

ERASMUS+ report, Conservatoire national supérieur de musique et de danse de Lyon, 2016

An ERASMUS stay always needs to be well prepared – you probably won't find out a big secret by me telling you so.

But there are a few things to consider. Music students have to plan much further in advance. It is best to know where you want to spend your ERASMUS stay at least a year before the start of the stay. Different universities have a wide variety of administrative systems that should be taken into account carefully.

I experienced a very friendly and professional approach to my application and my questions from both sides – the sending and receiving universities. The application deadline ended at the end of the winter semester, so I tried to submit all documents on time. The processing took a long time because the study places had to be distributed first. At this point you need patience and flexibility. The wait can be stressful when you receive concert requests or have ensembles with rehearsal and concert planning in advance. This requires resolute coordination.

In the end everything worked out well and I was happy that my application to the Conservatoire national supérieur de musique et de danse de Lyon was accepted. In the very next few days, messages arrived with important information about accommodation, enrolment and the welcome week. My questions were always answered in a timely and friendly manner. Unfortunately, I overestimated the ERASMUS+ funding in advance, so I had to concentrate on budgeting my expenses during the summer. Since I started learning the French language alongside my studies just a year before the ERASMUS stay, I couldn't count on local part-time jobs. Luckily, I found enough opportunities for paid performances during the summer to cover a month and a half of estimated expenses.

Now the day came when I traveled to Lyon for the first time for a lengthier stay. I was excited and open to the tasks that didn't keep me waiting long. The first few weeks were filled with information events and my pure amazement at the new country, the different way of life and not ultimately at the average temperature, which was around 10-15°C higher – well, I had assessed September to be cooler. Classes started and I started to get to know the new world: the CNSMD, the abbreviation for Conservatoire national supérieur de musique et de danse de Lyon.

The semester started with a general assembly, where Guido's "Ut queant laxis" was sung as a "welcome" – without notes. There was a common spirit that was taken absolutely for granted by both the teachers and the students: the CNSMD is there for those who want to learn, who want to study, who are actively involved in this, the colleagues all had something in mind – it was very inspiring!

I was largely satisfied with my main subject lessons: the lessons by XXX provided a perfect complement to my previous studies. Her attention and openness were very helpful for me throughout the semester.

Despite language difficulties, I was able to take up some minor subjects.

It should be noted that the Conservatoire has developed an innovative alternative for Early Music-specific minor subjects. Instead of the classic division, the teaching material is divided into three eras: Middle Ages, Renaissance and Baroque. For all three eras, two-hour intensive courses take

place weekly, which enable you to delve deeper into a topic. Of the three courses, I was able to attend the Renaissance programme, which suited me best.

In general, the lessons were similar to those in Bremen, except that there was significantly more motivation evident on both sides (students and teachers).

Surprisingly, some complex and challenging homework was given, but the results were evaluated together in the following lessons. Group work was also part of the lessons and preparation.

I really liked the city, it was similar to my hometown, Budapest, with its dividing rivers and geographical diversity. For two and a half months I found accommodation with friends, after which I moved in with a fellow countryman who lived at a high point in the city. The easiest way was to cycle to the university – twenty minutes there and fifty minutes home, as I had to push in some steep places. The roads were quiet in the evening after practice, I only had to be careful in the morning as there was generally a very creative traffic culture.

But from the beginning of winter onwards, these exercise became more and more strenuous and I had to find another room.

Luckily, friends helped me and I was soon able to move – this time to the flat, eastern part of Lyon.

Here, my roommate, who was also a Baroque musician, was able to provide important help in applying for housing benefit – which would have been important financial support and which I unfortunately have not been able to receive to this day.

In addition to my studies, I was able to make contact with the Hungarian club (<http://www.francehongrie.fr>), where I was able to play in their folk music group based in Lyon. This provided me with a humorous but fitting balance to the many new and foreign things I experienced in Lyon and was able to even learn a lot about my home culture (again a blessing that I never suspected).

But time passed and the many friends I met said a warm farewell and we look forward to seeing each other again occasionally, which we are already planning for to perform concerts together or visit each other on holidays.