

Basel Life

M A G A Z I N E

A Monthly Guide to Living in Basel

February 2018



Did You Know?



Introducing the Braswell Arts Center

Since last summer, Basel has a new place that bridges the gap between art and the public! The Braswell Arts Center offers quality dance lessons as well as provides a space for creativity, collaboration, and innovation in diverse art forms. It was initiated by ballet dancer Armando Braswell, a New York native who has been a soloist with Ballett Theater Basel since 2012. With this new center, Braswell wants to give something back to the community where he lives and hopes to inspire and mentor underprivileged youths the same way he was supported and mentored on his way to the top.

About Armando Braswell

Braswell grew up in difficult circumstances. By the time he was 12, his mother had died, his father was addicted to drugs, and he lived in a foster family in a poor area of Brooklyn with high crime rates. It was purely by chance that when he had to pick a new art class in his school, he chose the dance class. But dancing opened a whole new world to him, allowing him to experience and express new emotions and feel passionate about something. Braswell is convinced that without ballet, he would have ended up on the streets.

Equally important was the support he received from others, including his homeroom teacher, who personally drove him to the entrance audition for a New York ballet school. Braswell passed the audition and subsequently commuted between his home in Brooklyn and the wealthier Manhattan. Similar help came from the school's director, who helped the talented student when he could not afford his dance outfits. Even when his foster family's home burned down and they had to stay in a shelter, he persevered and managed to be accepted to the Juilliard Dance School at age 19—the start of his career as a dancer.

What Does the Braswell Arts Center Offer?

Grateful for having received so much support during his youth to achieve his dreams, Braswell now tries to do the same for underprivileged kids and youths in Basel through his new center, which he started with his wife Lisa in a spacious facility at Austrasse 19 in Basel. Through free

performance classes and frequent exposure to high-quality artists in all art forms, Braswell and his team are working to create a unique mentorship program for underprivileged children in cooperation with the cantons Basel-Stadt and Baselland, corporations, foundations, and the public. The center seeks to establish a more approachable and less intimidating relationship between the public and the art or artists in order to encourage and nurture a new audience who otherwise might not have been exposed to the arts.

A second focus of the Braswell Arts Center is an artistic residency program that offers artists a professional art space in which they can create, rehearse, and perform. By offering free rehearsal and performance space and providing other resources and support, they want to enable emerging artists to follow their passion—be it the creation of an opera, string quartet, solo dance piece, play, or sculpture—and give them development opportunities. The center's space is available for concerts, performances, and art exhibitions, offering spacious, bright, and transformable facilities and modern equipment, including a grand piano.

The third pillar of the Braswell Arts Center concept is "Ballett Dienstag"—a series of inclusive ballet classes for all levels (including absolute beginners) and body types that are led by Braswell and his team of quality artists and accompanied by live pianists. From a few students that Braswell took over from a fellow dancer, the program has now evolved into a popular dance community of around 200 students participating in various classes that are offered Monday through Friday. One of the attractions is the diversity of the students, who range from children and teens to older ladies, from artists to business people, from locals to foreigners.

To achieve all this, Braswell is working with a dedicated team of dancers, musicians, and other support staff, and several well-known dancers serve as artistic advisors on his team. Additionally, choreographer Richard Wherlock, who leads the Ballett Theater Basel, acts as a patron of the center. But more support is needed to make the Braswell Arts Center a state-of-the-art artistic hub in Basel for both professional artists and the next generation of artists growing up in the community. Therefore, donations are always welcome. You can find out more about the center, its mission, the classes and other events they offer, and how you can support them on their website.

www.braswellartscenter.com

Need Something Repaired?

REP-STATT (Repair Station) is a public service located in the Markthalle Basel (a few minutes' walk from the Basel SBB), where you can bring your defective appliances and other items to potentially get them repaired, easily and promptly. They have experts on hand in the fields of electronics, wood, metal, textile, leather, jewelry, and various types of appliances and machines. Most small repairs will be carried out on the spot, whereas more complex or difficult problems will be sent to a competent workshop. They are open Tuesday to Saturday from 10:00–18:00, but check out the calendar at <http://rep-statt.ch/>

oeffnungszeit.html to see when your needed expert (eg, carpenter, seamstress) will be present. The REP-STATT is a nonprofit offer of the Markthalle. The cost of repairs is modest: repairs will be charged at CHF 1 per minute plus any materials. You will receive an estimate for any repairs that need to be sent out. Click on "Aktionen" under "Unser Ziel" on their website to learn about regular special events, such as treatment of vinyl records, gluing of special items, and even 3-D printing of missing or broken parts that are necessary for reconstruction/repair.

www.rep-statt.ch