Apprentissage
2023-2024
What is « apprentissage » apprenticeship in France?

In France, apprenticeship is a path which alternates between a real-life professional situation in a dance company and a training program in a Apprentice Training Center (CFA in French). It is a qualifying and certifying training program.

PNSD Rosella Hightower is the lonely training centre in France which offers to graduate the « Diplôme National Supérieur Professionnel de danseur (DNSP)», the Professional Dancer Advanced National Diploma » throughout apprenticeship.

Today, we partner with three dance companies for the apprenticeship programme: Ballet Preljocaj; Ballet National de Marseille –direction (LA)HORDE and Grand Opéra Avignon.

A real benefit for young dancers

Recruiting a young dancer through apprenticeship is a tailor-made solution which ensures a good adaptation of the dancer to the requirements of the company.

The educational responsibility shared between the dance company and the CFA allows for optimizing the apprentice integration. The work-study programme is a real practical approach of the dancer's activity.

For young people, alternance or work-study programme is of significant interest because it allows to get a first qualified employment, usually the first one, and to integrate a professional team while being guided by an experienced instructor (maître d’apprentissage). In the meanwhile, the dancer takes advantage from a specialized training programme, where pedagogy is built from practical situations, leading to a diploma recognized at a European level: the Professional Dancer Advanced National Diploma (DNSP in French).

How is the training going?

The training is free for the apprentice and programmed by the PNSD at several locations in Aix-en-Provence, Marseille and at the Rosella Hightower International Dance Center in Mougins. The duration of training is 350 hours over a year, 10 weeks, under the responsibility of a tutor. CFA training times are concentrated on periods grouped together to adapt to the company's work schedule. The rest of the time the apprentice is in dance company.

In company, the person responsible for training is the "apprentice master". Its mission is to support the young person and pass on knowledge and skills related to the profession of dancer.

The objectives of the training

Corresponding to the last year of training leading to the DNSP dancer, the training provided under the apprenticeship contract is based on the skills benchmark of the DNSP dancer and on the approved model of the PNSD.

The professionalizing nature of the training is accentuated and is based on the experience lived in company by supporting and supplementing it. CFA training brings
diversity in terms of styles and choreographic universes by approaching other choreographers and repertoires than those worked in the dance company, in the field of classical as well as contemporary.

The training also aims to support the young dancer in his professional integration during his apprenticeship year and beyond to build his early career. Personalized support for everyone is at the heart of the program. The three main training objectives are:

- Keep and develop your versatility as a dancer
- Build work autonomy to meet professional expectations
- Appropriate tools to professionalize

The apprenticeship contract

The apprenticeship contract is a fixed-term employment contract. Its duration covers one season, that is to say eleven months from September to July. The contract is signed by the employer and the dancer. The apprentice has a regular employee status. He has the same rights (vacation, social security, maternity, work accidents, etc.) as the employees of the company, including advantages due to collective agreement in the company. Like any employment contract, it has a two-month trial period which allows the company and the apprentice to validate their choice or not. Beyond that, the apprenticeship contract can be terminated under certain conditions.

The employee status applies for the entire duration of the contract. The apprentice is salaried and under the responsibility of the employer even when he is training at the CFA. All fees transportation between the company and training programme locations are at the charge of the apprentice. Specific support programme is offered by South Region, see last page.

Apprentice's remuneration

The age and the number of years of execution of the contract define the level of remuneration of an apprentice on an apprenticeship contract. The salary calculation is based on the gross monthly minimum wage (update January 01, 2023). The salary levels are then categorized according to the age of the apprentice, in the 3rd year of work-study:
Special support and scholarship for apprentices

Apprentices are given an Apprentice student card. Different price reductions are granted with this card. The apprentice benefits from reductions in transport costs, food and sports and cultural activities. The card also gives access to accommodation and university restaurants. From the first months of training, this card is released and can be used in all regions in France.

The SOUTH Region also offers support for apprentices.

All info on www.maregionsud.fr. Online procedures to access the support programme.

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