Berlin

Ms. Merkli has been the executive director of the Ballettschule Theater Basel since February 2018.

## Housing

### **Monika Linge – Head of Student Housing**



Born: Germany

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 4<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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 coming from 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.

### **Student apartments**

Older students share houses (one for the girls, one for the boys) that are close to the theater. The student houses are under the supervision of our staff who are always ready to help students with problems or questions. 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.
6. 8 pass photos (can be brought the first day of school)

## 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](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 installent 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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