May 2015

Dear Colleague,

Please enjoy this Dance Education Network (DEN) Newsletter. The DEN is a project of the Education committee of the International Association for Dance Medicine & Science. This newsletter has been written by Maggie Lorraine, Chair of the DEN Sub-Committee who attended Prix de Lausanne this year with one of her students. Prix de Lausanne is one of the world’s most nurturing dance competitions as it places great emphasis on dancers’ health.

**Items in this Newsletter include:**
- An endorsement of IADMS from Honorary Member – Li Cunxin.
- The 2015 IADMS Annual Meeting and A Day for Teachers.
- IADMS Facebook Page and IADMS blog.
- Report from the Prix de Lausanne 2015.

**Honorary Member – Li Cunxin**

“For a dancer, nothing is more precious than a healthy, injury-free body – this is crucial for an artist to flourish. Throughout my long career in dance, I was supported by the ever-expanding knowledge and skills of dance health professionals, teachers, and directors. Now, as an artistic director myself, I am aware of the scientific research that lies behind these improvements in dancers’ well-being, and the importance of IADMS in disseminating knowledge that will improve dancers’ lives and performance now and into the future”. - Li Cunxin

Li Cunxin presented his company, Queensland Ballet, in the Interlude Performance at the finals of the Prix de Lausanne.

The **IADMS 25th Annual Meeting** will be held from October 9 -11, 2015, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA and **A Day for Teachers** will be held on Thursday, October 8, 2015.

Attend the IADMS Annual Meeting and you will:
- gain insights into the causes and treatments of musculoskeletal problems in dancers;
- enhance your understanding of recent research and its application to the training and treatment of dancers;
- enhance your knowledge regarding psychological and nutritional issues that affect dancers;
- be inspired to move in new ways and to incorporate new techniques into your teaching after participating in a variety of movement sessions;
- and increase your ability to communicate effectively with other dance professionals, be they dancers, dance educators, dance scientists, movement specialists, or healthcare professionals.
Here is a link that will give you a quick tour of Pittsburgh:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukrGv6dgb40

Photo credit - Visit Pittsburgh: Dave Reid

A Day for Teachers:
The Education Committee is proud to present: A Day for Teachers: Maximizing Positive and Healthy Teaching Environments, October 8, 2015, 8am – 3 pm.

Our featured speakers include:

- Tom Welsh, PhD, Professor of Dance, Florida State University, USA. “Optimizing the Teaching Environment: Psychology and Motivation for Teachers and Students”

- Emma Redding, PhD, Head of Dance Science, Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, London UK “Putting the Science to Work in a Class: The Importance of Fitness and Conditioning for Dance”

- Peter Lewton-Brain, DO, MA,

- Osteopath and Dance Educator, Association Danse Médecine Recherche, Monaco, “The Science and the Art: More than just a Tendu...”

Please visit the IADMS website for more information and registration

IADMS blogs
Fourteen blog postings have been launched this year on a variety of topics. These blogs have been very popular. The purpose of the IADMS blogs is to create a forum for dancers, teachers, researchers, and doctors with the current topics in dance medicine and science, in order to promote educational, medical and scientific excellence. The blogs are posted on the IADMS Facebook page. Follow this link to read the latest posts:


If you have been following the blogs, perhaps you will participate in an on-line survey for the Education and Promotions committee. We are gathering feedback about what is working and how we can improve. Please forward this link to anyone and everyone! Please complete it by May 20th. https://uscdentistry.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_25FeD5pvOwSUc29

Best wishes,
Maggie Lorraine, Dance Education Network Subcommittee
Margaret Wilson, IADMS Education Committee Chair
IADMS Education Committee: Education@IADMS.org
Prix de Lausanne, February 1-8, 2015

This report is provided by Maggie Lorraine, leading teacher in ballet at The Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School, Melbourne, Australia.

The Prix de Lausanne is one of the most prestigious ballet competitions in the world, and many of the world’s greatest dancers have participated in, or were finalists in this event held yearly in Switzerland. The Prix de Lausanne is unique from other dance competitions as it places great emphasis on dancers’ health and well-being. Over the years, the organizers have developed a health policy and candidates are required to fill out a health questionnaire when entering the competition.

This is my second trip to Lausanne with a student from my school, and this year, I accompanied Rebecca Blenkinsop, a Year 10 student aged fifteen years. I will describe the audition preparation, competition, and general impressions of the event.

Preparing for the audition video is a lengthy process. The Prix de Lausanne sets out clear instructions for the composition of the video application, right down to the time spent on each section of classwork. The directions are flexible enough to allow the teacher to demonstrate the strengths of the student who is auditioning. When preparing a student for the audition video, I am also conscious of the evaluation criteria. At the top of the list is Artistry and Musicality, so once the material is set for the application, I spend time working on interpretation and movement quality. The effort put into the application was worthwhile; a few weeks after submitting the video we were notified that Rebecca’s application was successful.

A review panel views all the video applications together over a four-day period and this year they watched over 300 videos. The criterion for their selection is the same criteria that are marked throughout the competition. The candidate’s potential as a ballet dancer is evaluated by considering:

- Artistry
- Physical suitability
- Courage and individuality
- An imaginative and sensitive approach to music
- A clear grasp in communicating different movement dynamics
- Technical facility, control, and coordination
- While advanced skills are taken into account, the jurors’ primary focus is on the candidate’s potential to succeed as a professional ballet dancer

We arrived in Lausanne two days before registration allowing Rebecca time to recover from the long flight from Australia and to acclimatize to the freezing temperatures. I pre-booked a studio in Lausanne at the Igokat Dance School to work each day before registration to give Rebecca a class and rehearse her solos. The arduous flight can take a toll on a dancer’s back, hips, and legs.
Registration day was on Sunday, February 1, and it snowed to celebrate the event. The Theatre de Beaulieu was surrounded by snow, which had settled on the branches of the trees overlooking the Artists Entrance, creating a beautiful winter landscape.

The candidates, comprising eighteen nationalities grouped together with their respective interpreters, were addressed by the Artistic Director of the Prix de Lausanne, Amanda Bennett. She noted that from a field of over 300 videos, 68 dancers were selected to attend the Prix. There were fourteen junior girls, twenty-two senior girls, ten junior boys and twenty-one senior boys competing.

After Ms. Bennett’s welcome she explained how the marks are compiled for selection to the finals:

- Ballet class 25%
- Contemporary class 25%
- Ballet solo and coaching. 25%
- Contemporary solo and coaching 25%

The marking in the finals was comprised of 50% for the ballet solo and 50% for the contemporary solo.

She also mentioned that there would be no marking on the first official day of the competition to allow time for the panel members to become familiar with the contestants. Amanda Bennett wrapped up her introduction by emphasizing the importance of versatility for a classical dancer in the 21st Century and noted that the boundaries between ballet and contemporary dance overlap in current choreography. She reiterated that the jurors’ primary focus was on each candidate’s potential to succeed as a professional ballet dancer.

The physician Dr. Carlo Bagutti was the next speaker. The Prix de Lausanne places a large emphasis on dancers’ health and the Prix de Lausanne have developed a Health Policy:

You can read the Health Policy here: [http://www.prixdelausanne.org/competition/health-policy/](http://www.prixdelausanne.org/competition/health-policy/)

He gave advice to the young dancers on diet and maintaining adequate rest to survive the week in full health and said that he would be speaking personally to some of the competitors. The organizers are aware that the week is grueling and high-pressured and that the dancers are under scrutiny the whole time, not only from the panel but also the press, photographers, and public. Additionally, a doctor and a physiotherapist are in attendance for the duration of the Prix and the candidates are provided with a healthy lunch every day. A space for relaxation is set aside so that they can rest when they are not scheduled to dance.

Following the welcome address, the dancers dispersed to their respective dressing rooms, which were allocated in nationality groups, to prepare for their first class together.
After class, the participants were allowed to practice on the raked (sloping floor) studio. The raked studio is aimed to help the dancers become accustomed to this type of stage which they will encounter in their careers.

**Day One of the competition:** First on the schedule was the junior girls’ ballet class in front of the nine jury members. Whenever the panel was observing class and marking, there were no outside observers allowed to watch the class. In a class I observed, I watched the senior boys grapple with a very novel and demanding contemporary class. Judging by the efforts of the boys, the work was totally new for them also and they struggled to come to terms with the material.

The contemporary teacher, **Tamas Moricz** is a Hungarian who is currently working in Berlin. He has worked with William Forsythe and maintains a close association with him. His classes are based on Forsythe's improvisational tools, hence the unusual class structure. The first ten minutes of the class involved a warm-up and then he set improvisational tasks, which were extremely challenging for the young dancers. The class culminated in a combination that he set very quickly and which tested the dancers’ abilities to pick up and retain material.

After ballet, the junior girls were scheduled onstage for a run of their solos and they were visibly challenged by the raked stage. Later, I watched the senior boys trying their classical solos for the first time on stage and they suffered the same fate as the girls. One could sense the frustration of the boys grappling with the rake after they had practiced their solos to such a high standard of accomplishment prior to arriving on the raked stage but they had several days to become accustomed to the rake.

**Day Two** of the competition started with a contemporary class for the junior girls, which was open to the public. Lausanne residents are able to purchase tickets for all open classes and it appears to be a very popular annual event with the local dance community. On this day I watched all four groups in the contemporary genre. Every class I observed was different in emphasis and structure. For example, in the junior boys class, Tamas Moricz spent a long time working on alignment issues and also gave some centering and grounding exercises. He presented different improvisational tasks to each group sometimes referring to spherical shapes and other times linear movement.
Late in the day, the junior girls were coached onstage in their contemporary solos.

This year there were six contemporary solos by three choreographers: Louise Deleur, Goyo Montero, and Richard Wherlock.

The day finished with an inspiring dance dialogue session with Lauren Cuthbertson, principal dancer with the Royal Ballet.

On **Day Three** of the competition, I was finally able to watch a ballet class taught by Stephanie Armand, a Prix de Lausanne winner in 1983 and it was a fast warm-up class in preparation for the classical solo coaching session that was to follow.

The male solos were coached by **Patrick Armand**. This is Armand’s fifth year of coaching the solos. When asked by a journalist about his experience on coaching the solos, he replied that the competitors have been working on these solos for many months. He does not change anything but gives a few details to help them with their technique. After that, he noted, too much information could confuse them. Armand also gives the boys’ class and so he sees them in both spheres. His general comments were that the student’s solo work was very good, but that students should also focus on classwork, specifically batterie, petit allegro, and care of the quality of transitions connecting steps.

**Monique Loudieres**, the girls’ classical coach, has also worked at the Prix for many years. The candidates work one variation at a time so that all those performing that solo hear the information given. Each dancer has ten minutes to run through the solo and receive corrections.

In the evening, I attended the dance dialogue session and enjoyed listening to Cynthia Harvey and Ethan Steiffel reminiscing about their careers.

On **Day Four** of the competition there was a very early start to the day with a warm-up ballet class in the raked studio. After class the junior girls had individual coaching onstage with Monique Loudieres. This was the last rehearsal onstage before they perform the solos the next day for selection for the finals and anxiety about the raked stage was still evident. Then the students had a contemporary class and coaching for their contemporary solo in front of the panel.
Tamas Moricz, teacher of the contemporary classes, was impressed overall but commented on the difference between the girls and the boys: “In the beginning the girls were getting the information really quickly, but in the end they didn’t retain it as well as the boys.” He added that the girls’ classes before the jury, were timetabled later in the week and therefore tension and expectations were also higher. This could have affected how they followed through with the information he gave them.

Goyo Montero was also impressed with the candidates. He commented on the improvement from one day to the next after his coaching. His message to the candidates and to dancers at large is to learn to see how all movement styles are interconnected. Contemporary feeds classical understanding and vice versa.

On Day Five of the competition, the selection for the finals of the Prix de Lausanne commenced. After a week of classes and coaching it was time to perform to a full audience on stage, in costume and with lights. The younger group of candidates was the first to perform and Monique Loudieres presented the jury to the audience. I watched 24 classical solos and 24 contemporary solos and was stiff from sitting so long. After a break, the senior group presented their solos. The judges watched a total of 86 solos!

At 5 pm, the selection process for the finals came to an end and the jury withdrew to tally their scores and make their decision on who should perform in the finals. The standard of the performance was very high, especially from the male contestants, some of whom gave brilliant performances.

At 6:30 pm, all the candidates with their teachers and family members gathered backstage for the results and my student Rebecca was in! Twenty dancers were chosen for the finals. There were ten junior and ten senior dancers selected. The juniors were composed of five boys and five girls. The seniors were made up of four girls and six boys. In the senior selection, the boys definitely dominated the performance. I was relieved that there was an equal division between the juniors and seniors as the seniors were so technically strong and mature in their performances. Immediately following the posting of the finalists on the big screen in the meeting room, the finalists and non-finalists were separated into two respective groups and were briefed on their schedule for the following day.

The Finals were held on Day Six. The day began for the non-finalists having a private meeting with a member of the jury. Each of the 47 remaining candidates was allocated to one of the jury members and received feedback and career advice. Following the interviews the non-finalists participated in a ballet class held before representatives of the partner schools and companies. This class was closed to the public. When the candidates are selected to attend the Prix they are asked to nominate three of the partner schools in order of preference, that they would like to attend and the senior dancers are required to additionally nominate three partner dance companies.

Following the class, the partner institutions are able to offer places to students who interest them. This networking forum is one of the most important aspects of this wonderful competition and it offers opportunity for the students, schools and companies. Similarly, schools and companies are introduced to a range of students that may not normally audition for them.
The finalists started their day by rehearsing the Award Ceremony with the judges and then they took their last class with Patrick Armand on stage. This class was open to the public. Debra Bull, former principal dancer of The Royal Ballet, Prix laureate and board member, formally opened the 2015 Prix De Lausanne.

The twenty finalists were a mixture of nationalities. There were four Australians, seven Americans, three South Koreans, three Japanese, one Portuguese, one Swiss and one Norwegian. They all performed their classical solo first and then their contemporary solo. There were some memorable performances from some of the young dancers but the young Australian from Sydney, Harrison Lee was, in my opinion, the winner. There were so many deserving dancers, it becomes a question of taste and I look forward to watching where their career paths take them.

Following the performances of the solos we watched the Interlude Performance. This consisted of Glass Concerto which was choreographed by Greg Horseman and performed by the Queensland Ballet Young Artists, and Serenity danced by Forceful Feelings, an Armenian ballet troupe. Finally the jury announced the winners and six scholarships were awarded. These are awarded in order of the candidates’ scores.

Gold Medal: Harrison Lee of Australia  
2nd Jisoo Park from South Korea  
3rd Mitsuru Ito from Japan  
4th Miguel Pinheiro from Portugal  
5th Rina Kanehara from Japan  
6th Julien MacKay from the USA

The Best Swiss candidate prize and the audience prize were awarded to Lou Spichtig from Switzerland. The contemporary prize was awarded to Miguel Pinheiro from Portugal.

Day Seven was the Sunday Networking Forum: A Springboard to Success.

The Networking Forum gave candidates who are not selected for the finals an opportunity to be seen by schools and companies directors from around the world. Following an audition class, interviews are organized with directors of Prix de Lausanne partner schools and companies wishing to recruit one or more candidates. Interviews with finalists who do not receive a prize are also arranged after the award ceremony. The opportunities offered to young dancers by this extraordinary competition are boundless. Everyone is a winner here.

Harrison Lee

Maggie Lorraine  
Leading teacher in ballet  
The Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School  
Photographs: Gregory Batardon and by kind permission of Prix de Lausanne.