

Dance Denmark 2019



Third week, check!

Week three began last Sunday afternoon, with an hour-long train ride into Copenhagen. While Gerlev, Slagelse, and the Danish country side are stunning, the city itself is just as beautiful. The architecture feels low and clean and bright. With cobblestone sidewalks, ceramic roof tiles, and brightly colored store fronts, it's easy to imagine how the city could have been centuries ago. The water from the canals keeps the air salty and cool, while the sun (which rises at four and sets at ten) keeps the city bright, even during thunderstorms. I woke up before my alarm every morning, sunlight streaming in. It's sometimes obscene how classically picturesque it was.

Copenhagen is also fantastically (and if you're used to OSU pedestrian traffic patterns, dangerously) bike friendly. Every sidewalk comes with a bike lane, and every intersection includes

lights for bike traffic. Getting on and off of busses comes with the additional hazard of getting run down by a pack of bikers. You can't just step out in front of them and expect to be safe like you can at OSU - they really will plow you over. Copenhagen isn't so big that everyone needs a car. From our hostel at the center of the city we could walk to most locations in about thirty minutes. While it meant for some long walks during the first few days, it means that the city itself (ideally) produces less waste. Sustainability initiatives are built into certain parts of daily life - global warming has been in my mind just as much here amid stunningly healthy landscapes as it is at home.

While in Copenhagen we participated in a four-day choreography workshop hosted at the Danish National School of Performing Arts. In addition to OSU dancers, dancers and musicians from Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia attended the workshop. The week included morning technique class, led by Daniel, Sofie, or the head of the DNSPA dance program, Tatiana Fracchiola. In the afternoon, Daniel lead the choreography workshop, focusing on music within dance making. Each day approached the topic in a different way. We talked about Baroque musical phrasing, minimal and repetitive music, jazz improvisation, and Cage/Cunningham chance procedures. Both dancers and musicians created work based on similar prompts, and collaborated to create rough draft dances that were performed in

an informal showing on Friday. This experience did more than give us a chance to dance with and learn from new people. We got to see how music making works from an insider's perspective, in a way that we don't often get to when taking dance class.

Dancers and musicians sometimes interact with music differently, and knowing how to talk about and work with music is an incredibly important skill for us as future choreographers and teachers.

For me, some of the major memories of the week involve the 25+ miles of walking and a nauseous cold. Despite some setbacks (including sore legs, raw feet, hacking coughs, and having to pay for food), Copenhagen's change of pace came at just the right time. We're now halfway through the program! After two weeks of running around the Danish countryside and small towns; it was exhilarating to roll into a real, big city. With Sweden so close by, and many interactions with people from outside Denmark, I got a feel for Denmark's place within the rest of Europe, as well as a better sense of what "Danishness" is. Food is one of the best ways to do this - I ate incredible curry, sausage, rye bread sandwiches, crepes, ice cream, and cheesecake. There's lots of grass and seating by the water, and impromptu picnics were some of my favorite moments. Fashion is another good way to feel out the flavor of a place. Shopping is expensive in Denmark - a man at the airport told me he does all

his shopping in NYC, because it's that much cheaper. But it pays off in quality and color. Floral skirts, cheetah print, pastel shirts, and flowy jumpsuits are the look here I think. And Berks, of course. Sightseeing in Copenhagen is worthwhile too - I feel like I saw every church, spire, royal and parliament building, and statue in the city. A student at Gerlev had an Art house film showing near our hostel, so I also got a taste of the local art culture here. I finished the week kayaking in the canal and running around Tivoli Gardens (an amusement park that takes up a large block in central Copenhagen).

This week sometimes felt fast paced and overwhelming. However, I feel that I've gained a deeper appreciation for Danish culture and art making thanks to our time in the city.

- Written by Jackie Bordjadze



Tune in next week to read more about our adventures during our
fourth week at Gerlev!