

Palucca University of Dance Dresden
Secondary School

Pedagogical Concept



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SHORT HISTORICAL OUTLINE

In 1925, at the age of 23, Gret Palucca started teaching. Her pedagogical concept focused on fostering individuality. Palucca didn't want to create imitations of herself but rather she wanted to pass on observations and insights so that her pupils could use these to create something of their own. Palucca and the teachers around her had faith in the inexhaustible reservoir of human movement and demanded that their pupils discover their own ideas and vocabulary of movements. Knowledge of the different musical epochs and styles and the in-depth analyses of the fine arts played a significant role.

The educational profile of the Palucca School Dresden with its integrated secondary school has experienced a series of changes with the passing of time. In 1961, the school began accepting pupils starting at the age of 12, who acquire a school education during their training to become a dancer. Since 1963, dance training can start as early as in the 5th class and it lasts nine years ending with a degree as a professional dancer. This educational model is principally valid even today.

WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE UNIVERSITY

The close interaction between secondary school and dance education defines both the pedagogical concept and also the organisation of the daily school routine. The components whose contents are necessary for a dance education are integrated into the secondary school curriculum. This also includes the mandatory remedial lessons, each of which comprises two hours a week, (a school hour is 45 minutes long) in the school years 5 and 6 (O1/O2). Each class level has "Dance Studies" one hour per week. Here, in addition to examining works from the basic dance repertoire, works relevant to current performance practices are also taught. Each class level has an additional weekly lesson in "Anatomy" and "Nutrition" which is taught in cooperation with the body awareness coach and the nutritional counsellor.

Especially talented dance pupils and dance students are particularly encouraged and supported by the University. The aim of this support and the additional training sessions are the participation in international competitions and performances.

As compensation for the resulting absences in the secondary school, the pupils and students receive special support and fostering outside of the normal study plan.

With the start of the Young Talents Programme in year 7 (N1), the pupils are also students at the University parallel to the secondary school. With this change of status, they are then subject to the Saxony regulations regarding higher education. The School Act and further regulations remain unaffected.

ADMISSIONS AND SCHOLASTIC CAREER

Approximately 90 pupils and students are taught at the Palucca University of Dance Dresden's secondary school. A number of them come from the Dresden area while another constantly growing portion comes from other German states. As of the 7th year, children

from other countries may attend the secondary school. Those pupils and students who are not from Dresden are quartered in the Palucca Dormitory. An important aspect of the University's profile, the secondary school is of great importance, both nationally and internationally.

Other than as provided in the School Act, there is no minimum to the number of pupils at the Palucca University of Dance Dresden Secondary School. The maximum class size is 20 pupils.

Admission to Palucca University of Dance Dresden's secondary school is preceded by a two-step procedure consisting of an aptitude test and an audition. Only those who pass the admissions procedures, which last over several days, and who have been assessed positively, when taking into account the scholastic potential for development and the challenges of the normal school day, will be admitted to the Palucca University and thus to the Palucca University of Dance Dresden's secondary school.

Pupils in the fifth and sixth year at the secondary school receive daily dance instruction in orientation classes. The seventh school year (N1) begins the four-year Young Talents Programme with an integrated secondary school education which ends with the 10th school year and a medium level (ordinary level) secondary school leaving certificate. With this, they qualify for further education should a Palucca pupil or student choose to continue at another higher or senior secondary school.

Lateral admission to the Palucca University of Dance Dresden's secondary school is, in principle, possible at any time. This requires a successful aptitude test, a successful audition in dance and, after a trial period, positive assessments by the secondary school headmaster and by the head of the dance training programmes.

International students in the Young Talents Programme are given special support. Students with insufficient language skills can complete their compulsory education and the final year of the Young Talents Programme in their respective home countries. These students also attend remedial classes at the secondary school in preparation for the BA study programme as visiting students.

SYLLABUS

In order to best fulfill the performance requirements (for dance training and a medium level school leaving certificate), the Palucca University of Dance Dresden, dance education and secondary school classes are precisely coordinated. The daily routine is thus adapted to the necessities of an intensely physically active dance education. The secondary school class schedule is planned in cooperation with the University.

The Palucca University of Dance Dresden's educational objective is developing each individual into a creative, independent artistic personality with their own unique voice. The secondary school is committed to this educational objective. That is why, in agreements between the Saxon State Ministry of Education (SMK) and the State Ministry of Science, Art and Tourism (SMWK), the Secondary School's syllabus has been adapted to the requirements of a dance education.

Flexibility in the scholastic work is necessary in order to promote the pupils' and students' particular artistic talents and the artistic practice associated with this. In individual cases, this might mean scheduling lessons on the weekend or during the holidays.

The medium level secondary school graduation is pursuant to the standards set in the Sax-on School Act (SOOSA).

PROOF OF ACHIEVEMENTS/ CERTIFICATES

Due to the changed syllabus, Palucca University of Dance Dresden's secondary school has transcripts that diverge from the usual school certificates but which, in principle, correspond with the regulations of SOOSA. The dance education will be specifically noted on the certificate. The half-year proof of achievements in dance will be handed out with the secondary school leaving certificate.

INTERNATIONALISATION

Within Palucca University of Dance Dresden's internationalisation endeavours, the secondary school is responsible for the area of general education. With the restructuring of the University's study programmes within the context of the Bologna Process, and the introduction of a Young Talents Programme starting with the seventh school year (N1), the University has experienced increased interest from applicants, especially throughout the European Union. Being able to freely select study locations throughout Europe within the scope of harmonised study programmes supports international mobility.

International pupils and students are immediately integrated into the classes and attend subject-related courses. The pupils' different levels of language skills are aligned through individual support programmes within the scope of DaZ lessons (German as a second language) and remedial classes.

In the first lessons, the pupils and students are individually assisted by the class teacher. Disadvantages are compensated by the flexible language skills of the special subject teachers and by internal differentiation in the specialised classes. The pupils or students to be integrated are encouraged and required to learn the German language within a time period of about six months after which they are expected to participate in regular schooling.

Language skills are reevaluated and language levels are assessed on a regular basis by a department head for individual assistance who organises the certificate-related adaptations of the special subject classes and also special support for the examination relevant subjects.

SCHOOL HOURS, HOLIDAYS

Daily lessons including the university dance courses are planned by the secondary school between 8:00 and 17:00. In addition, dance rehearsals and performances are integrated into the weekly class schedule. In order to avoid missing classes in secondary school, or for preliminary examinations in the graduating classes, or for additional rehearsals, three to four school days per school year are planned on a Saturday and are declared pool-days.

For larger dance projects, complex rehearsal blocks are planned yearly. In order to avoid missing classes in secondary school, these rehearsals are partially scheduled during holidays. Performances are also scheduled, in part, during the holiday periods. This is why the secondary schoolers have, overall, fewer holidays. As compensation and in coordination with the University, flexible rest periods are planned for these pupils and students.

THE TRADITIONS LIVE

Palucca's traditional concept for mutual cross-class teaching and learning is still alive today. At the beginning of the school year, the orientation level pupils in the secondary school are assigned guardian-mentor pupils from the 9th (N3) or 10th (N4) school years. They experience everyday school-life together. The guardian-mentors pass on the school's standards and values. In artistic and scholastic projects, pupils and students work together regardless of which class they are in.

In regularly scheduled consultations with the teaching staff, and during consultations between the class teacher and the class leader, the performance level at the secondary school and in dance training, and also the pupil's or student's potential for development are evaluated on a continual basis.

Parents receive feedback regularly regarding their child's developmental and educational status as well as an analysis of their child's potential. In addition to the parent meetings, parents may also sit in on dance lessons on the two parent-days per school year.