



Course Description

Sustaining Dance How to build a well-balanced career?

(short description)

Understanding the key elements of becoming an artist in dance today can be approached from multiple perspectives. Central to this is the exploration of how to build a life that supports artistic work, while reinforcing a healthy, sustainable, and well-balanced professional career—one that ensures long-term engagement and personal fulfillment.

To explore this, we have invited three distinguished artists, scientists, and educators to share their expertise on coaching mindset, physical and mental well-being, and creative practice within the context of dance. Through their insights, participants will receive valuable perspectives on integrating these essential components into their evolving professional journeys.

The workshop combines seven days of physical mobility training with a virtual component featuring two online sessions. It is open to graduating dance students and those with at least two years of professional dance training.

Course thematics:

Coaching mindset in classical and postmodern dance – new dimensions of goal orientation and excellence by István Simon

Body and health awareness in professional dance – new dimensions of safety and peak performance by Boglárka Simon-Hatala

Swimming in the creative pool by Imre Vass

Dates:

- **physical mobility** – From September 6th to 13th, 2026. (8 days)
- **virtual phase** – (under discussion).





Sustaining Dance

How to build a well-balanced career?

(detailed description)

In the field of dance, practice is a widely used term to attempt to host our activities whether it is simply the act of practising or the broader engagements that provide a framework for imagining and shaping our work and identities as dance artists. It also encompasses the exploration of a diverse array of activities and lifestyles that contribute to our artistic work and lives. Simply stated, it is about putting something into practice to explore and discover what we are doing and what we need at every level of a dance artist's work and life.

Understanding the key elements of becoming an artist in dance today can be approached from multiple perspectives. Central to this is the exploration of how to build a life that supports artistic work, while reinforcing a healthy, sustainable, and well-balanced professional career—one that ensures long-term engagement and personal fulfillment.

The BA Course in Contemporary Dance at BCDC by its aspiration, strives to nurture the artistic growth of young, talented individuals. Alongside diverse training and studies in dance techniques and movement, the pedagogical focus emphasizes fostering creativity to help students develop their personal artistic identity, reflection, and approach. The program introduces a variety of forms and methods, preparing them to cultivate a research-based practice for creating their works and discovering their unique, authentic voice as dance performance artists, while empowering them to create and sustain their own broader Practice. At the same time, we view Practice as a flexible framework that can take shape in various ways, ultimately tailored by each individual in response to the challenges of their profession while resonating with their personal needs and goals in dance and life.

Within the framework of BIP, the Contemporary Dance Department of BCDC invites three distinguished artists, scientists, and educators to share their expertise on coaching mindset, physical and mental well-being, and creative practice within the context of dance. The workshop combines seven days of physical mobility training with a virtual component featuring two online meetings and lectures. This hybrid format includes sessions that explore various methods and perspectives, examining the interplay between the activity of dance and





other essential skill sets and attributes that dancers may need to incorporate into their vocation.

Course thematics (see details in the appendix)

- *Coaching mindset in classical and postmodern dance – new dimensions of goal orientation and excellence* by István Simon
- *Body and health awareness in professional dance – new dimensions of safety and peak performance* by Boglárka Simon-Hatala
- *Swimming in the creative pool* by Imre Vass

Dates

- **physical mobility** – From September 6th to 13th, 2026. (8 days)
- **virtual phase** – (under discussion).

Entering criteria:

- Graduating dance students or those with at least two years of professional dance training.
- Digital literacy and internet access to use online video conference platforms and to fill online questionnaires.
- English language on B2 level.

Number of participants: minimum 15, maximum 25

Competences that the course aims to develop and the expected outcome:

- **Key educational competences** (EU directive) targeted by the program: multilingual competence, personal, social and learning to learn competence, cultural awareness and expression competence
- **Professional competences** (dance): body awareness and control, body alignment and posture, coordination of movement, self-health management, coaching mindset, goal orientation, basics of postmodern ballet class, somatic information processing and implementation, endurance and confidence in improvisation
- **Communication competences:** active listening, self-representation, assertiveness, confidence in the use of topic related vocabulary

Credits and Certificate

BCDC will issue a certificate of successful completion of the course. The credit value of the course is 4 ECTS.





Planned schedule

	day 0	day 1	day 2	day 3	day 4	day 5	day 6	day 7
8:10-8:30		arriving	arriving	arriving		arriving	arriving	arriving
8:30-9:00		warming up (individual)	warming up (individual)	warming up (individual)		warming up (individual)	warming up (individual)	warming up (individual)
9:00-10:30		István Simon	István Simon	István Simon	studio time (optional)	István Simon	István Simon	course assessment
10:50-12:20		Boglárka Simon- Hatala	Boglárka Simon- Hatala	Boglárka Simon- Hatala		Boglárka Simon- Hatala	Boglárka Simon- Hatala	
12:20-13:30		lunchtime	lunchtime	lunchtime		lunchtime	lunchtime	
13:30-15:30		Imre Vass	Imre Vass	Imre Vass	studio time (optional)	Imre Vass	Imre Vass	studio time (optional)
15:30-17:00	kick off with the organizers	studio time (optional)	studio time (optional)	studio time (optional)		individual consultation/ studio time (optional)	individual consultation/ studio time (optional)	



Finances

The course is designed as a BIP (blended intensive programme). For higher education students the participation is free in the context of the BIP programme. The participants can be supported through the Erasmus+ program by the participant's sending institution. Please contact your Erasmus coordinator!

What is BIP?

More on Blended Intensive Programme in the frame of the Erasmus+ Higher Education mobility project:

<https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/NAITDOC/Blended+Intensive+Programmes>

Contact

- Professional: Tamás Bakó (head of contemporary dance BA program)
tamas.bako@bcdc.hu
- Erasmus admin: Flóra Veres: flora.veres@bcdc.hu

Venue

- Offline: H-1036 Budapest, Hungary
- Online: google meets

Application

Application is possible by filling in the online application form, which includes a short motivation letter. [Open the application form here.](#)

Application deadline: April 30th 2025.

Criteria for the selection of participants

In case of overbooking, the following criteria will be taken into account:

1. Applicants in the final year of their studies have an advantage over those who still have one year of higher education left at BA level.
2. Quality of the written motivation.
3. Diversity in gender, nationality and sending institution.

Course information online: <https://bcdc.hu/en/sustaining-dance-bip-course/>

Appendix 1: course thematics

Appendix 2: teachers





APPENDIX 1: Course thematics

Coaching mindset in classical and postmodern dance – new dimensions of goal orientation and excellence

by István Simon

Relevance of the topic and the short description of the course

A coaching mindset is characterized by an empowering approach that focuses on facilitating clients' self-discovery, enhancing their problem-solving abilities, and fostering confidence in their personal development. It emphasizes active listening, empathy, and collaboration over directive instruction, creating a supportive environment conducive to growth. This mindset is essential in navigating today's complex and rapidly changing world, promoting adaptability and resilience among individuals.

In the context of classical and postmodern ballet teaching, a coaching mindset plays a crucial role in shaping the pedagogical approach of the 21st century. Classical ballet often emphasizes discipline and technical precision, requiring instructors to adopt a mindset that empowers students to explore their artistic expression while mastering foundational techniques. Postmodern ballet encourages experimentation and individual creativity. Both styles benefit from a more flexible, coaching mindset that values personal interpretation and innovation, a non-judgmental stance, where teachers guide students to discover their unique voice within the dance form. May it be classical or postmodern ballet education, coaching mindset fostering enhances both technical skill and artistic growth, allowing dancers to thrive in their craft.

Sub-topics

1.1. Coaching mindset – the most important terms and concepts of coaching mindset

A coaching mindset is centered around the belief that clients are the experts in their own lives, with coaches facilitating their journey through active listening and powerful questioning. This approach fosters a supportive environment that encourages self-discovery, personal growth, and accountability, essential for effective coaching relationships. In dance this results in a more interactive and dynamic class than what the average approach proposes. The knowledge serving as the foundational bases of coaching mindset needs to be transferred before its implementation.

1.2. Goal orientation and accountability

A coaching mindset emphasizes the importance of setting clear, measurable goals that align with an individual's values and aspirations. In this section, the





S.M.A.R.T. method will be introduced as a framework for effective goal-setting, ensuring that objectives are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound. This structured approach not only enhances clarity but also fosters accountability, allowing individuals to track their progress and take ownership of their commitments as they work towards their goals. By applying the S.M.A.R.T. criteria, clients can create actionable plans that motivate them to stay focused and engaged in their personal development journey. Ultimately, this method provides a clear roadmap for success, transforming vague aspirations into concrete achievements.

1.3. Positive thinking – what needs to be done vs what is wrong

Positive thinking plays a crucial role in coaching mindset by promoting resilience and a proactive approach to challenges. Coaches assist clients in developing actionable plans that not only identify necessary steps but also reinforce a belief in their ability to overcome obstacles and achieve success.

1.4. Fast learning information processing and implementation

In a coaching context, fast learning refers to the ability to quickly assimilate new information and apply it effectively in real-world situations. A coaching mindset in dance encourages individuals to embrace continuous learning, adapt swiftly to changes, and implement strategies that enhance their performance and growth. Fast learning highly contributes to a dancers' reliability, that may become a significant career advantage.

1.5. Basics of postmodern ballet class

In postmodern ballet, concepts like **weight shifting** and **movement waves** allow dancers to explore their physicality, emphasizing the use of gravity and momentum rather than solely relying on traditional ballet techniques. The order of joint engagement is approached with flexibility, enabling dancers to break free from rigid positions and explore new ways of moving. Additionally, the incorporation of **off-balance elements** challenges dancers to maintain control while exploring instability, fostering creativity and innovation in their performances. Overall, postmodern ballet classes prioritize individual expression and the integration of diverse movement styles, creating a dynamic learning environment that contrasts sharply with the structured nature of classical ballet.

1.6. Implementation of coaching mindset into postmodern ballet classes

Integrating a coaching mindset into ballet classes involves creating an environment where dancers feel empowered to express themselves and take risks in their training. We can facilitate this by encouraging open dialogue, providing constructive feedback, and supporting dancers in setting personal goals that enhance both their technical skills and artistic expression.





Body and health awareness in professional dance – new dimensions of safety and peak performance

by Boglárka Simon–Hatala

Relevance of the topic and the short description of the course

Body awareness is a new mind–body–space framework that encompasses a non–Cartesian view of humans. Body awareness unifies theories of embodiment, somatic movement, spatial awareness and stands for an approach that acknowledges the body as an equal actor, initiator and modulator of cognition, emotional processing and self–regulation. Body awareness offers a diverse, multi–dimensional toolkit for creativity, self–discovery, physical and emotional safety, health management, movement learning, performance optimization and new, socially sensitive community standards in dance. The focus of the program is a health–conscious approach to dance education and, on the other hand, the empowerment of dancers and dance students to take responsibility in the terms of their own health and safety by offering communication competences and practical instruments. The course takes into consideration 21st century dancer skills and is designed for professional dancers and pre–professional students.

Sub–topics

Body awareness introductions – the most important terms and concepts of body awareness and its relevance in dance (somatic awareness and somatic communication, spatial awareness, interoception, proprioception). Basic communication guidelines of the course: positive self–talk, solution–oriented coping strategies, critical thinking, teamwork, scientific/analytical approach of a given topic

Health as a capital and career advantage in professional dance: what are the benefits of health protections? What is the difference between injury prevention and decreasing injury risk? What are the most important tools of self–advocacy in professional dance health management and how to navigate in the complex structures of health care systems, in–house health teams working with professional schools and companies and health related training modalities (Pilates, Gyrotonics, Franklin method, Feldenkreis etc.)

Experiential anatomy I. – how to better understand the structure and functioning of our body, with special focus on the locomotion system. Main characteristics of the skeleton, ligaments and muscles and the translation of this knowledge into practical exercises in the dance studio.





Experiential anatomy II. – perspectives of alignment awareness. The most important extrinsic and intrinsic reference points of movement analysis and alignment control and the tools of assessment. Safe and unsafe choices of alignment management in professional dance, most typical, known health risks associated with the alignment of the body and possibilities of corrections

Body awareness and ethical communication in dance – bullying, discrimination, body shaming, harassment from a somatic perspective and the tools of prevention A new perspective on emotional, psychological and physical safety in dance environments and dance related online spaces. Development of interpersonal and intrapersonal soft skills that support efficient collaboration, assertiveness, innovation, self-reflection and informed consent in physical performing arts.

Swimming in the creative pool

by Imre Vass

The course invites the participant to spend time and wander in the field of creativity through improvisation and contemplative methodologies. It intends to explore the creative state of mind to map and understand what are the tools and requirements to be enabled in the creative mode.

What are the dance skills and knowledge that can be translated to understand the dramaturgy of making art?

The course intends to facilitate and support the participants to recognize their unique way of comprehension as a source of creativity and making art in a curious and playful yet attentive manner.

In creative environments a non-harmful exploration of the comfort zone is applied, to overcome the uncomfortable while tuning the senses and training the muscles of attention to recognize what is possible. Turning on excitement while playing with expectations, flirting with ambiguities and making obvious choices while swerving away from the mainstream. All that to liberate energies, to melt into the participant mode while dancing on the socio-political grid, for recognizing each other's gazes for acknowledgement, meetings and exchange.





Live sessions

An experimental format of sharing knowledge which consists of physical exercises, improvisational tasks, writing sessions, references and inspirational materials. Every day has a specific theme and approach yet throughout the 5 days the under mentioned aspects will be examined simultaneously as well.

WARM UP	activation	Activating the body, generating fluidity and heat.
TRAINING	focus	Training the muscles of attention (mind), practice mode.
RESEARCH	unfolding	Sense of discovery, new connections and pathways.
PERFORM	expression	Presenting yourself in a way vs. allowing to be seen.
INTEGRATION	wind-up	Articulation of the experience (for future analysis).

The emphasis is not on the creative act itself but understanding the elements, phases, engines, dead-ends and pitfalls of the creative process. The course intends to provide tools and develop skills to be able to identify the state or stage on the wide spectrum creativity.

Tasks, issues to understand and to overcome:

- staying actively connected to the act of discovery
- importance of intention
- immediate or gradual way of entering the field of creativity
- being present, felt sense of presence, kinesthetic presence, imaginative presence
- not too hard, not too little effort
- activation and attenuation of attention
- accepting the changing nature of attention
- being stuck – being enabled
- comparison to others
- commitment, resilience, endurance
- expectations from both sides
- boundaries, stagnation, limitations and obstacles





Appendix 2: teachers

István Simon



Harangozó Award-winning ballet artist who regularly performs in Hungary alongside his international career. In addition to his master's degree in ballet pedagogy, he completed a cultural management program at LEUPHANA University in Lüneburg and is currently pursuing a PhD at the Technical University of Dresden. He is the founder of Praetorian Non-Profit Art and Health Consulting, whose primary activity is health and advocacy for performing artists, as well as providing training,

coaching, and consulting services for companies and institutions.

The Transylvanian-born dance artist was previously a principal dancer with the Semperoper Dresden, the Hungarian National Ballet, and the Dortmund Opera. As a guest artist, he has performed in 45 different theatres across 23 countries, including the Paris Opera, New York City Center, Teatro San Carlo in Naples, the Kremlin in Moscow, Saitama Theater in Tokyo, DeSingel in Antwerp, Théâtre de la Ville and Théâtre Champs-Élysées in Paris, and other prestigious institutions. In addition to performing the most important male lead roles in the classical repertoire, he has had the opportunity to work with internationally renowned choreographers such as Jiří Kylián, Mats Ek, William Forsythe, Alexander Ekman, Alexei Ratmansky, David Dawson, Jiří Bubeníček, Andreas Heise, and Goyo Montero.

Since 2013, he has been teaching classical, modern, and postmodern ballet, Forsythe repertoire, and various improvisation techniques at prestigious theatres, art universities, private schools, and masterclasses around the world. With his German chamber ensemble, he tours globally; their performance titled *Winterreise* received a 5-star review from The Guardian. Since 2020, he has been a board advisor, tour manager, and head of the sponsorship program at the Operetta Theater in Budapest. Since 2023, he has been the Art Meets Business president of the National Association of Managers.





Boglárka Simon-Hatala



After graduating from Semmelweis University with an MSC in physiotherapy, she worked as a physiotherapist at the Hungarian National Ballet and as an instructor at the Hungarian Dance University, where she also designed the institution's skill development and health prevention program. In 2008 she was contracted to Germany, where she designed the health promotion program for the Semperoper in Dresden and worked as a body awareness coach. In 2010 she obtained a Master's degree in

health sciences, and in 2020 she will start her PhD research in neuroscience. She has worked in prevention with many major contemporary and classical dance companies, and her clients include some of the world's leading dance artists from the biggest companies.

Since 2018 she is a freelance dancer and lecturer at the Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Frankfurt am Main, the Oslo National Academy of Arts, a Technische Universität Dresden. Member of the ethics committee of the International Association of Dance Medicine and Science, Tanzmedizin Deutschland and Dachverband Tanz Deutschland, since 2022 ACC accredited coach of the International Coaching Federation. Her professional profile includes health prevention for performing artists, health, trauma, and ethical aspects of organizational development, representation of people with neurodiversity, and somatic, body awareness-based techniques of coaching and training.

Since 2021 she has been a regular lecturer at the Budapest Circus Arts and Contemporary Dance College.





Imre Vass



Freelance dancer, choreographer, performer and pedagogue. He studied at the Budapest Contemporary Dance Academy, but has also participated in non-formal educational situations: danceWEB scholarship (2010), SPAZIO – the European Network for Dance Creation (2012–2013).

He was a participant in the Research into the Unknown programme (Workshop Foundation, 2010), a participant in the Philadelphia Bilateral Artist Exchange Program (2016). He was a member of the International

Contemporary Dance Collective 2018–2020, participant in the Workshop Foundation’s Artist Partnership Program and a grantee of the Life Long Burning – Creative Crossroads program (2023–2024).

He has been creating his own works since 2012, is a three-time STAFÉTA winner, and a two-time winner of the Péter Halász Prize and the Rudolf Lábán Prize.

As a performer and creator, he has worked with choreographers such as Patrik Kelemen, Viktor Szeri, HODWORKS, The Symptoms, Stereo Akt, and with companies Ultima Vez (BE), Ingri Fiskdal (NO) United Sorry (AT\NL). He has performed at several festivals in Hungary (dunaPart, Nextfest, PLACCC, Sziget, Bánkitó, Kolorádó) and has performed in Berlin, London, Amsterdam, Olomouc and Sofia.

