

Emile Chouriet When emotion leads the dance

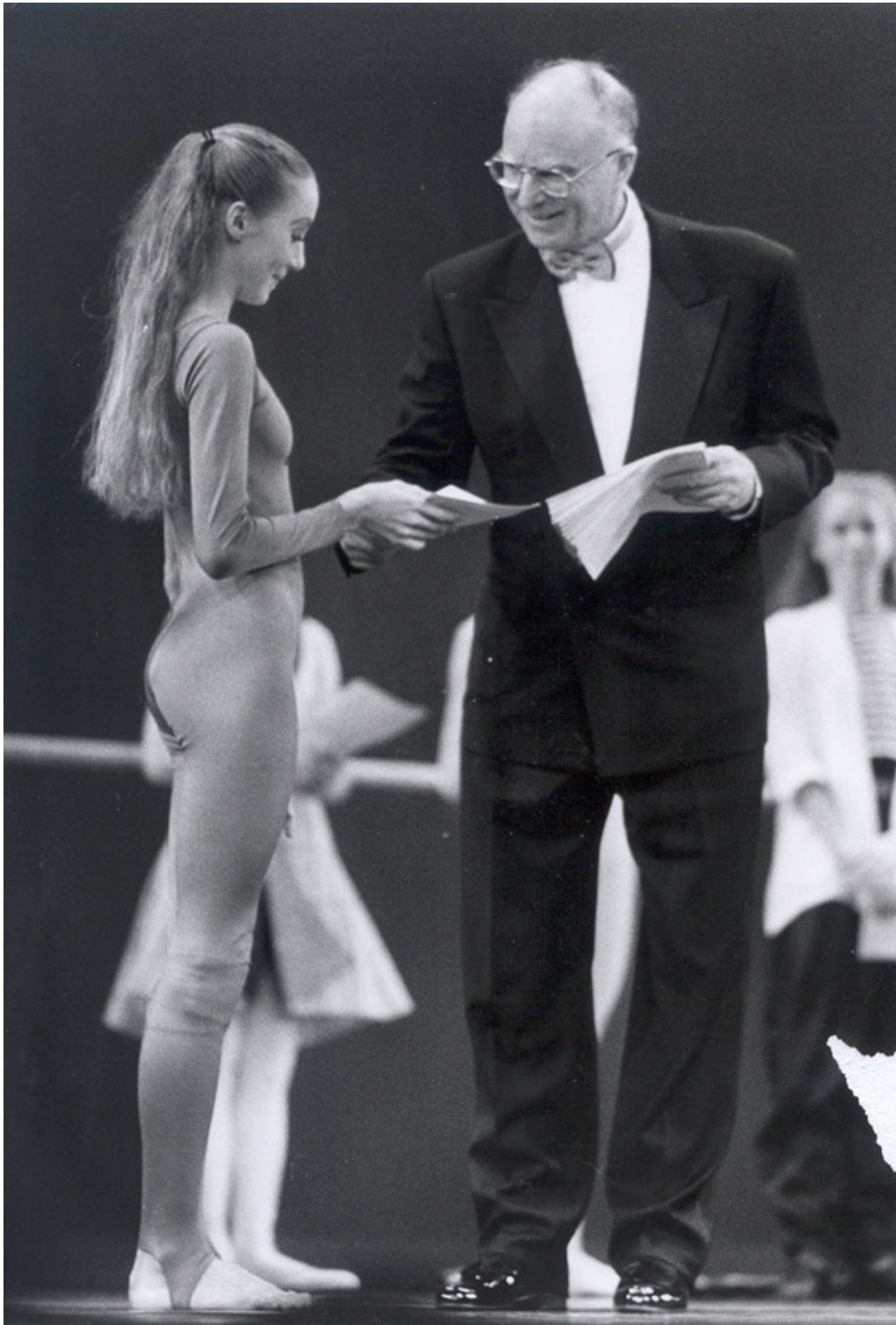
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There are not too many Swiss watchmakers who invest in the world of dance. Sports of all kinds provide many brands with an opportunity to display their names in stadiums and on racing circuits, and hence on the television. Music and cinema are also fertile ground for more culture-orientated watch companies. But partnerships between the worlds of watches and classical dance are few and far between. Jaquet Droz, exclusive presenting partner of the Bédart Ballet Lausanne, and Richard Mille, who signed up French dancer and choreographer Benjamin Millepied, are the rare exceptions.

Which is all the more reason to look more closely at why Emile Chouriet decided to become a partner of the Prix de Lausanne at the beginning of this year. Geographical proximity was an important factor, with Lausanne located just sixty kilometres from the watchmaker's Geneva base, not to mention the international reputation and prestige of the Prix de Lausanne. But dance and watchmaking also share artistic proximity, as Sophie Depéry, Emile Chouriet's artistic director, points out as she recounts the story of how this partnership came about. "The idea of a partnership with the Prix de Lausanne came out of a series of meetings. We saw it as an aesthetic bridge between our two disciplines. The world of dance is fascinating, and we fell in love with it. It's a world with which we share many aspects; aesthetics, skill, expertise, discipline and art are words that apply equally to watchmaking and dance." The logical conclusion of aesthetic refinement is the emotion that all art produces. "Dance is a vector of emotion, because of the spectacle it produces on stage," continues Sophie Depéry. "Watchmaking can also be about emotion, but the emotions generated by a mechanical movement remain largely hidden. Dance provides a platform for emotion, revealing it and making it accessible."

From the Incabloc® to the entrechat

Emile Chouriet's passion for watches and for dancing is reflected even in the genesis of the Prix de Lausanne. The world's greatest ballet competition was born in 1973 under the impetus of Philippe Braunschweig. As well as being passionate about classical dance, he also inherited a love of mechanical watchmaking from his father, who invented the Incabloc® system, which protects the balance wheel and escapement, in 1933. Today, Emile Chouriet includes Incabloc® technology in its watch collections, and supports the classical dance that was so dear to Philippe Braunschweig – a twist he would be sure to appreciate.



Philippe Braunschweig, at the Prix de Lausanne, in 1988 © Francette Levieux

Assistance and training

The Prix de Lausanne is awarded each year to eight young artists, both male and female. As sponsor, Emile Chouriet awards a scholarship to one of them. “It’s a one-year scholarship intended to help a young dancer to continue their training, usually abroad,” Sophie Depéry explains. As a company that is keen to promote training within its own manufacturing operation, Emile Chouriet has also made training a keyword of its commitment to the Prix de Lausanne, following its young laureates’ progress beyond the scholarship period. “Our first laureate, Lauren Hunter, is currently training at the Royal Ballet School, in London. We’re still in contact with her. [We interviewed her](#) a while ago and we’ll be doing a second interview very soon.” The young artist was given a Fair Ballerina watch,

part of a collection created specially for the occasion. “We can’t choose which of the eight winners our scholarship goes to,” notes Sophie Depéry, “but we were pleased that it was a girl this year. However, if it had been a boy, the collection also has a men’s watch that would have suited!” Emile Chouriet also supported the Festival International Jeune Ballet, another event set up to showcase talented young dancers, which was organised by the Dance Area Foundation in Geneva in May.



