

Joe Alegado Erasmus + Project Report – Shifting Roots AML

Location: Vienna, Austria

Dates: 12–21 August

Duration: 9 days

Project: Shifting Roots AML

Participants: Blanka Csaszyi, Joe Alegado

1. Project Objectives

The main objective of our Erasmus+ mobility was to dedicate an intensive period of artistic research to the further development of Shifting Roots the Alegado Movement Language (AML).

As a teacher, educator and, importantly, as a choreographer, it is very important to have the opportunity to work on one's craft in a creative environment where the only objective is to give more definition to an art form that was largely created from an instinctive approach to movement. To have time and support to further clarify an existing art form, is a luxury that was unexpected yet, greatly appreciated.

Our research focused particularly on creating new movement material and expanding the existing repertoire of hand gestures within the AML. Our aim was to explore how this movement language could be developed further and used as a foundation for new choreographic possibilities.

At the same time, we wanted to investigate the relationship between movement training, movement creation, choreography, and performance. As dance educators and artists, one of our main goals is to create a meaningful bridge between the training of students we work with in the classroom, and the creative demands of a professional performance.

2. Activities and Learning Experience

During the nine-day mobility in Vienna, we worked intensively in the studio, dedicating our time to movement research, experimentation, improvisation, and choreographic development.

We explored how movement material generated through class exercises can be developed into more complex choreographic structures. This process allowed us to examine the transition from technical training to artistic creation, and to consider how the methodologies of Shifting Roots can be the symbiotic connection between these two distinct facets of dance education.

The intensive studio period also gave us an opportunity to reflect on our own practice as teachers. By engaging directly in creative research, we were able

to question existing approaches, experiment with new methods, and identify ways in which our discoveries could later be integrated into our teaching. The Erasmus+ mobility, therefore, functioned not only as a period of artistic creation, but also as a professional development experience. It allowed us to deepen our understanding of movement, choreography, pedagogy, and the relationship between them.

3. Results and Outcomes

One of the main outcomes of the project was the creation and development of new movement material for the Alegado Movement Language. The research expanded our dance vocabulary and provided new possibilities for the continued development of Shifting Roots AML.

Another important outcome was a deeper understanding of how movement created during training can become a source for choreographic creation. Through the research process, we developed practical strategies for transforming classroom material into creative, artistic content for the performance stage.

The research also resulted in tangible choreographic material that could be tested outside the studio. Following the Erasmus+ mobility, we had the opportunity to present a performance in which we incorporated and applied the movement material, creative approaches, and choreographic ideas developed during our research in Vienna.

This performance was an important continuation of the project. It allowed us to move from research and experimentation into an actual performance context and to evaluate how the material functioned with an audience. In this way, the Erasmus+ experience directly contributed to the creation of artistic work and did not remain limited to the research process itself.

4. Impact on Our Teaching Practice

The experience had a significant impact on our pedagogical approach. As teachers, we believe that dance education should go beyond physical and technical training. Students should also have opportunities to understand how movement can be transformed into choreography and how their training can prepare them for the professional performance stage.

Conversely, the research undertaken during the mobility gave us new tools and perspectives for their application in the classroom. This is much like the reverse engineering of a futuristic aircraft needing to be investigated and broken down to its most basic components to understand its function. We approached the knowledge we gained, in the same way.

Since we explored ways to use the Shifting Roots movement language to transform the source dance material to movement fit for the professional stage, we 'reverse engineered' the performance results into components that could be, seamlessly, applied to the classroom structure. This allowed us, as dance teachers, to remain conscious of the fact that there is a constant looping of informational tools passing from the classroom-to the stage-to the classroom-in a continuous flow of symbiosis between two, often, separated entities.

This experience gained in Vienna, brings more clarity to the already existing process of Shifting Roots. Now, the need to create a synergistic approach to dance education, is more essential than ever. The development of tasks to encourage students to explore movement creatively, make artistic decisions, and understand the connection between technique, movement language, choreography, and performance, should be part of the ongoing movement education of a dance student.

The project therefore strengthened the pedagogical component of Shifting Roots AML and contributed to our own professional development as dance educators.

5. Impact on Artistic Development

The mobility provided us with something that is often difficult to create within the normal rhythm of teaching, and daily life, general: uninterrupted time for artistic research.

Having nine days where we could dedicate our energies in a professional studio environment, allowed us to concentrate on experimentation and creative development. This freedom encouraged us to take risks, question familiar movement patterns, and search for new possibilities within the Alegado Movement Language.

The experience also reinforced the importance of research as an essential part of an artist's professional practice. The subsequent performance demonstrated that the ideas developed during the mobility could be translated into a concrete artistic outcome.

6. Overall Evaluation

The support of the Erasmus+ program, our sending institute the – Budapest Circus Arts and Contemporary Dance College, and the receiving organization – InDancity Studio, made it possible for us to fully dedicate ourselves to this

process. We are very grateful for the opportunity to work in such an environment and to develop our practice as both creators and educators.

Most importantly, the project had a direct and measurable impact on the research carried out in the studio. This valuable time in the studio contributed to the development of new movement material, it influenced our pedagogical thinking, it contributed to the development of Shifting Roots AML, and was, subsequently, the all-important factor that allowed us to apply the results to a live performance.

For us, this mobility demonstrated the value of international exchange and dedicated artistic research within dance education. It strengthened our professional practice and gave us new tools and perspectives that we can continue to share with our students and wider artistic community.