

BALLET

DIEGO BENITO GUTIÉRREZ was born in Madrid, Spain. After completing his dance training at the conservatory there, he worked in dance companies in Spain, France and the Netherlands. In 2009 he moved to Switzerland and danced at Ballett Theater Basel for 14 years, as well as doing various projects in the free scene. In 2016 he was Contemporary Coach at the renowned Prix de Lausanne and since 2022 he is artistic director of the project "UKBB Tanz!" of the Children's Hospital in Basel. He is currently working as an artistic advisor at the Pro Ballet School and doing a Master's degree in cultural management at the University of Basel.

After having worked for 20 years as a professional dancer, I have learned how important it is to have a good time in the studio and finish the class with a good feeling. For me as a teacher, it is essential to continually work on ballet technique and mix it with freedom of movement and dynamics.

AZUSA NISHIMURA is from Hiroshima, Japan. Her repertoire ranges from classical ballet to contemporary dance. She began her professional career in Europe in 2000. Since then she has been living in Zürich and works throughout Switzerland as a dancer, teacher and choreography assistant. Collaborating with artists from other fields as well, she has performed in operas, dance films, theater performances, music videos, commercial events and photo shoots. <http://www.azusa.ch>

Azusa's ballet classes are for everybody, regardless whether they have a background in classic ballet or contemporary dance. She focuses on the individual bodies of the students and believes that each and every one of us is different. Her barre exercises are fairly simple and designed to help students to pay attention to their body and activate their own resources to be able to maximize their potential when we move on to the centre exercises.

LAETITIA KOHLER is a contemporary dancer, choreographer and dance teacher from Delémont, Switzerland. She began her dance education at the Basel Dance Academy with Galina Gladkova-Hoffmann. After graduating from the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste with a BA in contemporary dance, she started dancing with various choreographers and companies including Isabelle Beernaert's company in Belgium, T42 Dance Project, Sagi Gross dance company based in Amsterdam and Mainfranken Theater Würzburg with Anna Vita in Germany. She is currently doing research for her own projects, dancing and teaching in private schools and universities.

Laetitia's vision of ballet has been influenced though the years by her practice of contemporary dance. On the one hand, it is about precision, tradition, and lines while on the other hand, it is about releasing, momentum and taking space. After all, it is about expression and being yourself.

CARLOS KERR JR. is a Belizean-American artist from Brooklyn, New York. His career spans several international companies, including the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, the Metropolitan Opera Ballet, Rubberband Dance Group, Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company, Stadttheater Ulm, the Tanz Luzerner Theater, Snorkel Rabbit, and currently, Ballett Basel. He has performed in works and original creations by William Forsythe, Crystal Pite, Hofesh Shechter, Ella Rothschild, Johan Inger, Inbal Pinto, Bryan Arias, Georg Reischl, Marcos Morau, amongst others. As a choreographer, his work has been presented internationally, including at Springboard Danse Montreal, Dance Gallery Festival, and throughout Switzerland in Tanz Fest Schweiz. Along with his choreographic endeavors, Carlos is an active dance teacher, photographer, sound designer, and filmmaker. Carlos holds a Master's in Dance Science with a focus on Health & Performance and is also a Certified Gyrokinesis® trainer.

Ballet can be technically challenging yet equally healing. With a philosophy to move through form rather than to form, Carlos's classes develop coordination of breath, spiral, and spinal torsion. The constant change of direction, coordination of back and arms, and awareness of the pelvic floor foster a playful harmony with music, allowing for effortless movement from barre to center.

LEONIE HANSEN was born and raised in Basel. She graduated from the Ballet School at Theater Basel and completed her dance education at the Northern Ballet Graduate Program in Leeds, UK. During her graduate program year, she spent several weeks touring throughout the UK with Northern Ballet. In 2020 she joined the Ballet Opera Wroclawska in Wroclaw, Poland, and has been dancing there since then. Her repertoire includes pieces by choreographers such as Johan Kobborg, Yuri Vamos, Giorgio Madia, Meryl Tankard, Javier de Frutos and others. During her years in Poland, she has also danced at various galas in Europe, has choreographed for the "Young Choreographers Evening" at Opera Wroclawska, and has been teaching at local schools or for the company itself.

My class is intended to focus on simple ballet technique, which helps to get us set up properly at the barre, in order to build up for more complex combinations in the centre. I like to play with musicality and explore how different dynamics and accents will change our dancing and movement, or even how we feel during class. The goal is to move and have fun while not losing the most important basics.