Established back in 1973, today Prix de Lausanne is a world-famous international ballet competition for young talents. Every year, young people from around the globe come to perform before a jury of renowned ballet dancers. The winners are granted access to the best schools of ballet and guaranteed quick advancement in their dancing careers in the future.

Kathryn Braden, Artistic and Executive Director at Prix de Lausanne, has been immersed in the world of dance since she was five years old. Her ballet career spans over 20 years, from starting at the New York City Opera Ballet company to becoming a part of the internationally acclaimed Ballet of the 20th Century led by Maurice Béjart.

Kathryn came to Prix de Lausanne in 2008, first as a member of the jury, and later advancing to take her current executive post. We spoke to her about the importance of the competition in the contemporary world of dance, the meaning of talent, and her views on artistic expression.

2006年にローヌス国際バレエコンクールに初めて審査員として参加し、その後、現在の役職に就いたキャリスタ。今日はその活動は、現代のバレエの価値観、才能、芸術表現に対する考え方についてお話しいたしました。
LOOKING FOR “EXTRA LITTLE SPARKLE”

Kathryn Bradney explains that the uniqueness of the Prix de Lausanne competition lies in its capacity to merge contemporary dance with classical ballet. “A good contemporary dancer is a very good classical dancer. It goes hand in hand with the evolution of dance today, since a dancer needs to be versatile and know how to dance practically everything,” she says.

“It is not only classical dance, but it is everything. It is opening your mind and wanting to learn and be hungry to learn other ways of moving and progressing.”

At Prix de Lausanne, auditions can be done by video, and, according to Bradney, a dancer’s gift cannot be missed even on screen.

“There is just that extra little sparkle and quality that you can see even on video. It is in the expression and the way they move,” she says, adding: “Then, there is technical progress, but it is not only the technique that counts. It is the whole package.”

Kathryn also emphasises the importance of both physical and mental health for young dancers coming to the competition. The participants need to undergo a full medical check-up before the competition to make sure they are prepared for intense training. In addition, it can be extremely hard for young dancers to handle loss at the competition, and the specially trained staff is always available to speak to about any issues.

In 2021, the Young Creation Award was started at Prix de Lausanne to provide more opportunities for young aspiring choreographers and provide them with access to decades-long expertise of teachers at the competition.

“We are looking for new choreographers for the future. A dancer might not be good enough to get into the Prix de Lausanne as a dancer, but their creativity is so rich that they could create choreography for other dancers,” Kathryn says.
Expression in dance

“A good dance teacher will explain that your presence and your emotions are part of every dance, even in class,” – Kathryn states.

“A dancer needs to be aware, they must feel something and have a story, imagination, which relates to the audience as they dance.”

For this reason, she stresses the importance of free time and relaxation for the competitors who work very hard throughout the week. “I definitely recommend having some free time every day to relax and read a book or meet with friends, do something outside of ballet.”

“With Béjart, we did eight months of touring every year. I would get up early in the morning and go sightseeing. When you feel yourself in a different culture, I think it helps to learn and be open, which, in turn, helps relate these experiences on stage to the audience.” – Kathryn recalls.

At the same time, she speaks of the experience at Prix de Lausanne as an important learning process. She explains that the teachers at the competition are world-renowned dancers, which often makes young competitors nervous.

“These teachers make them feel more comfortable. Each day throughout the week it is the same class with a little bit more exercise added gradually.” – she elaborates. “By the time they are judged in front of the jury, they feel more relaxed, as they have progressed during the week. So it really is a learning experience, like a workshop type.”

ズッペヨレール Quinte 1984

Photo: Rodrigo Buí 2020

ダンスでの表現

良いダンスの先生は、コンテストだけでなくレッスンの中でも、ダンサー自身の存在と感情がダンスの一貫を作り出すということを教えてくれる。キャサリンは言います。

「意識して、感じ、ダンスを通じて自身のストーリーやメッセージを伝える、それがダンサーにとっては大事なことです。」

そのため、1週間のコンテストの期間ずっと意識を強めている学生たちに、自由時間はラックスすることが大切であることを伝えています。「毎日寄稿しておうとする自由時間をを使って、心を落ち着かせ、反復を含めて、パフォーマンス以外のことをとしてリラックスすることをすすめています。」

実は自身も同じ経験をしているキャサリン。「ベジャールとは毎年8ヶ月間のツアーを共にしていたが、ツアー期間中は、私は朝早く起きて物を準備したりしていました。異文化の中に身を置くことでたくさんのことを学び、心がオープンになり、その経験をステージ上で観客に伝えることができると思っています。」と、当時の振り返ります。

また、ロサンゼルス国際バレエコンクールでの経験は、学びのプロセスとしても貴重になる、と話します。ロサンゼルスでは世界的に有名なダンサーたちが競争をしめるために、通いダンサーは戦闘状態のように思いますが、それについて次のように語っています。

「通いダンサーの心を安らげるのがうまくいかず、1週間のコンテスト期間、毎日レッスン内容は基本的に同じなのでですが、通知明が毎日も多少ずつ追加されていきます。1週間で進歩するおかげで、ダンサーたちは、トラックスした状態で演劇に臨むことができるようになりました。これこそ、体験自体の学びの経験と言えず、どれもないでしょう。」
In the summer, European pre-selections are to be held to find the best dancers who will take part in the 2023 Prix de Lausanne. As the 2023 programme will mark the 50th anniversary of the competition, the teams develop many exciting projects and events as part of the celebration.

“We will have a gala performance with our prize winners who are still dancing the day after the finals,” – she says. “We are also making a documentary a part of which will be filmed during the 2022 Prix, and we will use our archives.”

Kathryn mentions that more projects are currently being developed, but some of them are kept secret and will only be revealed at the event.

future

2023年の中ローデンス国際バレエコンテストに参加する候補のダンサーを選考するため、夏にはヨーロッパで予選が行われます。2023年はローデンス50周年の記念の年となるため、お取引の一環として、魅力的なプロジェクトやイベントがたくさん開催される予定となっています。

「最終選考以降もダンスを続けていられる入賞者たちとの特別公演を行う予定です。また、2022年のコンテスト期間中に撮影した映像を含むドキュメンタリーも用意しています。」

これだけでも、皆さんそれぞれのプロジェクトが用意されていますが、その全貌はまだ秘密です。ローデンス編集部の発表が楽しみですね。

INTERNATIONAL BALLET COMPETITION JAN 31ST - FEB 6TH 2022
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