

Final Report – Erasmus+ Traineeship

Participant: Barbara Dabis

Host Organisation: Company VAYA – Art of Human Movement

Mobility Period: 30 November – 8 December 2025

Location: Freiburg im Breisgau



Report

My Erasmus+ traineeship with Company VAYA – Art of Human Movement took place between 30 November and 8 December 2025. The aim of this mobility was to gain practical and artistic experience within the company's movement research, partnering methodology, and workshop-based creative practice. Throughout the programme, I was able to deepen my embodied performance skills, explore new collaborative tools, and observe a professional production process in an international context.



1–5 December – Partnering Workshop in Freiburg

The first part of the traineeship consisted of participating in Company VAYA's Partnering Workshop in Freiburg, led by Christina Halford and the VAYA team. The practice was centred on physical awareness, trust-based collaboration, and the shared creation of movement between two or more bodies. Each morning began with technical physical training, followed by partnering exercises that emphasised stability, balance, and weight exchange.

Each day began with a partnering-based warm-up that introduced different pair or group games designed to build trust, attention, and connection among participants. We learned various structural forms that allowed us to practise the use of momentum, exploring which body parts can initiate lifting and which can receive or support weight. A strong emphasis was placed on directions, pathways, and the surfaces of the body, as well as on developing smooth transitions between elements. We repeatedly investigated how fluidity can be created and how momentum can support the continuity of movement. All of these principles were applied and tested through improvisational tasks throughout the week. At the end of the workshop, we worked in small groups to create short sequences that integrated the partnering tools we had explored.

A core focus of the workshop was understanding how the presence of another body can expand individual possibilities, enabling movements that cannot be achieved alone. We explored the mechanics of shared momentum, the use of muscular tonus at key moments, and the development of instinctive responses to a partner. The atmosphere of the training

encouraged playfulness, openness, and precision, allowing me to take risks, refine my timing, and become more sensitive to spatial and interpersonal dynamics.

In the afternoons, we continued with improvisation and creative exploration tasks that connected the partnering principles to compositional thinking. Regular reflection sessions supported our understanding of the physical processes, and I documented my learning through notes, video excerpts, and movement observations.

[VIDÉO](#)



6–7 December – Rehearsal Observation

Due to illness, I was ultimately unable to travel to Frankfurt am Main for the performance. Instead, this phase of the traineeship focused on observing and engaging with Company VAYA's rehearsal process.

I participated in and observed studio rehearsals, gaining insight into how the partnering principles and movement material explored during the workshop were further developed, refined, and structured within an ongoing creative process. This allowed me to deepen my understanding of the company's working methods, decision-making strategies, and the translation of improvisational material into performative form.

Online Mentoring

In addition, on 11 December, I took part in an online mentoring session with my mentor. During this meeting, we reflected on the partnering workshop and the rehearsal process I had observed. I received detailed feedback on my physical approach, partnering skills, and artistic presence, and we discussed how the tools and principles encountered during the traineeship could be integrated into my own artistic practice. This exchange provided valuable professional guidance and helped contextualise my learning experience within a broader artistic framework.

Learning Outcomes

Through this traineeship, I achieved the following learning outcomes:

- A deepened understanding of Company VAYA's partnering methodology and embodied performance tools
- Enhanced technical skills in weight-sharing, balance, and coordinated physical negotiation
- Greater creative adaptability, sensitivity to partners, and awareness of spatial dynamics
- Increased confidence in collaborative processes and improvisational decision-making
- An expanded international professional network and insight into the functioning of a touring dance company
- Strengthened ability to observe, reflect on, and document artistic processes

Conclusion

This short-term mobility was highly valuable for my artistic and professional development. The combination of intensive workshop practice and direct insight into a live production process allowed me to connect technical, creative, and organisational competencies in a coherent and meaningful way. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to work with Company VAYA – Art of Human Movement, and I intend to integrate the partnering principles and embodied communication skills acquired during this traineeship into my ongoing practice as a dancer and creator.

