

Accademia Dimitri



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The Accademia Dimitri offers specialized degree courses for performing artists of physical theatre. The school's approach combines consolidated theatre practice, movement, and circus techniques through innovative programs in training, devising, and performance.

The courses are designed to enhance the individual qualities of each student as they are accompanied through their artistic development – from acquiring movement techniques and theatrical interpretation, to creating staged performances and developing their personal language – fostering a creative environment for productive dialogue around practice, theory, pedagogy, and research. In the town of Verscio, in Ticino, the students train in a unique environment, with both familiar and multicultural dimensions, and experience training characterized by the intense exchange of experiences and opinions.

Founded in 1975 by the clown Dimitri, his wife Gunda, and the Czech actor and mime Richard Weber, the Accademia Dimitri was born out of the desire to offer young people a comprehensive professional artistic education, focusing on body and movement as opposed to traditional text-based theater. In 2006, the Accademia was recognized as a university campus affiliated with SUPSI – University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland – and over time has greatly expanded the training program it has on offer.

Today, the Accademia Dimitri offers comprehensive, fundamental training, consisting of a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre and a Master of Arts in Theatre (specialization in Physical Theatre and specialization Teatro di Figura: object, material and puppet theatre).

The Accademia Dimitri offers programs of study in physical theatre that are unique in Europe for this type of training; the quality and breadth of the teaching have earned the school its international acclaim.

The Accademia Dimitri also develops programs for continuing education (ex: Certificate in Advanced Studies, one-week courses, and tailor-made courses) that enable performing artists to deepen their practical and theoretical work across a variety of specific areas including performance, theatrical improvisation, clowning, and storytelling. The courses are taught by artists, pedagogical specialists, and experts whose international work is closely related to the Accademia's spheres of competence, and more generally to other institutions in physical theatre.

In addition to these professional programs of study, the Accademia Dimitri is also active in the organization of courses aimed at children and adults who are interested in physical theatre, all of which are conducted by the Accademia's teachers or by qualified, selected professionals. Courses explore a variety of disciplines including dance, circus arts, pantomime, clowning, voice, and theatrical

improvisation, and largely reflect the training to be found in the professional degree programs offered at the Accademia.

Physical Theatre

The physical theatre promoted by the Accademia Dimitri is understood as a theatrical form where the body and movement of the actor are at the center of the dramaturgical process. The body is the tool for creating the work; movement is used as a means of expression and the origin of the artistic form and content. Staged creations are developed through work in which several performance disciplines are woven together without a predetermined hierarchy. The actor provides a range of skills that enable him to embark on an artistic and expressive journey that combines technical skills and personal qualities.

In the programs for both the Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Theatre, the training approach focuses on engaging the body of the actor within predefined dramaturgical or choreographic structures, or inversely, creating dramaturgical and choreographic structures from the psycho-physical specificities of the actor. On the Bachelor's program, emphasis is placed on the most artisanal component of actor training: the approach is based on physical preparation and the acquisition of practical and theoretical skills related to a number of performance techniques. The Master's program is designed to foster personal research around skills that enable the staging of theatre performances founded on solid artistic, practical and analytical awareness.

Since 2010, the field of scientific and applied research has been formalized at the Accademia Dimitri: it designs projects which explore physical theatre as it relates to the practice of the performing arts, but also physical theatre as it relates to training and social work. This approach enables the development of theoretical skills that are always contemporary with the international performing arts scene and also, through the fruitful process of mutual influence between research and training, guarantees the constant development of educational paths. The interdisciplinary lines of research at the Accademia Dimitri, in turn, support a profound and necessary anchoring of the arts with the social and cultural issues facing the contemporary world.

Degree Programs

Bachelor of Arts in Theatre

This course consists of a nucleus of core subjects – Theatrical improvisation, pantomime, Voice, Dance, Acrobatics, Rhythm through movement, Theatre theory and history – and special intensive workshops, including Clown and Commedia, Lavori autonomi and Progetto Acrobazia Danza Ritmo. In accordance with the principles of physical theatre, the various subjects are taught and developed in parallel over the three years, without hierarchical preference, and are designed to complement and build upon each other.

This structured training program is further complemented by a series of productions that students are asked to create and present to the public: this format stands out for its strong practical orientation and allows students to acquire a wide range of professional theatre experiences during their studies.

In particular, the students have the opportunity to experiment and take their first steps on a journey towards creative autonomy during work periods dedicated to the purpose. This practice is aimed at developing the capacity for critical judgment of one's own work and time for self-assessment – intended as an opportunity for each student to evaluate their overall stage of development at various points during their training – and corresponds with the Accademia's technical-skill exams.

Objectives and skills

At the end of their journey, students possess a range of techniques and artistic / performance skills for theatrical expression, interpretation, and creation through movement, and are able to combine them in a relevant and functional way according to their ideas and, at the same time, model them according to the specific needs of an artistic project.

Practice

- to develop the techniques and artistic skills that characterize being a physical theatre actor
- to apply the range of expressive techniques and develop working methods in a professional environment

Theory

- to acquire and develop a knowledge of theatre history (history of theatre, dramaturgy, contemporary styles, aesthetic concepts)
- to know how to analyze dramatic structure
- to know how to analyze and critically evaluate one's own work

Creativity

- to know how to choose and combine expressive methods (choreographic and

dramaturgical) that are most appropriate to a specific context -to generate solutions during the working and creative process
-to encourage the taking of artistic risks and supporting one's own personal choices

General

-to work with a team in a productive manner making available one's personal, technical and artistic abilities and inventiveness
-to know how to express one's own ideas and concepts in a clear and persuasive manner
-to develop a capacity for self-reflection and self-assessment

Title

Bachelor of Arts in Theatre

Duration

Six semesters, full time

Requirements

-Aged from 18 to 26 years
-Holding a diploma (from a high school or professional school) or equivalent diploma and / or strong artistic talent

Master of Arts in Theatre (specialization in Physical Theatre)

The Master's degree program offers students an intimate artistic community in which to foster their individual approach to theatrical creation, and engage in a discourse about the contemporary aesthetics of the stage. The course emphasizes the idea of the artist as both a searcher and a researcher. Sympathetic to both notions, the program stresses the experimental, explorative character of stage work as well as the conception of the artist as an investigator of, or enquirer into, new forms of theatrical expression.

The curriculum, with its variety of courses, provides students with the opportunity to engage in a multitude of working methods, styles, and theatrical techniques, and encourages them to experiment and take risks as an actor and creator.

The theoretical part of the Master in Physical Theatre comprises a reflection on the creative process from idea to performance as well as a critical assessment of the stage-piece with regard to contemporary practice and poetics of "physical" theatre.

In their practical work, students learn to find a distinct form for staging a specific subject-matter and to develop their own theatrical idiom. The final result is presented to the public, offering the student a means to observe and appraise the complexity of communication between stage and audience.

The Accademia Teatro Dimitri is also a part of the Master Campus Theatre CH, a Swiss national cooperation which includes, in addition to the Accademia itself, the Manufacture - Haute école des arts de la scène in Lausanne, the Hochschule der Künste Bern, and the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste. The Master students of each school can take advantage of the courses offered by the various training programs and thus explore a wide range of different forms and theatrical styles.

Objectives and skills

Artistic

- to pursue a creative process from beginning to end
- to see the work in progress as a means to enhance artistic skills and continually enlarge the personal range of expression according to the particular challenges of the chosen subject-matter
- to take responsibility for continuous training and development after graduation in order to fully explore the personal artistic potential

Communication

- to account for the necessity to use the stage as a medium of communication -to clearly define a project, organize and manage its production, thereby implementing elements of physical theatre
- to communicate a personal vision to a production team, peer group, fellow artists, and ultimately, the audience
- to learn to think theatrically in transforming ideas, situations, and relationships for presentation on stage

Reflection

- to develop the ability to reflect on one's personal creative process against the wider backdrop of historical and contemporary theatrical practices
- to critically assess personal artistic choices and decisions by adopting the position of an "outside eye", thus developing the aptitude of being both creator and producer as well as performer and critical viewer of a stage composition

Title

Master of Arts in Theatre (specialization in Physical Theatre)

Duration

Three semesters, full time

Requirements

A Bachelor's degree in theatre, dance, circus arts, or an equivalent diploma.
Candidates who are able to demonstrate exceptional artistic talent may be admitted on the basis of their dossier (without an academic degree).

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