

Erasmus Project: Bilbao Residency (August 13-30, 2022)

Participants:

Joe Alegado (director, choreographer and arranger of movement creation)

Blanka Flora Csasznyi (dancer, movement creator, teacher)

Barbara Arrieta Balades (dancer, movement creator)

Iñaki López Miego (documenter: photo and video)

The residency – at the D8 Sorkuntza Faktoria in Bilbao, Spain – was a success. We accomplished what we set out to do. We wanted to bring together people from different countries, cultures, traditions, musical backgrounds, environments, and find a common ground from which to communicate and create.

We explored musical possibilities to support the creative work by visiting a bamboo forest, small creeks with running water, the Cantabrian Sea, and the nightlife full of music, dance, and food. All of these contributed to the overall experience of our residency in that it gave us ideas on to how to bring these factors into the creative process.

The end result – a, approximately, 10 minute work in progress. We took the basic idea of bringing together individuals from different backgrounds, and wove a fabric of human experience and communication. Through our investigations into each other's personal qualities – our musical tastes, foods, the landscape, the culture and traditions of the Basque country in which we were creating – we were able to apply these insights and contributions to establish a foundation for the creation.

The participants – Blanka and Barbara, as well as documenter Iñaki – could not understand each other in the beginning of the residency. Yet, with each day that passed, they began to communicate with facial expressions, hand signals, movement choices, shared experiences in everyday life, laughter, and, in time, ended up speaking some words in each other's respective languages (Spanish, Hungarian, English). Throughout the entire experience, dance brought us all together.

Our work culminated in a dance piece that exemplified the journey of different people finding ways to relate to each other, and to communicate in a common language of movement in spite of the differences in language and culture.

Joe Alegado

